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### Cover Page Footnote

Patrick Johnson has degrees from San Francisco State University and the University of California at Davis. He has been studying the myths about vampires as a hobby since 1994. He is the creator and author of the web site Strigoi's Tomb at <http://zyweb.com/vampirelore/Home.htm>

# Count Dracula and the Folkloric Vampire: Thirteen Comparisons

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“There are such beings as vampires ...The *nosferatu* do not die like the bee when he sting once.” -- Van Helsing (*Dracula* 286-87)

Western European words such as *vampire* (English and French) and *vampiros* (Spanish) derive from *vampir* which occurs in the Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian languages. The term entered the mainstream press of Western Europe during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century along with sensational reports of “vampire plagues” from Eastern Europe. The original *vampir* of Slavic folklore was indeed a revenant who left his grave in corporeal form (at least in appearance -- there are cases where the revenant was considered to be the spirit of the dead person), brought death to the living, and returned to his grave periodically. There were other Slavic names for such revenants such as *vorkudlak* (Serbo-Croatian), *obour* (Bulgarian), *upir* (Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish). But the name *vampire* became so fixated in western Europe that it has come to be applied to all the corporeal revenants bringing death to the living which occur in the folk beliefs of Eastern Europe.

In Romanian folklore, which is non-Slavic, the common names for corporeal revenants include *strigoi*, *moroi*, *pricolic*, and *varcolac*. Occasionally, one of these words applies to a certain set of origins or attributes of the revenant. For example, *moroi* might specifically refer to those revenants who died in their infancy without having been baptized. But in general there are no hard and fast rules for connecting a set of motifs with a certain name. As Agnes Murgoci notes, “We find also *strigoi*, *moroi*, and *varcolaci*, and *strigoi* and *pricolici*, used as if they were all birds of the same feather” (321).

Bram Stoker's research papers for *Dracula*, including articles from newspapers, magazines, and books, indicate that his primary source for vampire folklore was “Transylvanian Superstitions” by Emily Gerard published in the July 1885 issue of *The Nineteenth Century*: “More decidedly evil, however, is the vampire, or *nosferatu*, in whom every Roumanian peasant believes as firmly as he does in heaven or hell” (142).<sup>1</sup>

Below are matches between thirteen motifs of Stoker's Count Dracula and those of folkloric vampires. In only one case, Dracula's lack of a reflection, is there no counterpart to be found in recorded folklore.

## 1. Blood Drinking

“The vampire live on, and cannot die by the mere passing of time; he can flourish when that he can fatten on the blood of the living.” -- Van Helsing (*Dracula* 289)

In “Transylvanian Superstitions”, Emily Gerard (142) wrote that the *nosferatu* sucks the blood of his victims. Along with the word *vampire* came the general notion that all East European corporeal revenants drink the blood of their victims. Rather trivial to say, the motif of blood drinking became the hallmark of the literary vampire. But in the majority of reports concerning folk beliefs about such revenants, even those under the name *vampir*, there is no mention of the revenant drinking the blood of his victims. Yet,

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<sup>1</sup>Ironically, *nosferatu* is evidently a misnomer. Contemporary Romanian folklorists deny that the term is Romanian, and it does not seem to occur in the folklore of any other European country. See Elizabeth Miller, *Dracula: Sense & Nonsense* (Westcliff-on-Sea, UK: Desert Island Books) 48-49.

for most countries or ethnic groups which hold belief in such revenants, there is usually found at least a minority of cases in which the revenant is said to be a blood drinker. Regarding Romanian lore, I have found two examples recorded by Romanian scholars where such revenants do indeed drink human blood.

One folktale, recorded in the Romanian journal of folklore *Ion Creanga*, begins as follows: “There was a time when vampires were as common as leaves of grass, or berries in a pail, and they never kept still, but wandered round at night among the people. They walked about and joined the evening gatherings in the villages, and, when there were many young people together, the vampires could carry out their habit of inspiring fear, and sucking human blood like leeches” (qt in Murgoci 341). In the tale, it is said of the vampire that “He sucked their blood, he threw their flesh and bones under the bed, cut off their lips, and put their heads in a row under the window.”

