



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

Night Academy

Heroines, Hunters and Strange Vampires

Ritgerð til BA prófs í Ensku

Sólveig Geirsdóttir

September, 2013

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Abstract

It was within the Gothic genre that the literary vampire derived. The literary vampire has gained new popularity in the last decade with a new formula focusing on sympathetic vampires. This essay examines four contemporary vampire literary series that have all included a special vampire school. The four series analyzed in this essay are *House of Night* by P.C. and Kristin Cast, *Strange Angels* by Lili St. Crow, *Vampire Academy* by Richelle Mead and *Vamps* by Nancy A. Collins. The essay determines the school's purpose in the vampires lives and how it affects the protagonists who are all females inflicted with some kind of vampirism. The first chapter introduces the thesis and material used in the essay. The second chapter outlines the archtypical vampire focusing on the novel *Dracula* (1897) and summarizes the traditional qualities characterising the literary vampire. The third chapter focuses on describing the heroines and analyzing their behavior and motivation in regards to their situation at a school filled with other vampires. The fourth chapter goes over the difference in each series school syllabus and system, and analyzes the purpose of the schools. The series are analysed in regards to Gothic literature and its heritage. The essay relies mostly on *Gothic Romanced: Consumption, Gender and Technology in Contemporary Fictions* by Fred Botting and *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* edited by Jerrold Hogle for the analysis, as well as other texts on formula and semantics, contemporary vampire novels and female heroines.

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1 Introduction

It was within the Gothic genre that the literary vampire derived. The Gothic novel emerged near the end of the 18th century and was the horror literature of its time. Gothic literature explores the forbidden desires and fears of its readers, involving supernatural mysteries. The legend of the vampire has been written about and filmed for decades. The literary vampire was a sophisticated and terrifying monster embodied most famously in *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker. In recent years the legend has gained immense popularity with highly romanticized vampire novels aimed to entertain teenagers and young adults. The most popular new formula focuses on the forbidden love between a human and a vampire. In this new formula the vampire has become the hero instead of the villain. In the last decade a vast amount of contemporary vampire novels have been published and writing about them all would be impossible. In this essay I have chosen 4 series of novels in which the protagonist vampires, all female, go to a special vampire school. I will attempt to determine the schools purpose in the vampire's lives and how it affects the heroines.

In 1997 two very different types of entertainment became extremely popular. This was the year when the pilot of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* first aired and the first novel about the young wizard *Harry Potter* was published. *Buffy* presented a new type of vampire hunter; a hardcore female babe struggling with normal high school while also destined to slay vampires. The *Harry Potter* series presented a hidden world where witches and wizards lived amongst humans and their children attended a large castle like magic school. The immense popularity of both entertainments produced many similar novels, TV shows and movies including the four series presented in this essay. I will discuss the similarities further but the most obvious relation between them is that the protagonists are students at a high school or a special school.

The four series I have chosen are: *House of Night* by P.C. and Kristin Cast, *Strange Angels* by Lili St. Crow, *Vampire Academy* by Richelle Mead and *Vamps* by Nancy A. Collins. All series feature protagonists inflicted with vampirism, and are aimed to entertain young adult and teen readers.

The *House of Night* series contains ten published novels. The first novel was published in 2007 and the series is estimated to end in 2014 with two more novels due. I have chosen to only include the first two; *Marked* and *Betrayed* both published in 2007 with occasional references to novel three, four and five.

Strange Angels consists of five novels published in 2009-2011. Novels two and three take place at school and I will therefore focus primarily on those two with a few references to

the first novel. The first three novels; *Strange Angels*, *Betrayals* and *Jealousy* were published in 2009 and 2010.

Vampire Academy contains 6 novels published in 2007-2010. Since not all of them take place at the Academy I have chosen those who do, which are; *Vampire Academy* (2007), *Shadow Kiss* (2008) and *Spirit Bound* (2010). I will however reference the other three when it is befitting; *Frostbite* (2008), *Blood Promise* (2009) and *Last Sacrifice* (2010).

The *Vamps* series consists of three novels published in 2008-2009. The three novels are; *Vamps* (2008), *Night Life* (2009) and *After Dark* (2009). Even though novel two and three hardly take place at school I will include them because the first novel does not hold enough material about the Vampire world depicted in this series.

