

How the Vampire in a Volvo Ran Over the Prince on a White Horse: The "Twilight Saga" and its Influence on the Phenomenon of Vampires

Eva Strýčková

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doc. Ing. Anežka Lengalová, Ph.D.
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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce zkoumá fenomén novodobého upíra v literárním a historickém kontextu. Nastiňuje původ a postupný vývoj této literární postavy a analyzuje současný upíří žánr prostřednictvím Stephenie Meyerové a jejího neobvyklého pojetí upírů v bestselleru *Stmívání*. Tato práce také pojednává o vlivu *Stmívání* na současnou společnost, zvláště pak na mladé dívky a ženy.

Klíčová slova:

Legendy, Dracula, Edward Cullen, Stephenie Meyer, Stmívání, romance, dospívající dívky, sexualita, krvežíznivost, reklamy, fan fikce, kritika, genderové role, psychopatický upír

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the phenomenon of modern vampire in the literary and historical context. It outlines the origins and gradual development of this literary figure and also analyzes the vampire genre of nowadays through Stephenie Meyer's unusual vampire conception in the bestseller called *Twilight*. This work also discusses the influence of *Twilight* on the current society, particularly young girls and women.

Keywords:

Legends, Dracula, Edward Cullen, Stephenie Meyer, Twilight, romance, adolescent girls, sexuality, bloodlust, commercials, fan fiction, criticism, gender roles, psychopathic vampire

[Zadejte text.]

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INTRODUCTION

“Throughout the whole vast shadowy world of ghosts and demons there is no figure so terrible, no figure so dreaded and abhorred as the vampire, who is himself neither ghost nor demon, but yet who partakes the dark natures and possesses the mysterious and terrible qualities of both.”¹

Montague Summers (1928, British author)

“He’s vampire. He’s like perfect guy“²

Lexi (2010, Twilight fan)

Vampire, as an embodiment of mystery, danger and darkness, has both fascinated and terrified people around the world from the ancient times. Montague Summers and the world of his days represent the vampire as a creature undeniably associated with evil and dark desires inspiring the fear and timidity in people. However, present-day vampire is riding an enormous wave of popularity. He is sexualized and adored icon, and the vampire genre has become one of the most successful segments in the publishing industry.

There were published about 60 vampire novels and series in the last decade of the twentieth century. In ten years since then, over 175 vampire books have been published, and these numbers are still increasing.³ Most of these titles and series are directed to teenagers and young adults so it can be assumed that young people are the driving force behind this huge success. This phenomenon gave me food for thought, so I started to ask myself: What makes this quite obsolete figure so popular for young people of the technological twenty-first century? Is it possible to endure for a thousand years without any change or is it necessary to change completely to fit new times? What is behind this vampire boom? Thus, the aim of my thesis is to discuss vampire romance called the Twilight Saga, which seems to be the main representative of the contemporary vampire genre, and to analyze Twilight phenomenon in the context of our culture.

I chose this topic because everything related to the vampires has fascinated me since my childhood, and my bookshelves are overcrowded by fanged heroes! Naturally, I could

¹ Montague Summers, *The vampire: his kith and kin*. (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 1

² Joyce Ann Mercer, *Vampires, Desire, Girls and God: Twilight and the Spiritualities of Adolescent Girls*, 2010, 265

³ Joni Richards Bodart, *They Suck, They Bite, They Eat, They Kill: The Psychological Meaning of Supernatural Monsters in Young Adult Fiction*, (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 28

not ignore Stephenie Meyer's unusual story dealing with human girl, Bella, who fell in love with sparkling vampire Edward.

The first chapter of my thesis explores brief historical review of vampire myths and stories throughout the centuries. It is important to establish a definition of original vampire conception to recognize how the contemporary vampires have been changed. The next part of my work compares the abilities of Meyer's vampires with their predecessors to demonstrate the most significant differences coming with the Twilight Saga whereas the last chapter examines the influence of the Twilight phenomenon on the contemporary society, (especially girls and women), since fear of the vampires has changed to desire for them, as it could be metaphorically demonstrated by quotes above. I also point at frequently criticised themes in relation with the Twilight Saga such as gender roles, race or Edward's psychopathic behaviour. Eventually, I would like to discuss what it might be that makes people so fiercely attached to the world of the Twilight Saga because it seems that Bella is not the only one who fell in love with the vampire.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The first myths about vampires around the world

Contrary to the popular believes that the first vampire stories appeared simultaneously with Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, almost every culture has own myths and legends originated in the distant past. That is probably the main reason, why it is difficult to come up with some universal description of a vampire and his characteristic features because by no means do all vampires conform to one definition. Some of them are traditional revived corpses; others are demons or bloodthirsty spirits of cursed people, and also a lot of sorrowful women are affected by vampirism after some tragic circumstances in their life.

One of the oldest myths about vampire-like creatures was found in Babylon and Assyria. The mythological poem about seven evil spirits/demons, quoted by British archaeologist R. Campbell Thompson, can be regarded as the first and closest equivalent of the vampires.⁴ "Demons that have no shame, Seven are they! They spill their [mankind] blood like rain. Devouring their flesh...sucking their veins. They are demons full of violence, ceaselessly devouring blood."⁵

Analyzing this poem, it points to a vampire due to the phrases like "sucking veins" or "devouring blood" which supposedly represents a predecessor of vampires. However, it should be known, that it is not the only myth in ancient Babylon concerning vampire beings. Another legend, approximately 4000 years old, tells of vampire goddess Lamashtu. Sucking blood of aborted fetus and newborns, she was known as a remorseless baby-killer; however, she sucked adult men as well. In late period Babylon and Assyria, female vampire Lilitu appeared for a first time. She was a beautiful girl with wings of owl so she could fly and catch children to feed off their blood.⁶ Malaysia had a similar vampire called Langsuyar. It is said that Langsuyar was a beautiful woman who bore a stillborn child. Angry and desperate woman changed to flying vampire who kept close to any pregnant woman to suck baby's blood and kill his/her mother. Any woman or child who died during childbirth could become a vampire as well. To prevent this change, people placed eggs

⁴ John Gordon Melton. *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead*, (Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press, 1999) 27

⁵ Ibid,

⁶ Diane Bailey, *Vampires in Mythology*, (New York: Rosen Central, 2012), 18

under dead woman's arms, a glass bead or ash in her mouth and needles in her palms. It was believed that she cannot fly due to eggs in armpits, and cannot suck the blood with the glass bead in her mouth. The needles in the palms preclude her snatching any human. Baby's body was protected in the same way.⁷

It can be assumed that these myths were used to explain any complications associated with childbirth. Due to the low level of medical care, both childbirth and death were surrounded by unknown mysteries. Thus, myths seemed to be the only way to deal with any complications. Another interesting point is that female vampires were obviously older and more frequent in the history than their male colleagues.

The legends of vampires, especially the female ones with the special ability to fly, also took its place in ancient Greece. However, it should be said that their purpose was rather to frighten disobedient children than explain sudden death. It was just a tale. Greek legend told of a woman-beast called Lamiai. At the beginning, she was a beautiful woman loved by Zeus. One day, her children were stolen by jealous Hera, but Lamiai could not defeat her to get children back. So, she hid in a cave and killed children of others, which led to her change to bloodsucking beast.⁸ In the Roman Empire, the myth spoke of a vampire witch called Strix who sucked the blood of infants. She was similar to owl, so there is clear link to a Babylonian Lilitu, and it could be claimed that a lot of myths are probably based on common basis.

Back to the Roman female vampires, they were described in details by Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso in the first century A.D. "They fly by night and look for children without nurses, snatch them from their cradles and defile their bodies. They are said to lacerate the entrails of infants with their beaks, and they have their throats full of the blood they have drunk."⁹ To avoid Strix, there was a special ritual. People had to sprinkle entrance with water containing special drugs to repel Strix. Then, holding two-month old pig entrails in their hands it is necessary to say magic incantation, and end this ritual by hanging the special plants in the window.¹⁰ As can be seen, the first myths were mostly

⁷ Theresa Bane, *Encyclopedia of Vampire Mythology*, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co.,Pub, 2010), 100, Melton, *The encyclopedia of the undead*, 407

⁸ Melton, *The encyclopedia of the undead*, 304

⁹ Barbara Karg, Arjean Spaite, and Rick Sutherland, *The Everything Vampire Book*, (Avon, Mass: Adams Media, 2009), 10

¹⁰ Melton, *The Encyclopedia of the undead*, 581

associated with females and dead children. Besides the fact, that child of male sex could become a vampire; there is no evidence of any male vampire, although they are extremely popular nowadays.

1.2 The folktales and a traditional vampire image

The first records about what the Western world understands as a vampire came primarily from Russia in 1047 when the term upir was created and soon followed by Ukrainian upirbi, Serbo-Croatian upirina, Czech and Slovak upír, Polish upiór or Bulgarian vampire.¹¹ Different cultures have also a different view on a vampire as well as his transformation or abilities. There were a lot of ways how one could become a vampire. Traditionally, vampirism was a result of illnesses, deviations and problems with childbirth, but anyone who accidentally died or was killed could become a vampire too. Vampirism was also a result of a suicide, attack by another vampire and wrong religious ritual necessary for burial. Next “candidate” was a person who was born as the seventh child of the same sex in one family, or person who had died as the first during some unknown epidemic disease. Last but not least “alleged vampires” were dead women considered to be witches or even corpse over whom a cat jumped. Once a dead person was suspected of vampirism, his corpse was dig out from a grave and examined. It was believed that vampire’s hair and nails are still growing, and the corpse lacks any visual signs of decay or had blood around the mouth and other body openings.¹²

The alleged vampire had to be destroyed with wooden or iron stake. The stake was followed by decapitation and pushing garlic to the mouth of the corpse. Any vampire could be also killed by firing a bullet into his coffin and catholic traditions were integrated to this procedure as well because it was believed, that holy water and cross saved the human soul of any vampire being who was said to have two souls. Own soul and the demon one. By killing the demon soul, the human soul was free and could rest in peace. In some instances the burning of the alleged vampire occurred.¹³ It was less traditional method, but its records have preserved to the modern times, and Stephenie Meyer herself used the fire as the only way to kill her vampires.