The Romanian linguist, Emil Petrovici, records this folk tale: “Once a strigoi turned into a handsome young man and a young girl fell in love with him. They were married, but the girl also wanted a religious wedding. He rejected this idea. Her parents insisted, so he agreed to go to the church, but when they emerged from the church he looked at his wife in a strange way, baring his teeth. She became afraid and told her mother about it. Her mother said, ‘Don’t be afraid. He loves you. So that’s why he bared his teeth.’ When their parents came to visit them, they couldn’t find them. They had locked themselves in, but the people could see them through the window. He was sucking her blood. When the people saw it, they shot him through the window” (qt in Perkowski 314). He also records that “When a moroi comes it drinks the blood of cattle and they die” (Perkowski 315). Outside of direct Romanian sources, Barber notes: “Mannhardt reports that in Krain [a district of Romania] vampires both suck blood and create new vampires by doing so. Cremene adds that (again in Romania) the bite is never at the jugular but usually over the heart, the blood of which is in demand. More rarely, the bite is over the eyes” (32).

## 2. The Vampire’s Victims Become Vampires

“They cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world; for all that die from preying of the Un-Dead become themselves Un-Dead and prey on their kind. And so the circle goes on ever widening” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 261)

That the vampire’s victim becomes a vampire after death is common in Eastern European folklore. In actual historic reports, we find that plagues of diseases were sometimes blamed on vampires. This is often the case in the famous “vampire plagues” of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which drew the attention of Austro-Hungarian military and government authorities. Frequently, every victim of the plague was suspected of having become a vampire after his or her death. The ultimate test of contracted vampirism in these cases was to dig up the body of the victim from his grave to see if it was still fresh or had other signs to indicate that the corpse was actually undead. If the corpse exhibited such a condition, it was most typically treated by such means as driving a stake through the heart, decapitating it, cremating it, or otherwise mutilating it.

Emily Gerard writes that “every person killed by a *nosferatu* becomes likewise a vampire after death, and will continue to suck the blood of other innocent people till the spirit has been exorcized” (142). The basic notion is supported by Barber’s statement (see above): “Mannhardt reports that in Krain vampires both suck blood and create new vampires by doing so.” Further support will be found in the next topic. But with a twist of irony!

## 3. To Drink the Blood of a Vampire

“Then he spoke mockingly to me ‘And you, their best beloved one, are now to me, flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful wine-press for a while; and shall be later on my companion and helper. You shall be avenged in turn; for not one of them but shall minister to your needs ... He pulled open his shirt, and with his long sharp fingernails opened a vein in his breast. When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in one of his,

holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the — Oh my God! my God! What have I done to deserve such a fate, I who have tried to walk in meekness and righteousness all my days.” – Mina Harker (*Dracula* 343-44)

I have found no precedent in folk belief to support the notion that it is necessary for the victim of a vampire to drink the blood of the vampire in order to become a vampire himself or that a vampire compels his victim to drink his blood in order to gain power over him. To the contrary, Emil Petrovici records this bit of Romanian folk belief: “A dead person becomes a pricolici and he feeds on his relatives. When he is exhumed his rump is facing upwards and he has blood on his lips. You have to take some of that blood and feed it to the person at home who is suffering from the pricolici. In this way the relative regains his health” (qt in Perkowski 316). There are also examples in Romanian folklore where the ashes of organs of a cremated vampire were mixed with water and then drunk by living victims of a vampire to prevent the victim from dying from the disease induced by the vampire. Two of these cases are reported in *Ion Creanga* and translated by Murgoci (324, 325).

Somewhat similar cases can be found outside of Romanian folklore. Calmet reports that in the early eighteenth century “Arnald Paul had often related that in the environs of Cassovia, on the frontier of Turkish Serbia, he had often been tormented by a Turkish vampire ... but that he had found means to cure himself by eating earth from the vampire's grave, and by smearing himself with his blood, a precaution which, however, did not prevent him from becoming a vampire after his death” (51).