2 Vampire Tradition

“The vampire, with its foreignness, animality, unnaturalness, depraved appetites, condenses fears of decadence and regression, of a culture consumed by the return of all that it has repressed” (Botting, 66). The traditional vampire is usually associated with the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (Gelder, ix). It has been filmed numerous times and is still popular to this day. The novel is about a Count Dracula who resides in Transylvania and attempts to move to Britain. A young man, Jonathan Harker, who encountered him in Transylvania hinders and kills him with the help of his fiancé, vampire hunter Van Helsing and a group of other brave characters. Dracula is described as icy cold, pale, hairy, with sharp white teeth and pointed ears. He has no reflection, the ability to crawl up walls and depends on drinking blood to survive. He commands animals and several elements, he can vanish and change form at will and is immensely strong. His appearance has become the most common appearance of later vampires but it has also been altered in many ways. The basic qualities however remain: paleness, blood thirst and sharp teeth. His qualities are not only copied but also things associated with him and ways of killing him. Dracula’s biggest weakness is his dependency on blood; his power comes from the blood and it also keeps him immortal. He cannot enter a house without an invitation, his powers weaken at daybreak at which time he often seeks refuge in the earth or in a coffin. Communion wafers, crucifixes and other holy objects render him powerless. He dies in the novel when his neck is sliced and his heart staked. The stake continues to be a popular way of killing vampires, while the vulnerability to holy objects has mostly been abandoned and often replaced with magic. It is also mentioned in numerous novels as a false myth deriving from *Dracula*. The control over the elements has appeared in some new vampire novels where the vampires use crows and fogs to conceal themselves. Aversion to the sun and blood drinking has become an almost inseparable part of the vampire legend. New vampires are usually affected by the sunlight in some way; it may be deadly, crippling or uncomfortable. Not one vampire novel or film comes to mind where the vampire did not thirst for some kind of blood. The vampire is defined by its dependency on blood. The blood thirst appears in many ways; the vampire can drink humans without draining them or cannot bite them without draining them and anything in between. The speed and immortality have however been moderated. In some novels the vampire lives longer than humans, which is the case in *House of Night*, but not forever. They might also be faster than humans but not nearly as fast or strong as Dracula was described to be. Dracula also spread his condition with biting his victims. The exact process is not clear since the transformations explained in the novel differ, but one victim died before turning while the other turned while alive. Once the

victim turned it inherited all the powers and could immediately start the new life. The new vampire would sometimes need some guidance from the maker to ensure that the existence of vampires would remain hidden. This traditional way of making a vampire has remained relatively the same, with a bite. The maker is responsible for the new vampire and becomes its teacher.

Despite all these changes and alterations Count Dracula remains the obvious vampire role model. The novel *Dracula* has itself become an inseparable part of the vampire legend.

3 Heroines

Gothic novels were traditionally written for and by women. “The Gothic became the expression of repressed fears and anxieties resulting from women's actual oppression in a male-dominated environment. The women writers established the dominant tradition of a genteel Gothic fiction where the reader identified with a heroine threatened by a male villain” (Roberts). Gothic heroines are generally excessively curious, independent of mind and “seek both to appease and to free themselves from the excesses of male and patriarchal dominance” (Hogle, 5). All four series analyzed in this essay feature a female protagonist or heroines. The four heroines are all around 16 years old and have much in common with the traditional Gothic heroine. Due to their young age, and perhaps to some extent gender, their bravery and dedication to justice are marked as disobedience. Their quest for independence and freedom is harder. The archetypical Gothic heroine was a bit older or considered an adult sooner, a heroine around twenty would have sufficed. The young age of the heroines could stem from the change in regard towards women. The attempts to corrupt a pure and innocent 16 year old teenager are more effective now than they would be with an older heroine. Not all four series take place in a patriarchal society but the heroines all seek male approval, to some it is conclusive.

The four protagonists are all young females inflicted with some kind of vampirism. They possess some of the traditional qualities but need to learn to control them. The vampire condition is the revenge on repression and degradation (Botting, 66). The quest for freedom is embodied in the vampire condition the four heroines have. The supernatural existence is a given and not the mysterious aspect typical in the Gothic novel. Being only a vampire is not exciting enough and the four heroines all possess a unique quality making them special amongst vampires. “The women in Gothic fictions are represented as objects of pursuit, imprisonment, violation.” (Botting, 153) Their uniqueness combined with their curiosity makes them exposed to anonymity from not only villains but supposed allies such as authority

figures. Their special abilities threaten the villains and they seek to destroy them. The authority seeks to control them, use their ability for their gain which is not always concerted with the heroine's goal. In this chapter I will analyze the heroines and determine their motivation.

