

Université de Montréal

Coalescence and Opposition: Depiction of Vampires in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and  
Stephenie Meyer's *Breaking Dawn* from the *Twilight* Series

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## Résumé

L'objectif de ce mémoire est de créer un dialogue entre *Dracula* de Bram Stoker et deux romans de la série *Twilight*, *Twilight* et *Breaking Dawn*, de Stephenie Meyer. À l'aide de concepts présent dans ces deux ouvrages, il est possible d'analyser ce que la figure du vampire représente pour notre conception de l'être humain.

Dans le premier chapitre je soutiens l'idée que la transition que vit un être humain pour devenir un vampire est une métaphore de l'amélioration du soi. À travers cette transition, un individu peut accepter son côté le plus sombre dans l'objectif de le contrôler et non de simplement le dissimuler. Dans le second chapitre, j'examine les différents rôles que porte le sang dans la littérature portant sur les vampires. Bien que le rôle sang joue un rôle dans la représentation de la vie et de la mort, il en vient à représenter des concepts plus en lien avec la société comme l'appartenance à une race ou à un groupe en particulier. Dans le troisième chapitre, j'examine de quelle façon la peur de l'étranger, l'autre que l'on ne connaît pas, disparaît graduellement au fur et à mesure que le vampirisme devient une image d'amélioration et non de corruption ou de dégradation.

Tandis que les deux premiers chapitres sont axés sur la nature même du vampire, le troisième utilise cette nature pour comprendre où est la place du vampire dans une société humaine et ce que cette place signifie.

Mots clés : identité; vampire; l'inconnu; société; le sang; le soi.

## Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to create a dialog between Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and two novels from Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series, *Twilight* and *Breaking Dawn*. With the help of concepts present in these novels, it is possible to analyze what the figure of the vampire represents in our conception of a human being.

In the first chapter I support the idea that the transition that a human undergoes in order to become a vampire is a metaphor of the improvement of the self. Through this transition, an individual is able to accept its darker side in the objective of controlling it instead of simply hiding it. In the second chapter, I examine the different roles held by blood in vampire literature. Even though blood holds the role of being a physical representation of both life and death, it comes to represent concepts that are related to society like being part of a race or of a given group. In the third chapter, I observe how the fear of the stranger, the other that is unknown, gradually disappears as vampirism becomes an image of improvement instead of being one of corruption or deterioration.

While the first two chapters are focused on the nature of the vampire, the third will use that nature to understand where the vampire stands in regard to a human society and what its place amongst it signifies.

Key words.: identity; vampire; the unknown; society; blood; the self.

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## Introduction

This thesis investigates the ever-changing nature of the vampire figure that, like a mirror, can reflect what is in front of it in that exact moment. Like a mirror, it will create many images and will, each time, be different while being no less relevant. This thesis focuses on the nature of the vampire figure and its portrayal in vampire literature, more specifically Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Stephenie Meyer's *Breaking Dawn* from her *Twilight* series. I wish to explore how such a figure reflects numerous aspects of the society and period in which it originates. While I do not propose an analysis in depth of the human psyche, I believe that how we portray ourselves and how we define those around us has helped in the creation, and evolution, of the vampire figure.

To be able to analyze the figure of the vampire, it is vital to understand its origin. While there is no specific point in time when the figure of the vampire is said to have been created, Kathryn Morris links its source inspiration to "strange stories [that] began to emerge out of eastern Europe" in the "late seventeenth century." She claims that:

In late seventeenth century, strange stories began to emerge out of eastern Europe. They typically described some person who, having died under unusual circumstances, returned to terrorize his family and neighbors. These revenants would often suck the blood of their victims before returning to their graves. When exhumed, their bodies would be uncorrupted and their veins full. The monstrous creatures could then be destroyed by impaling them or cutting off their heads, or by removing and burning their hearts.  
(181)

These stories quickly traveled through officials who claimed to have witnessed such events or by letters sent to relatives describing such scenes. The problem with these testimonies was that "the overly credulous risked accepting fabricated or fraudulent facts, while the overly incredulous

risked rejecting new facts too quickly because they did not fit expectations” (Morris 185). Even though some events have been proven to be false, some remain a mystery. It is easy to see how such stories could lead to the creation of a monstrous figure that would find a home in literature and later in cinema. The stories themselves furnished the core aspects of the vampire and some features have been either added or removed over time. Marianne Kristensen claims “an important quality of a myth is its ability to renew itself so that it becomes relevant to each time and culture” and this applies to the vampire myth (7). That figure has survived the years, and Wendy Fall brings forth the point that “vampires are ill-defined as a category of creatures because of this tendency to shift in response to culture” (205). Since the vampire figure changes according to the time and culture in which it is depicted, it is, indeed, hard to create a specific category for it, and it is why the term vampire refers to such a high number of creatures that may possess only one or two of its qualities or all of them, and then have some more of their own. Fall also argues that “every generation creates its own version of the vampire, which is the vampire that generation deserves” (216). Since the vampire’s representation shifts according to culture, a writer will portray the vampire as something horrible according to his own culture but such a portrayal may not be as horrifying to some readers of another culture or another era.

With the notion of the vampire myth being forever relevant to each time and culture, I would like to demonstrate how vampire literature proposes versions of the vampire myth that suits each culture and period. To prove such a relevance, I will show how the novels *Dracula* and *Breaking Dawn*, are relevant to the era in which they are written and how the three can be seen as a development through the analysis of what being a vampire symbolizes in the novels, why blood is a central concept around the vampire myth and what it relates to, and how the forces in

opposition in the novels can help us understand how the vampire has changed over time as the world itself has evolved. By using two novels separated by a hundred years in their date of publishing, I believe that this thesis contributes to the analysis of how the other is treated in literature both in our current period and in the past. Using two novels written in such different periods allows for an analysis that will highlight how such a view has changed over a century. While a lot of modern criticism of vampire literature focuses on the feminist aspect of the genre, I wish to extend this view to the other in general. While I acknowledge that the feminist aspect of the modern vampire literature is rich in content, I trust that the inclusion of the concept of race alongside that of gender allows for new insight into how the outsider was treated in two different periods.

## Chapter 1: Vampirism and Transformation

What is the significance of being a vampire? What does a transition from human being to vampire suggest? While, as seen in the introduction, the definition of the vampire is in constant evolution in accordance to the generation in which it appears, its embodiments retain characteristics of their “nineteenth-century incarnation as creatures torn between animal instincts, human conscience, and monstrosity” as stated by Wendy Fall (216).<sup>1</sup> In accepting both the premises that the manifestation of the vampire is always changing and how it keeps some of its nineteenth-century facets, it is possible to analyze what the hidden meaning behind the vampire is, and what it means to transition from human being to such a creature. This chapter focuses on two concepts. The first concept is the vampire being a “dark mirror”, as termed by Fall, and I will use it to analyze the eponymous character of *Dracula*. The second concept is the currently trending notion of the self-as-project: an idea that promotes the continual personal improvement of an individual. While I agree that this concept is large in its scope, I nonetheless believe that it is central to Meyer’s novel and the key aspect of this notion which I will use is the idea of accepting all facets of one’s body or personality. I will apply this idea of acceptance to the character of Bella in *Breaking Dawn* who transitions from human being to vampire. My decision to do so is an attempt to establish how vampirism, when idealized, can be deceptively seen as perfection.

In 1897, Bram Stoker published his novel *Dracula* featuring the figure of the vampire. Such a figure, previously seen in John Polidori’s “The Vampyre” in 1819, in “Varney the Vampire; or,

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<sup>1</sup> See Fall’s essay “Vampires: Reflection in a Dark Mirror” for her full theory on the Dark Mirror.



the Feat of Blood" featured in short pamphlets from 1845 to 1847, and in Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* in 1847, had taken many forms over the years, and led to Stoker's creation of Count Dracula. For many years, the Count stood as the image of vampirism itself, inspiring numerous other representations of the vampire figure in both cinema and literature. Stoker has, in a sense, created the template which has been used in the creation of numerous vampires even after his own death. The novel *Dracula*, being an epistolary novel, is written in the first-person perspective of characters through journal entries, letters, and other personal writings. This leads to the character of Dracula being always perceived through the opinion of the main characters without a voice of its own. This form of writing greatly influences how the count is depicted in the novel as his appearance and actions are described as terrible through the eyes and hands of human beings.

Dracula, one of the most renowned vampires, stood for a long time as the most horrifying creature found in fictional horror with his "cruel-looking mouth," "his protuberant teeth", "long and fine" nails, his "hairs in the centre of the palm" and a hand "more like the hand of a dead than a living man" (Stoker 22-23). The feeling created by such a strange appearance is clearly stated by Jonathan Harker in the text: he feels "doubt" and "fear" and thinks "strange things which [he] dare[s] not confess to [his] own soul" (Stoker 23). This description of Dracula, which creates feelings of fear in Jonathan, marks Dracula as an odd individual. His differences are highlighted in Harker's journal. In the first few chapters of the novel, the Count is put in a separate category from his guest as all his oddities are pointed out, including the color of his lips, of his eyes, and of his skin. What staples him as foreign is the white of his skin that is devoid of any

blood. It is not perceived as supernatural, at first, but such a pure white does not exist amongst living human beings, and is associated with cadavers and death.

Throughout the novel, the distinction of Dracula being foreign and of another race becomes important in classifying his actions as monstrous and to ostracize him as not being a part of humanity. Stoker's decision to suppress the count's voice in the epistolary narrative also plays an important role in creating this feeling. However, I would like to argue that Dracula is seen as monstrous through our own refusal to accept how that figure is so akin to a human being. By looking at his basic needs and behavior it is possible to see that the vampire's actions are not entirely different from a human's. We learn from Jonathan that "Dracula lacks servants, that he is nocturnal, that he likes to eat alone, and that he despises mirrors, and only later do we watch him crawl down walls head first, feed small children to his women, and sleep in his coffin" (Stevenson 142). These oddities are compared to a human's standards but are key differences between the most basic activities of their lives. Dracula's peculiar actions in the castle are, at their core, human actions but different from an Englishman's. The Count is awake during the night instead of the day, he sleeps in a coffin instead of a bed and feeds children to his women.