#### **4. The Vampire's Ability to Shapeshift**

“He can transform himself to wolf ... he can be as bat...” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 289)

“He can come in mist which he create ... He come on moon rays as elemental dust ... He become so small – we ourselves saw Miss Lucy ... slip through a hairbreath space at the tomb door.” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 290)

There is indeed quite direct Romanian folkloric support of the notion that vampires can shapeshift, though I know of no evidence that Stoker actually knew of this. Petrovici records this anecdote: “A person who was born with pain and regret when he dies turns into a cat or dog and torments his relatives during the night. The solution is to exhume him and pierce his body with a needle or nail. Another solution is to walk around the grave with burning hemp [marijuana]. The hemp smoke renders the strigoi harmless.” He also records: “A dead person can turn into a moroi in the form of a dog, horse, sheep, or a man. In order to get rid of it, you burn his clothes.” And, “A dead person can turn into a moroi in the form of a dog, horse, sheep, or a man. In order to get rid of it, you burn his clothes” (Perkowski 315). Murgoci writes that “When vampires do enter, they do by the chimney or the keyhole” (334). She also reports that some Romanians considered a hole about the diameter of a snake near a tombstone as evidence that the buried person was a vampire because it was through such holes that vampires left and entered their graves (327).

#### **5. The Vampire's Ability to Affect the Weather**

“He can, within his range, direct the elements: the storm, the fog, the thunder.” -- Van Helsing (*Dracula* 287)

Petrovici records a Romanian folk belief that persons are destined at birth to cause a certain type of calamity if they become strigoi after their death (Perkowski 313). Floods and hail storms are included among these disasters. Murgoci writes that “heavy rains in Zarnesti were supposed to be caused by a recently buried girl, thought to be a vampire” (332). What is lacking in such accounts is the clever use of

such power found in Stoker's *Dracula* where Count Dracula manipulates the winds to his advantage while traveling aboard ship to reach England.

## 6. Ways to Destroy the Vampire

"This stake must be driven through her... Take this stake in your left hand, ready to place the point over her heart, and the hammer in your right." – Van Helsing  
(*Dracula* 262)

Arthur bent and kissed her, and then we sent him and Quincey out of the tomb; the Professor and I sawed the top of the stake. Then we cut off the head and filled the mouth with garlic. – Dr Seward's Diary (*Dracula* 264)

"The branch of the wild rose on his coffin keep him that he move not from it; a sacred bullet fired into the coffin kill him so that he be true dead; and as for the stake through him, we know already of its peace; or the cut-off head that giveth rest." – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 290)

Emily Gerard writes that "Every person killed by a *nosferatu* becomes a vampire likewise after death ... till the spirit has been exorcized, either by opening the grave and driving a stake through the corpse, or firing a pistol shot into the coffin. In very obstinate cases it is further recommended to cut off the head and replace it in the coffin with the mouth filled with garlic, or to extract the heart and burn it, strewing the ashes over the grave" (142). There can be no doubt that Stoker was greatly influenced by this. But Gerard says nothing about driving the stake specifically through the heart. The Eastern European practice of driving a stake through the heart of the exhumed body of an alleged vampire became known in Western Europe with the widespread publication of the reports of "vampire plagues" in Eastern Europe such as the cases of Peter Plogojowitz and Arnod Paole (aka Arnold Paul), both of which occurred in Serbia.

Murgoci asserts that "The commonest method [in Romania] is to drive a stake through the heart or navel. In Valcea it is sufficient to drive a needle through the heart. Garlic may be placed in the mouth" (328). But the various cases she gives reveal a wide variety of means: piercing one or more particular places of the body (including the heart) by stake, needle, nail, iron fork, or scythe, beheading, cutting out the heart and sometimes the liver as well, and burning the cut out organs or the entire corpse. Quite often a combination of these methods was used. Petrovici recorded in the Romanian village of Stefanesti an anecdote about shooting the corpse: "The old people say that if a cat walks over or under a body it will turn into a strigoi. The antidote is to exhume the body and shoot it" (Perkowski 315). Note that the Romanian use of metal instruments to pierce the bodies of alleged vampires is similar to Count Dracula's destruction by knives that cut his throat and pierce his heart.