¹¹ Melton, *The Encyclopedia of the undead* , 626

¹² Jan Louis Perkowski, *The Darkling: A Treatise on Slavic Vampirism*. Columbus, (Ohio, USA: Slavica, 1989), 174

¹³ Ibid, 193

1.3 Vampire hysteria throughout the centuries

For thousands of years, vampires were believed to be real, so a mass hysteria, the digging of the graves and huge numbers of reports about the vampires terrorising villages were common place, especially in South-eastern Europe. French enlightenment writer and philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778) depicts this vampire phenomenon in his *Philosophical dictionary*:

These vampires were corpses, who went out of their graves at night to suck the blood of the living, either at their throats or stomachs, after which they returned to their cemeteries. . .The sucking corpses grew fat, got rosy, and enjoyed an excellent appetite. It was in Poland, Hungary, Silesia, Moravia, Austria and Lorraine, that the dead made this good cheer.¹⁴

The hysteria usually appeared during epidemics such as plague because it was easier to blame the vampires than find the rational cause of anyone's death. One of the oldest cases of vampire hunting appeared in 1336 on the territory of the present day Czech Republic. It is said that there was dead shepherd Myslata who terrorized small village Blov. Myslata sucked blood of villagers, and the villagers were dying in rows, so the rest of villagers uncovered his grave. Myslata's corpse roared and tried to attack them, but he was defeated, staked and eventually burned. The similar case of vampirism occurred in town Levín in 1344 but it was woman called Brodka who sucked villagers of Levín and danced on their graves. No stake could destroy her, so the villager burned her body and then all problems disappeared.¹⁵ Probably the most famous hysteria is dated to 1725-1732 because the vampire epidemics began to filter out of the Eastern Europe. The term "vampire" entered English language (1734) and this evil figure became a subject of serious academic debates. The main problem associated with vampire hysteria was Christian's disagreement with mutilation and burning of bodies. On the other hand, a vampire occurrence was not negligible. This mutilation was the subject of discussion in one village of Austrian Serbia where a lot of people died of unexplained reasons. Angry villagers wanted to destroy body of recently died Peter Plogojowitz because his death triggered a wave of dying. A priest of

¹⁴ Francois-Marie Arouet Voltaire, *A Philosophical Dictionary: From the French of M. de Voltaire with Additional Notes, Both Critical and Argumentative, Part 2*, (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 371-72

¹⁵ Summers, *The Vampire in Europe*, 329, Rosemary Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Vampires, Werewolves, and Other Monsters*, (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2005), 211

this village refused to destroy Peter without permission of Roman Catholic bishop. However, bishop himself was not sure about the intention of the villagers as well, so he turned to Rome. There was published, (after a few years of studying the vampire phenomenon) that vampire existence is caused by the hallucinations of dying people. Thus, the pastoral attention should be focused on these people instead of dead bodies which should be left in their graves without any intervention. The priest of the village acted according the advice and the villagers stopped hunting.¹⁶ Evidently, the vampire was still used to explain all unknown phenomena of this time. It can be assumed that vampire hysteria were mostly developed because of people's inability to understand the concepts such as epidemic, mental illnesses, infection or premature burial which could easily convince people about the existence of vampires.

1.4 Historical, psychological and medical perspectives on vampires

Vampires were examined not only throughout the myths but also throughout different academic areas. In the historical context, there could be find lot of abnormally "bloodthirsty" historical figures who are subjects of many conspiratorial theories. One of them is Vlad III also called Dracula or the Impaler, ruler of Wallachia (1431-1476?). The name Dracula was created from name of his father Dracul which means dragon or devil and letter "a" has a possessive function. Thus, Dracula actually means a son of Dracul. The Impaler was Vlad's nickname because of his brutal manner to impale his enemies and vassals in various cruel ways. He supposedly killed around 40 000 people. No wonder that a lot of people regarded him more as a demon than ordinary human being.¹⁷

The second historical figure is Hungarian countess Elizabeth Bathory (1560-1614). Many rumours and tales follow her name. The most popular one concerns to her baths in virgins' blood to retain youth and beauty. This rumour is probably based on her preference to tortured young girls while they were naked. In addition, due to this rumour; she was often called Blood Countess. She was born to a prominent and powerful family which preferred intermarriage scheme to maintain a power and noble origin. Due to these marriages, a large number of descendents including Elizabeth suffered from psychopathic behaviour. Elizabeth Bathory definitely was not a vampire, but she delighted in the sadistic torture of

¹⁶ Melton, *The Encyclopedia of the undead*, 119

her servants. However, she was punished for her crimes in 1611 and sentenced to life imprisonment in one room of her castle where she remained until her death.¹⁸

From a psychological perspective, vampires were often the subjects of researches. The most famous one is Freudian psychoanalysis in which he says that the main purpose of vampire stories is the reflection of sexuality and sexual and aggressive human's wishes like sadistic acting, necrophilia or longings are reflected in vampirism. Another study declares that lot of psychopaths labelled themselves as vampires due to a desire for blood which is actually hematomania - mental illness defined by psychologists as a sexual pleasure caused by consumption or playing with blood.¹⁹ Next phenomenon standing behind vampire legends is called porphyria. From medical aspect, the porphyria is variety of health problems including pain in different parts of body, blisters, cramping, swelling, photosensitivity (sensitivity of skin to sunlight), hypertrichosis, mental changes, liver diseases, neurological problems, anaemia, blindness or another eye defects, dental problems - red coloured or different shaped.²⁰

Obviously, people with porphyria could be easily considered the vampires, especially because of their photosensitivity and strange appearance easily confused with description of a folktale vampire. To sum up, each of these perspectives contributed significantly to understanding of the vampire phenomenon throughout the ages and helped to determine the circumstances which could lead to the origins of the vampire phenomenon. In addition, it can be argued that sexual desires, deviations and mental illnesses might be reasons why vampire legends have never disappeared from a culture.

1.5 Vampires in the literary world

Leaving folktales behind, a huge number of stories were written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although many people are convinced that it was Bram Stoker's Dracula who, as the first, set the image of vampire, there were a lot of earlier authors. One of the first is John Polidori and his story about the aristocratic Lord Ruthven travelling with

¹⁷ Melton, *The Encyclopedia of the undead*, 762

¹⁸ Sunand T. Joshi, *Encyclopedia of the Vampire The Living Dead in Myth, Legend, and Popular Culture*, (Calif: Greenwood, 2011), 6

¹⁹ Melton, *The encyclopedia of the undead*, 147, *ibid* 549

²⁰ Shiela Sherlock and James Dooley, *Diseases of the Liver and Biliary System*, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 450-51

naive young man Aubrey. Ruthven was a bloodthirsty vampire and eventually he killed Aubrey's girlfriend and even Aubrey's sister. Aubrey went mad and died when he realized that Ruthven was the vampire and Aubrey had unintentionally saved him, which led to his girlfriend's and sister's death. It was Ruthven who killed them and then disappeared forever. Although it is said that Polidori was inspired by Byron's poem *Giaour* (1813), where was included vampire idea, *Lord Ruthven* is considered to be the first of modern vampire fiction. In 1840s, Polidori was followed by J.M. Rymer and his *Varney the Vampyre* or French novelist and poet Théophile Gautier and his *La Morte Amoureuse/Dead lover* (1836) telling of young priest falling in love with a female vampire called Clarimonda. She sucked his blood and made him weaker and weaker, but they loved each other till another priest convinced him to kill Clarimonda. E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Cyprian's tale* had quite similar concept. Man fell in love with a cute girl, but after marriage he realised that she is a vampire. Next and probably the most famous story of this period is *Carmilla*, written by Sheridan La Fanu in 1872. The story deals with vampire girl sucking blood of other young girls. Most of them died. The story has a lot of erotic signs and lesbian theme which is little bit unusual and shocking for the period of Fanu's life. Close the end of the nineteenth century (1897), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* appeared. *Dracula* is set up on more types of vampire stories, because Bram Stoker utilized Slavic folktales, the legends of Vlad the Impaler and a huge number of literary sources including Polidori's *Lord Ruthven*. Despite of the fact that *Dracula* is not the first literary vampire in the nineteenth century, he is definitely the most famous one and he definitely initiated the popular era of this genre.

Literary vampire characters in the last three decades of the twentieth century were slightly changed because most of the authors tried to create own vampire image completely different from others, completely unique.²¹ The society was tired of universal vampire model persisting from Stoker's times, so new type was created. The main representative of these times is Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* followed by the whole saga called *Vampire Chronicles*. She depicted vampires as charming and misunderstood cosmopolitan citizens who try to fit new times and technology but their dark desires do not allowed them to do so. The *Interview with the vampire*, first published in 1976, is written as a story

within a story dealing with a journalist and two-hundred-year-old vampire Louis de Pointe du Lac talking about his human life in colonial Louisiana as well as his vampire life with easy-going vampire Lestat and vampire child called Claudia.

The end of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century are characteristic by strong fascination with a vampire fiction likely caused by major shift in the vampire genre. The vampire was traditionally associated with horror and gothic stories full of the vampire hunters, whereas nowadays, it is rather a romance with very similar scenario - vampire who fell in love with human girl. That is the case of the *Southern Vampire Mysteries* of Charlaine Harris, *Vampire Kisses* of E. Schreiber, *Insatiable* series of Meg Cabot, L.J.Smith's *Vampire Diaries* or namely S. Meyer's the *Twilight Saga*, where abnormally romantic attractive and charming vampire bravely fights to protect his human girlfriend against rest of the bloodthirsty world while his girl considers whether or not have sex with him and whether or not become a vampire too. The main theme is love, not fight. From this perspective, the vampire genre of the twenty-first century can be regarded as a feminine. It is reasonable because, as Marc Collins Jenkins said, "vampires have never appeared more sensitive or romantic. They have never been more heroic. And they have never been portrayed more sympathetically."²²

²¹ Bodart, *They Suck, They Bite, They Eat, They Kill: The Psychological Meaning of Supernatural Monsters in Young Adult Fiction*, 13-15

²² Mark Jenkins, *Vampire Forensics: Uncovering the Origins of an Enduring Legend*, (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2010), 1

2 STEPHENIE MEYER AND STORY BEHIND THE TWILIGHT SAGA

Stephenie Meyer (maiden Morgan) was born on 24th December, 1973 to Stephen and Candy Morgan in Hartford, Connecticut. Her parents belonged to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and strictly taught children to obey rules and beliefs of this Church. In 1977, family relocated to the Phoenix in Arizona where she spent the rest of her childhood and teenage years. She was second of six Morgan's children including older sister Emily and younger siblings Heidi, Jacob, Seth and Paul. Stephenie Meyer attended Chaparral High School, but she often felt isolated because was not part of any popular group at school and lot of attending kids did not share her hobbies. Instead of the cheerleading, dancing and parties, she loved books such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* or *Anne of Green Gables*. She also looked different than her tanned schoolmates. Her skin was very fair, despite the hot Arizona sun.²³

