

REPRESENTATIONS OF INTERCULTURAL IDENTITY IN SCREEN ADAPTATIONS: A COMPARATIVE CRITIQUE OF INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

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Abstract

This paper aimed to identify and discuss some aspects through which the issue of intercultural identity is reflected in film critique. The two forms analysed were film reviews and series reviews, as these two forms of cinematographic art differ in numerous ways, from the construction of the story and its length to narratological devices, thematic interests, and features of style and tone. These concepts were identified and further discussed in this research by establishing the reasearch on reviews extracted from various digital platforms and professional sites of cinematography critique, all exploring the particularities of two depictions of Anne Rice’s famous novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, these being the 1994 film, directed by Neil Jordan, starring Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise and Kirsten Dunst, in contrast to the longer adaptation created by AMC: the 2022 TV series, starring Jacob Anderson, Sam Reid, Bailey Bass and Delainey Hayles.

In line with our analysis, a large variety of differences was noted in the manner in which the evaluative and descriptive language adopted by critics assessed the value of those visual depictions of Rice’s novel. The comparative evaluation demonstrated the function of critique as a process of interpretation across contexts, especially when put aside issues of intercultural identity of various characters, focusing mainly on the appearance and the cultural heritage (between originality and blend) for Louis and Claudia. Therefore, the results demonstrated that by linking vampiric immortality with the unique experience of isolated and oppressed identities, the series reviews are capable of becoing a pair of lens through which Rice’s novel is reshaped into a reflection on cultural exchange, moral responsibility, ethical tension and the continuous quest for personal identity; themes and ideas briefly voiced in film reviews, in accordance to the structure of these two types of cinematographic depictions.

Key-words: *intercultural identity, cinematography, film reviews versus series reviews, thematic focus, features of language and style.*

Introduction

The language of cinematographic critique occupies a crucial intersection between visual aesthetics and analytical discourse, serving as a means through which critics articulate the formal and expressive dimensions of film and

television. The two different forms encompass various ways of expressing meaning and evaluating their features. Even though, at first, it was associated with cinema, cinematographic techniques are now central to television series, streaming content, advertisements, and even video games, due to their unique ability to combine real-life situations with fiction while offering a visual description of those situations.

Films use cinematography to condense complex stories into visual experiences, often within a limited runtime. Narrative depth is achieved through various choices in composition, lighting and perspective. Classic examples demonstrate how cinematography conveys symbolism, such as chiaroscuro lighting in *The Godfather* symbolising moral ambiguity or the selective use of colour in *Schindler's List* highlighting innocence and loss. Atmosphere creation is equally vital, from the neon futurism of *Blade Runner 2049* to the naturalistic light of *Roma*, where cinematography defines the film's world and emotional tone. Various films are constructed with different intentions behind their original composition, as colours, light, music and even silence convey messages and intentions hidden within moving pictures.

In contrast, television and streaming series allow for extended storytelling, where cinematography supports gradual character development and creates continuity across multiple episodes. Stylistic signatures are also important, as *Breaking Bad* uses recurring visual motifs, such as colour-coded costumes and desert landscapes, in order to reinforce its themes. In addition, cinematographers working in series must carefully balance visual cohesion with variations in pace, tone and style, to ensure that each episode maintains individuality while contributing to the overall arc. In this case, we have studied the manner in which the same topic, the inspiration offered by Anne Rice's famous novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, managed to represent the theme of intercultural identity in reviews created on two different cinematographic representations, those being the 1994 Neil Jordan film and the 2022 AMC TV series.

1. Artistic and aesthetic principles in cinematography

Despite differences in medium, all forms of cinematography share core artistic principles. Such principles included the setting, production design, lighting, costume and character visual representation, framing, overall composition, as well as plot, motifs, and symbols.

Mise-en-scène, for instance, offered meaningful data concerning everything placed before the camera and it consolidated its status as one of the most fundamental artistic principles in cinema. It is usually defined as a group of concepts encompassing settings, props, lighting, costumes, makeup, and the movement or positioning of actors within the frame, a manner of organising ideas, concepts, and even narrative episodes in visual representations. These elements work together to establish the visual identity of a film by using moving images and various sensory elements appealing to the public, in order to convey mood and atmosphere, while expressing various keys concerning the psychological development of characters or a number of related thematic ideas, without relying on dialogue. Thoughtful mise-en-scène usage of techniques allows filmmakers to

communicate to a large number of audiences the subtext and emotion of certain situations and plots through purely visual means.

Additionally, due to the fact that cinematography is defined as the art of capturing images in motion, it is also capable of shaping the perspective of various audiences and their manner of watching and interpreting the film's world. It involves choices related to framing, composition, camera movement, lens selection, depth of field, and colour, creating opportunities not only to control the elements the viewer focuses on, but also to evoke emotional responses. Such emotions depict intimacy through close-ups, highlight tension by means of canted angles or design grandeur with the help of wide shots. This principle plays a crucial role in visual storytelling by guiding the audience's gaze and shaping the film's aesthetic tone accordingly. Thus, we have used a few of those principles in order to shape and construct this analysis.

First, cinematography must serve the story, ensuring visuals align with narrative and theme. Second, it guides emotion by using composition, light, and rhythm to influence the viewers' feelings and emotional responses towards the artistic act. The last element is centred by the manner in which it builds atmosphere, being capable of immersing audiences in the world created by the director through the plot and story, finally being capable of communicating the meanings encompassed by the symbols, while transforming images into details extending beyond the literal sense or the stylistic explanations.

The study investigates the rhetorical and semiotic structures that underpin cinematographic analysis in critical reviews of *Interview with the Vampire* (Neil Jordan, 1994) and its 2022 serial adaptation (*Interview with the Vampire*, AMC), with particular attention to the manner in which intercultural identity is conveyed and further discussed by means of visual language. Therefore, the issue of characters' identity is described, interpreted and enhanced.

By examining a corpus of professional and academic reviews, this research aimed to uncover the techniques through which the language of art critique frames the role of cinematography in constructing mood, narrative tone and thematic resonance across two distinct audiovisual interpretations of Anne Rice's gothic novel, while the main focus of this analysis being the representation and the person insights of critics upon the depiction of intercultural identity of Characters in both the film and the series. Anchored in evaluative language and discourse analysis, this study further took into consideration the shifts in medium (classical cinema to TV series), and their reflection and impact in the historical context and technological aesthetics within these representations, in order to assess the value of both the cinematic practices and the language used to evaluate them.