## 7. The Vampire's Aversion to Garlic

Shortly after I had arrived, a big parcel from abroad came for the Professor. He opened it ... and showed a great bundle of white flowers ... "These is for you, Miss Lucy," he said ... "This is medicinal but you do not know how. I put him in your window, I make pretty wreath, and hang him around your neck so that you sleep well." ... Lucy had been examining these flowers. Now she threw them down saying ... "Why, these flowers are only common garlic." – Dr Seward's Diary (*Dracula* 167-68)

In “Transylvanian Superstitions” Gerard writes about the practice of placing garlic in the mouth of an exhumed vampire, but nowhere does she say that Romanians used garlic to prevent a vampire from entering a dwelling or to otherwise protect a person from becoming a vampire’s victim.<sup>2</sup>

How Stoker found out about this practice is a mystery. But in 1926, nearly thirty years after the publication of *Dracula*, Murgoci writes: “Garlic keeps off vampires, wolves, and evil spirits, and millet has a similar action. On St Andrew’s Eve and St George’s Eve, and before Easter and the New Year, windows should be anointed with garlic in the form of a cross, garlic put on the door and everything in the house, and all the cows in the cow shed should be rubbed with garlic. When vampires do enter, they do by the chimney or the keyhole, so these orifices require special attention when garlic is rubbed in. Even though the window is anointed with garlic, it is wisest to keep it shut” (334). And in 1934, Petrovici records that in the town of Coropceni “On the Feast of St. Andrew [November 30] it is useful to rub garlic on the doors and windows to protect yourself against the strigoi” (Perkowski 315).

## **8. Inability to Cross Running Water**

“It is said, too, that he can only pass running water at the slack or the flood of the tide.” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 290)

The Count, even if he takes the form of a bat, cannot cross the running water of his own volition, and so cannot leave the ship. – Jonathan Harker’s Journal, (*Dracula* 395)

It is not known how Stoker arrived at this notion. Perhaps he invented it. But there are precedents for this in folk beliefs. On some of the Greek islands, including Hydra, Kythnos, and Mitylene, there was occasionally found the practice of re-burying the corpse of an alleged vampire on a desert island in belief that the vampire could not cross the water to another shore. For example, Rennel Rodd tells us: “Hydra is said to have been formerly infected by vampires, but a zealous bishop transferred them to the unoccupied island of Therasia, in the Santorini group, where they still walk at night, but being unable to cross salt water, find no one to torment” (194). In China too, the undead were sometimes believed unable to cross water. For example, the revenant in one Chinese folktale retold by Olga Hoyt (35-37) turns into a wolf upon being frustrated by its inability to cross a stream in pursuit of a man. But it still can’t cross the water. And when this man returns to the revenant’s grave, he finds the body of an infant sucked dry of blood. There are also precedents in the British Isles, albeit these apply to other supernatural creatures. Oxford scholar Katherine Briggs notes: “If chased by evil fairies, one could generally escape by leaping to safety across running water, particularly a southward flowing stream” (336).

## **9. The Vampire in the Day**

“His power ceases, as does that of all evil things, at the coming of the day. Only at certain times can he have limited freedom. If he be not at the place whither he is bound, he can only change himself at noon or at exact sunrise or sunset.” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 290)

“They are racing for the sunset. We may be too late. God’s will be done!” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 440)

The original Count Dracula created by Stoker cannot be destroyed by sunlight. In *Dracula* (215-16), Mina Harker describes in her journal entry for September 22 the circumstances of how Jonathan Harker happened to see and recognize the Count outdoors in London, watching a pretty girl. Right after this event, Jonathan and Mina walked to Green Park to sit for a while. Mina noted: “It was a hot day for

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<sup>2</sup>She does note, however, that “Rubbing the body with garlic is a preservative against witchcraft and the pest” (145).

autumn, and there was a comfortable seat in a shady place.” There is not even a hint here that Dracula had any concerns regarding the sun.

In *Dracula* (290), Van Helsing seems to say that Dracula can only transform into an animal, or a mist, etc., at sunrise, noon, and sunset. The Count’s last hopes for maintaining his undeath are on the sun setting before he and the gypsies are intercepted by the heroes. It certainly seems to be Stoker’s intention here that Dracula would have enhanced powers after sunset, allowing him to defeat or escape from his pursuers, but that was foiled when his heart was pierced and his throat cut by knives just at the critical moment.