The reader may notice that Meyer's youth is quite similar to the youth of *Twilight* heroine Bella who spent childhood and most of her teenage years in Phoenix as well. Bella felt and differed from the rest of her classmates. "I'd never fit in anywhere. I should be tan, sporty blond – a volleyball player or a cheerleader. . . Instead, I was ivory-skinned despite the constant sunshine. I did not relate well to people of my age, period."²⁴

Stephenie Meyer also embedded the real names of her siblings into the *Twilight* novels. Emily, Jacob, Seth and Paul belong to the group of werewolves of Quillet tribe, Heidi is a name of one evil Italian vampire. It can be also assumed that Stephenie Meyer was inspired by her favourite books, and this is why she chose the female narrator. Obviously, *Twilight* hides more from personality of author than it seems at the first glance. In 1991, Stephenie Meyer started to attend Brigham Young University in Utah. As a creative person with a lot of imagination, she tried to write some short stories, but she lost most of them. In 1994 she married Christian Meyer whom she met during church activities, and one year later, she graduated with a degree in English. Afterwards, young couple moved back to Phoenix in Arizona. Her husband took job as an accountant, and she

²³ Katherine E. Krohn, *Stephenie Meyer: Dreaming of Twilight*, (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2011), 11,12,16,19

²⁴ Stephenie Meyer. *Twilight*. 2005, (London: Atom, 2010), 9

worked as a receptionist. After the first child in 1997, she stayed at home and in subsequent years gave birth to two more children.²⁵

Stephenie Meyer's life changed during a night on June 2 in 2003. She had a vivid dream of an unusual young couple laying on the meadow. The girl was completely ordinary, but her boyfriend was a beautiful vampire. They loved each other, but he tried to restrain both his desires - love as well as strong lust for girl's blood. This strange dream about true love, dark passion and mortal danger was too extraordinary to forget. As Stephenie Meyer claims "I was so intrigued when I woke up. I just sat there and thought: So how does that end? Does he kill her?"²⁶ Therefore, she decided to note this dream down. It was just for herself, not for fame or a publication. She was simply fascinated by that scene. As any keen reader; she wanted to find out what would be the vampire's choice - love or lust? Thus, she continued in the story where her dream had left off. Background of the story was for later. She wrote each day and even lost some friend due to her fascination by a romance between human girl and beautiful vampire. After six month, she realised that her writing is long enough to be considered for book, and her relatives convinced her to publish it.²⁷

The dream became truth in 2005. Supernatural romance was immediately catapulted to the bestseller list of New York Times, Best Book of Decade, Top Ten Books for Reluctant Reader, Publisher Weekly's Best Book of the year and many others. Concurrently, Stephenie Meyer was chosen as one of the most promising new authors of 2005 and the *Twilight Saga* became the phenomenon.²⁸ In 2006, a second sequel of *Twilight* called *New Moon* appeared, followed by highly anticipated *Eclipse* in 2007. Next year, Stephenie Meyer made a short break from all vampires and wrote the sci-fi romance called *The Host* which became the bestseller with motto: "The science fiction for people who do not like science fiction."²⁹ Obviously, Meyer is able to implement love to everywhere, even to the world where the earth has been invaded by a species that take over the minds of their human hosts.

²⁵ Krohn, *Stephenie Meyer: Dreaming of Twilight*, 24-25

²⁶ Stephenie Meyer, *The Twilight Saga: The Official Illustrated Guide*, (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2011), 9

²⁷ Chas Newkey-Burden, *Stephenie Meyer: Queen of Twilight : the Biography*, (London: John Blake, 2010), 53, Marcela Kostihová, *How to Analyze the Works of Stephenie Meyer*, (Minn: ABDO Pub. Co, 2012),14-15

²⁸ Ibid, 15

²⁹ Stephenie Meyer . "The Host." <http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/thehost.html> (accessed May 3, 2012).

Three months later of the same year (2008) a final sequel of the Twilight Saga (*Breaking Dawn*) was released. In the first 24 hours there were sold over one million prints of this sequel. Besides *The Host* and the Twilight Saga, Stephenie Meyer also wrote and published *Official Illustrated Guide* which includes a great deal of information about the world of Twilight. Besides the Twilight Saga, Meyer also wrote a short story for the collection *Prom Nights from Hell* and a novella *The short second life of Bree Tanner* dealing with one member of vampire army introduced in *Eclipse*. Bree's bitter end touched thousands of Twilight fans and therefore Stephenie Meyer wrote this short novella about Bree describing darker and less idealistic world of the Twilight Saga where one has to fight for life everyday and where the word vampire does not always mean immortality. However, one of Meyer works had been never published. A few years ago, she was writing a story called *Midnight Sun – Twilight* from a view of Edward. Unfortunately, partial draft was illegally posted on the internet without her knowledge or permission.

Currently, Stephenie Meyer lives with her husband and three sons in Phoenix, Arizona, and all the sequels of The Twilight Saga were filmed. Second part of *Breaking Dawn*, is coming to cinema this year (fall, 2012), and *The Host* premiere is scheduled for March 2013.³⁰

2.1 The basic plot of the Twilight Saga

This romance story of more than 2000 pages deals with an ordinary teenage girl Bella Swan who moves to her father living in town Forks, extremely rainy place. Bella is a very clever girl but a magnet for troubles as well. She often hurts herself unintentionally and gets to the confrontation with the wrong people. In Forks, she meets mysterious and unbelievably attractive schoolmate Edward Cullen and his equally charming family consist of father Carlisle, mother Esme and four adoptive siblings Rosalie, Jasper, Emmett and Alice. Despite Edward and his family turn out to be vampires, Bella falls in love with Edward and this situation brings lots of troubles. In *Twilight*, for instance, one of the biggest problems is Edward's desire for Bella's blood and confrontation with evil vampires James, Victoria and Laurent considering hunting Bella to be very funny event. Cullens hid

³⁰Mariah Larsson and Ann Steiner. *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight: Studies in Fiction, Media, and a Contemporary Cultural Experience*, (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011), 16-18, Kostihová, *How to Analyze the Works of Stephenie Meyer*, 15

Bella in Phoenix, but sadistic James finds her and attacks without any hesitation. Bella is wounded, but Edward saves her life and kills James. From this moment, their relationship is slightly changed. Edward believes that by allowing Bella to enter his world he endangers her life. Therefore Edward leaves Forks to let Bella live human life in *New Moon*. However, Victoria and Laurent, seeking to avenge James death, come back to kill her. Fortunately, Bella is protected by her friend Jacob from native tribe called Quillet who turns out to be werewolf. He and members of his tribe kill Laurent, but Victoria escapes. Later, Bella comes face to face with Edward and his sister Alice again. Unfortunately, all are captured by powerful and the oldest Volturi vampires, representing law and order of vampire world. Edward has broken the law by revealing vampire existence to Bella. As a consequence, he must turn Bella into a vampire soon or both will be killed by Volturi. Once the approximate date of Bella's change is set, they are allowed to return home. In *Eclipse*, Victoria appears in Forks again, but this time she has a huge army of newborn vampires. Although Jacob and Edward hate each other, and both constantly compete for the love of Bella, they have to join forces to defeat Victoria's army. In the last sequel, *Breaking Dawn*, Edward and Bella are newlyweds expecting half-vampire baby called Renesmee. During a brutal childbirth, Bella is killed by her baby who is biting through the womb and breaking her bones, but Edward change Bella to a vampire. Then, everything seems perfect. However, after some time Volturi vampires come again. They wanted to kill Cullens and Renesmee because they consider her to be immortal child prohibited by vampire law. Human children transformed into the vampires in very early age were frozen physically and mentally without any possible intellectual development. It means that they stayed childish, sulky, impulsive, irresponsible and unable to comply with the basic vampire law – protect the secret of their existence. Cullens and their vampire friends explain that Reneesme was born as a half-vampire, half-human. She lusts for the blood like any other vampire, but she is able to control herself and definitely is not dangerous for the vampire world. Furthermore, she is growing and learning faster than anybody else and she is not the only one in the world. Similar vampire beings live in Latin America. (Alice find some of them). Because Volturi do not expect Cullens' superiority in the arguments and powers, they leave the Forks without any struggle. After that, all live happily ever after.

3 CHARACTERISTIC OF TWILIGHT VAMPIRES

Despite of the fact that each book defines vampire being in slightly different way, Stephenie Meyer added to her vampire concept quite innovative features. She argues that she was creating her own world not wanting to find out how many rules she was breaking.³¹ Thus, it can be assumed that she did not care about the traditional appearance of vampires. As a result, her vampires have become very unusual in the literary world. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the concept of Meyer's vampires and discuss the most significant differences.