3.1 Rose Hathaway

Rose is the heroine of *Vampire Academy*. She is a dhampir or a half human, half vampire. The supernatural world in *Vampire Academy* consists of three kinds of vampires; dhampirs, moroi and strigoi. The moroi are magical vampires dependent on blood but avoid killing while strigoi are traditionally evil and relish in killing. Rose is unique because her moroi best friend Lissa brought her back from the dead creating a mental bond between the two. This mental bond is an advantage because the dhampirs guard the moroi. Dhampirs only difference from humans is their supernatural strength and speed. Rose is therefore extremely strong physically due to her heritage but she is also mentally strong. She is sassy and extremely confident, very reckless and impulsive, continually seeks freedom and independence from the school's domination. The villains of *Vampire Academy* seek to possess Lissa, who is also special, and Rose's connection to her puts her in danger. Her uniqueness is therefore not the object of pursuit. The society in *Vampire Academy* is very patriarchal even though their ruler is a queen. The males are usually stronger or better dhampirs. Rose's mentor, Dimitri Belikov, is famous for being extra good at killing strigoi. Dimitri is the love interest throughout the series but he is more a father figure or a role model for Rose. She learns a lot from him and desperately seeks his approval; she is unable to accept herself without it. She is a very independent and confident young woman who believes in freeing herself from male dominance but never truly commits to it. Dimitri is turned strigoi at the end of novel three, *Shadow Kiss*, and Rose vows to kill him. Novel four, *Blood Promise*, shows a new side of her character. She is determined and grows immensely in that novel until she fails to kill him. The whole journey she took both literally and mentally in *Blood Promise* is thrown back when instead of fulfilling her vow she discovers a magic solution to save Dimitri. Killing the love interest in a popular teen series would have uplifted the series as a whole and outraged the devoted fans. Instead of twisting the formula the author falls back on the love story. The love story inhibits Rose's growth as a character. The character herself also seems to still seek Dimitri's approval, even though he is evil. Rose holds herself back by becoming what she herself despises; a guardian willing to give everything up for love. Had the series ended with *Blood Promise* it would have stood out in the sea of contemporary vampire fiction.

3.2 Cally Monture

Cally is the protagonist of *Vamps*. There are naturally born vampires who acquire their abilities gradually until they reach 18 and undead vampires who remain their maker's faithful servants forever in the series. Cally is the offspring of a male vampire and a female human tryst. She still possesses all vampire qualities and an extra special one; the shadow hand which is deadly to the touch. The enemies are a group of hunters called Van Helsing where a few are the descendants of the Van Helsing introduced in *Dracula*. Cally is first introduced as a self-sufficient, independent young vampire but her individuality gradually decays. She is already free of male dominance and instead of embracing her freedom she feels the need for dominance. Her father has been absent her whole life and her mother is bordering on insane so her self-sufficiency rose from need. In the first novel she acquires a boyfriend who is a Van Helsing and replaces him with her need for a father. The boyfriend and his father seek to use her special ability to eradicate the other vampires. However as soon as her father reveals himself in the second novel she dumps the boyfriend. No frustration she might have had towards her father lingers on when he appears and she immediately relies on him. Her independence, which had already started to decrease when she was forced to change schools in the beginning of *Vamps*, completely disappears with her father's appearance. The series is narrated by both Cally and her sister, a fact revealed in the first novel, Lilith Todd. Lilith is Cally's complete opposite. Cally is sweet, naïve and innocent, Lilith is nasty, devious and corrupt making her the intended mischief-maker. However while Cally's individuality decreases, Lilith grows immensely and almost takes over as the heroine. She begins as a self-centered mischievous vixen that depends on admiration from everyone. Without necessarily changing she uses her deviousness to seek freedom from the patriarchal oppression that is dominating the *Vamps* society. The flaws in both characters almost deprive the series of a heroine though that was probably not the author's intention. It makes an interesting semi-objective read, if read without having a favorite character.

3.3 Dru Anderson

Dru is the heroine of *Strange Angels*. The series take place in the "real world", what Dru calls the hidden supernatural world most humans are ignorant to. There are many creatures in the real world and some are dangerous. Dru is a *svetocha*, a female half vampire, half human. The

male blend is called *dhjampir*¹ and the full vampires are called *nosferatu* which are also the most dangerous creatures to encounter. *Svetocha*'s are extremely rare and, once their change is complete, deadly to *nosferatu*. The *dhjampir* and *svetocha* are *nosferatu* hunters. Dru's human father was also a real world hunter and Dru does not discover her true identity until he dies in the first novel. She is introduced as a tough loner determined to hunt everything not human. She therefore struggles throughout the series with coming to terms with her real identity. The *svetocha*'s are also very rare; making her very unique and doomed to be forever hunted by the *nosferatu*. The hybrids inherit most of the *nosferatu* qualities aside from pure evil but tap into them using a condition called the aspect. With the aspect comes; blood thirst, better reflexes, increased speed, fangs and exaggerated features such as smoother hair and paler skin. Dru's father encouraged her independence. She managed to stay alive after his death and until her savior, Christophe a *dhjampir*, appeared. She is very able to take care of herself but is afraid to venture far from the safety Christophe offers. She yearns for freedom whilst being afraid to have it completely.