The vampires in European folklore typically do have schedules to follow. Regarding Romanian vampires, Murgoci says that it was commonly believed that the vampire “must be exhumed on a Saturday, as on all other days it will be wandering from its grave” (326). But she adds that “In general dead vampires come out every night except Saturday, when they are to found in their graves. The vampires that are reanimated corpses or spirits of the dead disappear, like all evil spirits, at cockcrow” (333). Abbott records the Slavic Macedonian belief that the vrykolakas left his grave at two hours before midnight, wandered about committing such acts as sucking the blood of men and beasts, and then returned to his grave at “the first crowing of the morning cock” (217-18). But other Eastern European beliefs allow the vampire to be about during some daylight hours. Calmet reports: “The public memorials of the years 1693 and 1694 speak of oupires ... which are seen in Poland, and above all in Russia. They make their appearance from noon to midnight, and come and suck the blood of living men or animals” (59). Cambridge scholar Robert Pashley reports that, in Crete and the Greek isles during the early nineteenth century, “many believe that, even in the day time, it is only once a week, on a Saturday, that he [the vampire] is allowed to occupy his burial place” (qt in Summers 221).

#### **10. No Reflection of a Vampire Seen in a Mirror**

“He throws no shadow; he make in the mirror no reflect, as again Jonathan Harker observe.”  
– Van Helsing (*Dracula* 289)

Stoker has left us with no clues in research notes and papers as to where or how he came up with this idea. And recorded vampire folklore is mute on this subject.

There is at least one historical account about the shadow of a vampire. St Clair and Brophy report the Bulgarian belief that nine days after a person predisposed to become an obour is buried, he returns from the grave in a form invisible except that in the dark he gives off sparks and in the light he casts a shadow (see Summers 315-19).

There are anecdotes concerning superstitions that the shadow or reflection of a person was actually that person’s soul. There was also an old belief that the vampire was a corpse that had been possessed by a demon after the person died and the soul had departed. Putting these two beliefs together could lead to the conclusion that the vampire would cast no shadow or reflection. This, of course, is all speculation.

#### **11. Vampire Intellect and Social Sophistication**

“But he is clever ... That mighty brain and that iron resolution went with him to his grave, and are even now arrayed against us.” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 291)

A current notion is that literary vampires such as Count Dracula are much smarter and more sophisticated than the corporeal revenants of folklore. In this argument, the latter are typically portrayed as being creatures with not even the sense to keep clean the burial clothes that they continue to wear. I must admit that many cases from the original folklore support such an impression. But there are significant exceptions.

In Romanian folklore, there are tales where vampires had the ability to dress up and behave in social circumstances quite well enough to seduce young women. I have already given two such examples above



under “Blood Drinking”: the tale recorded in *Ion Creanga* and the tale recorded by Petrovici. Also, according to Murgoci, “If the vampire is not recognized as such, and rendered innocuous, it goes on with its evil ways for seven years. First it destroys its relations, then it destroys men and animals in its village and in its country, next it passes into another country, or to where another language is spoken, and becomes a man again. He marries, and has children, and the children, after they die, all become vampires and eat the relations of their mother” (327). Cremene clarifies this in his *Mythologie du Vampire en Roumanie* where he states that, after seven to twelve years from the time of burial, the *strigoi* will have reached a stage where he is no longer tied to his grave, and will go forth in the world, moving to another village, marrying, and raising a family. At the beginning of this phase, the *strigoi* ceases to prey upon humans but instead attacks wild and domestic animals. But then he reaches the point where he can sustain himself on a normal diet and it is then that he goes off to another village where he passes as a normal mortal human. But even when the *strigoi* is living incognito in another village with another family and doesn’t have to take nourishment from the living, he is still bound by the requirement of living for short periods of time as a vampire. Usually, these times are from Friday night until Sunday morning. During this time, he might find a resting place in a nearby cemetery or go cavorting with other *strigoi*. Being bound by this necessity of joining his own kind for this period each week, a *strigoi* in this stage of undeath must learn to be very cautious about his doings so as not to arouse suspicions about his true nature. This is a very hard thing to do for a long time. Also these *strigoi* are not affected by sickness or aging, so they have the reputation of being nomads. They wander into a village or town, take a wife, have children, and eventually find it necessary to wander again and make a new life somewhere else.