2. Film versus series reviews. Function and usage

As mentioned, films and series are artistic forms of expression able to differ significantly in their personal usage of cinematography for conveying stories and the manner in which they transmit meaning. One of the most notable differences lies in duration and aim of the cinematographic form, as film is a continuous story, ending after a couple of hours, with a story intended only for

one view (not taking into consideration the prequels or the sequels created after the film, or even the remakes), while the series has a structure which is intended for an extended period of time, some of those streaming for years, as seen in the case of *Young and Restless* or *Grey's Anatomy*.

Consequently, a film has a limited runtime, usually between ninety minutes and three hours. Therefore, the director and the producers are forced to condense the story into striking and meaningful visuals that communicate quickly, sometimes with the price of excluding essential parts from the original story. Series, however, unfold across multiple episodes and seasons, allowing the characters and the plot more time to develop imagery gradually and reinforce themes over a more extended period of time, so that the story does not feel rushed or cut off abruptly. There may also be observed the existence of a form of extension applicable to films, as their story can be enlarged through different sequels and prequels: "This film is usually created when its first film gained a large audience. Almost the same as a sequel, a prequel also adapts the first film, but the story and its setting are set before the first film. These films are usually created because of the success of the first film. In fact, many sequels and prequels come from films based on adaptation. At the same time, a remake is a film that is reborn after long periods of time since experiencing success. In short, the films based on adaptations, sequels, prequels and remakes are motivated by their previous success stories" (Bahruddin & Yurisma, 2017: 939).

Another distinction is in character development. In films, character arcs must be established and resolved within a short period of time, due to time regulations; in contrast, in series, cinematography can evolve with the characters over time, using shifts in style, colour or framing to mirror gradual changes across episodes or seasons, in which characters and arcs can be successfully described and elongated, without being considered to rush the character's journey.

The rhythm of visual storytelling is an issue worth discussing, as it differs between the two and manages to create a space of distinction between the two entities. Films generally follow one continuous rhythm that builds toward a climax within a single viewing experience. Cinematography is carefully structured to deliver impact within that window. Series, by contrast, require each episode to have its own rhythm while also fitting into a larger arc. Cinematographers often vary tone and pacing slightly to keep audiences engaged across many hours of storytelling.

Differences also emerge in terms of stylistic continuity, in relation to the duration and the structure of the two forms. Films are usually created under the guidance of one director and cinematographer, resulting in a unified visual style. Series often involve multiple directors working on different episodes and the cinematographer's challenge is to maintain visual consistency while adapting to different creative inputs.

Finally, production demands and audience engagement also shape the form. Films generally have higher budgets per minute, which allows for elaborate camera work, lighting, and set design. Series operate under tighter schedules, demanding efficiency, though many prestige series now rival films in scale and spectacle. In terms of audience experience, films are designed for one immersive

sitting, so cinematography aims for maximum impact in a single encounter. Series, however, are structured for episodic or binge viewing, requiring cinematography that sustains immersion over time while rewarding attentive viewers with recurring visual motifs.

In short, films compress visual storytelling into a unified artistic whole, while series stretch cinematography across time, demanding consistency, patience, and evolving imagery that adapts to characters and narrative arcs.

In this respect, there are two definitions that take form when applying the theory of art critique to cinematographic forms, as follows:

(1) “Film talk came about at the same time as the invention. With the development of film media in various directions, the discussion about film has also developed after countless experiments, differentiation and integration. The development of film discourse can be compared with the development of other forms of art discourse” (Wang, 2023: 2).

(2) “Television shows can be studied as “texts” (Aber 1996; Burns and Thompson 1989). A TV show is an encoded text and can convey meaning for a specific purpose. Television sitcoms convey meaning that intends to entertain; TV news clips communicate meaning to inform; TV ads impart meaning to persuade” (Mirrlees & Kispal-Kovacs, 2012: 4).

Our analysis comprises the differences in style and linguistic choices in film and series detailing upon the same topic, in this case, the cinematographic depiction of *Interview with the Vampire*, novel written by Anne Rice.

Upon its release in 1994, *Interview with the Vampire*, directed by Neil Jordan and adapted from Anne Rice’s 1976 novel, achieved significant commercial and cultural success. The film captivated both audiences and critics with its lavish production design, atmospheric cinematography, and introspective portrayal of vampirism. Featuring a star-studded cast, including Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, and a breakout performance by Kirsten Dunst, the film drew widespread attention not only for its gothic aesthetics but also for its interpretation of the story within the vampire mythos. Grossing over \$220 million worldwide, the film demonstrated broad mainstream appeal while also securing a cult following among fans of gothic fiction and queer-coded narratives. Its popularity was further amplified by the controversies surrounding casting decisions and the adaptation’s fidelity to Rice’s novel, which fuelled media interest and public discourse. Over time, *Interview with the Vampire* has come to be regarded as a pivotal work in 1990s vampire cinema, noted for its blending of high production values with dark romanticism and psychological depth.

The 2022 television adaptation of *Interview with the Vampire*, produced by AMC, marked a significant resurgence of interest in Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles*, bringing the gothic narrative to a new generation of viewers through the medium of serialized storytelling. The series was met with critical acclaim upon its release, praised for its bold reinterpretation of the source material, richly stylized cinematography, and nuanced performances, particularly those of Jacob Anderson as Louis and Sam Reid as Lestat. Unlike the 1994 film, the series embraced more explicit representations of race, sexuality, and colonial history, aligning its thematic concerns with contemporary cultural discourses. This

progressive and character-driven approach resonated strongly with both long-time fans of the novel and new audiences, contributing to its popularity across streaming platforms and social media. The series also benefited from AMC's strategic investment in adapting the broader Rice literary universe, creating anticipation for expanded storytelling, leading to multiple paths of extension in the future, as the connection was made with other novels from the same universe created by Anne Rice. Its success not only reaffirmed the enduring appeal of the *Interview with the Vampire* narrative but also demonstrated the potential of long-form television to explore the psychological and aesthetic dimensions of gothic fiction with greater depth and complexity.