3.4 Zoey Redbird

Zoey is the heroine of *House of Night*. The vampires in *House of Night* drink blood but are also able to eat regular food, they are a little bit paler than humans and are sensitive to sunlight. They are not bitten but marked with a crescent moon on their forehead. The *House of Night* series differs from the other series but the vampires are known to the humans. The vampire society is also very matriarchal. The vampires learn to control one element; water, earth, fire, air or spirit but Zoey has an affinity for all five elements making that her unique power. The villain is a female ruler who is threatened by Zoey's power and her potential to destroy her plans for a war between vampires and humans. All higher power persons in *House of Night* are females, most of the teachers and students are also female though the males are not as rare as the females are in *Strange Angels*. Zoey only depends on others for advice, mostly her grandmother. She is herself the only savior available because of her uniqueness. She has never been able to depend on any male, resents any dominance some have shown towards her. She is already independent from patriarchal tyranny when she becomes vampire and the matriarchal dominance does not affront her, she acquires freedom easily both because of her power and her strong-willed mind. She is sure of herself and does like it when people try to control her. She has really more in common with the typical male hero than the Gothic

¹ The word *dhjampir* is spelled differently in *Strange Angels* from the more common spelling used in *Vampire Academy*, *dhampir*.

heroine because nothing faces her but hostages. The typical male “hero’s growth to manhood is a process of ‘triumphant self-discovery’” as opposed to how the “woman’s growth is a process of ‘anxious self-denial’” (Barry, 129). The character Zoey rambles a lot throughout the series where she ponders her ‘anxious self-denial’, but her certainty in taking action against injustice make her more like the male hero no matter what she herself claims. She has a fit of ‘anxious self-denial’ when she is first marked as a vampire but that is more due to the prejudice towards vampires than because of her gender. She is the most confident and truly independent, free from needing male approval and therefore more like a hero than a heroine.

3.5 Analysis

Female heroines are not as complex as male heroes; they are more one dimensional and often defined by only one word such as ‘strong’ or ‘feisty’. Their role in life is dependent on their male counterpart, how they affect him. Typically the woman character is surrounded by dozens of male characters, the gender imbalance prominent. The few women allowed are therefore often exaggerated characters because they represent the whole gender (McDougall). The four heroines are all a little more multi-dimensional, they are not only “strong” but they are also not as complex as male characters are like Harry Potter for example. Their backstory is not as dramatic, their enemy not as dangerous. In *Strange Angels* Dru is almost alone in representing the female, forever surrounded by males. She is not an exaggerated female character but her enemy and fellow *svetocha*, Anna, stands for everything that is despised in women. She is a callous vixen in the extreme, dependent on male admiration and murderously jealous when Dru gets some of it. Christophe’s actions are often suspicious but also admiring, he is not perfect; not completely evil but not completely good either. For Dru and Anna, one is pure goodness the other pure evil, Dru is incorruptible and Anna is remorseless. The male character that is only pure evil has the excuse of being *nosferatu*, his lack of dimensions is due to his nature not gender. The heroine always has to prove her worth, while the hero has the privilege of being allowed to make mistakes, have flaws. In *Strange Angels* male characters are allowed to be completely male but female characters, being so few, have to assimilate their female nature to suit constant male presence.

“Within the female Gothic film, female characters are frequently placed in narrative positions that challenge assumptions of gendered agency” (Hanson, xvii). This can also apply to Gothic literature. The expected situation for a woman is within the safety of home, hearth and family (xvii). The curiosity of the Gothic heroine leads her away from the safety; “into an immoderate and vicious world of darkness, horror and villainy” (Botting, 63). The excitement

that lays in the Gothic fiction offers the escape to women readers that is unattainable in real life. The heroine's possess the bravery to venture out, to leave the safety behind and to find freedom. They all manage to escape the confinement and safety of school at some point during the series and appropriate the traditional male hero role; saving the day. The future for Rose is to professionally guard others, be a body guard which has generally been conventional for men. She is just as strong and fast as her fellow male students and reaching the level Dimitri has attained. Yet while the heroines become the superwomen they are alone amongst a mass of supermen. All other female characters in all four series are less courageous, strong and resourceful; the heroines alone match the physical and mental strength of the male characters. All female qualities they show are a sign of weakness. To be equal with the males all heroines are both vampires and have their unique ability. The suggestion is that it is impossible to save the day, to be the heroine, without being special. Even though this also applies to heroes in regards to comic books, where their superpowers come from spider bites or chemical explosions, the suggestion made in these novels is that the males can be heroes simply because they are male, but the females need a special quality to be heroines.