3.1 Transformation

In the world of Twilight, like in many other stories, the transformation to a vampire begins with a bite. The saliva produced vampire's mouth contains special venom-based fluid, and once the venom enters bloodstream of human, the change begins. It lasts approximately two or three days because the venom, spreading in circulatory system, has to transform each human's cell. It also depends on the factors including health condition, amount of the venom in human body or its proximity to heart. As soon as the transformation is finished, the human heart stops beating. What is more, the venom repairs all injuries, damages or paralysis. On the other hand, it is not capable to replace any missing body part, and the process of transformation is extremely painful similar to burning alive.³² Bella describe her transformation as follows: "Fiery torture . . . burying me in the flames that were chewing their way out from my heart now, spreading with impossible pain. I wanted to raise my arms and claw my chest open and rip the heart from it—anything to get rid of this torture."³³ In comparison with Dracula, the transformation process is partly similar and partly different. It is similar because after complete transformation, the body is dead. Stoker's vampire has "no pulse, no breath, no beating of the heart."³⁴ Another point is that when Dracula attacked and sucked blood of Mina Murray (Harker) in attempt to change her, he forced her to drink his own blood from breast.³⁵ Thus, it could be claimed that nor Dracula neither Meyer's vampire has beating heart, and both vampires need to use some

³¹ Meyer, *The Twilight Saga: The Official Illustrated Guide*, 58

³² *Ibid*, 54

³³ Stephenie Meyer, *Breaking Dawn*, (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), <http://www.onread.com/book/Breaking-Dawn-191108/> (accessed April 18, 2012), 279 -80

³⁴ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, (London: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), 42

kind of fluid from their bodies to change a human. Although there is no clear indication in the book that Lucy Westenra, the first Dracula's victim, had ever drunk Dracula's blood, it could be assumed so because she did not remember anything due to Dracula's hypnosis and her somnambulism. It should be also known that after a few Dracula's attacks, Lucy died and became a vampire, whereas Mina, the second victim, stayed alive and was changing more slowly. She was sleeping longer and longer during daytime, she could not touch any holy item and after some time, her teeth were sharper, skin paler and eyes harder.³⁶ She was also mentally connected with Dracula and followed his commands. Eventually, Mina's transformation to vampire was not complete because Dracula was founded and destroyed. That is the next significant difference between *Twilight* and *Dracula*. Besides the fact that the transformation from human to a vampire is much more painful in the *Twilight* Saga, it cannot be stopped by destroying vampire who attacked victim once the venom is spread in circulatory system. It is possible to save a human life by immediate sucking of the blood in place of biting (just by another vampire because the venom is infectious for people), but as soon as the vampire venom is spread, there are just two options - transformation or death - because the successful transformation depends on beating heart to get the venom into the whole circulatory system.³⁷ The point is that if a victim dies during this transformation, for instance because of too much blood, the vampire transformation cannot be finished. Bram Stoker's story, death is not an obstacle for a complete transformation. Lucy Westenra is a great example to support this argument. She was sucked, died, was buried and after that, she turned into a vampire. Thus, any victim of Meyer's vampires is little bit limited.

In comparison with the vampires of *Interview with the Vampire* written by Anne Rice in 70s, the beating heart is necessary for their successful transformation as well. Similar to Dracula, Rice's vampire has to offer his own blood to bitten human. The change itself lasts for a couple of days, but it is not painful at all except for a few last minutes before complete transformation in which a human vomits all human fluids.³⁸ Meyer's vampire need not to get rid of own blood, he uses it to his advantage. He is faster and stronger than older vampires due to the rest of own blood in the body. Approximately one year from the date of transformation, his physical abilities are reduced to a 'normal' for vampires.

³⁵ Stoker, *Dracula*, 240

³⁶ *Ibid*, 269

³⁷ Meyer, *Twilight*, 396-397

3.2 Physical characteristic

First, it should be said that as soon as the transformation is completed, any physical change is not possible anymore for vampires of the Twilight Saga. It means that they cannot be older, taller, get fat or get thin. Even the length of their hair or nails is frozen. All tattoos, wrinkles, moles and scars disappear during the transformation because the venom significantly changes surface of human skin to harder than granite and almost indestructible, but simultaneously their skin remains perfectly smooth, gloss and very pale, regardless the race.

Each Meyer's vampire has symmetrical face, angular features, perfectly cut lips, straight and white teeth similar to human teeth without pointed or longer canines; however, all teeth are strong and sharp enough to cut through anything. The vampires have also breathtaking smile and their body, despite the body shape, looks muscled, firm and fit. As Bella said, seeing vampires for the first time, they were "devastatingly, inhumanly, beautiful."³⁹ Actually, Meyer's vampires are very similar to Rice's vampires in issue of breathtaking beauty, though canines of Rice's vampires are traditionally pointed. Stoker's vampires are not beautiful at all, just at the very first sight. Aura of evil, cruel looking faces and teeth protruded over the lips make their expressions malignant and grim. For instance, Stoker's minor vampire character, Lucy Westenra, is dramatically changed and increasingly sexualized after her transformation. Lucy's beauty is preserved, but her „sweetness is turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty and her purity to voluptuous wantonness."⁴⁰ Thus, she is both attractive and repulsive. This is why any human being feels endangered in vampire's proximity, and "horrible sense of nausea"⁴¹ comes over them as was claimed by Jonathan Harker when he met vampire for the first time.

On the contrary, Twilight vampire's scents, appearance and melodic voices attract every human. Some more sensitive people a danger and keep away, but the vast majority of them just stare with fascination unable to move or run away. As once Edward Cullen said to Bella, "I am the world's best predator, aren't I? Everything about me invites you in – my voice, my face, even my smell. As if I need any of that."⁴² Especially the last sentence of

³⁸ Anne Rice, *Interview with the Vampire*, 3d ed. (London: Sphere, 2008), 25-26

³⁹ Meyer, *Twilight*, 17

⁴⁰ Stoker, *Dracula*, 175

⁴¹ Stoker, *Dracula*, 17

⁴² Meyer, *Twilight*, 231

Edward's speech hides real threat because indirectly reveals that any effort to fight with Meyer's vampires is impossible. These vampires are unbelievable fast, they can run over hundred miles per hour to catch their prey and their movement is very graceful.⁴³ They are also inhumanly strong lifting many of times heavier object without any problem or crushing rock to powder by bare hands. Obviously, no human is able to fight them off. Meyer's vampires have a super senses, they can hear sounds and smell scents which humans cannot. They need not to breathe, they can see in the dark without any problems, and direct sunlight cannot weaken or harm them. Nevertheless, surface of their indestructible skin reacts unusually in the direct sunlight due to crystalline properties making their skin sparkling like "thousands of tiny diamonds,"⁴⁴ and once Meyer removed the sun "allergy", her vampires need not to hide themselves in coffins, have a rest or even sleep. The vampires of *Interview* are more limited because the Sun burns them if they are not in their coffins. They can sleep and also have dreams.⁴⁵ Regarding to the physical abilities, their movement are comparable to Twilight vampires' abilities, just "too fast to see."⁴⁶ Stoker's Dracula can stay alive in the direct sunlight, but he is significantly weaker and his supernatural abilities disappear in a daytime, so coffin or box with soil from mother country is very important for him. Regarding to Dracula's other physical abilities, his movement is rather panther-like and sinister than graceful, he is not much faster than people, and his strength is comparable to "strength of twenty adult men."⁴⁷

Thus, it can be claimed that Twilight vampires are probably the most dangerous owing to physical characteristic and resistance to the sunlight. In contrast with other mentioned representatives, once they decide to hunt somebody, nothing can stop them. They are not limited by sleep, daytime or exhaustion, even the bright sunlight is harmless - just emphasizing their disparity, but it is not any disadvantage; rather the contrary, this effect even more heightens vampire's breathtaking beauty. According to Bella, Edward in the sunlight was like an angel, like "a perfect statue, carven in some unknown stone, smooth like marble, glittering like crystal...too beautiful to be real."⁴⁸

⁴³ Meyer, *Twilight*, 251

⁴⁴ Ibid, 228

⁴⁵ Rice, *Interview with the vampire*, 29

⁴⁶ Ibid, 30

⁴⁷ Stoker, *Dracula* 169, 199

⁴⁸ Meyer, *Twilight*, 228-229

3.3 Abilities and lifestyle

Meyer's vampire may exceed Dracula in issue of physical abilities, but Dracula exceeds them in numbers of special supernatural abilities. He can hypnotize people, he can transform himself to a mist or kind of an elemental dust to get through each keyhole or chink in a wall. He can also change to a wolf or a bat. The transformation into completely different shape or creature is definitely impossible for Meyer's vampires. Another point is that Dracula is able to influence people mentally and command wolves, spiders, owls or toads.⁴⁹ That is unimaginable ability for Meyer's vampires as well because all animals tried to avoid them instinctively. Meyer's vampires cannot hypnotise anyone, but they are able to dazzle people with their extraordinary appearance and voice.⁵⁰ Thus, it can be assumed that dazzling effect is quite similar to Dracula's hypnosis.

When it comes to the supernatural abilities, some Meyer's vampires develop additional ability associated with their personality characteristics intensified by the transformation process. For instance, Edward was very sensitive to people as a human, so he can read the thoughts as a vampire. Who could influence a mood of others, encourage or scared them, has ability to influence emotions as a vampire. Other can cause cruel pain by a thought, see future, recognize any lie in someone's speech, create the very straightforward illusions in someone's mind, control nature elements or use a psychic shield - the psychic shield, means that nobody can use own psychic gift. As could be seen, Meyer's vampires are not very similar to older and primitive type. Moreover, Meyer argues that Twilight vampires have a lot more in common with superheroes than with horror-genre vampires.⁵¹ This might be a reason why many traditional limitations and characteristics are regarded as myths in Meyer's story, just put into a circulation by vampires themselves to confuse everyone who believes in them. In the world of Twilight, it is mere superstition that vampires has no reflection or cannot enter a house without human's permission. Furthermore, they are *not* repelled by garlic, *cannot* be harmed by holy items, destroyed by sun or killed with a wooden stake stabbed into their hearts. Actually, the wooden stake is completely ridiculous weapon because Meyer's vampires have skin harder than granite. Thus, Twilight vampires resemble rather superheroes than traditional bloodsuckers due to

⁴⁹ Stoker, *Dracula*, 199

⁵⁰ Meyer, *Twilight*, 88

⁵¹ Meyer, *The Twilight Saga: The Official Illustrated Guide*, 52

an unusual “immunity“ against traditional stuff repulsing their non-sparkling predecessors like Dracula who is afflicted significantly.

Dracula may not enter anywhere at the first, unless there would be someone of the household who bid him to come. Dracula has no reflection in mirrors, and the wooden stake, garlic and the holy items are very efficient weapons.⁵² It can be assumed that in times of Bram Stoker and his literary predecessors, a life was more associated with Church and therefore the holy items were recommended as exceedingly efficient defence, but nowadays religion has not so much striking effect because of education and technology therefore Edward Cullen is able to have huge crucifix from the sixteenth century in his house as a nostalgic decoration.⁵³

So, how one could kill a vampire in the Twilight world? There is one way. He can be destroyed by cutting his body and burning in the fire, but it is impossible for any human being to defeat or at least catch him, so he are practically indestructible. Anyway, the fire has been efficient in a struggle with a lot of vampires of oldest folklore tales. Thus, at least one traditional feature was preserved in the Twilight Saga followed by consistent vampire characteristic such as immortality, pallor and necessity of drinking blood.