While Dracula's behavior might seem odd to an Englishman, out of context, it proves that Dracula and his fellows must drink, eat, and rest like a human but they do so differently. When comparing the vampire figure and a human, it can be observed that the vampire's behavior is but an inversion, a parody, of human actions. Human beings live during the day while vampires do so at night. Humans eat animals and other living entities while vampires feed on that which is different from them, human beings and their life essence, blood. While it might be taken to the

extreme, it does, however, demonstrate how similar the two species are in their differences, like a reflection that shows an inverted image. Even the descriptions of the count and of Jonathan Harker are seen as an inversion. While Jonathan has a rosy English complexion, the Count possesses a white skin that mimics that of a cadaver, in opposition to Jonathan's healthy, living, skin. The human character has blood flowing in his veins, while the Count is often described with blood around his mouth or on his clothes. Even the hairs on the palm of his hands, where humans do not normally have hair, help to demonstrate how Dracula is an inversion, a parody, of a human being. The importance of creating such a distinct appearance between the two characters is to highlight how similar they are.

Another aspect of the Count's behavior that is deemed as horrible by the characters of the novel, but which is revealed to be a hidden facet of a human's, is the violent nature of his actions. Various actions perpetrated by the vampire are in all appearances vicious as they are presented as murder and rape by the protagonists. They do, however, reflect basic human behaviors of feeding and procreation: like the feeding on and later death and transformation of Lucy. I will discuss these notions further in the next chapter as the important idea here is the concept of violence, in the eyes of the humans, attached to those actions and not the nature of the actions themselves.

Since the main characters deem the vampire to be a horrible monster who commits violent acts, they claim that it must not be allowed to live. On various occasions, Dracula demonstrates his unnatural strength but often does so upon provocation by the humans which might lead the reader to wonder who the violent one truly is. Some actions done by the group of

individuals who desire to banish such a great evil are sometimes of an ambiguous nature when carefully analyzed. When Mina is corrupted, against her will, by Dracula, she is marked as unclean by the group when Van Helsing “placed the Wafer on Mina’s forehead, it had seared it — had burned into the flesh as though it had been a piece of white-hot metal” (Stoker 316). The fact that they have allowed the wafer to “sear” her flesh like a piece of “white-hot metal” shows that they are not as holy in their purpose as they claim. They, intentionally or not, have caused great pain to one of their own group who has not willingly fallen prey to their opponent.

This tendency to cause pain through violence is, at the end of the novel, repeated when they slay the vampire as Mina describes in her journal: “on the instant, came the sweep and flash of Jonathan’s great knife. I shrieked as I saw it shear through the throat; whilst at the same moment Mr. Morris’s bowie knife plunged into the heart” (Stoker 400). Their actions and decisions to aim at the throat and heart to “shear” and stab are of great violence and are done with a desire to kill. The speed and efficiency with which the kill has been secured is also troubling as the men in that scene appear to execute such an action with both agility and peace of mind. In that very scene, their violent behavior is not unlike Dracula's own throughout the text, a behavior that they deemed worthy of death. Macy Todd defines rightly the group’s violent nature thus: “the rituals and customs that go along with the hunting party’s actions are a disguise for conventional violence. When they finally dispose of Dracula, for example, their ritualistic plan of action is abandoned in a burst of force” (361).<sup>2</sup> This is further reinforced by the claim that they wish to “to undo the evil of their actions in the same moment that they perform them” (Macy

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<sup>2</sup> See “What Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* Reveals about Violence” for other types of violence, some being even non-physical, that Macy Todd examines in the novel.

Todd 363). I would agree with her claim as Stoker created a figure so powerful as Dracula to demonstrate how powerful, and violent, human beings can be when faced by a power that threatens their lives. I would argue that it is possible to see Dracula's violence as a parody of the protagonists' actions. By accepting the premise that Dracula is the hidden and darker facet of the humans, then his potential to commit violent actions would then be limited to the potency of violence his creators, if we keep the concept of a reflection in a mirror in mind, can enact.

The idea of a dark mirror that creates a reflection of a being's darker facets goes well alongside Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject in her essay "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection." In her theory, Kristeva uses a concept called the "primal repression" and she describes it as: "the ability of the speaking being, always already haunted by the Other, to divide, reject, repeat" (12). This described tendency to divide and reject can be seen in *Dracula* through Fall's concept of the dark mirror. If the vampire is a reflection of a person's hidden facet, then it is also an attempt by that person to separate itself from such things that are deemed monstrous or, in other words, behavioral aspects that are not endorsed by the society in which that person lives. As an example, an individual coveting another person's wife and acting upon that desire was shunned in Victorian England. Such a deed was seen as terrible. Fall's mirror then becomes metaphorical and, thus, by dividing and then rejecting this monstrous aspect of itself, it is only logical that the person from whom this monstrous figure originates would seek to destroy it to remain within the boundaries of what a given society considers permissible.

Kristeva's theory, however, does not stop at the primal repression. She also mentions how "excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stand for the danger to

identity that comes from without" (Kristeva 71). In this analysis, I would argue that the most important part is the idea of the corpse and of decay. As Kristeva claims in her essay: "It is the human corpse that occasions the greatest concentration of abjection" and the vampire is such a source of abjection (149). The end of every human body is to decay and turn into a corpse, a universal signifier of death for human beings. However, the vampire and its nature disrupt that natural order. While decay is, according to Kristeva, a "privileged place of mingling, of the contamination of life by death, of begetting and of ending" it takes on a whole new meaning through vampirism (149). The vampire is able to stop the decaying of the deceased person's body by infecting it with the essence of a vampire. It is, in opposition to the "contamination of life by death", a contamination of death by life. This explains why the Stoker's vampire figure's ghastly appearance unnerves the characters of his novel.

I believe that which creates a vampire, be it blood in *Dracula* or venom in the *Twilight* universe, breaks the natural cycle of the human body as it prevents it from reaching its final state. As per Kristeva's theory, it infects the death that is the corpse, with a kind of life that allows it to stay in a semi-dead and semi-alive state, the undead state of a vampire. It can, then, be agreed that the vampire figure itself is a form of living abjection, in literature, as it both reminds humans how they will eventually die and show them a fate that could prevent that which every living creature is destined for by turning the embrace of death into an eternity of undead monstrosity that belongs to neither of the known states of being alive or dead. The figure of the vampire can then be seen, in this sense, as humanity's fear of death given form through the fictive figure of the vampire.

There lies another factor of why vampires are deemed monsters. Death is relatively familiar to living creatures as it is their fate but the state of being between life and death is a foreign notion. According to Stevenson, “the familiar is the image of good, while foreignness merges with monstrosity” (142). This idea easily applies to the vampire figure as its very nature is a foreign notion to us. While living creatures follow the pattern of living and then dying, the vampire follows the exact opposite, a reflection or parody of that natural order, by dying first and then living. As it can be seen with Lucy Westenra in *Dracula*, she starts as a living human being who then dies and, from that death, she then rises as a vampire. This disruption of the natural order of living things creates the image commonly used to describe vampires as undead since, in a living being’s perspective, there are only two states of existence: those of being either dead or alive. An entity that exists outside of those states can, then, only be a monstrous “other”. This concept of the vampire existing outside of the living realm reinforces the idea that the “evil” vampires, like *Dracula*, represent the darker side of humanity. As long as humans live, so will their reflection, the vampires, exist.

As I discussed earlier, the vampire figure is not necessarily evil. However, *Dracula*, in which the narrative style deprives the count of a voice, does not really open up the possibility for the vampire to be good. Being written in the first-person perspective of characters through journal entries, letters, and other personal writings, *Dracula* is always perceived through the opinion of the main characters and, as an outsider to their group, is forced into the role of the “other”.

The solution of Stoker’s protagonists to deal with their hidden “vampire” is to destroy it in an attempt to keep it from view since, as Eric Kwan-Wai Yu argues: “To the horrified Harker,

the count can only be perceived as a loathsome beast, a degenerate monster, if not degeneracy itself: all traces of his modernity and Englishness must be erased" (164).<sup>3</sup> What Harker views, however, is but his own reflection. By erasing it from view, through the metaphor of destroying the vampire figure, the humans, like Harker, try to suppress that image of their darker side to hide that shadier part of themselves from both their own sight and that of others. Stephenie Meyer proposes an alternative to this kind of behavior in her *Breaking Dawn* novel, released in 2008, from her *Twilight* series as, in opposition to *Dracula*, Bella sees and admires herself in a mirror in the first few moments when she becomes a vampire. The fact that Bella sees the reflection of her vampire self in the mirror gives a whole new meaning to the concept of the dark mirror. Whilst *Dracula* mirrors the shunned and violent side of humans that had to be destroyed or hidden, Bella acknowledges the existence of her darker side and, instead of seeking to destroy it, embraces it as a part of herself. In Meyer's novels, the vampire figure is no longer a metaphor for the hidden part of a person: it is still a dark facet of the individual's personality but it is now embraced instead of being ostracized. Through the mirror's reflection, both parts are united. In opposition to *Dracula*, Meyer's vampires are complete entities. Emma Dunn supports this type of idea when she claims that "upon sacrificing her female flesh and transforming into a vampire, Bella gains the ability to dominate all aspects of her previously unruly body, including its appearance, abilities, and desires" (118).<sup>4</sup> This idea of "sacrificing" human flesh also points toward a willingness to become a vampire which is different from Stoker's idea of a transition that is imposed on a victim.

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<sup>3</sup> Eric Kwan-Wai Yu, in "Productive Fear: Labor, Sexuality, and Mimicry in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" describes various types of fear found in Stoker's novel.

<sup>4</sup> See "Good Vampires Don't Eat: Anorexic Logic in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* Series" for Dunn's theory on how Meyer's novels perpetuate a logic of anorexia.



Meyer's take on the vampire is interesting as the discussion of vampires being neither good nor bad but a mix of both is more open than it is in *Dracula*.

As a human, Bella knew what the vampires' lives were like. She knew that the typical vampires drank human blood in order to survive and that, especially in their early days when they are known as newborn vampires, their emotions can be extremely volatile. These emotions, however, do not go beyond the range of emotions that humans can feel. Bella is then seen as accepting both positive and negative emotions when she recognizes her reflection. Furthermore, the acceptance of her new way of life and how she chooses to live reconciles her human past and her future as a vampire.

