



# **From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth**

*Matthew Beresford*

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In blood-soaked lore handed down the centuries, the vampire is a monster of endless fascination: from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, this seductive lover of blood haunts popular culture and inhabits our darkest imaginings. The cultural history of the vampire is a rich and varied tale that is now ably documented in *From Demons to Dracula*, a compelling study of the vampire myth that reveals why this creature of the undead fascinates us so.

Beresford's chronicle roams from the mountains of Eastern Europe to the foggy streets of Victorian England to Hollywood, as he investigates the portrayal of the vampire in history, literature, and art. Opening with the original *Dracula*, Vlad the Impaler, and his status as a national hero in Romania, he endeavors to winnow out truths from the complex legend and folklore. *From Demons to Dracula* tracks the evolution of the vampire as an icon and supernatural creature, drawing on classical Greek and Roman myths, witch trials and medieval plagues, Gothic literature, and even contemporary works such as Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire* and Elizabeth Kostova's *The Historian*. Beresford also looks at the widespread impact of screen vampires from television shows, classic movies starring Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee, and more recent films such as *Underworld* and *Blade*. Whether as a demon of the underworld or a light-fearing hunter of humans, the vampire has endured through the centuries, the book reveals, as powerfully symbolic figure for human concerns with life, death, and the afterlife.

A wide-ranging and engrossing chronicle, *From Demons to Dracula* casts this blood-thirsty nightstalker as a remarkably complex and telling totem of our nightmares, real and imagined.

## **From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth Details**

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# From Reader Review From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth for online ebook

## Lovely says

nice.

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## Meredith says

*From Demons to Dracula* isn't very meaty for a book marketed as being scholarly work and would only really be of interest to someone unfamiliar with the topic. Although it gave good general overviews (the chapter on the historical Dracula was particularly good), it just sprinkled in a few details without delving very deeply. And the source citations in the endnotes were often incomplete.

Honestly, this book disappointed me especially the chapter about the vampire in literature, which only dealt with "The Vampyre" by John Polidori, "A Fragment of a Novel" by Lord Byron, *Varney, the Vampyre* by James Malcolm Rymer, and "Carmilla" by Sheridan Le Fanu as forerunners to *Dracula* by Bram Stoker. Even if one eliminates the poetry genre, there are dozens other prose vampire stories published prior to 1897 worthy of mention. Even restricting the topic to original English language works would yield at least a dozen.

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## Katia M. Davis says

I enjoyed the first half of this book discussing the mythological and folklore origins of the vampire. However my interest dropped off somewhat when it came to the Hollywood versions. No doubt movies and tv shows do play a role in the modern evolution of the vampire, but my interest was in the more ancient origins and would have enjoyed a greater focus on the old rather than the new. That's just my personal preference though. Overall this was seen interesting read that has ultimately sent me looking for further information on the ancient origins of the vampire.

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## Barbara says

Nice book but a bit of a disappointment. It gives a nice overview of folklore and fiction without discussing it much. It is a nice starting point to give you an idea of what is out there nothing more.

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## Melissa says

While I thought the material was very interesting, the author seems to jump around a lot and doesn't always

make sense. There are numerous grammatical errors which is bothersome because that is what editors are for. The author also writes sentences that are so long you lose track of what he is talking about. I think he could have done a much better job at posing the information in a coherent way.

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## **Liv says**

An entertaining, interesting and easy read. More like reading an essay that was written for fun.

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## **Steve Cran says**

We are all familiar with the sexy suave vampires that dance across our tv and movie screens all across the world. Their image is based primarily on one that was created since the victorian times, where in the vampire is charming, seductive and aristocratic. Of course some authors are having their vampires sparkle like diamond when they go into the sun.

Once upon a time there was legend of vampire like creatures all across the world. Greece, Rome, Egypt and Mesopotamia had vampire like creatures. At first they were rather spiritual in nature and even some would drink energy as opposed to blood. Since prehistoric times there have been burials conducted that would stop a vampire from rising to haunt people. Sometimes a rock would be placed in the mouth, or the heart would be staked and the head removed. Some rituals called for burning the body. Yup vampires seem to have been around back then. There were even dome covers to stop a vampire from coming out.

Vampires were not turned or made they were originally predestined from birth to become vampires. How did this come about? Well believe it or not people who were werewolves were destined to become vampires after they died. So were witches. Some names for vampires include the term varkolack which pertains to wolf and upir which means vampire but also has witch like connotations. After all witches traveled at night and eight small children. Those were born with a caul would also be destined to become vampires. alcoholics, violent deaths, suicides and unbaptized children would become vampires after dying.