However, it should be mentioned that in issue of drinking, Stephenie Meyer has made some changes as well. Her vampires do not need to feed as often as Stoker’s (daily, max weekly) or Rice’s vampires (twice, three times during night).⁵⁴ The blood of one human is enough to satiate thirst even for ten or fourteen days. Vampires, ignoring a thirst for more than two weeks, feel cruel pain in their throat similar to flames. Eyes of the vampire, who has not fed for a long time, are dark black, whereas the recently fed vampire has deep red or crimson eyes. Exact colour depends on vampire’s age. Dracula’s eyes also change colour from black to red and vice versa. Exact hue depends on his mood, especially wrath. Rice’s vampires fit the society better because their eye colour stays unchanged after the transformation, they are just highlighted. However, Meyer has also a special sort of quite inconspicuous vampires. They have medium gold-coloured eyes and called themselves vegetarians because they respect human life and subsist on animal blood, especially bears, mountain lions and deer are hunted. It is not as tasty as human blood, but it has the same

⁵² Stoker, *Dracula*, 199

⁵³ Meyer, *Twilight*, 288

⁵⁴ Rice, *Interview with the Vampire*, 96, Stoker, *Dracula*, 147-48

nutritional strength.⁵⁵ Cullens are vegetarians and Edward compared it to living on tofu and soy milk. It does not completely satiate the thirst, but it keeps them strong enough to resist human blood.⁵⁶ This peaceful life has naturally a lot of benefits. One of the greatest benefits is possibility to co-exist with humans such as living in their proximity, working with them or attending schools. For example, Carlisle, Edward's creator works as a doctor in a local hospital, Carlisle's wife is an architect, and their "adoptive" children attend high school in Forks. Otherwise, common lifestyle of Meyer's red-eyed vampires is mostly nomadic because their animalistic thirst for human blood does not allow them to deal with humans. Actually, it can be claimed they are more similar to an old type which is unable to live as a part of the society or even as a part of some vampire coven. From time to time, these wild vampires attack own species to gain better territory for hunting. However, long wars for the territories might arise not only suspicious of humans noticing increasing number of dead/disappeared people but also the attention of a royal vampire coven Volturi who would kill all irresponsible vampires involved in the war to keep a vampire existence in secrecy.

The secrecy is probably a common feature of many vampire stories. Dracula, for example, lives alone in a castle of dark woods of Transylvania. He is very circumspect in his hunting and behaviour.⁵⁷ In *Interview with the vampire*, Louis is very careful and consumes only rats or dogs and later, he kills just evil or expendable people.⁵⁸ In addition, there is a theatre with huge group of vampires inside who pretend to be humans pretending to be vampires to keep secret of the supernatural world.⁵⁹ In older vampire stories, vampires create false identities or anagrams from their original names to fit the society and leave no traces behind. For instance, cruel countess Mirallca uses anagrams like Carmilla or Mircalla as a vampire. Dracula called himself Alucard or Dr. Acula in later book adaptations. Cullens from the Twilight Saga change their names and address each six or seven years to avoid suspicious about their unchanged appearance and identity emphasized by their effort to live among people.

⁵⁵ Meyer, *The Twilight Saga: The Official Illustrated Guide*, 51

⁵⁶ Meyer, *Twilight*, 164

⁵⁷ Stoker, *Dracula*, 14

⁵⁸ Rice, *Interview with the Vampire*, 38, 111

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 232

3.4 Free will

Another feature distinguishing old and new vampire is undoubtedly free will. Stephenie Meyer explained this relatively new feature of her vampires associated with “vegetarian” food in the *Official illustrated Guide*: “No matter what position you’re in, you always have a choice. So I had these characters in a position where traditionally they would have been the bad guys, but, instead, they chose to be something different.”⁶⁰ They choose animal blood instead of humans, they choose to be good.

Regarding to Dracula, he had no similar choice. Vampirism was just a curse, so he had not any other option. Blood of others means life for him. Lucy Westenra was sweet, kind human girl believing in God but after the transformation, she became repulsive woman sucking blood of small children.⁶¹ Actually, she was a vampire similar to the creatures of the oldest myths like Langsuyar or Lilitu - just a heartless killer. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis has good intentions trying to kill just animals, but vampire natures usually drawn him back to the darkness. “I know peace only when I killed. The killing of anything less than a human being brought nothing.”⁶² Obviously, he tended to be good, but animal blood did not contain what he wanted and needed therefore he had no other option.

In the *Twilight Saga*, animal blood is nutritionally comparable to blood of humans and that is a key point. Once the vampire is given an opportunity to be “good” by sucking animals, they ended up being vampires in the way they are.⁶³ Evil nature of vampires lost dominance, whereas emotions and supernatural abilities were highlighted. Thus, free will and choice between good and evil shift this literary figure from creepy bloodsucker to hero generally admired by readers. Moreover, as Lauren Streib said, they are sexy, powerful and immortal – they have what humans want.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Meyer, *The Twilight Saga: The Official Illustrated Guide*, 78

⁶¹ Stoker, *Dracula*, 147-48

⁶² Rice, *Interview with the vampire*, 97

⁶³ Meyer, *The Twilight Saga: The Official Illustrated Guide*, 78

⁶⁴ Stuart A Kallen, *Vampire History and Lore*, (San Diego, CA: ReferencePoint Press, 2011), 74

4 SOCIETY AND THE TWILIGHT SAGA

4.1 New concept of vampire to fit new times

The contemporary vampire is no longer only that evil figure feeling just dark emotions and corrupt desires. On the contrary, he is able to feel love, sadness or regret, to be jealous or happy, to be killer as well as protector willing to do everything to save his love. Vampire is suddenly humanized, socialized and domesticated.⁶⁵ Regarding to the society, seniors probably imagine vampire like a bad sinister creature, lower and more primitive than human due to his inability to control appetite, a new generation see at least two options - the old one, archetypal undead with coffin in the basement or modern conception of immortal and almost indestructible vampire associated with beauty, absolute self-control, moral feeling and unlimited opportunities of modern lifestyle.

This change of traditionally evil figure is quite predictable owing to claim of Gregory A. Waller, professor at Indiana University who argues that “every generation reshapes the story of the confrontation between the living and the undead to fit new times.”⁶⁶ Thus, it can be said that this vampire transformation just illuminates changes of the modern society and reflect its desires. Nowadays, scientists, better technology and lifestyle significantly extend human life. Therefore the physical appearance, youth and beauty undeniably play very important roles in the world of today. Plastic surgery and cosmetics companies with anti-wrinkles creams are drowning in money because a lot of people refuse to accept their age and natural changes associated with aging. Retouched photos, presenting people younger and more perfect than they really are, could be seen in all magazines and even films. Especially many celebrities love retouching because all imperfections like sagging skin, wrinkles, moles and other uncomfortable symptoms of aging disappear in a moment to create illusion of eternal youth and perfect appearance.

Back to the context of the Twilight Saga, the phenomenon of attractive, forever young vampires is also emphasized by film protagonists chosen from the most beautiful actors and actress. For instance the performer of Edward Cullen - Robert Pattinson - repeatedly

⁶⁵ Bodart, *They Suck, They Bite, They Eat, They Kill: The Psychological Meaning of Supernatural Monsters in Young Adult Fiction*, 13,

⁶⁶ Waller, Gregory A. *Living and the Undead: Slaying Vampires, Exterminating Zombies*. (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 379

occupies the top position of the sexiest man/actor of the year. Actor Kellan Lutz, Edward's brother in the film, works as a model for leading fashion brands such as Calvin Klein. Nevertheless, some people absolutely idealized their fictional heroes and strongly protested against chosen actors who do not fulfil their expectations and dreams completely. This situation occurred especially with second film sequel of the Twilight Saga. Michael Sheen, performing evil vampire Aro Volturi, originally did not correspond with expectations of fans and Stephenie Meyer's view. Michael Sheen was simply director's choice. Stephenie Meyer could not see him as Aro. Later, she naturally realized that he is brilliant actor, but her first opinion was not positive at all. "I kinda had a different mental image."⁶⁷

However, as was claimed in the research study of Emily Reynolds, the strongest reactions were undeniably associated with the casting of Edward Cullen. Even though Robert Pattinson is regarded as one of the most handsome actors of this decade, fans generally considered him too ugly to perform idealized Edward. However, during promotions, publicity campaign and interviews, Pattinson showed more and more likeable qualities slowly dazzling the Twilight fans as intensively as "real" Edward Cullen⁶⁸. As was said by one of the Twilight fans, "At first I didn't like him, but now I love him"⁶⁹ It can be assumed that some people may have huge problem with the fact that all actors performing vampires are not as "inhumanly beautiful" as their idealized vampires coming with Meyer's book as well as TV broadcast of the *Vampire Diaries* and *True Blood* – series version of *Southern Vampire Mysteries*.

The society, younger one in particular, slowly gets used to a new image and starts to require this certain type. Moreover, any attempt to return to the older times with the creepier bloodsuckers might be hard to realize because films and books overcrowded by glamorous vampires are preferred so produced on demand. As a consequence, even somebody like Robert Pattinson, considered "gloriously handsome,"⁷⁰ may not fulfil expectations of the society.

⁶⁷ Alison Genet, "Stephenie Sounds off the Volturi and Flawed Edward," <http://www.twilightlexicon.com>, (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁶⁸ Emily Reynolds, *Screams, Vampires, Werewolves and Autographs: An Exploration of the Twilight Phenomenon*. (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2009), 44-45

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Laura Brown, *Harper's Bazaar*, 2009, para.9,

4.2 Love bites in the women's hearts

As was stated before, vampire genre of the twenty-first century is outlined more as a feminine romance than gothic genre. The Twilight Saga builds this argument because it is more love story than horror presenting unusual love of vampire being and human girl. In addition, Edward is a typical romantic hero. He is a little bit "bad boy" owing to his vampire nature, but at the same time he is very protective constantly saving Bella's life. He is also very charming and mysterious. Naturally, the more mysterious he is, the more Bella and readers desire for him. Strictly speaking, this attractive vampire aspiring for love and struggling with dark desires is remarkable concept in comparison with animalistic creepy creature with a phobia of the sun. Thus, *Twilight* with heavy seductive lure of Meyer's vampires touched so many girls and women because it perfectly encapsulates fear and passion, life and death, romance and menace. Stephenie Meyer gave each girl a hope that she can find perfect guy who will passionately love her with all her imperfections as intensively as Edward loved Bella. Actually, Susannah Clements argues that Edward's whole existence revolves around Bella, and this behaviour is reflected in girls' fantasies as an ideal, though it often exceeds the realistic boyfriend's behaviour. Edward follows Bella wherever and whenever like some stalker, he watches her sleeping, protects her against all, gives her everything what she want, forgives her everything. He even tries to kill himself in *New Moon* when he is convinced about Bella's death because he cannot live without her. This portrait of vampire as a romantic partner caused that young readers yearn for similar boyfriend, dream about him and idolize him.⁷¹ Naturally, the idolization of certain literary figure leads to growing popularity of this figure and because the idolization of some literary figure or celebrity typically begins in early adolescence, when girls struggles with their hormones, sexuality and unwritten social norms suggesting that they should have romantic feelings in someone, it is easy to state the main audience of the Twilight Saga.⁷² It is written exactly in the way fulfilling girls' visions about ideal prototype of a boyfriend and reinforces familiar script about beauty, eternal youth and love lasting forever.

