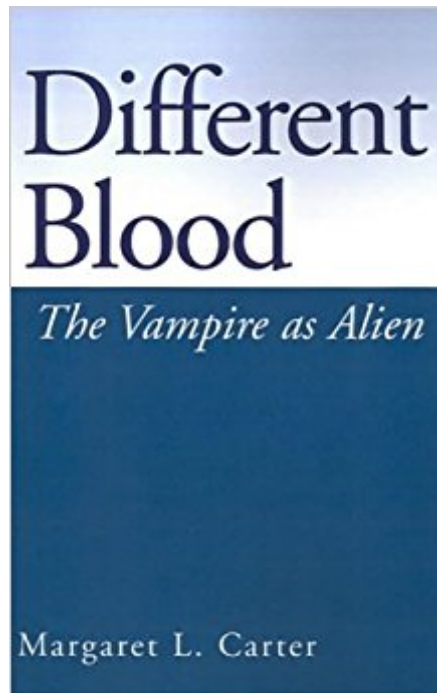




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Different Blood: The Vampire As Alien



Synopsis

Different blood flows in their veins-but our blood quenches their thirst. From Bram Stoker's 1897 creation of Count Dracula, portrayed as a foreign invader bent on the conquest of England, the literary vampire has symbolized the Other, whether his or her otherness arises from racial, ethnic, sexual, or species difference. Even before the bloodsucking Martians of H. G. Wells's War of the Worlds, however, popular fiction contained a few vampires who were members of alien species rather than supernatural undead. Guy de Maupassant's Horla is only one of the best-known. Vampire invaders from other planets appear in pulp fiction throughout the 20th century. Among others, interplanetary adventurer Northwest Smith meets a shapeshifting, Medusoid seductress in C. L. Moore's Shambleau. Even more intriguing, though, are humanoid and quasi-humanoid beings who live on Earth among us, often camouflaged as our own kind. Jack Williamson's Darker Than You Think, for example, features an inhuman race, vampiric as well as lycanthropic, that has preyed on humanity from prehistoric times. A gentler view of the Earth-born "alien vampire" appears in Ray Bradbury's Homecoming, a poignant tale of the one "normal" boy in a clan of "monsters." Such fiction can use vampirism either to valorize or to undercut racism and xenophobia. Richard Matheson makes the vampire a misfit child in Dress of White Silk and Drink My Blood. Cyril Kornbluth's The Mindworm, at mid-century, uses the alien in the form of a mutant born of human parents to foreground another cultural preoccupation, the fears spawned by the nuclear age. Similar fears underlie Matheson's I Am Legend, in which a worldwide plague wipes out all "normal" human beings and transforms the survivors into a new species. The boom in vampire fiction that began in the 1970s engendered a variety of "alien" vampires, many of them portrayed as sympathetic characters. The science fiction vampire is especially suited to the presentation of vampirism as morally neutral rather than inherently evil. Suzy McKee Charnas's The Vampire Tapestry, Whitley Strieber's The Hunger, George R. R. Martin's Fevre Dream, Jacqueline Lichtenberg's Those of My Blood, Elaine Bergstrom's Shattered Glass, and Melanie Tem's Desmodus are only a few examples of this richly diverse subgenre. In the '80s and '90s the new subgenre of vampire romance also flourished, exploring the naturally evolved vampire (as well as the more traditional undead type) in terms of the redemptive power of love. Different Blood surveys the literary vampire as alien from the mid-1800s to the 1990s, analyzing the many uses to which science fiction and fantasy authors have put this theme. Their works explore issues of species, race, ecological responsibility, gender, eroticism, xenophobia, parasitism, symbiosis, intimacy, and the bridging of differences. An extensive bibliography guides the reader to numerous novels and short stories on the "vampire as alien" theme, many of them still in print. --This text refers to an out

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Customer Reviews

"A penetrating survey of vampire fiction from the late nineteenth century almost to the present day."