In terms of critique, the two parties expressed their opinions, revealing differences in the form of expression, choice of terms, and content related to societal norms and values. *Interview With the Vampire* (1994) is a lush, brooding, and provocatively stylised adaptation of Anne Rice's best-selling novel, directed by Neil Jordan. As the reviews reveal, it is a film that inspires both admiration and ambivalence, a gothic fever dream that swings between grandiose spectacle, philosophical musing, and controversial melodrama.

However, its first season is widely praised as a daring and soulful reimagining of Anne Rice's classic. It blends lush visuals, intense performances, and fresh thematic weight, particularly around race, queerness, power and grief. Critics celebrate its boldness, though their emphases vary: Dyer on emotional authenticity, Pobjie on sensory richness, and Frederick on sociocultural resonance.

The critical reception of the 1994 film *Interview with the Vampire* reflects the aesthetic and thematic values of its time: emotional introspection, gothic visuals and ambiguous intimacy. Its reviews are literary, dramatic, and abstract, often focused on mood and performance. The 2022 series, however, is received as a bold cultural reimagining, with critics responding with socially engaged, intellectually rigorous language that reflects the show's commitment to exploring race, queerness, and trauma through horror. Where the film rendered Anne Rice's narrative as a tragic romance of the soul, the series reframes it as a politically charged meditation on history, identity and power, one that compels both the characters and the audience to reconsider what stories are told and why.

3. Research methodology

This research adopts a qualitative, interpretive methodology to create a comprehensive analysis of film reviews across two different categories of cinema reviews (film and series). The core of this study is to explore how critics construct meaning, evaluate aesthetics, and negotiate cultural themes within these forms of cinematography through their reviews. Film critique, as both a creative and analytical form of writing, serves as a valuable entry point for understanding how genre conventions are reinforced, reimagined, and even subverted in the discourse surrounding cinema, particularly in film versus series reviews.

By examining critical perspectives drawn from established publications, online platforms and notable reviewers, this research seeks to locate and detail the common points identified between genre theory, cultural critique and rhetorical

expression in contemporary film commentary, with the focus being placed upon the differences in thematic focus and features of style of critics commenting and assessing the values of two different depictions of the same novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, by Anne Rice, namely the 1994 film, directed by Neil Jordan and the 2022 AMC TV series.

3.1. Research objectives

The overall aim of this research is to conduct a detailed qualitative analysis of film reviews and series reviews in order to explore the process in which critics construct meaning, express evaluation and negotiate cultural and aesthetic values through language concerning the building and assessment of intercultural identities of characters in the cinematographic pieces. By examining the thematic content, tone and interpretive strategies used in professional and widespread criticism, the study aims to identify the role of film reviews not only as pieces of vital assessment of cinematic quality, but also as reflections of broader cultural personalities and attitudes, genre conventions and constantly changing and evolving notions of artistic legitimacy.

The specific objectives are listed below:

O1: To examine the thematic and linguistic patterns in film critique across the two visual depictions of Rice's novel, in order to understand the critics' manner and style of interpretation and meaning construction around aesthetic, moral, and emotional elements in cinema.

O2: To analyse an extensive list comprising issues such as cultural context, genre conventions and critical perspective influencing elements including tone, interpretation and evaluative criteria in professional and popular film/series reviews.

O3: To explore the role of film critique as a form of cultural commentary, assessing reviewers' language, biases, and interpretive frameworks, aiming to reflect broader societal attitudes toward issues concerning identity, morality, desire, and artistic value within contemporary media culture.

3.2. Research questions

Building on the study's aim and objectives, this research is guided by a set of core questions. Since film reviews operate both as evaluative commentary and as cultural texts, they offer valuable insight into the ways language, ideology, and aesthetics intersect within the critical reception of cinema.

By engaging with reviews from established publications and digital platforms, this study seeks to understand the critics' manner of assessing films' artistic value and relevance in the contemporary society, but also how their linguistic choices, interpretive frameworks and cultural assumptions shape broader conversations detailing art, genre and meaning, all when discussing the manner in which intercultural identity is conveyed or depicted. The following research questions have therefore been formulated to guide the inquiry and to provide a structured focus for the analysis:

Q1: What is the process by which film critics interpret and represent key thematic concerns in the 1994 film and the 2022 TV series?

Q2: To what extent do form conventions (film and series) and cultural contexts influence the tone, style and evaluative language used by critics when reviewing films within the selected genres?

Q3: Does film criticism function as a form of cultural commentary, reflecting or challenging prevailing societal attitudes toward issues such as intercultural identity?

3.3. Hypothesis

The language and tone used by critics are expected to vary according to form conventions and sociocultural contexts, revealing implicit biases and value systems that influence interpretation and assessment when discussing and depicting intercultural identity.

3.4. Findings

We started the analysis with the film reviews. The 1994 film, directed by Neil Jordan and based on Anne Rice's 1976 novel, primarily explores themes of existential despair, moral ambiguity and emotional isolation within the context of the vampire mythos. Critics often focused on the film's portrayal of immortality as a curse rather than a gift, emphasizing Louis's (Brad Pitt) suffering and loss of purpose after being turned into a vampire. Though queerness is present in the source material, the film largely subdued its queer elements, choosing instead to depict Louis's and Lestat's (Tom Cruise) relationship as a codependent, ambiguous partnership rather than a romantic or explicitly erotic one. The emotional heart of the film is grief and guilt, with vampirism serving as a metaphor for emotional repression and the burden of memory. The film's themes are consistent with 1990s Gothic revival aesthetics, prioritising internal emotional landscapes and aesthetic melancholy over social critique.