I have found other cases of advanced, sophisticated vampires from other southeastern European countries. In due fairness to Count Dracula I now give a quick review of these.

Matthew Bunson notes that in both Serbia and Albania it was believed that, if an undead vampire wasn’t destroyed within thirty years after burial, it would become “human” and travel the world under a different name (156). He also says that in some regions of Albania it was believed that the vampire grew stronger with time until it reached a final stage where it is called a *kukudh*. It was then no longer required to return to its grave and could live in a home during the day, and typically it traveled to other lands as a merchant (148).

George Horton (115-17) records a tale about a particular *vrykolakas*, a Greek vampire, who reached an advanced stage where he could emigrate, marry, and have children after being in the grave and wandering about at night for only two weeks. The vampire then left his home island and traveled to another where he managed to set himself up as the lucrative owner of the general store, marry, and have children. But each week, from Friday night to Sunday, he returned to his grave on his home island. His wife became suspicious not only because of his weekend absences but also because he ate the raw organs of animals instead of normal cooked food, and because their children’s bones were made of gelatin. (In southeast European folklore, there is the motif that the child of a vampire has bones made of gelatin.) The vampire’s cover was completely blown after his living brother happened to come to the island and recognized him. There seem to be no living human victims in this tale until near the end where it is told that the vampire devoured his brother whole out of revenge for his betraying him. Immediately after, the vampire was consumed by a fire set by villagers to destroy him.

St Clair and Brophy (see Summers 315-19) report the Bulgarian belief that, nine days after a person predisposed to become an *obour* is buried, “he returns to upper earth in aeriform shape,” invisible except that in the dark he gives off sparks “like those from a flint and steel” and in the light he casts a shadow. His harm is confined to such activities as roaring out in a loud voice or calling out cottage dwellers in endearing terms and then beating them black and blue, and entering cottages to turn things topsy turvy like a poltergeist, spit blood on the floors, and smear cow dung everywhere. After forty days from burial, the *obour* arises from the grave in bodily form and is able to pass himself off as an ordinary mortal human being who lives “naturally and honestly.” They give as an example what was alleged to have happened beginning thirty years before in the village they themselves were now living in. It was then that a stranger arrived in the village, established himself, and married a wife. The newly-wed wife’s only complaint was that every night he stayed out until dawn. It was soon noticed that there were many dead horses and cattle

about, partially eaten. This came to an end, but then cattle grew sick and died, and it was noticed that the blood had been drained out of them. When the villagers learned from the stranger's wife that he was always out all night, they suspected that he was the vampire responsible for the animal deaths. They examined him and found that he had only one true nostril – a sure sign that he was a vampire. So, they bound him, took him to a hill outside the village, made a big fire of thorn bushes, and burned him alive.

## 12. Vampires of Noble Birth

“He must, indeed, have been that Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk...” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 291)

There is of course no historic or folkloric connection between vampires and the historical Dracula, Vlad Tepes, a one-time Voivode (Prince) of Wallachia and son of the Voivode Vlad Dracul. And I know of no case where a person of Romanian nobility was ever thought to have become a vampire after his death. By attributing nobility to his vampire, Stoker was following an already established literary tradition. This includes such stories as *The Vampyre* by John Polidori (1819), and *Carmilla* by Sheridan Le Fanu (1872). But, looking into non-fiction beyond Romania, I have found two cases of Eastern European vampires who were of noble birth -- albeit one might be classified as a fairy tale, and the other might possibly be a fabricated report inspired by Stoker's *Dracula*.

Melton (479) gives a synopsis of a Polish folktale found in the collection *A World Remembered: Tales and Lore of the Polish Land* compiled by Marion Moore Coleman (Cherry Hill Books, 1965). The title is “The Vampire Princess”. The tale is about a poor man named Jacob and a king whose daughter had become a vampire. Near the end, the princess is put to true and final rest as the result of Jacob entering her tomb after she had left it, writing the name of The Holy Trinity on her coffin, and sprinkling it with holy water.