“In nineteenth century fiction very few women work for a living. The focus of interest is on the heroine's choice of marriage partner” (Barry, 117). In *Vampire Academy* and *Vamps* the heroines are pressured to choose their future early; family or work. This is most prominent in *Vampire Academy* where it is considered a waste of female dhampirs talent if they choose to reproduce over being a guardian. Choosing to settle down and marry another dhampir is considered a waste because together they cannot reproduce. Settling down without a partner and having multiple children with moroi brands the females as blood whores. The older female vampires in *Vamps* are married housewives, teachers or fashion designers; either in their traditional role or working in a female dominating profession. The future for Cally and Lilith offers either fashion design or marriage.

In *Strange Angels* the imbalance between genders restricts reproduction between *dhampjirs* and *svetochas*. The *dhampjirs* are diligent at reproducing with female humans but rarely get into romantic relationships with them. Dru's mother, who was very rare and could have had almost any *dhampjir* she desired, settled down with Dru's human father. *Svetochas* are deadly to *nosferatu* when they have completed their change but because of their rarity they are not allowed near the *nosferatu*. Dru is therefore not exactly being trained to hunt down the *nosferatu* but to defend herself if she encounters them. Dru's future will revolve around her surviving as long as possible. The restrictions women had when the Gothic fiction emerged are continued in these three novels, in the present women can almost choose any work

available but the future for the three heroines is restricted.

House of Night is as previously mentioned a matriarchal society. It is never revealed if the vampires can reproduce, which they most likely cannot. If Zoey wants her life to be meaningful, especially since she is so unique, she must choose leadership over simplicity. She has at the end of novel one already chosen to become a high priestess in training meaning she has already chosen her future. There is not really a choice between marriage/family and work, only a career choice. None of the heroines have any real power over their destinies. Their role in the world stems from their uniqueness. Rose is the ideal guardian, Cally and Dru are only to use their abilities to defend themselves when necessary and Zoey must lead. Their uniqueness decides their destiny, with either creating a more desirable path or only one available path.

4 Vampire 101

The new vampire novel has brought a variety of a worlds were vampires exist. The kinds of vampires existing in these different worlds are presented in many ways that seldom stray from the basic formula. The four series analyzed in this essay all feature a vampire heroine who needs to attend vampire school to control and enhance her supernatural abilities. All four schools maintain the tradition that vampires are night creatures and the school hours are during the night. In *Vampire Academy*, *Vamps* and *Strange Angels* the heroines are born vampires or half vampires while in *House of Night* the vampires are marked during puberty. The moroi in *Vampire Academy* and the vampires in *Vamps* learn to refine and control their abilities during schooling but are born entirely vampire. Both heroines of *Strange Angels* and *House of Night* need to go through a change to become a vampire or half vampire. The schools play the same role as the traditional maker does; teaching the fledglings how to be vampires and how to remain hidden from the human world (apart from *House of Night* where the humans know about them). With the *Harry Potter* series emerged the idea for a school attended by supernatural students unbeknownst to humans. There are many similarities between *Harry Potter* and the four series. Both *Vampire Academy* and *House of Night* have vampires with magical qualities. All series but *House of Night* hide their schools from the humans. The success of the *Harry Potter* series opened up a new sub-genre where high school fiction could be combined with fantasy and the Gothic.

Abraham Van Helsing, the vampire hunter who assisted in killing Dracula, was a teacher of sorts in the novel *Dracula*. He taught other characters about the nosferatu or vampires and how to hunt and kill them. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* did the exact same thing

exactly 100 years later, hunted and killed vampires professionally. Half the students in *Vampire Academy* and all the students in *Strange Angels* are training to become vampire hunters, to hunt other evil kinds of vampires. These novels do not abolish the traditionally evil vampire but instead embrace the new sympathetic one combining it with the vampire hunter allowing both traditions to co-exist as vampires.

In general human schools there is a certain syllabus based mostly upon math, language, sociology and science. The vampire schools have a different syllabus because theirs is based on teaching students to be a vampire. Both protagonists in *Strange Angels* and *House of Night* start their vampire school in the series and have therefore both attended human schools. They have already learned how to write, read and calculate. In the other series the heroines have spent all their life in Vampire school, and since they can both read and write, the syllabus during their first years must have been somewhat similar to human syllabus. In the next pages I will demonstrate each schools syllabus and compare the different emphasis.