In this respect, we have selected a number of reviews for the 1994 film, as we did for the 2022 series. For the film, the reviews will be compiled in the following table (**Table 1**):

No.	Review title/Name of the reviewer/Organisation	Date
1.	"Interview With the Vampire review – Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt's brilliant bloodsucking bromance" / Peter Bradshaw/ The Guardian (Top critic)	February 15 th , 2024
2.	"A Feast Of Rats, Blood And Wild Rice"/David Ansen/ Individual Review (Top critic)	October 18 th , 2008
3.	- / Marc Savlov/ Austin Chronicle (Top critic)	January 1 st , 2000
4.	- / Robert Ebert/ Chicago Sun-Times (Top critic)	January 1st, 2000

Table 1. *The reviews selected for the Interview with the Vampire 1994 film, extracted from various sites and magazines*

Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times* frames the film around the theme of existential sadness and erotic tension, portraying immortality as a burden rather than a thrill. He praises the homoerotic undertones in the relationship between Lestat and Louis and the tragic plight of Claudia, whose eternal childhood symbolises the loss of innocence and her impossibility of escaping this destiny. Ebert emphasises the emotional and philosophical aspects of vampirism over spectacle, noting that the film's unique glory lies in its psychological and aesthetic depth.

Therefore, we have organised the thematic approaches highlighted by each critic into the following table (**Table 2.**) as follows:

Review	The Main Thematic Focus	Features of Tone and Style
1. Peter Bradshaw/ The Guardian	<p>(1) <i>The difference between the old world and the new one, in the context of vampirism</i>: Louis is considered “a modern vampire ... a vampire of the American enlightenment”, contrasted with Armand's “Euro-vampirism” with its “abysmal cynicism and disillusion” (This idea frames Louis as culturally American—idealistic, democratic, moral, in contrast to the other category of vampires, the Paris vampires who embody European decadence and cynicism. The contrast constructs intercultural identity as a clash between Enlightenment ideals and Old-World fatalism).</p> <p>(2) <i>Slavery, colonial history and identity transformation</i>: Louis is introduced as “a former slave master and plantation owner in 18th century Louisiana” whom Lestat perhaps notices because of “the parasitism and spiritual death of slavery” (Louis's identity is rooted in his American colonial past, marked by racial violence, by his status as a plantation owner. His transformation into a vampire echoes the central theme of guilt,</p>	<p>(1) <i>Operational, exaggerated descriptions, creating an antithesis between the European grandeur and American cynicism</i>: The usage of syntagms such as “histrionic energy ... operatic pathos ... jaunty offensiveness” (The author uses a heightened, theatrical tone reminiscent of European melodrama when describing both Lestat and the Paris vampires. This particular technique subtly links style to cultural identity, creating a parallel between the European taste of excess and the American restraint attributed to the remains of virtue.</p> <p>(2) <i>Critical moral distance (American enlightenment tone)</i>: Louis is “full of democratic openness” and repelled by “abysmal cynicism” (The critic chose to adopt a reflective tone, detailing Louis's</p>

	<p>being accompanied by historical burden, and moral rebirth. These concepts remind of a culturally specific struggle different from European vampires, as colonialism was understood differently from one side to the other, the colonial power's side and the coloniser's side).</p> <p>(3) <i>The Paris vampire theatre as European cruelty and the merciless show</i>: A "secret theatre of cruelty ... patronised by the beau monde", in which vampires "pretend to be humans playing vampires" (This grotesque European performance tradition symbolises a particular cultural manifestation of decadence, which masks brutality beneath artifice and show. Louis, coming from American moral and historical consciousness, ultimately rejects it, thus, Louis reinforces his moral and cultural background, enhancing the topic of cultural difference).</p>	<p>moral seriousness. This particular concept aligns with the American Enlightenment identity attributed to Louis, contrasting sharply with the more decadent European characters both in the novel and the film).</p> <p>(3) <i>Gothic shock woven within modern sensibility</i>: There were observe syntagms such as "secret theatre of cruelty", "meta-vampire snuff horror", "which year was that ever OK for, again?" (The author chooses to mix elements extracted from the Gothic horror vocabulary (European tradition) with modern conversational critique (American contemporary tone), to emphasize intercultural dialogue within the narrative and review itself).</p>
2. David Ansen/ Individual Review	<p>(1) <i>Alienated hero moving through different cultures and eras</i>: Louis is described as "an alienated hero before his time ... dragging his suffering soul through all time" (Louis's identity forms across different historical and cultural moments over multiple centuries: 1750s in Louisiana, then 1870s in Paris, followed by 1990s San Francisco background. He becomes a figure culturally displaced, one who never finds his place, never fully belonging to any era or location, hence the cultural</p>	<p>(1) <i>Lush, decadent gothic description (European influence)</i>: "Splendid visions of elegant depravity" (This idea creates a sensual, heavily ornated "Old World" European aesthetic. It is capable of emphasizing the manner in which Louis enters a cultural space that is not his own and one he discovers without a proper consent, the one of European decadence).</p>