Dudley Wright (67-78) quotes an entire article, “An Authenticated Vampire Story” by Dr Franz Hartmann, originally published in the September 1909 issue of *Occult Review*. This article begins by referring to a report published on 10 June 1909 in the Vienna newspaper, *Neues Wiener Journal*, about the burning down of the castle of “Count B— “ by the neighboring peasants. These peasants believed that the last Count B— had become a vampire after his death and was the cause of an abnormally high number of deaths among their children. The castle was located in a desolated region of the Carpathian Mountains, and was once a fortification against the Turks. It had been abandoned except for one wing in which dwelled the caretaker and his wife.

## 12. Vampire Cadet School

“The Dracula were, says Arminius, a great and noble race, though now and again were scions who were held by their coevals to have had dealings with the Evil One. They learned his secrets in the Scholomance, amongst the mountains over Lake Hermanstadt, where the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due.” – Van Helsing (*Dracula* 291)

Stoker learned about the Scholomance from the article “Transylvanian Superstitions” by Emily Gerard which he included among his research papers. Gerard wrote: “As I am on the subject of thunderstorms, I may as well here mention the Scholomance, or school supposed to exist somewhere in the heart of the mountains, and where all the secrets of nature, the language of animals, and all imaginable magic spells and charms are taught by the devil in person. Only ten scholars are admitted at a time, and when the course of learning has expired and nine of them are released to return to their homes, the tenth scholar is detained by the devil as payment, and mounted upon an Ismeju (dragon) he becomes henceforward the devil's aide-de-camp, and assists him in ‘making the weather,’ that is, in preparing thunderbolts. A small lake, immeasurably deep, lying high up among the mountains south of Hermanstadt, is supposed to be the cauldron where is brewed the thunder, and in fair weather the dragon sleeps beneath the waters” (136).

The Scholomance described by Gerard has nothing explicitly to do with vampires. But according to a belief found in parts of Eastern Europe, black magicians and others who deal with the devil during their mortal lives become vampires after death. According to Murgoci, his belief was once held in Romania: "Roumanians think that a man born with a caul becomes a vampire six weeks after his death; similarly people who were bad and who had done evil deeds in their lifetime, and more especially women who have had to do with the evil one and with spells and incantations" (329). In Romanian lore there are also quite explicit forms of supernatural training specifically for people still living who will become undead vampires after they die. The training is most often for those fated at birth to become vampires, but there are exceptions. The trainers include undead vampires. Murgoci writes: "People destined to become vampires after death may be able in life to send out their souls, and even their bodies, to wander at cross-roads with re-animated corpses. This type may be called the *live vampire* [*strigoi viu*] type. It merges into the ordinary witch or wizard, who can meet with other witches or wizards either in the body or as a spirit" (321). Furthermore, "Some Roumanians think that, if anyone is fated to be a vampire, they will become one whether they wish to or not ... Then during their lifetime, when they sleep, their soul comes out of their mouth as a little fly" (329). Later she notes that "It is said that the strigoi meet the moroii and varcolaci at the boundaries, and decide on their programme of evil for the coming year – who is to be killed and by whom. Elsewhere it is said that at these same boundaries, where neither the cuckoo sings nor the dog barks, the dead vampires meet the living ones and teach them all sorts of incantations and spells" (330). And again, "Vampires, whether live or dead, are generally born rather than made. However, a peasant from Strojineti said that there is a class of female vampires which are really only half vampire, that is to say, they are not vampires by birth, but have been taught to be vampires by the real ones, and shown how to do things. They put enchantments on cows, take the form of a girl's lover, and so kill her.... Such vampires are alive, but after they die they walk" (332).

## Conclusion

No single vampire in folklore has all of the attributes of Stoker's Count Dracula. Yet the Count's attributes can be considered to be a collection drawn from many of these folkloric vampires. The one exception is Dracula's inability to cast a reflection. Known folklore regarding vampires is mute on that point. If Stoker himself were brought back to life today, he might be surprised to find how well he did in this survey!

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