On the other hand, Debra Merskin argues that the characterization of Edward as a desirable male poses a danger to real girls-as-eventual-women's sense of self and future

⁷¹ Susannah Clements, *The Vampire Defanged: How the Embodiment of Evil Became a Romantic Hero*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos Press, 2011), 116, Merskin, *A boyfriend to Die For*, 8

⁷² Merskin, *A boyfriend to die for*, 9

development. In addition, perfect depiction of Edward may cause that girl, especially the younger one, creates very distort vision of ideal boyfriend or “real” relationship.⁷³ Thus, no man will be able to fulfil her expectation.

Besides the teenagers, the Twilight Saga seems to be attractive topic for adult women as well. *Twilight* catches their attention because of deep intensive love of Edward Cullen. This element attracts women in particular because each woman has at least once dreamt of romantic hero, so-called the prince on a white horse, but current culture is characterised by women’s independence and individualism, so weak girl and brave hero defending her against all villains and supernatural powers is not very modern in the twenty-first century.⁷⁴ Thus, the only way to enjoy and fulfil these dreams is through some romance. According to Mariah Larsson, woman a girls generally love stories “with the girl courted and taken care of by the boy, who is dangerous and full of secrets and yet a handsome and protective gentleman.”⁷⁵ However, Edward and Bella’s perfect love story may influence woman’s relationship as significantly as girl’s ones. The woman may start to express constant dissatisfaction with her “ordinary” relationship or life. After all, Meyer’s vampire stays young forever in contrast to her who, sooner or later, starts to think about the first anti-wrinkle cream. The life in the Twilight world is so much exciting in contrast to her life consisting of the working and paying taxes. Imaginary Edward is probably more charming than any real partner or husband because as Debra Merskin argues, “would a handsome vampire sit in front of the television, scratching his stomach and drinking beer?”⁷⁶ Probably not. Thus, abnormally attractive vampire Edward Cullen dazzles girls and women throughout the countries and slowly replaces the image of the uncertain prince in their hearts. As said one of the adult women fans, “I would leave my husband for someone like that”⁷⁷. Younger, teenage fan had similar point of view and claimed that “Edward is a super strong, he is such a gentleman and knows how to treat women unlike the typical seventeen year old boy. What could be better than that in a guy?”⁷⁸ It could be

⁷³ Ibid, 3

⁷⁴ Milly Williamson, *The Lure of the Vampire: Gender, Fiction and Fandom from Bram Stoker to Buffy*. (London: Wallflower, 2005), 188

⁷⁵ Larsson and Steiner, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight > Studies in Fiction, Media, and a Contemporary Cultural Experience*, 164

⁷⁶ Merskin, *A boyfriend to die for*, 8

⁷⁷ Reynolds, *An Exploration of the Twilight Phenomenon*, 39

⁷⁸ Merce, J oyce Ann., “Vampires, Desire, Girls and God, 267-68

said that some kind of affinity appeared between females and fictional vampires, which explained why this vampire seducer replaced the “ordinary” prince. All in all, the prince gives you half of the kingdom, with the vampire, there are no limits. These hopes are maybe little bit naive but definitely profit-making because as was stated by Debra Merskin “this combination of deathless good look, vampire’s mystique and sexuality are reason why females are attracted to these kind of stories about vampires”⁷⁹. Thus, no wonder that the *Twilight Saga* has become a bestseller.

On the other hand, any harlequins or romances generally belong to junk literature, and the modern vampire novels seem to take quite a similar position due to a huge number of imitators on the market. Publishing houses constantly bring out a huge number of supernatural novels and their sequels to gain highest profit as long as the demand is persisting. A lot of bookstores are overfull of books with seductive vampires attending High School such as *Vampire High*, *House of Night* series, *Vampire Academy* etc. They are also sexy immortal boys of *Everlasting*, handsome fallen angel of *Hush,hush saga*, witches of *Hex Hall* or camp *Shadow falls* for all troubled teenage vampires, fairies and werewolves. In contrast with *Twilight*, just only a few of them reached the world-wide success in spite of the fact that the vast majority is similar to *Twilight*. However, the story with “stupid shiny Volvo owner,”⁸⁰ as Bella and fans jovially called Edward, was one of the first on the market therefore original, which might be the next reason why a vampire has taken the first place in women’ dreams and profits of bookstores.

Another point is that advertising industry is quite aggressive, so it is difficult to resist the wave of sexy vampires. Commercials attract girls and stimulate them by subsidiary products like decoration, jewellerys, calendars, clothes, cosmetics, school supplies, wedding dress or even sexual toys with pictures of vampire idols to catch attention of fans.

Merchandising approach is generally based on idolization of celebrities performing fictional characters, but according to Melissa A. Click, these products also enable fans to demonstrate their allegiance to the series, to show strong loyalty to a particular character and to create an illusion of the *Twilight* world.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Merskin, *A boyfriend to Die For*, 7-8

⁸⁰ Meyer, *Twilight*, 71

⁸¹ Click, Aubrey, Brehm-Morawitz, *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*, 237

Some authors, exploiting the vampire popularity, try to make money by publishing many guides for obsessed vampire fans like *Vampires Don't Sleep Alone, Your Guide to Meeting, Dating and Seducing a Vampire* or publication *How to date a vampire*. Bookstores also offer 'specialized' guides if one would become a vampire: *The new vampire's handbook: The guide for the recently turned creature of the nights*. As could be seen, Meyer's love story with its attractive vampires presumably left indelible mark on the society, and Saga itself has become a subject of deep analysing to find out what is behind its success. It was examined in issues such as gender roles (*Touched by Vampire Discovering the Hidden Message in the The Twilight Saga*), philosophy (*Twilight and Philosophy*), religion (*From Twilight to Breaking Dawn: Religious Themes in the Twilight Saga*), historical links (*Twilight and history*), criticism (*The Twilight Mystique*) biblical references (*Parables from Twilight: A Bible Study*) etc.

Moreover, although the numbers of vampire titles have increased steadily from 1990, there is a huge increase by about ten/fifteen titles per year after publishing of the Twilight Saga. What is more, the majority of these titles are written as a series because teenagers want to revisit their favourite world and enjoy new adventures of seductive vampire characters.⁸²

4.3 To increase trading profits, use a vampire

The world success of the Twilight Saga caused that the phenomenon of sexy vampires slowly overrun the teen market continuing in a broad range of advertisement for people of all ages. Interesting fact is that vampires have become really favourite protagonists of commercials.⁸³ One of the first companies using a vampire for its commercials and billboards was Volvo Company. This company was aware of the fact that Meyer's romantic vampire, Edward Cullen, is a Volvo owner. Thus, to increase profits of the company, some shots from films and Edward's name were used as an effective marketing tool. In addition, the company put a challenge out to all Twilight fans in 2009, and they were given a chance to win a Volvo. This online contest did not run in all countries, to the disappointment of many fans, just in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, France and Germany.

⁸² Bodart, *They Suck, They Bite, They Eat, They Kill: The Psychological Meaning of Supernatural Monsters in Young Adult Fiction*, 19

⁸³ Larsson and Steiner, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight> Studies in Fiction, Media, and a Contemporary Cultural Experience*, 204

Fans had to log onto webpage (WhatDrivesEdward.com) to solve interactive game based on knowledge of the novels. The fastest player from each country received tickets for premiere of New Moon and the Volvo XC60. However, Jeff Pugliese, president and CEO of Volvo Canada had to stress that vampire is not equipped with this car in order to prevent later misunderstandings and hysterical scenes of potential winners obsessed by Edward. The chance to win a Volvo is held regularly with each following film of The Twilight Saga. The last one was announced with film the premiere of the first part of Breaking Dawn when the Volvo company cordially invited fans “to drive happily ever after” in the new Volvo S60 T6 R-design. It seems that this car brand has never been as well-known as in the connection with the Twilight Saga.⁸⁴

However, it should be said that the Volvo Company is not the only car company using a vampire.⁸⁵ Other companies, namely Audi, Citroën, Renault or Mazda, have also noticed unusually frequent presence of a vampire in media and bookstores.⁸⁶ Thus, they introduced own vampire commercial as well. Regarding to a Mazda car, firstly it looked like an ordinary car commercial. Camera takes some nice details of the Mazda 3 smoothly running on the road. Afterwards, bats appear to accompany this car driven by a charismatic vampire who wants to enter an overcrowded vampire club. Due to many vampires and their cars standing around, he ultimately parked on the ceiling among bunch of bats.

Whoever watched the vampire in the Mazda commercial could see the first demonstrable influence of the modern vampire conception. There is emphasis on beauty, fashion style and lifestyle. Only the association with bats remained. Next vampire commercial hit the network at the beginning of 2012, and a viewer might notice many allusions to parodied Twilight. The scene took place in a forest during one night where group of young, attractive vampires had a party. They were talking and dancing, when another vampire fellow arrived by the Audi S7. Unfortunately, before he had chance to join the party, LED headlights of the car had destroyed all the participants with slogan

⁸⁴ Pugliese, Jeff, " What Drives Edward Cullen May Soon Drive You." Volvo Car Corporation, Volvo Cars Country Selector. <http://www.volvocars.com/en-ca/top/about/news-events/pages/default.aspx?itemid=4> (accessed February 9, 2012).

⁸⁵ Click and Aubrey and Brehm-Morawitz, *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*, 302

⁸⁶ Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger, *Blood Read: The Vampire As Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 141, Click and Aubrey and Brehm-Morawitz, *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*, 250

“daylight, now in a headlight.”⁸⁷ In spite of the fact that the vampire commercials are very funny, it raises the question. Why did these companies choose a vampire for their commercials? It can be assumed that the hard Twilight fans would probably choose a Volvo from all car brands due to the fact that Edward Cullen drives one. Therefore, others car companies presumably felt a need to astonish Twilight-obsessed girls by own sexy vampire performers.