	<p>orphanage. His immortality forces him into constant cultural translation, embodying the tensions between American and European identities, in contrast to his modern ideology and understanding of the world.</p> <p>(2) <i>American sensitivity in contrast to European decadence:</i> Jordan finds “a style that unites 18th-century New Orleans, 1870s Paris and 1990s San Francisco”, creating “splendid visions of elegant depravity” (All settings have an impact upon Louis identity, as the critic observes. The American settings enhance his emotional struggle and moral introspection about values and choices, whereas the European settings, especially the capital of love, Paris, insist on a sophisticated image of decay and performance dramatically. The film takes another form, an intricate journey between American moral identity and European theatrical decadence. This contrast is embodied by the contrast Louis versus Armand).</p> <p>(3) <i>European performance culture vs American introspection:</i> The three main characters, namely Claudia, Louis and Lestat become a “family”, though she hates “her eternal entrapment in an undergrown body” (This “family” fractures conventional cultural roles, including the ones of a child, parent, lover and others, blurring identity boundaries and confusing characters whenever they are trying to understand their</p>	<p>(2) <i>Melancholic, philosophical tone:</i> “Tone of lugubrious regret”, “his vestigial humanity is at war with his ruthless vampirical nature” (A statement which reflects Louis’s introspective, American inspired style of moral self-examination. It also underlines the contrast with the other European characters who do not exhibit this moral melancholy and even regret from their decadence and hedonistic actions).</p> <p>(3) <i>Sensual, theatrical language (European show):</i> “Luxuriantly decadent vampire cosmology” (This particular description creates a baroque and theatrical depiction of being associated with European gothic traditions. It makes a contrast of European vampires with Louis’s simpler, more earnest American identity).</p>
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	functions in society and its micro groups).	
3.Marc Savlov/ Austin Chronicle	<p>(1) <i>Moral and immoral vampirism (a comparison between American conscience and European excess)</i>: Louis is “passionate, moral... who abhors killing”, while Lestat is “haughty, evil”, full of “feral pomposity and animal lust” (The film becomes a cultural negotiation between American moralism and European hedonism, as this particular concept is played out through their contrasting vampiric identities).</p> <p>(2) <i>Colonial Louisiana as a hybrid cultural landscape</i>: “Together, they travel around colonial Louisiana...” (The characters’ identities are shaped in a culturally hybrid landscape, reflecting the process of merging of European vampire traditions with the racial, colonial and spiritual complexities of early America, all observed in the blend of Lestat and Louis).</p> <p>(3) <i>Spirituality and homoeroticism as cross-cultural identity markers</i>: Rice’s book “dripped spirituality, decadent homoeroticism, and heady atmosphere”, which Jordan “thankfully keeps... in the fore” (The vampires’ identities maintain an enjoyable process of formations, one at the intersection of American spirituality and European sensual transgression, a process creating a culturally hybrid selfhood).</p>	<p>(1) Sensual, decadent description: “Draping tendrils of mist and fog across much of the action” and images of “a gutted New Orleans” (The European gothic aesthetic blends in -in the beginning- and after takes over the American setting, to produce a stylistic mixture reinforcing the characters’ fused identities).</p> <p>(2) <i>Irony and sardonic humour (specific to American self-awareness)</i>: “Oprah’s a wimp”, “I could scarcely give” (These ideas inject playful irreverence and ironic commentary, which are characteristic pieces of modern American critical discourse and general assessment).</p> <p>(3) <i>Exaggerated portrayal of Lestat</i>: Cruise shows “feral pomposity and animal lust” “sucking on severed arteries... with a grim, sardonic grin” (The author comments Lestat’s theatrical, exaggerated presence which stylistically marks him as culturally European, contrasting with Louis’s restrained American seriousness).</p>

<p>4. Robert Ebert/ Chicago Sun-Times</p>	<p>(1) <i>Vampirism as endless sadness across cultures:</i> “Although one of the characters ... eagerly awaits the doom of immortality, the movie never makes vampirism look like anything but an endless sadness” (The film presents vampirism as a shared experience across multiples cultures, being capable of highlighting the emotional and ethical continuity between the <i>Old World</i> and the <i>New World</i> vampires).</p> <p>(2) <i>Homoeroticism and sexualized seduction:</i> “The initial meeting between Louis and Lestat takes the form of a seduction; ... there is a strong element of homoeroticism in the way the neck is bared and the blood is engorged” (These statements define homoerotic and sexualized practices which connect European gothic environment with the more modern American sensibilities, technique which creates a hybrid identity for the characters).</p> <p>(3) <i>Child vampires and temporal dislocation:</i> “Claudia ... is disturbing, trapped in her child’s body as she ages, decade after decade” (In this respect, her existence makes it possible for the European gothic archetypes (the eternal child, the vampire society) and the American narrative of moral to be directly linked to emotional development, while it insists upon the hybrid identity formation between her former self and her undying nature, as</p>	<p>(1) <i>Moody, tragic tone:</i> “Both Rice and Jordan ... play it as tragedy” (Tragedy, as seen in almost every scenario, holds the ability to generalise the vampire experience across different cultural settings, as it creates empathy for characters from both European and American contexts).</p> <p>(2) <i>Lush, cinematic visual style:</i> “Combines the elegance of the former and the fantastic images of the latter into a vampire world of eerie beauty” (This description merges American settings (New Orleans) with European places (Paris catacombs), to visually represent the cross-cultural journey of the characters).</p> <p>(3) <i>Macabre imagination and gothic realism:</i> “Skilful exercise in macabre imagination ... more about the history and reality of vampirism than about specific events” (The blending of historical context (colonial Louisiana, Parisian vampire society) with Gothic horror reinforces the cultural hybridity of vampire identity, especially that one of both Louis and Claudia).</p>
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	well as the influences between the two worlds).	
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Table 2. *The approaches highlighted by each critic for Interview with the Vampire, the 1994 Neil Jordan film, detailing thematic focus and features of tone and style*

We have discovered that the language of film reviews of *Interview with the Vampire*, the 1994 film, directed by Neil Jordan, explores the topic of intercultural identity through the contrasting moral, cultural and aesthetic sensibilities of its central characters, especially the most troubled ones, namely Louis and Claudia, the ones constantly opposing to the European decadent and hedonistic style. Louis, on the one hand, embodies the American stream of moral consciousness, grappling with a wide range of feelings and their attendant hues, such as guilt, restraint, and ethical dilemmas, while Lestat, representing the image of the basic European vampire, embodies decadence, theatricality, and sensual excess. This tension is heightened by settings that cross boundaries of both time and place, starting with the colonial Louisiana, passing through the 19th century Paris and extending even after the contemporary San Francisco. This particular concept places the characters in culturally and historically layered spaces, a challenge also noted by critics. In addition, the child vampire Claudia further complicates her own identity and her "parents" too, as she is trapped between youth and centuries of experience, symbolising temporal and cultural dislocation in the unit of eternity. Other issues, such as the ones of homoeroticism, eroticised seduction and the vampire "family" unit create hybrid spaces, or dens, in which desire, power and morality meet various contexts, from both the Old and New World contexts. Stylistically, the film's lush, baroque visuals, moody, tragic tone, and sometimes automatic, darkly humorous performances reinforce these cultural contrasts; they blend Gothic European concepts of grandeur with American introspection. Therefore, by emphasizing atmosphere, historical texture, as well as the psychological weight of immortality over linear plot, the film creates a dramatic representation of vampirism as both a universal and culturally specific experience. In other words, it enhances the negotiation between European Gothic customs and American ethical modernity.

In contrast to the film, the relatively new TV series, created by AMC²³ have sparked major controversies and powerful reactions from both the audience and reviewers. The 2022 television adaptation of *Interview with the Vampire*, produced by AMC, marked a significant resurgence of interest in Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*²⁴, bringing the gothic narrative to a new generation of

²³ AMC is a U.S. cable and streaming television network known for producing high-quality, cinematic TV series.