While some vampires are seen as monstrous by drinking the blood of innocent humans to survive, Bella and her newfound family, the Cullens, propose an alternative way of feeding which is an attempt to oppose that image of the vampire as a monster. They call themselves vegetarian vampires since they solely feed on animals instead of human beings or, as Marianne Kristensen describes that new concept of the vampire figure: "They are self-conscious and self-reflective beings that acknowledge that they are of a monstrous nature, and make the moral decision to live as vegetarians, which is a very human thing to do" (88).<sup>5</sup> Their decision to do so comes from their desire to coexist alongside humans instead of seeing them as food for their survival. Kristeva touches that type of idea in her essay when she claims that "abjection appears as a rite of defilement and pollution [...] it takes on the form of the *exclusion* of a substance (nutritive or linked to sexuality)" (17). Applied to the *Twilight* series, this concept follows Kristeva's idea of

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<sup>5</sup> For further reading on her theory, see "The Literary Vampire — From Supernatural Monster to the Actual Human?".

primal repression as the “good” vampires, Bella and the Cullens, exclude human blood from their diet in order to separate themselves from the “bad” vampires who drink human blood in an attempt to be neither human nor entirely inhuman. While I agree that this new vampire figure explores the desire to cohabit with human beings, I would like to point out the irony of “vegetarian” vampires feeding off animals. The very definition of a vegetarian is “a person who does not eat meat: someone whose diet consists wholly of vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, and sometimes eggs or dairy products”.<sup>6</sup> Could this new vampire figure, then, still be a parody of a human being? I would argue that they are as, no matter where it comes from, they must still feed on life itself, blood, instead of sustaining it but I will discuss the matter further in the next chapter. Their desire to feed differently from the rest of their species does not eliminate the violence linked to their feeding habits.

The way vampires are perceived in Meyer’s novels is also different from *Dracula*. They are no longer clearly marked off as outsiders due to their foreign or hideous physical appearance: they are seen as incredibly beautiful, above the average human beauty, and cannot be differentiated from a human being when standing side-by-side. The only physical aspect that might easily mark them off as different is their glittering skin when they are under direct sunlight. The ability to live during the day also refers to the fact that they are no longer a hidden facet of a being that comes out only at night or in darkness. While it is true that they can live amongst humans, Marianne Kristensen strengthens the idea that the vampires in Meyer’s novels are improved individuals when she claims that: “Edward in the *Twilight* series [...] shows that the

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<sup>6</sup> Definition taken from the Myriam-Webster dictionary.

vampire no longer represents something that is horrible or unobtainable, but rather something that can be obtained and that has the possibility of changing one's life in a positive direction" (94). According to her, humans can, through vampirism, get closer to their best self as an improved version of themselves. While I agree that, in some regards, Meyer's vampirism is portrayed as a positive improvement, most of its aspects are not so different from how *Dracula* was presented as evil to readers. Dracula possessed the strength of many humans together; he spent his nights expanding his knowledge of things and had to take lives to sustain his own. The Cullens, despite the way in which they are presented, are not so different from the count in these aspects. I believe that while Meyer's portrayal of the vampire figures is an attempt to quell the pre-existing fear of the other, as seen in *Dracula*, it, nonetheless, does not negate the potential threat that such a figure brings with it.

Many ideas in Meyer's series support the notion of the vampires being improved versions of humans that succeeded in transcending their past limitations as simply human. The first improvement that can be observed in the novel is the loss of a human's physical weakness. As Emma Dunn points out: "Edward repeatedly warns Bella, 'you are so soft.... You don't realize how incredibly breakable you are'" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 114). When Bella and Edward wish to share an intimate moment, the vampire makes her understand how physically inferior she is to him. His hard vampire body and his physical strength could crush her if he is not, at all times, careful. Dunn summarizes this idea clearly in her essay: "Within Meyer's novels, the soft body is fragile and vulnerable to attack, while the hard (vampire) body is externally 'perfect'" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 114). By transitioning from human to vampire, an individual can, then, surpass the past limitations of a human body and acquire a new state of strength that allows the body to be protected from

most harm. Through vampirism, “Bella’s ‘achieved’ vampire physique is awesomely beautiful and physically hard” (Dunn 118). Vampires are, in the *Twilight* universe, hard to destroy. It must be pointed out, however, that this juxtaposition of a hard vampire body and a soft human one demonstrates how easy it would be for the vampire to kill Bella. I would also add that using the word “breakable” somewhat dehumanizes Bella in Edward's view as an object can be broken and repaired but if a human body is broken it will not be so easily repaired. This betrays how the Cullens are described as valuing human lives and might, in fact, align the family with Dracula’s feeling of superiority over humanity.

The improvement of the self through vampirism does not stop at raw physical prowess. All the senses that belong to a human being are also improved during the transition. Meyer’s vampires have improved eyesight that can clearly see even specks of dust, hearing that can hear sounds from far away, a sense of smell that detects even the most minute distinction between smells, and a sense of touch that feels even the smallest textures when they both touch things and when they are touched. Their ability to taste stays the same but their appetite craves blood instead of human food. When these senses are used together, they give the vampire the ability to be in perfect control of their movements. Bella, when she sees the world for the first time as a vampire, says that “the dimming shadows and limiting weakness of humanity” were taken off her eyes (Meyer 390). Her coordination has also improved as she thinks that “the instant [she’d] considered standing erect, [she] was already straight” (Meyer 391). Bella, in her human form, is known as a clumsy person who can trip on anything and who has issues coordinating her movements. However, with her newfound abilities, she is able to move with a grace that is seen as superior even for a vampire as Edward remarks: “That was quite graceful—even for a vampire”

(Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 409). The vampire's abilities are, then, enhanced versions of what the human previously could do, both on the physical and sensorial aspects and it, again, points out how inferior humans are. Bella's newfound coordination is, however, also a potential threat as she is then able to go on a hunt a few minutes after her transition. While she is able to prevent herself from feeding on nearby humans, the threat still lingers as the humans would have been unable to protect themselves.

Another key element that allows the vampire to surpass its past human limitations is the loss of the need to sleep or rest. In *Dracula*, vampires must, at sunrise, lay in their coffin until sunset. Even though they are incapable of sleeping, they lay there for half a day in a lethargic state. In the *Twilight* series, however, vampires do not have to lay in either a coffin or a bed and are not prevented from moving around during the day. The benefits of such freedom from the need to rest can be seen in the Cullen family who is composed of various members who possess a deep knowledge of whatever they are passionate about. The two main examples that can be seen in the series are Carlisle's knowledge as a doctor and Edward's musical prowess. Since they do not, like human beings, have to spend an average of eight hours a day to recover from their daily exhaustion, the vampires are able to progress in any field that they seek to improve themselves in. Carlisle has spent nights studying medicine to know how to treat both humans and vampires, and Edward has had plenty of time to practice the piano. While, in the series, there is no example of how this extra time, from a human perspective, can change the course of a person's life, it does open up the possibility of continuous improvement when paired with the immortality of the vampire.

The most interesting facet of the transition is how it is felt by a human character who gets to experience both life as a human and then as a vampire. Bella has experienced both these lives and her thoughts reinforce the idea of how the self can be improved through vampirism. The reader is able to capture her thoughts when she thinks: "As a human, I've never been best at anything [...] after eighteen years of mediocrity, I was pretty used to being average" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 523). That feeling of being "average" is emphasized in the first *Twilight* novel when Bella is compared to the Cullen family whose members were all seen as perfect in every possible way. The notion of superiority given to the vampire figure throughout the series is felt when Bella completes her transition and is able to feel the improvements vampirism has given her. By reading her thoughts, the reader is able to see that she feels more complete as a vampire than she did before: "I was amazing now—to them and to myself. It was like I had been born to be a vampire" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 524). Aligning Marianne Kristensen's idea that the vampire has been humanized in its recent versions with Meyer's series, I would agree that "the vampire has evolved into an extension of a human; they are something *beyond* human" (66). Accordingly, Bella does not become something entirely different from a human being, she becomes *more* than a human being. By improving her human self through vampirism, she is able to go past her previous limitations to transcend her human nature to become an improved version of herself.

This idea that the vampire figure in the *Twilight* series is something more than human instead of being a completely separate entity explains why some vampires choose to feed off animals instead of humans. As Kristensen writes it: "Despite their supernaturalness, they [the Cullens] consider themselves equal to us humans, hence do not want to take human lives for their own pleasure" (81). This desire to prevent pain from being inflicted is a key element that attempts

to separate the more modern vampires from traditional ones like Dracula: “Dracula was important for what he does, the modern vampire is important for what it *is*” (Kristensen 93). The distinction drawn by Kristensen is vital in the dialog that exists between Stoker’s and Meyer’s novels as the count was important in his time for his apparently evil, from the protagonists’ point of view, actions while the Cullens are just as significant today for what they are. They are beings, whose nature is deemed as evil, who choose to live peacefully in accordance with the way humans live and act against their instinct to feed on human blood. They are humanized vampires that promote the improvement of self despite the horrible background that might exist in their kind’s past. They do not follow the same path that their leaders, the Volturi, do and forge their own path through their eternal lives.

The vampires in the *Twilight* universe are a good counterpart to Count Dracula as they shift the focus from social anxieties to personal ones. The core idea of feeding on animals instead of humans opens up the possibility for the vampire figure to no longer be seen as an immediate threat and to no longer be ostracized. This idea is, however, overshadowed by the fact that most vampires in the *Twilight* series do not mind harming humans to feed, and the Cullens, with their vegetarian diet, do not mind taking the lives of animal creatures as they share the see it as more humane. By giving human emotions to the vampires, Meyer creates a gray zone that was not present in *Dracula* in which the vampires are not all seen as evil. Stoker’s take on the vampire myth created a narrative in which Dracula, due to his actions and to the reader’s point of view as human, is forced into the role of the evil monster who never directly speaks and is unable to voice his emotions. In Meyer’s novel, however, by having a narrative that allows the vampires to speak

for themselves, the reader is able to explore the world of vampires and realize that they are not all inherently evil.

While it is true that this new version of the vampire figure has the potential of being an example of good, the opposite is also true. The vegetarian vampire figure proposed by Meyer has an equal potential for doing good deeds as it does for evil ones. Those vampires, while seen as slightly weaker than the ones who feed off human beings, are still physically superior to humans and could, would they so desire it, invade the human world as Dracula desired. Meyer's vampires, while being depicted as good by her narrative, possess the same qualities that marked Dracula as a threat to England in Stoker's novel: they are physically superior, most of them disregard the value of human lives, and they can easily pass for human beings. This comparison, in my opinion, opens up the possibility of seeing Dracula as not as evil as he has been described by the protagonist. Given the fact that Stoker's vampire figure is not given a voice of its own as Meyer does with her vampires, I believe it could, had it a voice in the novel, be nuanced and not only relayed to the role of the evil entity to be destroyed. If all vampires in Meyer's series had been unable to directly speak and share their thoughts, like Dracula, readers might have had a different view of them. However, since the narrative is nuanced and the Cullens are depicted as good in opposition to the other vampires, it is understandable how a reader could see the count as evil and the Cullens, especially the main character Bella, as good.