4.1 House of Night

The students at *House of Night* arrive immediately after they are marked indicating that the school must be operating all year long. Zoey, our heroine, is put in classes with other first year fledglings where some have been there longer than she has. Even though she arrives later it seems she is not behind in all classes and very quick to catch up. Here is her schedule:

1st hour – Vampyre Sociology 101. Rm. 215. Prof. Neferet.

2nd hour – Drama 101. Performing Arts Center. Prof. Nolan.

3rd hour – Lit 101. Rm. 214. Prof Penthesilea.

4th hour – Fencing. Gymnasium. Prof. D. Lankford.

LUNCH BREAK

5th hour – Spanish 101. Rm. 216. Prof. Garmy.

6th hour – Intro to Equestrian Studies. Field House. Prof. Lenobia.

(Cast, *Marked*; 116)

In the first year schedule the only obvious link to vampires is the first class; Vampyre Sociology. The other classes are linked to vampires when Zoey attends. The novel mentioned

that vampires excel at many things including the performing arts. Drama 101 is therefore a supreme option for vampires, and in this fictional world Shakespeare was in fact a vampire. Literature 101 also suggests that the most excellent authors are in fact vampires. The classes after lunch seem to be more linked to humans, Spanish and Fencing. There is no explanation as to what Intro into Equestrian studies has to do with changing into a vampire but Zoey's best friend tells her; "I told you they like to keep us in shape... they put me in Tae Kwan Do." (Cast, *Marked*; 117) It seems that the subjects chosen do not exactly help with learning to be a vampire but more to excel at different things while keeping in shape. The references from older students suggest that the syllabus will get more vampiric.

4.2 Schola Prima

The world in *Strange Angels* has many schools spread around the US and probably elsewhere though it is not mentioned. The schools purpose is training *djampir*, *svetocha*, *wulfen* and *loup-garou* to fight evil supernatural beings, especially *nosferatu*. *Wulfen* are werewolves and *loup-garou* are humans bitten by werewolves meaning they cannot turn entirely wolf. The female *wulfen* do not attend school while all male werewolves do. The gender ratios in the schools are therefore highly unequal. Dru is the only female student because *svetocha*'s are so rare. In *Betrayals* Dru arrives at her first special school which is situated in the middle of nowhere. This school is not the main school but a reform schola. She refrains from attending classes so I will primarily focus on her schedule or syllabus in the next novel; *Jealousy*. When she arrives at the Schola Prima she is put in the real classes which are; Paranormal Biology, Chemistry, Sparring, History, Basic Firearm Safety and Aspect Mastery.

Even though Dru has previously only attended human schools her father trained her well in both combat and knowledge on the real world. The history class only covers the history of the real world. That is the history of the *dhjampir*, *svetocha*, *nosferatu* and their dealings with other supernatural beings. Basic Firearm Safety speaks for itself; learning to handle firearms and use them properly where Dru is an expert and a teacher favorite. She is also great in sparring thanks to her father's training. In Aspect Mastery she learns to control her *nosferatu* side and use it to her advantage. Paranormal biology teaches the supernatural biology and chemistry is merely mentioned. The syllabus in Schola Prima is not really vampire-friendly but dead on training vampire hunters. No languages or math twisted in there, all hunter business.

4.3 Bathory Academy

In the world depicted in *Vamps* there are two vampire schools hidden in New York. The rich vampires attend *Bathory Academy* and the others attend *Varney Hall*. Cally Monture is starting *Bathory* in the first novel. The classes at *Bathory* are: Shapeshifting, Scrivening, Avoiding Detection, Alchemy, Beast Mastery, Mesmerism and History.

In shapeshifting the students learn how to change into their animal form and back. They are both able to transform themselves into humanoid bats and their own animal form (panther or a wolf for example). The students are training to transform faster and smoother. Cally does not have an animal form but instead a shadow hand where her hand turns black and deadly.

Scrivening is a writing class where they learn to read and write chthonic script, the vampire language. The vampire community made up their own language in order to remain hidden, a diligent idea from the author that is not considered in the other series. The threat of being detected by humans is more acknowledged in these series. Avoiding Detection is a class specifically teaching how to avoid detection in the human world. The fledgling vampires gradually lose their reflection in the mirror and cannot be photographed. Alchemy is a chemistry class where the students learn how to mix helpful and vicious potions. The series does not go into more detail and Beast Mastery and Mesmerism are only mentioned as a part of the syllabus.

Bathory Academy seems to be the most traditionally vampiric school of the four series. The aim of almost all the classes is to help students hiding amongst the humans and controlling their beastly side. Compared to the other series the vampires in *Vamps* are the most evil towards humans; they simply live in a different age than Dracula forcing them to be more subtle with their killing. The school system does not concern themselves with depressing their murderous nature but guiding them through their transformation and preparing them for a dangerous world ruled by humans.