Blood drinking was not so central to vampires in ancient lore. They would often rise from the grave at night and eat people and drink their blood yes that is true but sometimes they ate other human foods and blood drinking was a side note. They would at first visit their family member and make them sick one by one and then they would die. Angry family relations. Heck vamps could even fornicate

Garlic has been a way to repel them. That is a constant. Vampires seem to have many constants going all the way back to Egypt in the book of the dead. There in is references to shapeshifting, eating in the after life, resurrecting and even staking. pharaohs used to bathe in the blood of children. They could even drink the blood of the vampire to cure vampire related illnesses.

Vampires started out in pagan times. There were vampires who served apharesia, Hekate and Diana. Lamias were owl like female birds who sucked the blood of men or even their energy. In the Middle East you had the linin or female demons who drained the energy from men as they had relations with them. The vampire started out as a spiritual entity and then morphed into the living dead.

The image of the vampire would undergo even more changes. With John Polidori's story the Vampyre, our

horror creature become a suave and dashing aristocratic debonair Varney the Vampire would go back to the original concept of the vampire, while the story Carmilla would focus on Lesbian attractions .

Movies like Blade, Vampire Diaries turn the vampire into an action figure with not much thought requirement. Now they are action figures. They are a part of our lives whether they live among us or whether they are non-existent. Vampires play on our fear and yet they live for ever which is something we would all like that to live forever.

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### **Simge Perçin says**

Not that great as I expected. Historical stories are circling around on the same opinion. Also popular culture references poor.

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### **Faye Hollidaye says**

I loved this book. It really gets to the root of where today's vampire myths come from. It is interesting and informative. An all-around great read. I'll never forget about the dancing pumpkins and vampire garden tools.

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### **Libby says**

An entertaining, informative, if oddly structured look at vampire myth, starting with prehistoric burial rituals and going all the way through more contemporary versions, like Anne Rice's "Vampire Chronicles." I liked the idea that vampire literature exploded because we no longer fear them in reality, and they came to be a cipher for all manner of taboo subjects, like homosexuality and sexual desire. I didn't particularly care for the long sections on true crime- the section on the Highgate Vampire was well-researched but had relatively little impact, and I'd have liked more literary analysis, but all in all, this is a solid and useful book for those wanting a good overview of the vampire in popular culture and its roots in myth.

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### **Helen Mears says**

I bought this book at a literary event after hearing the author speak at a Gothic event. It's a useful exploration of the vampire myth through history and how those myths transformed into the caped, fanged literary vampires that we know.

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### **Mohamed says**

A very enjoyable book. It tears down the vampire myth into pieces systematically and chronologically in a digestible way. Although may be a little bit shallow in certain aspects and neglects to mention major deities in the ancient civilisation as perpetrator or even an igniter of the vampire mythological stems. Discusses the difference between folkloric tales and systematic and religious myths. A valuable asset to folklorists,

mythologist or even a simple horror fan library.

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### **Laura says**

So... I guess the reason persons who committed suicide, persons of illegitimate birth, and heretics are not allowed to be buried in Catholic cemeteries is due to their tendency to become vampires. I was unaware of the fact that in places like Romania, people to this day desecrate the remains of suspected vampires after their deaths. I think I'm beginning to understand the veiling of babies in public in Ukraine, to prevent the evil eye from falling upon them. Weird.

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### **Unity says**

Personally didn't care for it but good information on the formation and continuance of the vampire myths.

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### **Stu says**

Matthew Beresford has done some commendable work here. He gives respect to Johann Glaser's account of the Arnold Paole vampire hunts while other writers neglect Glaser in favor of Johann Fluckinger's report. He also gives attention to well-meaning efforts to restore Highgate cemetery, and makes fine points about including medieval English "histories" in the canon of vampire folklore.

That said, *From Demons to Dracula* is riddled with problems. Beresford makes several mistakes, including errors of language and history. He repeats the old saw about Bela Lugosi learning his *Dracula* lines phonetically (after the Hungarian émigré had been playing the role on stage for four years), identifies "dhampir" as a Serbian word for vampire (it is in fact a Romani term for a vampire hunter according to sources in Beresford's own bibliography), and includes too many mistaken dates and typographical errors to enumerate confidently. Regarding the Highgate vampire hysteria of the 1970s, Beresford is not as responsible as he should be in identifying the whole affair as an epic instance of cemetery vandalism. Though Beresford tends to romanticize the Highgate incidents, I cannot muster anything but disgust for those who tore the historic burial ground apart, or encouraged traffic by spreading wild rumors.

At the end of the day, Beresford's book is just too besotten with problems to recommend as a general survey, and a prudent reader will look elsewhere.

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