The two main vampires, Dracula and Bella, appear to represent different ideologies but they can be seen as a continuity. I have decided to use these two characters, even though they are separated by over a hundred years in their creation because they both challenge what the



reader is invited to see. They are invited to see Dracula as evil, through the epistolary form, and Bella as good, through a first-person narrative, but neither is one or the other. Kwan-Wai Yu claims that the protagonists in *Dracula* see the count as an evil being as they are afraid to “recognize in Dracula ‘their culture’s imperial ideology mirrored back as a kind of monstrosity’” (164). They are afraid to gaze upon their own nature since the vampire is but a reflection of it. In Meyer’s series, Bella understands her condition as human and knows that she is flawed. She never, like the humans in *Dracula*, claim any superiority over vampires and, in fact, only feels complete when she becomes one. In other words, Dracula is like a glass that can be used to peer into the darker side of humans while Bella is an attempt to remove that glass to unite both the reflection and the reflected individual into a complete entity again. If, in the 19th century, Dracula was the facet of humanity that had to be hidden for humans to conform to social norms, then Bella, in the 21st century, is a return to individual growth and shifts the focus from the social to the personal. Both novels present a different point of view on the concept of the other that does not belong and both of those have helped to shape what the vampire figure represents.

## Chapter 2: Blood: Family, Life, and Sexuality

A human's transition into a vampire is a ritual of giving and receiving fluids. While blood holds vital importance in that ritual, it is, however, a symbol that represents more than the sheer passage from one state to another. Many questions arise as to the semi-constant presence of blood vampire literature. Why is blood such a central element in vampirism? What does it represent? Must blood be taken as a metaphor, a symbol, or as nothing but what it biologically is? While these questions do not have one precise answer, I would like to argue that blood, often seen as life itself, is ideal for the ever-changing vampire figure. Furthermore, I believe that another reason as to why it is omnipresent is because we tend to see blood and race as interchangeable words. In this chapter, I would like to present how blood in vampire literature can be used to explore the concepts of humanity's fear of death, identity, and sexuality. Through the analysis of Stoker's and Meyer's novels, I would like to argue that both authors have discussed those three concepts in their novels. While they propose different points of view, I would propose that they are, in fact, a continuity.

The first concept that should be discussed about blood is its key role in the vampire's cycle of life. Essentially, there are three steps to such a cycle. The first step is the act of feeding on a human which serves both the purpose of satisfying the perpetrator's appetite for blood and to fulfill its sexual needs. When a vampire feeds on a human, it both drinks the victim's blood but also, in a sense, impregnates it. As Stevenson argues: "The same action, vamping, answers the need for nourishment and procreation" (142). Such a feeding/impregnation can be seen in *Dracula* when Dracula feeds, on numerous occasions, on Lucy. After the feedings, the second step occurs in the cycle: the human becomes, metaphorically, pregnant with its vampire self. The

essence of vampirism, coursing through the human's veins, acts as a kind of developing fetus that gives birth to a vampire once the human dies. The third and last step of the cycle is the newly born vampire that goes forth and repeats the cycle with another human.

The relationship that exists between the vampire parent and its child is, like many critics and scholars have pointed out, complicated. Before the transition, the pair engages in an act that could equate sex and procreation for humans. However, since the human later becomes the vampire's child, without the vampire's embrace it would never have transitioned, their relationship could be seen as incestuous. As Stevenson points out to explain the situation:

Not only do vampires combine feeding with reproduction, they collapse the distinction between sexual partners and offspring. 'Wives,' that is, become daughters in an extraordinarily procedure in which penetration, intercourse, conception, gestation, and parturition represent, not discrete stages, but one undifferentiated action. (142)

Stevenson also brings forth an interesting point by claiming that "penetration" happens during the feeding. There is a double meaning to the vampire's fangs penetrating the victim's body. The parent feeds on the child while the child receives what it will later require to be reborn. It is both an action that symbolizes parenthood and intercourse between two adults. However, since both of these are not socially acceptable together, that action is seen as evil.

It is important to note that a line is drawn at one point once the transition is over. In *Dracula*, the count no longer feeds on an individual that transitioned as that person is now one of his children. Once Lucy becomes a vampire, she is no longer an object of desire for the count.

This fact appears to separate the relationship that exists between the vampire and its child into two parts: a sexual relationship that exists before the transition and one of parenthood once it is completed. Stevenson points out “that sexuality is also a parody of human sexuality, a literalization that makes him seem very odd: he *cannot* commit incest, he *must* marry out. And that necessity, in turn, creates his primary danger. Since all vampires are kin, they cannot simultaneously seek likeness [...] and avoid incest” (144). In *Breaking Dawn*, the act of penetration is more direct as Edward and Bella are occasionally seen to have sex but the vampire never bites her to feed. This new twist, when compared to *Dracula*, opens up the possibility that Edward is not seen as Bella’s vampire father. Even though it is Edward’s venom that is shot in her heart to start the transition, he never directly injects it through penetration. Such a relationship that is shrouded in potential taboo is one of the reasons why vampires are seen as monstrous since, according to Julia Kristeva: “primitive societies have marked out a precise area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals or animalism, which were imagined as representatives of sex and murder” (12-13). Humans, by removing sexual intercourse between family members from the socially acceptable things, are afraid of the vampire that does it as it, like the world of animals in Kristeva’s theory, represents murder and depravity. These two elements must be ostracized from society if humans are to coexist.

By further analyzing the world of vampires in literature, I would argue that the roles of the sexes appear to be confused. There is no real role for each sex, and the fundamental differences between men and women are blurred. By taking a look at the vampires’ sexual encounters, it can be seen that “*Dracula* penetrates, but receives the ‘vital fluid’; once Lucy becomes a vampire, she acts as the ‘penetrator’” (Stevenson 146). *Dracula* is the one receiving the vital fluid, blood, which

is often linked to seminal fluid in vampire literature. He is, then, the receiver, a role held by women as the one receiving the fluid and later creating life. Lucy, the woman, becomes the one who penetrates, the role of the man. In *Dracula*, “the Vampire’s baptism of blood” is when a human is fed vampire blood to begin the transformation and, in that novel, Dracula cuts his breast to feed Mina his own blood in a scene that resembles breastfeeding (Stoker 343). Mina herself fails to fully describe the scene as she is stopped by a feeling of shame when realizing what the apparent breastfeeding meant: “He took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the —” (Stoker 307). The count’s actions of holding Mina’s hands, seizing her neck, and pressing her mouth so this wound demonstrates the violent nature at the core of a vampire’s relationship.

The vampire not only blurs the roles of each sex but also makes seminal fluid and blood appear as interchangeable as the symbol of life and of its creation. This leads to both the actions of breastfeeding and oral sex being, as seen in *Dracula*, able to happen at the same time. Dracula both breastfeeds Mina into becoming a vampire and forces her to drink his blood/seminal fluid with her mouth. Stevenson describes blood as meaning “many things in *Dracula*; it is food,” “it is semen” and adds that “*Dracula* does indeed make blood and semen interchangeable fluids, and this equivalence may offer another clue why the combination of red and white is the vampire’s distinct coloration” (144-146). Kwan-Wai Yu refers to the phenomenon of blood, milk, and semen becoming substitutable as “anatomical displacements and the confluence of blood, milk, and semen” (148). In this sense, blood becomes a signifier of the creation of life through semen, of the nurturing of it through the milk, and of the life and death that is represented by blood.

Stoker and Meyer do not approach the concepts of femininity and masculinity in the same way in their use of the vampire figure. In *Dracula*, these notions are blurred and the vampires do not act in accordance with any of these concepts. Their physical appearance may align with the human versions of the masculine and the feminine bodies but their actions, however, are not prescribed by those human notions. The count, with his masculine physical appearance, does not act in the manner a Victorian man would. When humans procreate, there needs to be both a father and a mother present to conceive the child and to, later on, tend to its needs. Vampires, however, fulfill both of these roles by themselves. Dracula, when creating an offspring, will act as both the father and the mother. As it can be seen when Dracula breastfeeds Mina, he can take on the role of the mother by giving the fluid that feeds the child but he also acts as the father by being the penetrator with his fangs. His behavior will appear odd to human beings as there is no need for two vampires to come together to conceive children. A single one holds the procreative power of both a man and a woman. Thus, the count holds a greater power over life than humans do and it reflects the duality of blood in vampire literature as both life and death: the giving and the drawing of blood. Despite his power, however, Dracula needs humans to procreate. Since he is unable to conceive with members of his species, he must always seek new blood: "Because his sexual partner is also his food, the vampire must marry out or die. A world without foreign women would represent not only sterility but famine" (Stevenson 144). This duality of a human being both food and a potential partner blurs the line between humanity and fodder in the vampire's eye. While I agree with Stevenson's idea, I believe the vampire figure being forced to "marry out or die" is a parody of the threat of inbreeding, or incest, would pose to humanity's survival if those actions were both common and tolerated. I think this would also explain why violence is often

linked to the vampire figure when it comes to procreation. That figure must seek someone different from it or die out.

In the *Twilight* novels, the distinction between sexes and their roles is more distinct as vampires often form pairs, mates, who will live together. The pairs that we can observe in the novel are mostly formed of a man and a woman. In this regard, they fit into the more standard human view on relationships but they are unable to conceive children together like humans. They retain their power to create offsprings alone but the only pair that is seen as conceiving a child in a human way is Bella and Edward. They are, unknowingly at first, successful in procreating since Bella is still human when they engage in sexual intercourse.