4.4 Vampire Academy

Vampire Academy has two kinds of vampires attending school. The Academy is situated somewhere in the middle of nowhere in Montana to avoid running into humans. The two kinds of vampires attending are moroi and dhampir. The syllabus for moroi aims to discover and improve their affinity for one of the elements; fire, water, earth, air and the rediscovered one spirit. Here is Lissa's schedule:

1st Period Russian 2
2nd Period American Colonial Literature
3rd Period Basics of Elemental Control
4th Period Ancient Poetry

-Lunch-

5th Period Animal Behavior and Physiology
6th Period Advanced Calculus
7th Period Moroi Culture 4
8th Period Slavic Art

(Mead, *Vampire Academy*; 46)

There seem to be no classes teaching them how to be a vampire because they already know how to control themselves. They drink blood every day without killing from human donors and instead of enhanced physical powers they possess magic. Basic Elemental Control helps students tap into their exemplary element and when they do they are moved to a specialized class. The syllabus in *Vampire Academy* is in many ways very human. The students learn languages, literature, calculus, art and science. There is no link to the traditional vampire, no classes on blood drinking. The only noticeable difference from a human syllabus is the magic class.

The dhampir syllabus is much more physical but it aims to prepare them for killing strigoi. Here is Rose's schedule:

1st Period Advanced Guardian Combat Techniques
2nd Period Bodyguard Theory and Personal Protection 3
3rd Period Weight Training and Conditioning
4th Period Senior Language Arts (Novices)

-Lunch-

5th Period Animal Behavior and Physiology
6th Period Precalculus
7th Period Moroi Culture 4
8th Period Slavic Art

(Mead, *Vampire Academy*; 26-27)

The dhampir and moroi only share classes after lunch. The dhampir are a huge part of moroi culture explaining why they must take classes on that subject. Their schedule before lunch is very physical aimed to increase their speed and strength. The dhampir are strigoi hunters and have more in common with Van Helsing than Dracula. As a vampire school the academy has little to do with preparing actual vampires. It is a blend of Hogwarts (the school Harry Potter attended) and Van Helsing legacy with students learning to do magic or hunt evil vampires. The moroi's vampirism is stripped down to the inseparable basics of a vampire; paleness and blood drinking. The dhampirs have more in common with *Buffy*. Even though they are half vampires they only possess qualities that strengthen them, none that weaken them and the inseparable part of vampires; the blood drinking does not affect them. They are merely vampire hunters which happen to have some vampire in them.

4.5 Analysis

The four series have very much in common with each other. The vampire aspect and schools being the most obvious, but there are many little things such as secondary characters and similar progress. However examining the schools in detail reveals big differences between series. *House of Night* has little to do with the traditional vampire. It has much more in common with Hogwarts and a normal high school. The school's purpose is assisting the vampires during their change, and there are chances they won't make it. The schools existence is made crucial because without attending the fledgling vampires will definitely die. They do not learn anything particularly special at school but are guided by other vampires and gain vampire friends. The main focus in the school has more to do with magic than vampires and even though Dracula was himself able to control the elements it was not his most remembered or strongest quality. In *Strange Angels* the main focus is on training vampire hunters, the full vampires or *nosferatu* adhere to the traditional aspect of the maker acting as the teacher. *Vampire Academy* has much in common with both *House of Night* and *Strange Angels*. The academy trains both magical vampires and half-vampire hunters. The schools role in *Vampire Academy* and *Strange Angels* is to offer safety to the young and prepare them for the dangerous future. Also most of the students at Schola Prima do not have anywhere else; they are usually born from male *nosferatu* and female human consummations where the mother dies in birth. This is also a possible situation to arise is *House of Night* if the human parents disown the vampire child. All the students in these three series live at dorms situated near the school.

The situation the authors have created enforce the school's importance, the young

vampires cannot survive without the safety and teachings found there. The creation of a parallel world where vampire academies exist opened up an assortment of various possibilities. None of these three authors apply any radical changes to the system and merely assimilate their schools with the accepted norm. The classes, syllabus and length are all set up in the same way as the real schools. The adding of the vampires to the schools becomes unnecessary. It merely creates a more dangerous school to attend, which changes the excitement factor of the series, but the actual school drama remains very human. In *Vamps* the assimilation to the human system is even more, where the students live at home with their parents and attend school at night. However the vampires are themselves so completely traditional, the classes taught at school are all dedicated to their nature. The school becomes important, the young vampires need it to survive amongst the humans because their parents cannot be bothered with assuming the maker's role because they actually have to work. Even though Nancy A. Collins refrains from any considerable school system changes, she also does not include any classes' part of the human syllabus. Where in the other three novels it feels like a normal high school fiction with the added vampire excitement the *Vamps* series adds the need for a school to the literary vampire.