²⁴ *The Vampire Chronicles* is the collective title of **Anne Rice's iconic series of gothic novels**, beginning with *Interview with the Vampire*, published in 1976. The series redefined the modern vampire myth by blending various elements at a first glance highly different from one to the other, including **horror, eroticism, philosophy and theology**, all into a sweeping saga about immortality, morality and human desire.

viewers through the medium of serialised²⁵ storytelling. The series was met with critical acclaim upon its release, praised for its bold reinterpretation of the source material, that is

Anne Rice’s famous novel that they embellished with new created features: richly stylised cinematography and nuanced performances, particularly those of Jacob Anderson as Louis de Pointe du Lac²⁶ and Sam Reid as Lestat de Lioncourt²⁷. Unlike the 1994 film, the series embraced more explicit representations of ”taboo”- considered issues, including race, sexuality, and colonial history, aligning its thematic concerns with contemporary cultural discourses, particularly in Louis’ and Lestat’s relationship and rapport. This progressive and unapologetic approach resonated strongly with both longtime fans of the novel and new audiences, contributing to its popularity across streaming platforms and social media worldwide.

The series also benefited from AMC’s strategic investment in adapting the broader Rice literary universe, creating anticipation for expanded storytelling. Its success not only reaffirmed the enduring appeal of the *Interview with the Vampire* narrative but also demonstrated the potential of television to explore the psychological and aesthetic dimensions of gothic fiction with greater depth and complexity.

Once again, we have selected four reviews from different sites and magazines and we have arranged them as follows (**Table 3.**):

No.	Review title/Name of the reviewer/Organisation	Date
1.	“Interview With The Vampire: Season 1 Review”/James Dyer/ Empire Magazine/(Top critic)	October 13 th , 2023
2.	“Interview with the Vampire, review: ruder, gorier, more modern – and far less fun than the film”/Ed Power/The Telegraph (Top critic)	October 12 th , 2023
3.	“A Lusty, Soul-Searching Adaptation of “Interview with the Vampire”” / Inko Kaang/ The New Yorker 100/ (Top critic)	October 31 st , 2022

²⁵ A TV series, short for ”television series”, is a narrative program made up of a sequence of episodes that are broadcast or streamed over time, usually following a continuing story, set of characters or central theme. In this respect, as cinematographic art can be considered a means of visual storytelling, series can also be considered a form of storytelling narrating different plots, only that they differ in length, elements, and approach.

²⁶ Louis de Pointe du Lac is a central character in Anne Rice’s *The Vampire Chronicles*, most prominently featured in *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), where he serves as both narrator and moral conscience of the story.

²⁷ Lestat de Lioncourt is one of the most iconic characters in Anne Rice’s *The Vampire Chronicles*, often regarded as Louis’ partner and creator; a flamboyant, charismatic and morally complex vampire who embodies both seduction and corruption.

4.	“AMC’s TV Version of ‘Interview with the Vampire’ Bests the 1994 Film”/ Kristen Lopez/IndieWire/ (Top critic)	October 3 rd , 2022
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Table 3. *The reviews selected for the Interview with the Vampire 2022 AMC TV series, extracted from various sites and magazines.*

We have observed that voices such as James Dyer emphasised the series’ fidelity to Anne Rice’s original vision while celebrating its modern updates. He highlights the show’s embrace of the queer romance, a taboo reference up until this moment, between Louis and Lestat, noting that previous adaptations, such as the 1994 film, wanted to enhance or to feature in their incursion. Dyer admires the series for artfully balancing respect for the source material with creative changes, particularly praising its intricate detail, lush visual rendering, and the interesting exploration of preternatural sexuality and love. Concerning the overall performance, the critic finds the cast exceptional, framing the series as a definitive, stylish retelling of Rice’s gothic tale that merges horror, passion and modern sensibilities with various cultural and racial elements.

Additionally, Ed Power frames the series as darker, gorier and more serious representation of the famous gothic novel, than the mild 1994 film directed by Neil Jordan. It is worth noting that the majority of the reviews and their speech and narrative are created by mirroring or referencing the plot and construction of the 1994 predecessor, the film. He appreciates its faithfulness to Rice’s novel and its explicit depiction of the homoerotic undertones, praising the courage to depict the fundamental nature of Lestat’s and Louis’ partnership, though he critiques it for losing some of the original’s playful absurdity, an element heavily exploited in the shorter version. Power observes that the series’s sense of gore and violence, as well as its arch sincerity, create a more intense, sometimes jarring tone for the audience to indulge in. His perception reveals that the star power is more subdued than in the film, even though the tone and the pitch are powerful and rigorously oriented to an organised chaos. Overall, he positions the adaptation as a faithful but less entertaining, more sombre rendition that prioritises horror and sexual frankness over the camp charm of its predecessor.

On the other hand, Inkoo Kang focuses on the series’ thematic depth, particularly its exploration of identity, isolation and marginalisation, especially for Louis’ and Claudia’s new appearances and identities in the series. This leads to a stark contrast between Lestat’s and Louis’ clashing worlds, creating even greater discrepancies between the two perspectives on immortality and life as an immortal. She emphasises the way vampirism serves as a metaphor for social and personal struggles, highlighting Louis’ journey from closeted gay man to immortal being confronting toxic relationships with others and with himself. Kang praises the performances, especially Jacob Anderson’s nuanced portrayal of Louis; she appreciates the show’s tonal range, balancing various contrasting elements: tragedy, eroticism and comic hues. Her perspective reinstates the series as a reflective, psychologically resonant adaptation, extending beyond Rice’s themes to modern social contexts, issues which were also discussed by other voices, such as Kirsten Lopez. She examines the series through the lens of

character dynamics and power relations, particularly the romantic and sexual relationship between Louis and Lestat. She notes the series’ modernisation and its bold presentation of queerness, which contrasts with the subtle coding in the 1994 film. Lopez highlights how the TV adaptation deepens Louis’ relationships, including his rapport and interactions with the journalist Daniel Molloy, portraying them as reciprocal and complex rather than merely narrative devices. She appreciates the show’s interrogation of power, consent and intimacy, insisting upon its focus on character development and evolution, as well as on the exploration of moral and emotional consequences.

Therefore, we have identified features of thematic discussion and analysis, as well as language and tone, which we have included in the following table (Table 4.).