In Meyer's novels, the male vampire, when mating with a human female, is able to inseminate her with his venom which creates a hybrid that is neither fully vampire nor human. His ability to conceive through bodily fluids links back to the idea that blood and semen are interchangeable in vampire literature. Rachel Hendershot Parkin explains Meyer's thoughts on the male vampire's fertility by quoting her in her essay: "Meyer writes that 'throughout the vampire's body are many versions of venom-based fluids that retain a marked resemblance to the fluid that was replaced, and function in much the same way and toward the same purpose'" and so, male vampires "have venom-based fluids that closely resemble seminal fluids that 'carry genetic information and are capable of bonding with a human ovum" (70). These venom-based fluids, however, only allow the male vampire to be fertile as they do not replace ovaries. This means that once Bella is turned, she loses her capacity to bear children, like every other female vampire. In this series, male vampires are the only ones who hold the true key to life as they can conceive children through both human or vampire means. Furthermore, the female inability to

create life within her might be explained by the fact that if a female vampire could create life within her body, most pairs, or couples, would be somewhat incestuous, since one vampire creates the other like Dracula does. The count, however, no longer sees the new vampire as a potential partner. If Edward turned Bella into a vampire and she could bear their child as a vampire, it could be seen as incest. I believe Meyer's vampire figure is different from Stoker's in this sense. While she does link the ideas of inbreeding amongst vampires to sterility and potential extinction if they do not feed outside of the family, she does not relate her vampire as close blood relatives as Stoker did.

While Stoker and Meyer propose a different view, in their novels, on the relationship that exists between two vampires, they both depict the exchange of blood, through the drawing and the giving of it, and the feeding habits of a vampire as creating links between individuals. In *Dracula*, Lucy is raped and becomes Dracula's victim. This event links her to him as it begins her transition toward becoming a vampire and one of Dracula's children. Through the ritual of baptism, the count creates a link between himself and his children. He, himself, admits that they have shared a relationship of some sort when he tells his wives in his castle: "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so?" (Stoker 46). Before the transition they were linked by feelings and once transformed, they share a deeper bond like parenthood. Another instance when this existing link can be observed is when Mina becomes infected by the count. Ever since his visit to her in the night, when he breastfed her, they share a sort of telepathic link through which they can feel and see through the other's senses. The count, being the parent and figure of authority, also holds power over Mina and can prevent her from revealing his feelings to the humans through his power over her. Furthermore, the creation of links through blood can be



observed during the numerous transfusions of blood that Lucy receives from the protagonists. Once Arthur, Lucy's future husband, transfuses some of his blood to her, Jack Seward is asked by Quincy: "Arthur was the first; is not that so?" (Stoker 153). The importance of the husband being the first to have a part of himself going inside the body of his loved one tells a lot about blood linking two individuals. Even though the goal was to save Lucy's life, her husband being the first was important, as if the first transfusion was a kind of bloody defloration that charges blood with a sexual image.

In the *Twilight* series, some vampires develop a kinship through their feeding habits, like the Cullens who are vegetarian vampires. Even though most vampires are seen as forming pairs, most vampires in the novel acknowledge and tell the Cullens that their family shares a unique bond that is not found in the usual covens. Carlisle, the father figure of the family, is the one that has turned all of the other family members, aside from Alice and Jasper, and taught them to live off the blood of animals instead of humans. It is interesting to note how the Cullens use the word "family" to describe themselves instead of "coven" like the other vampires. Since most of them share a bond through Carlisle's venom, and all of them through their feeding habit, they can live like a real family. Even though Jasper and Alice do not share a direct link with the rest of the family, they are, nonetheless, considered to be Carlisle and Esme's adoptive children. The family member's decision to live more like human beings than vampires allows them, according to Meyer's text, to have deeper and more humane feelings than other vampires, and it would account for the fact that they see themselves as a family and not as a coven. They see themselves as a whole and not as an addition of numerous pairs. Kristensen also adds that "the strong bonds that blood creates" are "not just between vampires, but also between members of a family" (79).

It is then logic that the bonds that share the Cullen family emulate that of blood relatives that form human families. Their relationship is, however, different from what can be seen in Stoker's text. Meyer does not treat the act of feeding and the following transition as sexually charged. This enables her vampire figure to be both family relatives to some and sexual partners to others.

I would argue that while the view of the two authors on the links that exist between vampires is different, they both reflect ideologies present in the period in which their novels have been written. Stoker's *Dracula*, depicting the fear of the outsider, can be seen as not a warning but as a fear of racial mixing. In his novel, the vampire figure is marginalized and shunned for his procreation with an Englishwoman. Meyer's *Twilight* series boasts an all-inclusive-family with members that come from different backgrounds and have different origins. While Meyer's desire to create such a family is admirable, they too are depicted as living on the margin of the fictive society present in the novel. They are not described as common. While they can pass as humans and walk amongst them, they must live in the wood outside of the human settlements.

The links created between individuals through blood can also be seen as a rite of passage in these novels. In *Dracula*, the drawing of blood can be a metaphor for sexual intercourse and when a being, like Lucy, is a virgin, the drawing of her blood, meaning that blood comes out of her body, can be seen as a defloration. This first encounter is the first step in her rite of passage to become a vampire. Every human that is fated to become a creature of the night must undergo that rite. In *Breaking Dawn*, the rite of passage that can be observed is slightly different. During their honeymoon, Bella is deflowered by Edward while he does not directly draw blood from her. However, it does signify her passage into both adulthood and motherhood since she becomes pregnant from their intercourse. Tylin argues that "regarding vampires, the underlying fantasy

seems to be the blood as life-giving, in connection to the female triad of menstruation, defloration, and childbirth” (288). His claim aligns with the idea that blood can represent a rite of passage from a pre-adult state, through menstruation, to an adult, through defloration, and then into parenthood through childbirth.

For vampires, since they are a parody, or reflection, of humans, instead of menstruation when blood comes out of the body, there is a menstruation/insemination when the blood goes inside the body, as it happened with Mina. Furthermore, this exchange of blood can also be seen as a symbiosis between the parent and the child: “Blood is exchanged between the vampire and the new undead—parents feeding on their children and children on their parents, a bloody symbiosis!” (Tylim 289). Thus, by adding the parent and child type of relationship vampires have and the defloration aspect of the vampire’s bite, it is possible to link the existing relationship they have with Freud’s Oedipus complex. There is some kind of longing for the parent that, in this case, represents both sexes. It is, then, unclear whether the child should be jealous of the parental figure or desirous to be with it. However, I do not claim that Tylim’s theory applies to every iteration of the vampire figure. Dracula is, indeed, seen as the vampiric father of his wives and that explains his inability to engage in intercourse with his them once transformed. However, in *Breaking Dawn*, there is no exchange of blood when Bella undergoes her transition. Dracula directly penetrates its child while Edward turns Bella with a syringe in an act that resembles a medical operation. I do not believe that one idea is better than the other in this matter as both carry different ideologies as to the relationship that is created by blood.

Beyond the links that blood creates between individuals lies a central aspect of blood, that of its metonymy as life itself or rather as the essence of life. According to Stevenson, in *Dracula*,

“it is a rather ghastly parody of the Eucharist, the blood of Christ that guarantees life eternal” (144-146). Following this idea, I would like to propose that in vampire literature blood represents both the destruction and the permanence of life. Most vampires feed on the life essence of humans, their blood, to keep their own body as physically healthy as possible. They drain that life essence to prolong their own life. Without blood, as can be seen in both *Dracula* and the *Twilight* novels, vampires become less intellectual and more primal beings that will rely on their basic need to feed to act. It can then be agreed that they will no longer be themselves and that the life essence of their victims allows them to stay alive as non-primitive entities. However, this continuity or permanence of their lives, since they can do it for as long as there are living beings around them, comes at the cost of its opposite, the destruction of someone else’s life. Even though the vampire has the choice to either turn its prey into one of his kind or to let it die, a loss of life occurs. If transformed, the new vampire will, in turn, seek life, blood, to feed itself. If the vampire’s victim is not turned it will die from the loss of its blood, its life.

The permanence of life is also seen in death when blood is perceived to be life-giving and that which grants a beautiful appearance. This can be observed in the scene when Lucy Westenra dies and is watched by Dr. Seward who notes that “death had given back part of her beauty, for her brow and cheeks had recovered some of their flowing lines; even the lips had lost their deadly pallor. It was as if the blood, no longer needed for the working of the heart, had gone to make the harshness of death as little rude as might be” (Stoker 173). The emphasis put on blood, the essence of life, being no longer needed for the heart accentuates the fact that it can fight off the “harshness of death” and to make its effects “as little rude as might be.” Her death, however,

only prefaces her rebirth as an undead being but it, nonetheless, complements the idea that the vampire figure gives blood two facets: the creation and destruction of life.

Another aspect of blood in the novels is present in the opposition of concepts such as eroticism and sexuality in *Dracula* with the concept of love in the *Twilight* series. In Stoker's novel, Dracula's wives are seen as voluptuous and erotic, they are the manifestation of the Victorian fear of the new woman who is sexually free. They are seen as horrible by Jonathan since they show no restraint when it comes to sexual intercourse and their desire to drink his blood would mean stealing his virginity from his wife. Such fear of female sexuality comes from the Protestant religion which spread "gendered ideals of the sexual purity of the respectable woman" which "helped to enshrine a sexual double-standard" as remarks Holly Furneaux.<sup>7</sup> Women were seen as housewives and mothers with no sexual desires. They were idolized as pure beings who sanctified the house they inhabited.

While such a belief existed in the religious doctrine, the reality for most people was different. Furneaux discusses how "this double-standard is apparent in legislation such as the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857", in which it is written that "women could be divorced on the grounds of their adultery alone, while it had to be proved that men had exacerbated adultery with other offences" (Furneaux, "Victorian Sexualities"). She also argues that "ideal of the 'angel in the house', though, was counter-balanced by a cultural fascination with her opposite, the 'fallen woman' (a broad definition encompassing any women who had, or appeared to have, sexual experience outside of marriage, including adulteresses and prostitutes). Furneaux also

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<sup>7</sup> See her article "Victorian Sexualities" for an in-depth look at the double-standard created by the Protestant ideals.

claims that this fascination is why the figure of the fallen woman “appears in so much Victorian literature and art” (Furieux, “Victorian Sexualities”). I would argue that this double-standard regarding female sexuality is well-depicted in Stoker’s novel in the opposition of Dracula’s wives, seen as overly sexual women who throw themselves on Jonathan, to Mina being seen as chaste, loving, and protective of her husband. *Dracula*, being an epistolary journal, mimics the Protestant view on those actions as they are judged and presented as evil by the characters who adhere to the religious doctrine. Since the vampires’ voices are silenced by the narrative form, they can only be judged without being given a chance to explain their behavior.