Heiða Jóhannsdóttir discusses in her article "The Narrative Theory of Action Films" ("Frásagnarfræði Hasarmynda") the two conflicting threats the hero has to deal with; the villain and the authority. In the four series the schools officials act as the authority. In action films the government prevents the hero from stopping the villain with rash decisions or disbelief in the threats presence. Due to the heroines young ages their demanded presence at school prevents their ability to save the day. The curiosity of the heroine has led her to discover something dubious but if she reports it the disbelief of the authority disappoints her. The authority also seeks to employ the heroine's uniqueness, which makes her quest for independence vexatious for them. They distrust the heroines own ability in controlling her powers claiming it their duty to control her for the sake of the community. The need for control really derives from jealousy. The schools in all four series replace the maker's presence in previous vampire fiction. They act as the guide and teachers to the progenies or fledging vampires whilst also thinking of the progeny as their property.

5 Conclusion

Genres consist of specific systems of expectation that spectators bring with them (Neale, 161). Each genre has certain semantics allowing the audience to anticipate the progress and outcome, authorship has shifted to the audience (Altman, 9). The expectations of the audience towards vampire fiction and film have changed remarkably since *Dracula*. The change has mainly happened in recent years. Even though the traditional Gothic novel was mostly written for and by women, the ones written by men became better remembered and preserved. “Cultural products associated with girls and women have often been positioned at or near the bottom of cultural hierarchy” (Strong, 73). While *Dracula* and Anne Rice’s novels (a famous more modern Gothic vampire author) are now highly praised the contemporary vampire novels published in the last decade rarely get the benefit of the doubt. They are generally considered trash. The expectations not only control the criticism but also how the author writes the novel. The novels daring to break free from the constraints of genre’s expectations do not appeal to the young teenage girls likely to buy everything to do with vampire-human love, and the intended groups of readers boycott the novel because of the expectations. Due to these low expectations most of the series analyzed in this essay consist of novels that are written over short time, two or three published in the same year, and the quality suffers from it. They are written much in the style of the motion picture; the descriptions, hurried progress and sudden jumps between time periods. The ultimate goal is not to be an excellent novel anymore but mainly successful and for the material to end up on the big screen. Quantity does not necessarily mean quality. However these series are intended for the teenage girls and other vampire love story fans and the adding of a school does not disappoint them. Surfing the net reveals tons of readers admiring and recommending the novels as great fun, in line with other contemporary vampire novels. The lack of quality does not mean less popularity.

The four heroines are all, as discussed before, very young which inhibits their independence and freedom more than patriarchal dominance traditionally does in Gothic fiction. With combining the high school formula and Gothic vampire formula the authors have created a dominating force not necessarily patriarchal or matriarchal. The dominating force is the school establishment. The school authority dominates them until graduation both because of their age, and attempt to control them more because of their uniqueness. The school, in itself as a teaching facility, is entirely irrelevant. It is made into the dangerous and inhibiting force delaying the heroines from being the saviors. It also acts as the maker and teacher; it is both Count Dracula and Van Helsing, helping students become vampires or vampire hunters. To the normal student the school is a positive establishment but to the

heroines it is a dangerous force determined to control them. The school's purpose in the four series is to create a believable place capable of being filled with vampires, just like Hogwarts was filled with witches and wizards. Hogwarts was however hidden by magic while the three novels maintaining the tradition to keep the vampire condition hidden from human notice operate their schools within human cities or in the wilderness close to human society. "A Gothic tale usually takes place in an antiquated space – be it a castle, an abbey, a large old house" (Hogle, 2). Despite the four series being part of new age vampire novel and almost a new genre the remains of the old tradition linger in many ways. Instead of having modernized and technological school buildings all four authors refer back to older architectural styles linking the new vampires to the old. Dru describes the school in *Strange Angels* as a "Gothic spaceship" (Crow, *Betrayals*, 4) and the other heroines all describe their schools as old fashioned buildings. Old Gothic buildings attended by pale students every night must surely raise some suspicion amongst the silly humans.

The contemporary vampire novel offers a new world, makes new vampire traditions. While the idea of creating school facilities intended to teach and train vampire and vampire hunter students holds much potential none of the four series really rose up to the challenge. The Gothic aspect mainly exists within the heroines themselves but the vampire is what they are, not what they embody. Their vampirism is lacking every negative side effect which makes it merely a concept to sell the novels. The existence of the schools became irrelevant to the vampire and Gothic aspect to the novels. Or more feasibly the vampire aspect is entirely irrelevant.

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