It should be mentioned that besides the car industry, also fashion vampire commercials (Diesel, 2011) or many food/drink commercials were made as well. For instance pizza (Delissio, 2009), chips (Doritos, 2011) or burgers (Sonic burger, 2011). The last mentioned one created successful commercial shot with rude woman sitting in a car by a side of her partner Phill. She’s eating Sonic burger with onions, silly convinced, that this vegetable keeps vampires away. Simultaneously she criticises those night creatures and called them disgusting without realization that her ugly pale partner with long canines is one of them. Although Phill, dressed in innocent pastel-coloured clothes, tries to point out her illogical prejudices, she is continuing in her stupid monolog and ignores him completely. In this commercial, the vampire is showed as a domesticated and quite emotional creature who just sadly listens to offensive speech of his girlfriend instead of killing her as any older, violent ‘type’ of vampire surely would have done. Another indication that icon of evil has changed it is seen in official commercial for Kinder Bueno which appeared on TV screens in 2011. The commercial with young lady eating nut-chocolate candy in front of a mirror while good-looking vampire is stalking her to finally choose Kinder Bueno instead of her blood, was well-known even in the Czech Republic. However, this conception might be the closest to the archetypal image of a vampire. He was sneaking during a night, wore a long cloak and his reflection could not be seen in a mirror. On the other hand, he forgot girl’s blood due to a cheap chocolate bar, and his appearance was simply breathtaking, partially due to the fact that the vampire was successful male model Pedro Perestrello.

Coca-Cola Zero commercial for Japan is based on the same concept. An attractive vampire with golden eyes, strikingly similar to Edward Cullen’s eyes, prefers Coca-Cola soft drink instead of fresh blood offered by two provocative young women sitting near him. Obviously, it’s really hard to find a commercial without some attractive and harmless

⁸⁷ Anthony Ocasio, Best Super Bowl Commercial 2012 – Audi Vampire Party, online video clip,

vampires. Czech advertisement of Commercial Bank firstly looked promising, because of the scary atmosphere and the repulsive vampire who sneaks up on a woman. However, after woman's confrontation with the vampire, he showed his toothless mouth in a warm smile promising to not suck her because he's a new profitable bank loan.

Obviously, all vampire performers mentioned above have rather qualities of the modern vampire than the traditional one. First, they are good guys, domesticated and fit our technological society without problems. Second, they are very handsome and most of them seem to be completely harmless. To sum up, it seems that an evil and bloodthirsty vampire of creepy appearance disappeared not only from our books but also from our media.

4.4 Post-Twilight world

Nowadays, Internet is the most popular and fastest way to share news and madness associated with Twilight. On February 16, 2012 Google searched over 21 000 000 links directly related to name *Edward Cullen* and about 118 000 000 results for the expression *The Twilight Saga*. The Twilight vampires have filled online blogs, fan sites and a lot of discussion boards. Many fans of the Twilight Saga keep updated information related to *Twilight* including interviews, gossips, videos and photo shots of their favourite actors. Ann Steiner and Mariah Larsson argued that this behaviour is mostly caused by fans' strong fascination by *Twilight* or Edward Cullen and other actors, which naturally leads to looking for more information about the subject of their fascination.⁸⁸ Together, they have formed a huge online community which enables them to share their passion for the Twilight Saga. This is a great opportunity namely for adult fans who are usually not allowed to express their interest as passionately and insanely as the teenage fans usually do, because of some unwritten norm that each adult is supposed to behave reasonably and rationally. Forty-five-year-old fan Maria from *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight* "has no one of her age with the same interest."⁸⁹ Thus, the online community plays a vital part for Maria because she can finally share a collective fascination, and her partial anonymity provides the opportunity to express her true feelings.

<http://screenrant.com/super-bowl-commercials-2012-aco-149203/all/1/>, (accessed 30. April 2012)

⁸⁸ Larsson and Steiner, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight: Studies in Fiction, Media, and a Contemporary Cultural Experience*, 164

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 167

However, one of the most significant phenomena associated with this pop-culture is the Twilight fan fiction, also called *TFF*, *twi-fiction*, *twi-fanfic* or *Twifics*.⁹⁰ They are generally based on the original story and the characters of the Twilight Saga. It can be assumed that most of fans simply refused to accept the “end” of their favourite heroes, who just “continued blissfully into that small but perfect piece of their forever,”⁹¹ and instead, they started to write own alters of the story to keep their adored vampires alive. Regarding to some fan sites including the fan fiction, the most frequently visited are *TwilightMoms* (website of adult fans), *TwilightFanCenter* or *Twilighted*.⁹² In the Czech Republic, plethora of stories can be seen on the website called “Stmivani.eu”. Regarding to a huge number of Twifics, it is impossible to make some general claims about them because the genre and the level of originality depend on the skills and age of an individual writer. However, there is one particular feature of Twifics which should be mentioned. A lot of stories deal with strong erotic theme depicting sexual intercourses of the Twilight vampires, especially Edward and Bella. From time to time, even a *slash twi-fic* appears.⁹³ This subgenre is focused on sexual relationships between fictional characters of the same sex, which means, for instance, between Edward and Jasper or Bella Swan and Alice Cullen (slash with women is often called femme slash or femslash).

The sexual twi-fiction is mostly written by teen girls who reflect their desires and sexual tension through this textual production, but Mariah Larsson said, that “the depiction of detailed sexual scenes may be read as a reaction to the absence of these scenes in Meyer’s novels.”⁹⁴ It makes sense because Edward, the main male protagonist of *Twilight*, is inhumanly attractive and very desirable for the female audience of the Twilight Saga, but Meyer’s original story includes just the subtle sexual signs, no direct “porn”, which might not be enough for the girls and women with the strong desire for him. Thus, they express their desires and dreams of Edward (or another favourite character) through these fan fiction stories. That is also understandable according to Joyce Ann Mercer who

⁹⁰ Ibid,127

⁹¹ Meyer, *Breaking Dawn*, 548

⁹² Maggie Parke and Natalie Wilson, *Theorizing Twilight: Critical Essays on What's at Stake in a Post-Vampire World*, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2011), 63, Click, Aubrey, Brehm-Morawitz, *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*, 155

⁹³ Larsson and Steiner, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight: Studies in Fiction, Media, and a Contemporary Cultural Experience*, 128

⁹⁴ , Ibid, 127-128

argues that this phenomenon is associated with socially acceptable opportunity for young girls “to experience and explore sexual desire in the safety of a narrative imagination.”⁹⁵

The fans of *Twilight* called themselves Fanpires, Twihards or Twilighers and they also created three groups called *Team Edward*, *Team Jacob* and *Team Volturi*.⁹⁶ The choice is largely a matter of personal preferences. For example, *Team Jacob* consists of people who are either convinced that Bella should stay a human and love her best friend Jacob instead of Edward, or they think that actor Taylor Lautner (Jacob) is more handsome than Robert Pattinson (Edward). Regarding to *Team Edward*, the reasons are quite a similar, just vice versa. Team Volturi consist of those fans who admire evil vampires Volturi, or who are disappointed from happy end of the Twilight Saga. They expected the fight, not a discussion similar to a trial court. Last but not least, there is a very specific group called Twihaters who have overly negative attitude to the Twilight Saga and everything related to this phenomenon.

Twilight is also associated with Twi-Cons, huge meetings of the vast majority of Twilight fans with presence of the Twilight actors and Stephenie Meyer.⁹⁷ People may collect autographs; buy souvenirs or books. Many fans are in costumes of their favourite vampire characters, and also the real costumes from the films could be seen there. These overcrowded meetings lasts for a few days, and one could participate in the competition in costumes, a lot of games and many other funny activities. Moreover, the Twilight novels are read aloud by Stephenie Meyer and all films are projected. Regarding to the phenomenon of the Twilight Saga, these events emphasize fans’ fixation with *Twilight* and significantly contributes to its popularity. The Twi-Cons enable people to share their interests (or obsession) with others and bring the Twilight vampires to life for some time.

Next phenomenon reflecting the integration of *Twilight* to the real world is the usage of characters and location from Twilight in normal conversation, especially for purposes of comparison. Emily Reynolds claims that fans often compare person from their real lives to book character by using expression such as “I dated a guy that was just like Edward”⁹⁸ or

⁹⁵ Mercer, *Vampires, Desire, Girls and God, Twilight and the Spiritualities of Adolescent Girls*,275

⁹⁶ Rebecca Housel and Jeremy Wisnewski, *Twilight and Philosophy: Vampires, Vegetarians, and the Pursuit of Immortality*, (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.),244

⁹⁷ Click and Aubrey and Brehm-Morawitz, *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*, 207

⁹⁸ Reynolds, *An Exploration of the Twilight Phenomenon*,54

”Sometimes I see a person who looks like Alice.“⁹⁹ The same comparison is also used for places: “I live in a place that’s like Forks, lots of trees, very green”¹⁰⁰ and emotions: “I feel like a werewolf.”¹⁰¹ The tendency to use these expressions in everyday speech demonstrates fans’ strong passion for the Twilight Saga as well as their effort to find a subject to embody literary character and bring him to life.

The popularity of *Twilight* has also a negative side because young people who have not read it yet, might feel isolated from schoolmates and friends according to Joyce Ann Mercer. She wrote down the experience of one young girl who totally lost her social status in group of friends because she did not know what *Twilight* is and how to be in conversation with girls who had already read it. It made her feel very alone and isolated from others.¹⁰² Obviously, the fascination with the Twilight Saga is significantly on the different levels. Some of them just like the story itself due to its romantic theme. They read it to relax and dream of somebody like Edward Cullen. Some of them are obsessed by the Twilight Saga books, films, news, actors, Edward Cullen etc. The last group considers knowledge of the Twilight Saga to be necessity to retain some social status. It proves that *Twilight* is not just part of fan’s everyday life, but even ordinary people cannot escape the impact of all those sexy vampires hitting our culture.