Following the idea of a sexual double-standard, it must be noted that Dracula claims he needs new women. While his need for new women, and in a sense a need to be polygamous, is both a biological need to feed on them and to have intercourse with as an attempt to reproduce, there is an underlying fear of this being which always seeks new sexual partners. This fear is also represented through the potentially incestuous relationship that exists in Stoker’s novel also prevents him from mating with the vampires he transforms. Dracula is forced to seek new partners, a potential reference to men being tolerated to have multiple sexual partners while women were chastised when doing so.

Regarding the vampire figure’s sexuality and anatomy, I would like to point out that the vampire’s bite serves both the purposes of feeding and having intercourse. Sometimes, such actions are taken further as can be seen when Mina encounters Dracula for the first time. Dunn, to explain the erotic aspect of the vampire, claims that “because vampire mythology always hinges on the act of feeding [...] the vampire’s mouth [acts] as the paramount site of eroticism” (110). Thus, since everything vampire-related focuses on the mouth, it is only logical that it

becomes the “paramount site of eroticism” since it acts both as a mouth and as genitals. Meyer offers an alternative to this concept of blood as erotic by relating it to love instead. In the intercourse between Edward and Bella, there is no drawing of blood and the only blood that comes out of Bella’s body is when she gives birth to their child. In this sense, the image of blood in this vampire novel represents a new kind of birth through blood instead of the fluid being seen as an erotic substance part of erotic acts. Meyer’s novel deals “with the *love* between a vampire and a human” instead of sexual desires or needs (Kristensen 77). This love between a vampire and a human is, however, overshadowed by the fact that Edward must, at all times during their intercourse, restrain his desires or he would hurt, or potentially kill, Bella. While it is presented as a romantic moment in the narrative, the overshadowing danger cannot be ignored. Furthermore, the nature of their child being both human and vampire represents the unity of the two parents and how, to return on the idea of acceptance in the *Twilight* series, an attempt is made to present differences as something that draws beings together instead of separating them. It is not, however, unrelated to life and death as Bella had to die for her vampire daughter to be born.

Following the idea of human and vampire coupling, blood becomes a metonymy for race and racial identity. Throughout history, humans have had a fear of racial mixing and caste mixing that could pollute their societies. Stevenson explains this phenomenon when he claims that: “Groups speaking the same language and being alike in other ways might well exchange wives amongst themselves—but the connubium stopped at the boundaries of the language, territory, or colour, or whatever marked ‘us’ off from ‘them’” (Stevenson 140). His claim clearly defines the separation that exists between the group, the “us,” and the outsiders not part of it, “them.” This principle to marry within a specific group to which an individual belongs is explained by Julia

Kristeva as she explains that “the endogamic principle inherent in caste system amounts, as everywhere else, to having the individual marry within his group, or rather to his being prohibited from marrying outside of it” (Kristeva 79). This artificial separation mimics the one that exists between humans and vampires in Stoker’s novel and that explains why Dracula’s presence is seen as an element of corruption.

This preoccupation with protecting a certain heritage, or ethnic purity, has been present amongst human societies for a long time, including the London of Stoker’s time. In such a period, Britain had colonies around the world, and there existed a fear in the Empire that these colonies would be the ones to someday invade the capital. Stephen D. Arrata argues that this kind of fear present in literature is related to “the decline of Britain as a world power at the close of the nineteenth century; or rather, the way the perception of the decline was articulated by contemporary writers: (Arrata 622). This sprouted a fear of the outsiders, “them.” Stevenson, in his essay, asks: “Why are wives and womenkind a treasure better destroyed than lost to the enemy?” (139). The answer is that they hold the power of creation and if they were to mate with outsiders, there would be racial mixing, something that was seen, throughout history, as polluting a given race. This aligns with Arrata’s belief as he claims that the economic status of Britain and its diminishing power overseas “all combined to erode Victorian confidence in the inevitability of British progress and hegemony” (Arrata 622). This fear partly explains why Dracula is seen as such a monster in the earliest part of the novels when he goes to England and starts corrupting Lucy. He is then seen as “Dracula [...] the ultimate adulterer, whose purpose is nothing if it is not to turn good Englishwomen like Lucy and Mina away from their own kind and customs” (Stevenson 140). From an English point of view in the period when the novel was released, it was an existing fear



to lose women to an outsider. Stoker, in his novel, “defines the vampire not as a monstrous father but as a foreigner, as someone who threatens and terrifies precisely because he is an outsider” (Stevenson 139). The fear is, thus, not of the figure of Dracula himself but of the potential changes he represents.

The very nature of Dracula as a non-English character who dwells on English land and takes women for himself can be seen as monstrous for someone afraid of mixing. His biggest crime aside from corrupting the Englishwomen’s bloodline is “a sexual theft, a sin we can term excessive exogamy [...] he is exclusively interested in the women who belong to someone else” (Stevenson 139). Not only does he corrupt Lucy and Mina but he is interested in them because others also are. His crime is deemed as worse since he is the one who gets the women above the Englishmen who were also interested in them. In Stoker’s novel: “Dracula’s threat is not miscegenation, the mixing of blood; instead, he gives his partners a new racial identity” (Stevenson 144). He, through vampirism, strips the woman from her race and grants her a new one. She is no longer part of her previous race and must then be cast-off, or even marked, by members of that group. When Dracula strips Lucy of her Englishness, she becomes a “treasure better destroyed than lost to the enemy” and the vampire hunters destroy her new monstrous form and nature. With Mina, however, the events unfold differently. Since she is not entirely corrupted, she is simply marked off as polluted by having a mark, willingly or not, seared on her forehead. In both cases, “The wounds are not self-inflicted but given by members of the group of vampire hunters [...] so that they represent an attempt by the nonvampires to ‘mark off’ the vampires” (141). Being able to differentiate members of different groups is an attempt to keep a race’s purity alive.

In *Dracula*, the pure Protestant Englishwomen who are delicate in their manners and refined in their tastes become voluptuous, erotic, and hungry for blood once corrupted by the outsider, Dracula, and his racial identity. In *Breaking Dawn*, however, Bella's new racial identity is not seen as something monstrous that must be either marked off or destroyed. By turning into a vampire, Bella is no longer a human being, but through her feeding habits and her attitude toward humans, she can still live on the margin of humanity. At first, her werewolf friend, Jacob, was unable to accept her new identity and acted much like the vampire hunters in *Dracula*, he was distant and began to see her as a completely new entity. As the novel unfolds, however, he realizes that the new Bella is a different version of the human Bella and not merely a corruption of it. Meyer's novel even offers an alternative to *Dracula's* branding of the outsider. Bella's child, first seen as unique, is seen as a monster in the eyes of the Volturi since it is a mix of human and vampire essences, and they thought it had to be destroyed. However, upon seeing it and learning about its nature, they come to see it as something almost unique in their world and decide that it should live instead of being terminated. However, their benevolent decision to spare the half-vampire is tainted by the idea that they spared the child since it will, like them, stop aging once she reaches maturity. In a sense, they have allowed her to live since she will be assimilated.

While this is a new outlook on the vampire figure, I do not believe that the Cullens can be seen as good vampires since their potential for the destruction of life is equal to the non-vegetarian vampires. I would argue, however, that they symbolize a human's desire to change its behavior to live within a given society. While that person will still acknowledge their origins, they will seek to adapt to the customs of the group they wish to integrate.

It is interesting to compare the two novels and how they handle the character's behavior toward the potential corruption of women through vampirism by an outsider to that given community. While Stoker's novel reflects lingering fears of an invasion by an outside force that would steal the "good" Englishwomen, Meyer's story opens up the possibility that the mixing that was feared so much in the past could be able to produce a new identity through which an individual could potentially improve itself. I would argue those novels form a continuity as a development can be observed in the way the outsider is depicted. It is also interesting to see how the socio-political contexts of the periods in which the novels have been written have influenced this depiction of the outsider. However, I do not claim that one novel is better than the other as we cannot argue that one period is better than the other. Each period has a vampire figure that suits it.

### Chapter 3: The “I” against itself: The improvement of the Self and Fear of the Unknown

Blood in vampire literature is a powerful image of both creation and destruction of many things like relationships, fear, culture, etc. as seen in chapters one and two. Other concepts can be opposed to offer new insight into how each novel studied in this thesis differs and what can be gained through that difference. The first opposition to be found in each novel is the “us” against “them” which reflects the fear of a social identity being corrupted or shattered by a dreadful outside force. The Other, the unknown outside force, is always present in vampire literature but the fear it carries changes according to the period in which the novel is written. This is why “the analogy of a dark mirror works well to understand the particular type of horror that vampires evoke because they tend to reflect their contemporary culture’s darkest anxieties” (Fall 205). Stoker’s vampire does not represent the same threat that Meyer’s vampires embody since the two novels were written over a hundred years apart in time. The second opposition that will be discussed is the Feminine being opposed to the Masculine in terms of the fear that has helped to create the appearance and behavior of the female vampires in *Dracula* and how such fear of the New Woman is represented by Bella in *Breaking Dawn*.