Critic.	Main Thematic focus	Features/ Style/Tone
1.Jame s Dyer/ <i>Empire Magazine</i>	<p><i>The realisation of embracing its queer romantic core as part of the intercultural identity:</i></p> <p>(1) “Never precious about the source material” (The critic suggests that creative freedom, not strict textual fidelity, allows the series to honour Rice’s essence. Adaptation becomes an act of reinterpretation rather than reproduction as identity is viewed differently and embraced).</p> <p>(2) “Exquisite study of preternatural sexuality” (The phrase merges aesthetic beauty (“exquisite”) with intellectual inquiry (“study”), signalling the union of form and philosophy, while establishing eroticism as existential thought and this sort of sexuality is viewed as another layer for identity).</p> <p>(3) “Wear its queer heart (and guts, and gore) proudly” (The juxtaposition of “heart”, “guts” and “gore” fuses tenderness with carnality, celebrating the body as a site of both love and horror, a fact emblematic of Rice’s gothic ethos, bringing together the ideas of multiple cultural environments).</p>	<p><i>Celebratory and cinematic critical voice, blending wit, energy and erudition:</i></p> <p>(1)</p> <p>“Never precious about the source material’ (the usage of phrases such as “fresh new blood” coexist with “beautifully rendered adaptation” (This idea details the identity as a concept of mixing playfulness and sophistication to reflect the show’s blend of pop culture and art).</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>“Rings true</p>

		<p>with the author's original vision" (The usage of sentences which often build momentum through parallelism and crescendos, as well as by imitating visual pacing, giving the review an almost edited, filmic texture).</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>"Wear its queer heart (and guts, and gore) proudly" (A humoristic means of conveying messages ("wears its guts proudly") that disarms the reader, but the joke carries analytic weight and equates aesthetic excess with emotional honesty, as queerness is another layer in the discussion concerning the issue of identity).</p>
2.Ed Power/The Telegraph	<p><i>Fidelity opposing fun, the exploration of tension between authenticity and loss of camp theatricality:</i></p> <p>(1) "Homoerotic undertones get ramped up" (He acknowledges the new adaptation's</p>	<p><i>Sardonic, ironic and theatrical tone, denoting critique through</i></p>

	<p>deliberate queering of the narrative, but implies this explicitness lacks the subtle tension and theatricality of the film's innuendo).</p> <p>(2) "Between Christopher Lee's Dracula and Poirot" (A humorous hybrid metaphor concerning Sam Reid's performance as overly stylised and highly mannered, meaning that it may be characterised as too self-aware to evoke genuine menace or charm, due to his theatrical identity and nature).</p> <p>(3) "Faithful... and nowhere near as much fun" (A repetition of contrast which underlines a critical paradox, one occurring between aesthetic precision without emotional vitality, as the review suggests that adaptation can be too reverent for its own good).</p>	<p><i>wit and distance:</i></p> <p>(1) "Homoerotic undertones get ramped up" (In this particular example, the use of irony allows the critic to assess and to evaluate without overt hostility, as it signals sophistication, due to his critique being performative rather than dismissive).</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>"Between Dracula and Poirot" (These are references to classic performances of Christopher Lee and David Suchet, which invoke a pantheon of camp archetypes, placing the series within a tradition of excess and style).</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>"Faithful but not fun" (A manner in which the critic writes from above the text, refusing</p>
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		immersion; this aesthetic detachment embodies his manner of assessing the show's "arch sincerity").
3.Inko Kaang/ The New Yorker 100	<p><i>Vampirism is considered a metaphor for racialised and queer identity, is usually placed between freedom and constraint:</i></p> <p>(1) "To be a vampire is to be free" (The critic opens with this paradox, only to unravel it by showing that freedom from mortality brings new imprisonments: secrecy, loneliness, and eternal difference).</p> <p>(2) "Black business owner and closeted gay man" (A sort of manner of reframing grounds the supernatural in historical realism, translating Rice's themes of alienation into racial and social terms).</p> <p>(3) "Melancholy era of vampire entertainment" (A phrase positioning this series as part of a cultural turn from spectacle to sadness, a genre now introspective, mirroring collective fatigue and nostalgia).</p>	<p><i>Philosophical lyricism, rich metaphors and intellectual sensuality, all organised within the tone:</i></p> <p>(1) "To be a vampire is to be free" (A tone which balances abstraction and poetry; being accompanied by sentences that flow like meditations in order to fuse critical evaluative and descriptive discourse with creative writing, echoing the show's sensual intellect).</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>"Black business owner and closeted gay man"</p> <p>(Descriptions of "the burgundy velvet chaise longue of TV shows" layer tactile imagery with thematic</p>

		<p>suggestion constructing a synthesis of analysis and aesthetic pleasure).</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>“Melancholy era of vampire entertainment” (The opening claim “To be a vampire is to be free” has the central role of only subverting it, exemplifying dialectical style, conveying freedom entwined with confinement).</p>
4.Kristen Lopez/Indie Wire	<p><i>Modernisation of themes, done in comparison to the first depiction, the focus is placed on race, consent, and queer identity:</i></p> <p>(1) “Queer Black man... running a brothel” (A detail which transforms the story’s moral landscape as the vampire becomes both oppressor and oppressed, simultaneously marginalised and powerful).</p> <p>(2) “Propel the story into a more modern era” (Views considering adaptation as evolution and not preservation, as to emphasize ethical contemporaneity and emotional realism).</p> <p>(3) “Power dynamics and questionable consent” (The introduction of a critical lens of trauma and domination, which create a connection between erotic desire and coercive structures, functioning as an echo of <i>MeToo</i>-era discourse).</p>	<p><i>Analytical clarity mixed with accessible journalism, comprised within in a moral and critical framing:</i></p> <p>(1) “Queer Black man... running a brothel” (In this particular usage of paradox, the critic writes with approachable intelligence, which may be considered explanatory without simplification and equally inviting to a</p>