4.5 Criticism of the Twilight Saga – gender roles and psychopathic behaviour

The Twilight Saga and a lot of books written in relation to the *Twilight* phenomenon provide a large space to analyze or criticise Meyer’s vampire conception and the story itself. Thus, there are some frequently discussed themes related to *Twilight* which Stephenie Meyer is criticized for. One of them is an issue of gender roles. Meyer is criticized because of Bella’s portrayal.¹⁰³ Bella does not care much about parties, fashion or boys. She is household-family oriented girl sitting at home and constantly cooking, cleaning or doing laundry for his father. And as Lena Manderstedt says, “she receives a rich

⁹⁹ Ibid, 55

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 56

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 60

¹⁰² Mercer, *Vampires, Desire, Girls and God - Twilight and the Spiritualities of Adolescent Girls*, 267

¹⁰³ Meyer, *Twilight*, 125,133

strong husband and social and financial security.”¹⁰⁴ This depiction is generally seen as outdated and anti-feminist, which may have negative influence on the Twilight Saga audience consisted mainly from young girls.¹⁰⁵ However, Stephenie Meyer argues that “just because she [Bella] doesn't do kung fu and she cooks for her father doesn't make her worthy of that criticism.”¹⁰⁶ Moreover, Bella is not so much household-family oriented person as it seems. It is just a necessity due to the fact that her father is divorced, he is terrible cook and most of the time spends in the work. Thus, Bella must take care of herself and the household. However, who has never read *Twilight*, cannot know all circumstances which influenced Bella's decisions, and just accepts anti-feminist theory as a fact. Stephenie Meyer denies this theory personally and adds:

From my point of view, the foundation of feminism is being able to choose. The core of anti-feminism is, conversely, telling a woman she can't do something solely because she's a woman—taking any choice away from her specifically because of her gender. Bella chooses romantic love...she chooses to marry at an early age and then chooses to keep an unexpected and dangerous baby. I never meant for her fictional choices to be a model for anyone else's real life choices. . . Bella chooses things differently because she lives in a fantasy world.¹⁰⁷

From this argumentation should be clear that Bella is not anti-feminist heroine. She cannot make her decisions on the base of contemporary society considering eighteen-year-old girl too young for a marriage. Her world is not the real world, though she lives in Forks, the real town near Seattle in state Washington. Moreover, there are some supernatural circumstances that she has to deal with. There are Volturi vampires who pay a lot of attention to Bella because she is a human who knows about the vampire existence. Thus, besides the fact that Bella loved Edward, the marriage was also metaphor for the end of Bella's mortal life. Another point is that Bella feels absolutely happy in a role of Mrs. Cullen: “Happiness was the main component in my life now. And I was euphoric for the

¹⁰⁴ Larsson and Steiner, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight: Studies in Fiction, Media, and a Contemporary Cultural Experience*, 143-45

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 148

¹⁰⁶ Karen Valby, “Breaking Dawn” *Entertainment Weekly*, 2009-09-29, http://www.ew.com/ew/gallery/0,20308569_20308452,00.html#20488430 (accessed May 2, 2012).

vast majority of the time. The days were not long enough for me to get my fill of adoring my daughter; the nights did not have enough hours to satisfy my need for Edward.”¹⁰⁸ Obviously, she is content wife, but it does not mean that she is anti-feminist. Any married woman can be an independent and strong woman. Moreover, it was Bella who protected all her vampire friends and defeated all Volturi vampires’ due to her own psychic gift. She was the strong and powerful “superhero of the day.”¹⁰⁹ Based on these evidences, it can be claimed that she does not look like anti-feminist heroine at all.

Another problematic theme mentioned in *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight* is that “Meyer’s novels present mainly white, heterosexual characters, among both vampires and human beings.”¹¹⁰ A huge number of virtual communities claimed that Meyer’s love story conception is homophobic because there are no homosexual couples, and this fact supposedly hides a message that true love is only possible with beauty, white and heterosexual man. However, Annbritt Palo, who examined sexuality in the Twilight Saga, argues whether the Twilight Saga would be the bestseller with bisexual Bella or homosexual Edward and Jacob.¹¹¹ Another question is whether the homosexuality must be included in every book to avoid any allegations of discrimination.

The criticism is also focused on Edward’s supposedly dominant and abusive behaviour during Bella’s human life. Debra Merskin argues that “Edward Cullen is a psychopath and Bella Swan, is completely dependent on him.”¹¹² This criticism is based on Edward’s stalking, his need to control Bella and his strong conviction that he knows what is the best for her. For instance, when Edward invited Bella for a dinner, she refused, saying “Honestly, I’m not hungry.”¹¹³ However, Edward did not accept her answer, rather the contrary he opened the door of a restaurant and said that she “should eat something.”¹¹⁴ Then, Bella obeyed him because “Edward’s voice was low, but full of authority.”¹¹⁵ In *New Moon*, he broke up with her because he was convinced about rightness of his actions and

¹⁰⁷ Stephenie Meyer, “Is Bella an Anti-Feminist Hero?” www.stepheniemeyer.org, http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/bd_fa.html (accessed May 2, 2012).

¹⁰⁸ Meyer, *Breaking Dawn*, 388

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 541

¹¹⁰ Larsson and Steiner, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight: Studies in Fiction, Media and Contemporary Cultural Experience*, 150

¹¹¹ Ibid, 150-52

¹¹² Merskin, A boyfriend to die for, 1

¹¹³ Meyer, *Twilight*, 144

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

positive consequences for Bella: "I wanted you to have a chance at a normal, happy, human life. If I hadn't thought you would be better off, I could have never made myself leave."¹¹⁶

A clear example of his psychopathic nature is stalking. He followed Bella wherever she went. He was sneaking around her for weeks, and he even got into her house to watch her sleep, saying in defence: "What else is there to do at night?"¹¹⁷ When Bella realized that Edward was stalking her, she is flattered, instead of frightened.¹¹⁸ Her reaction is really unusual and unhealthy because even many Edward's fans admit that Edward's behaviour is "creepy as hell if that happened in real life."¹¹⁹

Elaine A. Heath claims that Bella's logic is sometimes similar to logic of unhealthy dependent person. When Edward is alone with Bella in the mountains, he has problem with his self-control because of desire for Bella's blood. Bella knows about his internal struggle, but the point is that she did not tell anyone about date with him because she did not want Edward to get in trouble if he killed her.¹²⁰ Actually, she cares more about him, though she knows that he can kill her without ever being suspected. It does not look like healthy relationship, indeed. However, young girls obsessed by Edward may think that this behavior is common in any relationship. Debra Merskin expresses concerns that young girls may accept the model of hyper protective, controlling, dangerous guy and dependent girl as an ideal.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Meyer, *Twilight*, 144

¹¹⁶ Stephenie Meyer, *New Moon*, (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2006), 512-513

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 255

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁹ Larsson and Steiner, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight: Studies in Fiction, Media and Contemporary Cultural Experience*, 151

¹²⁰ Elaine A. Heath, *The Gospel According to Twilight: Women, Sex and God*, (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 31

¹²¹ Merskin, *A boyfriend to Die For*, 18-19

CONCLUSION

The figure of the vampire is one of the oldest and most fascinating. The legends and lore have been handed down for generations in every part of the world, and there could be seen significant development of this figure. At the dawn of history, the vampires were generally depicted as women with violent and animalistic behaviour. Babylonian Lamashtu, Malaysian Langsuyar, Assyrian Lilitu and Greek Lamiai were the first vampires in the history. Their transformation was usually caused by some tragic circumstances such as loss of a child. Thus, they kidnapped and sucked children of others, and actually they enjoyed an excellent appetite. The characteristics of what the Western world understands as a vampire come primarily from the folklore of South Eastern Europe which brought some common vampire characteristics such as the necessity of coffin/grave, fear of sunlight and holy items, aversion to garlic and death by wooden stake or fire. After the thirteenth century, the vampires were mostly depicted as repulsive and zombielike creatures, and people truly believed in their existence, which led to the regular waves of vampire hysteria and hunting of alleged vampires. It was examined that the vampire myths were mostly used to explain unknown phenomena such as mental illness, epidemic, premature burial, porphyria etc. During the eighteen and nineteenth centuries, the vampire has been fictionalized and romanticized probably more than any other character. The setting was usually dark creepy and ghotic, and the vampire himself mostly belonged to the upper-class. Besides the bloodthirsty countess Carmilla or evil Lord Ruthven, the most famous representative of this period is Count Dracula who typified the vampire genre for several decades. The vampire shifted from a primitive outsider to a noble man. Dracula is a powerful and strong man with his castle, brides and a huge amount of money. He is very cruel and has cold, calculating and cunning character. He is nightmarish enemy indeed. The end of the twentieth century brought new themes and modification. Most of the authors tried to come up with something new and unique because the society seemed to be tired of universal vampire model persisting from Stoker's times. The main representative of these times is Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* dealing with two-hundred-year-old vampire Louis de Pointe du Lac. Rice omitted some more traditional characteristics like fear from holy items or Dracula's popular opera cloak. The twenty-first century is typical by strong fascination with a vampire fiction likely due to the world-wide successful Twilight Saga written by Stephenie Meyer. The complicated love story between the vampire Edward Cullen and human girl Bella Swan has touched many people, especially

the female part. Edward Cullen is inhumanly beautiful, unbelievably strong and deadly vampire, but he is also protective, gentle, tender and very seductive. Girls and women cannot stop themselves from sighing whenever Edward appears on the scene. Expressive speaking, the vampire in a Volvo ran over the prince, sucked his horse and seduced the vast majority of female readers.

Generally, Meyer's vampires have become symbols of desire, eroticism and power. They need not sleep in the coffins, actually they need not sleep at all, and the sun cannot destroy them. They are the best predators ever because everything about them attracts people. Some of Meyer's vampires are also very domesticated and socialized. They go to work, attend school and have human friends. Moreover, they have free will. Who do not want to kill people, do not have to because animal blood is as nutritious as human blood. Thus, once the vampires were given a choice to give up human blood, they ended up being vampires in the way they are. Suddenly, the horror genre changed to a romance and vampire bites were replaced by vampire kisses.

Regarding to the Twilight phenomenon, Meyer's vampires could seemingly be found everywhere. There are Twi-cons alias meetings of the Twilight fans. You can read countless Twilight blogs or twific -fictional stories created by fans and based on the original concept of Meyer's novels. One can join Twilighers or Twihaters alias fans and critics of the Twilight Saga. There exist team Edward and Team Jacob, so let's choose your supernatural boy to die for. Generally, the movies, commercials and magazines are overwhelmed by gloriously handsome vampires. Thought it is generally known that the popularity of any genre is transient, it can be assumed that Meyer's vampires left an indelible mark in our culture. Strictly speaking, the world was bitten by Twilight.

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