Stoker’s Great Britain was flourishing and had colonies all around the world and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, it created a fear of the colonies invading the capital. However, instead of focusing on Dracula’s intentions toward England and its women, this chapter focuses on the representation of Dracula and the original fear that led to its creation. Dracula’s plan, from the very beginning of the novel, has been to invade England with the help of Jonathan Harker. The count, being a foreign individual to the country is seen as “a nightmarish incident of ‘reverse colonization’” (Kwan-Wai Yu 145). The fear of the colonizers being colonized by “the forces of

barbarism and demonism”: a force that is both foreign and unknown to them and against which they can do very little to stop its advance (Kwan-Wai Yu 145). Kwan-Wai Yu, quoting Arata, argues that “Dracula shocks us because he can ‘pass’ [...] and that he is a ‘monstrous double’ of late-victorian culture” (147). This refers to the vampire being a dark mirror of humanity and adds a new point to the discussion. Dracula can “pass.” This means that, in the general public, nobody could tell him apart from the humans around him without prior knowledge of his differences. In a Victorian England that is afraid of racial mixing and of being invaded by an outside force, this characteristic is potentially the most frightful of all of Dracula’s traits. The count can “pass” in such a manner since his ability to learn and develop is superior to that of a human being. Van Helsing describes Dracula as being “so strong in person as twenty men; he is of cunning more than mortal, for his cunning be the growth of ages” (Stoker 252). As such, he has had many human lifetimes to study the world that evolved around him through books and travelers and can adapt his behavior and speech to the country he covets. This aspect of the vampire also reflects the English colonies being taught the ways of the English people. The colonized learned from the colonizer how to “pass”, just as Dracula was taught by Harker. At the end of the nineteenth century, with the loss of British global influence, the fear of an uprising that could influence the British lifestyle was often expressed in literature.<sup>8</sup>

With that idea of fear in mind, Stoker presents the count as being superior to human beings and channels that dread through the vampire’s attitude towards them. This outsider is presented, through the protagonists’ point of view, as both outside of humanity and superior to

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<sup>8</sup> See Arata’s “The Occidental Tourists: ‘Dracula’ and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization” for a more exhaustive background on the decline in the British powers oversea and how it has influenced late nineteenth literature.

it and he is, then, seen as having no consideration for human lives. He does not view the lives of humans as being of any value since they are finite: "His [Dracula] massive memory and experience separates him from humans in the same way that humans are separated from insects; because of Dracula's comparatively immense life span and experience, humans bear little significance to the vampire" (Fall 212). Fall's use of the comparison of humans and insects is interesting as since Dracula is represented by the human in the comparison, the insects can be either beneficial or destructive and sometimes both. The average household spider found in North America will be harmless to humans but will be useful to keep other insects from invading the house while a single sting from a Black Widow spider can be fatal. In Dracula's view, humans are insects but using this perspective nuances the term insect. They may be disregarded for their different constitution but they are nonetheless potentially harmful. This dehumanization of the other characters in Dracula's view "is at the center of what makes him terrifying, as is his desire to relocate to England and to make that territory his next conquest" (Fall 212). Being conquered as an equal offers the possibility of staying alive but being conquered as inferiors offers a grim future for the protagonists were Dracula to win.

The vampire's attitude toward humanity makes the vampire as terrifying as his abilities and appearance. Fall claims that "Stoker creates a vampire whose monstrosity isn't founded in his animal instincts, but rather in his ambivalence toward humans. For a creature of such an alien attitude toward human beings to invade England would be an unthinkable type of horror for many readers" (212). Such a claim is based on how England acted in such a way when it colonized various countries around the world. Any being that was different was regarded as non-human, or at the very least not equal to the white European, and were, usually, massacred, turned

into slaves, or forced to work for England. The novel, being published in the decline of the British empire, created a fear of the colonies invading the capital. The possibility that Dracula brings of these invaders seeing the inhabitants of England as inferior, contemporary readers of *Dracula* could feel the terror of the possibility that the novel brings forth of how an invasion could be fatal to their way of life. Beyond the potential corruption of the English blood that was discussed in the previous chapter, this new threat creates a fear of death. If a superior force came to England with no regard for English lives, how could it be stopped? Another detail to consider in this equation is the fact that the count can “pass” as English. Since England has taught its ways to its colonies, the threat could already be in the country without anyone being aware of it.

The fear of the outsider and its potential destructive power is, perhaps, the greatest fear brought forth in Stoker’s novel but it is also mirrored by the protagonist’s will to fight and live. The vampire, being a dark mirror, reflects the humans’ will to live by a will to destroy them. This opposition of forces serves the purpose of countering the fear created by the count. While Dracula is powerful and a potential invader, some humans try to stand up to it and seek to vanquish it. The group represents humanity’s hope of defending itself against a superior threat and the novel ends with a victory for the protagonists but at the cost of human life. However, in a patriotic way, Quincey Morris dies for the cause of freeing humanity from Dracula’s threat. As he dies, he says: “I am only too happy to have been of any service [...] It was worth this to die” (Stoker 401). His death, when he claims that he is happy to die to protect the lives of others from evil, reminds the death of Christ, in the Christian religion, who died for humankind’s sins. Quincey’s action of sacrificing his life to protect England is seen as an honorable action due to his American nationality. The United States, being an old British colony, is seen as sacrificing itself for

its parent country through Quincey's sacrifice. The power of destruction is opposed by the power of hope and salvation. I must, however, point out that the novel, being written in the epistolary form and the author's decision to discard the vampire's voice from the narrative imposes this opposition between the two groups. By using the idea of the colonized individual rising against the colonizer, could Dracula not then be seen as the one fighting against the protagonists' will to destroy the vampire?

This constant opposition between humans and vampires brings forth the concept that the vampire figure is an entirely different race in literature. While this notion was discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to highlight how it has changed over the years: how the vampire is shaped today in Meyer's novels is different from how it was in Stoker's period. To have a better understanding of what the vampire stands for in literature it is crucial to look at the reasons why it is depicted as a different race. Stevenson claims that vampires are "a convenient metaphor to describe the undeniable human tendency to separate 'us' from 'them'. An idea like race helps us grapple with human otherness—the fact that we do not all look alike or believe alike or act alike" (140). While it helps the readers to acknowledge and understand the concept of human otherness, it also provides some insight into how alike humans are. When faced with each other, two human beings will pinpoint their differences and create a "us" and a "them" to separate themselves. However, when a third element is introduced, a non-human element like the vampire, the humans quickly group up and the "us" and "them" groups are transformed. The humans will no longer see how they are different but how alike they are in the face of the other party that was introduced.



In *Dracula*, when the vampire had not yet arrived in England, three men were competing for the favors of Lucy. These three men were humans but different in their status and place of birth. The reader is told that one is of high standing in society, Arthur Holmwood who later becomes Lord Godalming; the second is a doctor who takes care of an asylum, Jack Seward; and the third is a man from Texas in the United States, Quincey Morris. Even the ladies are differentiated by their wealth and standing in society. Lucy is a part of the higher class while Mina belongs to the upper-middle-class. However, as soon as the count arrives and the humans are pitted against the supernatural, the novel's narrative shifts into humans against the non-human, the other. The main characters are no longer seen as dissimilar: they seek each other's strength instead of seeing how different they are. Lord Godalming can supply funds and good connections to the group, Quincey Morris is full of conviction and vigor, Jack Seward and Van Helsing possess bright minds, and Mina uses her practical knowledge of trains and their arrival and departure times to plan the group's movements. Instead of seeing them as disparate individuals with diverse backgrounds, Stoker invites the reader to see them as parts of a whole and in which each member brings their own strength to complement the weaknesses of the others.

While the novel presents Dracula as a force of evil to be destroyed, I would like to argue that the vampire figure is not necessarily evil. The protagonists in *Dracula* are all Europeans aside from Quincey Morris who is American, which previously was a European colony. They are inhabitants of Western Europe, or related to it, and are faced with the outsider that comes from the very Eastern edge of the European territory. In this scenario, it is possible to see Dracula as an alienated outsider who is marked as different due to his eastern origins. As Morris points out, "the intellectuals who participated in the vampire debates" considered the Eastern-most

inhabitants of Europe as “the ignorant and superstitious East European savage” (Morris 183).<sup>9</sup> When taking this view of the inhabitants of the East into account, it is possible to see how Dracula, seen as the “East European savage” has been racialized by the protagonists in Stoker’s novel. The author’s decision to remove Dracula’s voice from the epistolary form leaves the reader with the Western characters’ view of the count as the only available point of view. By considering this aspect of the text, I would argue that it is valid to see the count as not necessarily evil but as demonized by the protagonists who saw him as both different from them and as a potential threat to the Western European way of life. However, by using the protagonists’ vision of the count, I am still confident that an analysis of the count as “evil” can be valid but the subjective point of view presented in the novel must be acknowledged as such. The “evil” count is useful in the analysis of the vampire figure but it is not all that the count represents: he is also the alienated outsider forced to go back to the margin of society where his castle, his place, is.

As an alternative to the count, Edward’s vampirism in the *Twilight* series, a younger image of vampirism, offers new insight on the opposition between the two groups. The traditional groups, “us” and “them,” are shattered and a new alternative is proposed by the narrative: the “self” against itself. Vampirism in Meyer’s novel is not portrayed as it was by Stoker’s protagonists in 1897: it is no longer necessarily a sign of evil and horror. Some vampires, indeed, do fit in the traditional role of the monstrous creature that cares not for human lives. However, some, as seen in the previous chapters do not fit that description. The narrative no longer focuses on vampirism being the nature of evil: evil comes from a character’s actions and is no longer inherent in

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<sup>9</sup> See Kathryn Morris’ “Superstition, Testimony, and the Eighteenth-Century Vampire Debates” for a more complete review of the Western European view of the first vampire sightings, legends, and testimonies that arose from Eastern Europe.

vampires. As an example, Edward Cullen is, in the series, seen on numerous occasions as a gentle vampire that seeks to protect humans from other vampires who disregard the value of human lives much as Dracula did. In other words: “Edward in the *Twilight* series [...] shows that the vampire no longer represents something that is horrible” (Kristensen 94). A vampire’s actions define its nature, not vampirism.

This notion of vampirism no longer standing for a signifier of evil opens up a new possibility in Meyer’s novel: it is “something that can be obtained and that has the possibility of changing one’s life in a positive direction” (Kristensen 94). As seen in the first chapter, Bella’s life is positively changed through vampirism, and at no point in the narrative is it hinted that Bella becomes evil after her transition. The only character that makes this connection is Jacob who is a werewolf and, according to the novel’s lore, a natural enemy of vampires. He refers to all vampires as “bloodsucking leeches” despite not knowing any of them on a personal level as Bella does (Meyer 259). His attitude toward vampires is a reflection of the Victorian anti-vampire behavior that can be seen in *Dracula* but it slowly changes as he begins to warm up to the Cullen family, and is at one point the one who protects them against members of his werewolf clan. This action to protect them opens up the idea that the vampires, at least the Cullen family, are worth protecting instead of seeking their destruction. This change of attitude toward the “us” and “them” separation signifies a change in how the Other is perceived in the modern days. The noted differences between two individuals no longer serve as a wall to divide them and put them in opposition.

The developing relationship between vampires and werewolves in Meyer’s novel is a testament to this newer behavior and can be seen at the end of the novel when Jacob “imprints”

on Bella's daughter Renesmee. This action of imprinting is, in short, a link that has always existed between two individuals, one of them being a werewolf, that marks the two as being fated to be together in a relationship. Meyer, through Jacob's character, explains that "it was involuntary" and that their mutual attraction, between Bella and Jacob, meant that he was fated to be with her daughter "from the very beginning" (Meyer 449-451). This attitude of acceptance and union between the vampire and the previously anti-vampire party mirrors the modern movement of acceptance toward differences. Members of two different races are seen as fated to be together. While both groups, the vampires and the werewolves, belong to the "them" group for humans, they can form a kind of unity between their groups and it allows them to coexist with humans. In the Victorian era of *Dracula*, the anti-vampire heroes would stop at nothing to destroy that which was different. Now, the possibility of a union exists and is encouraged over the fear of the outsider that existed. I do not believe, however, that such a view is to be dismissed as it belongs to the period in which *Dracula* was written.