-- —S. T. Joshi, *Weird Tales*"If you're intrigued by the idea of vampires as mutants or space aliens, this book provides a fascinating guide.." -- Jean Lorrah, author of award-winning vampire novel *Blood Will Tell* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Marked for life by reading DRACULA at the age of 12, Margaret L. Carter specializes in fantasy and the supernatural, especially vampires. A career Navy wife and the holder of a Ph.D. in English, she has produced several books and articles on the supernatural in literature, including DRACULA: THE VAMPIRE AND THE CRITICS, THE VAMPIRE IN LITERATURE: A CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY, and DIFFERENT BLOOD: THE VAMPIRE AS ALIEN. Her novels include SHADOW OF THE BEAST (werewolf), DARK CHANGELING (vampire), several vampire romances, and a horror novel, FROM THE DARK PLACES. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Endless plot summaries stripped of life and interest. Minimal critical analysis. No new ideas.

Compiled by a would be academic with too much free time.

Margaret L. Carter is one of the acknowledged authorities on the vampire in literature. This book is a

critical academic study of the literary treatment of vampires as an alien life form--as natural rather than supernatural beings. Throughout the 20th century, the vampire in literature has increasingly changed from the classic vampire exemplified by Count Dracula--the embodiment of evil and of Otherness--to the vampire as a natural and separate alien or human species. Carter explains that "The vampire as literal alien serves as a vehicle for exploration--and the containment--of metaphorical alienness." (p. 167) In other words, the vampire as alien allows an author a non-threatening way of looking at the human animal and its behavior. Perhaps this changing viewpoint illustrates the development of ourselves as a culture, because while to be different in the 19th century was to be separate and evil, in the 20th century being different is treated with empathy and, often, admiration. Much of the fiction mentioned in this book deals with attempts at communication across boundaries between species, a constant preoccupation of modern humans. The first chapter explores the vampire fiction of the 19th and early 20th centuries as a framework for later works, while the 2nd chapter looks at the pulp fiction of the mid-20th century. The remainder of the book studies the post-1970 explosion of vampire fiction. Carter discusses not only Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* (in which the aliens came seeking blood), and C. L. Moore's *Shambleau* (a psychic vampire), but also less familiar works, such as those of William Tenn, Colin Wilson, Suzy McKee Charnas, and Tanith Lee. This is a well-written and interesting book for a person interested in the development of the vampire genre. As far as I know, this is the first book-length treatment of the vampire as alien in literature, and, as such, it fills a gap in the critical literature. Having established her academic credentials with her dissertation "Spectre or delusion?: the supernatural in Gothic fiction. (Ph.D., UC-Irvine, 1987)" and her critical works, "Dracula: the vampire and the critics. (1988)" and "The vampire in literature: a critical bibliography. (1989)," Carter is also the author of several works of vampire fiction published through Amber Quill Press. The author includes a selective bibliography ("only fiction actually discussed in the text"). The author produces a comprehensive annual bibliographical update of vampire fiction every January--contact MLCVamp@aol.com for information. In spite of the popularity of vampire novels in science fiction today, there has been little analysis of this very specialized subgenre. Until I read this work, I never realized how systematic its development and growth has been over the last century. This is an excellent exploration of the topic for the reader who has an interest in the story behind the story, and is perfect for the reader who is new to literary analysis. -- Jean, Fallen Angel Reviews (courtesy of Fallen Angel Reviews)

Vampire fiction is much more than Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Anne Rice's *Chronicles*. Stoker focused on the supernatural evil of the vampire as personified by Count Dracula. Rice's undead

were linked to a king and queen of ancient Egypt. Many modern writers also give the vampire supernatural status, but there are other authors who depict the vampire as another species, an alien, and this is the focus of Margaret Carter's fascinating study. A great many authors and works are discussed. The following is a brief look at what can be found in Carter's work. In Jacqueline Lichtenberg's novel *Those of My Blood* the luren have lived on Earth for many generations but are extraterrestrial in origin. These vampires divide into two camps: Residents who respect humanity as a sentient race; and Tourists who consider humans as prey. There is a fascinating discourse on the equally fascinating novel *The Vampire Tapestry* by Suzy McKee Charnas. *Tapestry* is a classic, much read and discussed by aficionados of vampire literature. Dr Weyland, the primary character, passes for human, but he is not and never was. He is a pure predator. and he is one of a kind. Well known fantasy writer Tanith Lee wrote *Sabella*. The title character must come to terms with her alien vampiric self after years of believing herself to be human. Elaine Bergstrom has written a series about the Austras, a family of vampires who have resided on our planet for such a long time they consider Earth their home. I've listed only a few examples of a wide ranging, well researched discussion of the vampire as alien. The book, though academic in approach, will appeal to anyone interested in a readable analysis of literature.

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