		<p>broader readership into a nuanced debate).</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>“Propel the story into a modern era”</p> <p>(The usage of terms and syntagms including “power dynamics”, “consent,” and “agency” indicates moral framing, as Lopez uses sociological vocabulary to transform genre analysis into cultural critique).</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>“Questionable consent” (In this construction, there are moments of informality meant to establish authenticity and immediacy, preventing academic detachment).</p>
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Table 4. *The approaches highlighted by each critic for the Interview with the Vampire, the 2022 AMC TV series, detailing thematic focus and features of tone and style*

Summing up, the reviews of the series have an obvious positive tone, in contrast to those of the plot and construction of the 1994 film. Most critics agree that the 2022 series is truer to Anne Rice’s original themes, especially its queer romance and psychological depth, whereas the 1994 film is remembered as

stylised and constrained by its era's limitations, particularly in its treatment of sexuality and race. Contrary to general opinion and expectations, once the themes presented as the author intended and accompanied by even more taboo elements (the race of a parts of characters), have managed to reestablish a channel of sharing feelings and feedback between the audience and the artistic crew. Therefore, Dyer (*Empire Magazine*) praises the series for fully acknowledging Rice's intent, embracing queer themes that the 1994 movie "coyly skirted". He sees the TV adaptation as a modern corrective, that is richer, more emotional and closer to the real nature of the film itself, to the spirit of the books.

Inkoo Kang (*The New Yorker*) believes the show surpasses Rice's and Jordan's earlier visions, using vampirism as a metaphor for identity and marginalisation in a way the film never achieved, while Kristen Lopez (*IndieWire*) argues the series improves upon the film by turning subtext into text, making the relationship between the two central vampires, Lestat and Louis, openly queer, emotionally complex, and ethically fraught.

Concerning the ideas of identity, roles change drastically. Intercultural gains another dimension, as queerness and the inclusion of various characters of colour (Louis and Claudia) expand the topic of discussion and the domain of analysis, adding questions and inquiries concerning the new context and its implications.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of the reviews for the 1994 film *Interview with the Vampire* and the 2022 AMC series adaptation reveals how each version reflects the cultural and artistic values of its time while interpreting Anne Rice's source material through distinct thematic, linguistic, and symbolic lenses. The 1994 film, with its emphasis on existential anguish, the moral weight of immortality and a stylistic fidelity to Gothic tradition, is reviewed as a visually rich yet emotionally restrained work. Critics focused on its atmospheric qualities, elegant language, and philosophical tone, often noting how its formal dialogue and symbolic use of blood underscored themes of inner torment and suppressed identity. However, it shied away from overt portrayals of queerness or racial difference.

Ultimately, the reception of both adaptations reflects their respective approaches to storytelling. The film is often seen as a product of its time: elegant, moody, and restrained, while the series is celebrated for its emotional complexity, inclusivity and thematic daring. Reviewers from both groups acknowledge the artistic merit of each adaptation, but their contrasting focuses, existential introspection versus sociopolitical engagement, showcase how *Interview with the Vampire* has evolved from a singular Gothic tale into a multifaceted narrative framework that continues to invite fresh interpretation.

Conclusions

In line with our findings, within academic and artistic inquiry, critique emerges as an essential discipline dedicated to examining, interpreting and evaluating works of art beyond their immediate appeal. It also functions as a form of aesthetic judgment, providing creators, scholars, and audiences with conceptual and methodological tools to understand art as a cultural, psychological, and

sociological phenomenon across different contexts and circumstances. In this sense, the language of art critique extends far beyond opinion, as it primarily serves to enhance meaning, that is, to reveal aesthetic forms mirroring the values, anxieties, and aspirations of their time.

We have organised and discussed various elements of cinematography and after understanding their role and functions within the language of film critique. The comparative reception of *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) and its 2022 AMC series adaptation clearly demonstrates this function of critique as interpretation across contexts. Reviews of the recent series reveal a markedly more positive and inclusive tone than those of Neil Jordan's 1994 film. Most critics regard the newer adaptation as truer to Anne Rice's original intent, particularly in its exploration of queer romance, race and psychological complexity. James Dyer from *Empire Magazine* praises the show for "fully acknowledging Rice's intent", embracing themes the earlier film "coily skirted". Inkoo Kang, from *The New Yorker* also interprets the series as a more layered metaphor for identity and marginalisation, while Kristen Lopez (*IndieWire*) highlights its success in transforming subtext into text, as making the central relationship between Louis and Lestat openly queer, emotionally intricate and ethically ambiguous.

As for the topic of identity, the evaluative and descriptive language used by cinematographic art critique uses the contrasting European and American vampiric identities to explore themes of cultural and moral divergence. Louis's American sensibility, which is grounded in ethical introspection, various democratic ideals and emotional depth, stands in stark opposition to the sophisticated, cynical and performatively cruel nature and attitude of Paris vampires, the group from which Lestat split. The lush and highly detailed depiction of the Parisian theatre, alongside its grotesque rituals, emphasizes the extravagance and decadence of a world engulfed in tradition and decadent practices, a fact that further enhances Louis's cultural and moral alienation. By using this process of interplay, the film puts into a specific light the intercultural collision, portraying vampirism not merely as a supernatural condition but as a lens through which historical, ethical and aesthetic differences between the two realms (old and new) are vividly examined. Ultimately, Louis's resistance to European cruelty underscores the narrative's meditation on identity, morality, and the ethical consequences of cultural inheritance.

In contrast, the AMC TV series *Interview with the Vampire* established the theme of intercultural identity by reimagining Louis as an African-American, queer man, lost as he navigates the increasingly intense pressures of race, sexuality, and historical context. Critics note that this version situates him in early 20th century New Orleans, a culturally complex space, in which European traditions of vampirism collide with American social realities, including systemic oppression against people of colour and its adjacent social implications. His relationships, particularly the one with Lestat and with the vampires of Paris highlight power dynamics that are at once erotic, emotional and symbolic. These interactions are, in the critics' opinion, reflections and embodiments of the tension between European decadence and American ethical consciousness of that time,

enlarging upon the contrast between pleasure and abstinence. The series' visuals, rich historical detail and emotionally grounded tone were also praised, as they are believed to reflect various cultural contrasts.

Lastly, by intertwining vampiric immortality with the lived experience of isolated and oppressed people's identities, the show is considered a gateway through which Rice's novel's narrative is transformed into a meditation on intercultural negotiation, moral agency and ethics, as well as the ongoing search for one's individual identity.

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