Meyer, in her *Twilight* and *Breaking Dawn* novels, describes how, through acceptance and acknowledgment, one's difference can be seen as strength. Her *Twilight* novel starts with Bella accepting Edward's vampirism and wanting to be with him even though it could be dangerous for her. She chooses to be with him because she knows that he will not hurt her. He does, however, unwillingly hurts her on a few occasions due to his vampire nature. Later, she accepts Jacob's difference as a werewolf. In *Breaking Dawn*, she chooses, of her own volition, to become a vampire, to transition to another race, by embracing the vampire's difference from humanity. A transition can be seen from Stoker's attitude toward the turning of a human woman, seeing as being corrupted, to Meyer's more hopeful point-of-view in her *Twilight* series. Instead of seeing

it as corruption, she sees it as an opening toward new possibilities. This shift can partly be explained by the decrease in the religious influence present in literature.

Meyer's series' world is filled by three races: humans, vampires, and werewolves. As revealed in the last novel, it is also inhabited by human-vampire hybrids and couples formed of humans and werewolves. While some feelings of hatred exist toward vampires who have no regard for human lives, the human-loving vampires, like the Cullens, peacefully share the world with the other races. The presence of racial mixing is not frowned upon and is seen as a positive thing by Meyer and her protagonists. Even Bella's hybrid child, which was at first feared by the Volturi, becomes a symbol of hope and peace between the Cullens and the werewolves.

Another aspect that Meyer and Stoker approached differently is the notion of femininity and how it should either be suppressed in vampirism or not. This idea originates from the Victorian fear of female empowerment and the New Woman; a new type of woman who is acknowledged as intelligent, independent, who can work, and who is sexually free. This type of woman created fear in the male-centered power of the phallogentric ideal that existed in England. Such a fear took form in Stoker's novel in the depiction of Lucy as a vampire and Dracula's wives. These four women are portrayed as highly open with their sexuality. They are flirtatious and desire to drink the blood of men. This desire to drink blood directly translates into having sex for vampires. Stoker, through the character of Van Helsing, describes them as "devils of the Pit" and compares them to Mina who "is a woman" and claims that "there is nought in common" (Stoker 61). The opposition of Mina, a woman, and the wives is significant. The author denies them both their femininity and their place in society. Through their sexuality, they are seen as the Other that must not be acknowledged. Emma Dunn, on this subject, brings forth the idea that "the

hypersexuality, lesbianism, and villainy that characterize the Victorian female vampire reflect cultural fears of female appetite and consumption that dominated nineteenth-century discourse” (111). The wives, being seen as monsters for their sexuality, are given a minor role in the novel as Dracula’s wives. They are, furthermore, left nameless and referred to as the wives.

Julia Kristeva’s theories support the idea of femininity being oppressed by a male power as she discusses how “the attempt to establish a male, phallic power is vigorously threatened by the no less virulent power of the other sex, which is oppressed [...] the feminine, becomes synonymous with a radical evil that is to be suppressed” (70). This “power of the other sex” that threatens the male dominion is present in Stoker’s novel in the form of vampirism and is an attempt to suppress the feminine by having the wives killed by the male power represented by Van Helsing. Melissa Anne Howsam claims the author disguises “a rampant female sexuality behind an unrecognizable, vampiric mask, *Dracula* signifies the terror of the female in an era of anxiety about the ‘New Woman’” (41). While Mina can be seen as a type of New Woman, she is far less threatening to both the male power and the religious institution as she is not depicted as possessing sexual desires like the “devils of the Pit”. There is, however, a certain empowerment that can be seen in that character. Even though she must be saved by the male power, her professionalism and rigor in providing the male protagonists with crucial information to counter the count’s actions are astounding:

“Mina, an assistant schoolmistress already ‘overwhelmed with work’ (Stoker 55), is extraordinarily zealous in practicing stenography and typewriting. She tells Lucy that she also keeps a journal as an ‘exercise book,’ ‘try[ing] to do what [she sees] lady

journalists do: interviewing and writing descriptions and trying to remember conversations' (Stoker 56). She even takes pains to study train schedules in order to be of help to Harker in the future."

(Kwan-Wai Yu 150)

Mina's behavior is in direct opposition to Lucy, before her transition, who fits the Protestant ideal of the woman at home. While Stoker does not directly empower the female figure in his novel, he does open up the possibility that the New Woman is not necessarily a figure to be feared.

As an alternative to *Dracula's* fear of female empowerment, Meyer opens up the possibility of empowerment through vampirism. While Bram Stoker encouraged a type of anorexia and self-control as it can be seen with Lucy who barely eats when human and who is bloodthirsty and indulges in blood when a vampire, Meyer treats Bella's appetite differently. She depicts the human Bella as not eating much because she has no appetite and the vampire Bella as having a normal appetite for a vegetarian vampire. However, some critics like Emma Dunn claim that "like a post-feminist reincarnation of her predecessor, Lucy, the 'bad' Bella feasts—both figuratively and literally—while the 'good' Bella does not" (113). She also claims that "Meyer's novels frame Bella's appetite for food, like her sexual appetite, as out of control" (115). While it is true that in the early days of her transition Bella felt a heightened thirst for blood, it is a normal thing for newborn vampires to do so and she successfully manages to control her hunger soon after. Both male and female vampires feel this thirst and, thus, it is not necessarily directed toward a fear of femininity.

Before her transition, when she is pregnant with her hybrid child, Bella needs blood to feed the growing child but, thinking that it is wrong for a human to drink the substance, she feels guilty as she “opened her eyes and stared up at him. Her expression was... apologetic. Pleading. Scared. ‘It tastes good, too’” (Meyer 249). This guilt partly comes from her werewolf friend who keeps saying that it is wrong but she wants more and then acts according to her own will. Also, she is only “scared” because it is a new experience for her. Furthermore, Meyer, through Edward, claims that Bella, being empowered through vampirism, can skip the negative aspects of being a newborn: “You were unbelievable. All that worrying over being a newborn, and then you skip it altogether” (Meyer 517). Against all expectations, she can control her hunger as a newborn even when she is close to human beings. Her sexual appetite, however, is not something that has changed with vampirism. As a human, she kept asking Edward to have intercourse but due to her frail nature as a human, he feared to hurt her. Once she has transitioned, she is able to free her sexuality positively. She does not have intercourse with any man that she sees, she seeks only to engage with Edward.

*Dracula* and *Twilight* offer two different approaches to female vampires. The first, thinking that it is a danger for the male power, seeks to destroy the demonic female vampires while empowering the working woman represented by Mina. The latter embraces the female vampire figure in literature as a fulfilling experience that promotes personal growth. This attitude mimics the behavior the two narratives have toward the Other and the unknown. Isaac Tylim affirms that “hatred of the Other, the different (woman, Black, Jew, etc.) is often woven into vampire [...] narrative” and such a claim applies to vampires, which is the Other for humans (283). However, the attitude toward this Other has changed through history. Stoker’s vampire, *Dracula*, is



described as peculiar and as an evil that has to be destroyed since it is unknown to the protagonists and does not possess a voice of his own in the novel. Meyer's Bella is first portrayed as odd when human and as beautiful, her best self, as a vampire. Each of these descriptions fit the time in which they were written. Dracula, being seen as a threat from the outside, could not have been depicted positively in an era when Britain feared the possibility of an attack by its colonies. In modern days, Bella could not have been described as inhuman in appearance and in behavior when the social trend is to accept oneself and those around us despite the differences that might exist.

Following this idea of learning to live as a whole, I would argue that both novels have a cathartic element that fits their time. Dracula's death, at the end of the novel, is cathartic as it represents the end of the threat from the outside for Britain. To apply Kristeva's theory of the abject on this idea, Dracula is seen as that which must be purged from the body, Britain, in order to save the body. This idea of survival is central to the novel as the fear must be lifted and Stoker chooses to do it through fictional violence. Dracula, being the physical manifestation, in the novel, of the feared threat is destroyed by the brave protagonists in a repetition of the violence the readers fear. However, this refers back to the first chapter of this thesis and to the violent aspect of human nature that is reflected through Dracula. The protagonists, Britain and its allies, "hope to undo the evil of their actions in the same moment that they perform them; they wish to produce a violence that can stamp and blot out simultaneously" (Macy Todd 363). In other words, they seek to produce a violence that is necessary to "stamp and blot out" both their violence and that which required it.

Stoker's desire to write about violence and survival is an attempt to quell the fear that existed in England by putting it in words and repeating it in a context that will not, ultimately, bring it to life but only bring to life the feelings associated to it. Kristeva, on this subject, notes that "the abject, mimed through sound and meaning, is *repeated*. Getting rid of it is out of the question—the final Platonic lesson has been understood, one does not get rid of the impure; one can, however, bring it into being a second time, and differently from the original impurity" (28). She associated the catharsis with a solution to the abject. In the current context it would mean that while the menace may not be removed, the English could learn to live with it by purging their fear through literature.

Meyer, in opposition to this cathartic ending to cope with the fear of the outsider, offers her own catharsis through the apparent perfect family ending of the *Twilight* series. While the conclusion of *Breaking Dawn* depicts the stereotypical family of a married couple and their child, the second layer of it is much more purifying. Through this ending, the protagonist is empowered by her new identity. Embracing her darker self, by becoming a vampire, allows her to become a complete individual. While it might appear as the simple metaphor of everyone having to embrace their flaws and their darker side, it is much more. It is not, either, simply about a woman falling into the role of a mother and wife. It is about possibilities. This specific outcome is what the character of Bella might have wanted: stability in her life. However, Meyer does not claim that this is all that can be achieved through vampirism, or female empowerment. The metaphor of vampirism simply opens up the possibility of reaching one's goal, what one truly desires.

I would like to propose that the transition that can be observed between the two novels on the subject of female empowerment can be explained by the rise of the Feminist movement.

Discussing the various feminist movements, Elinor Burkett claims that Charlotte Perkins Gilman in *Women and Economics*, published in 1898 a year after Stoker's *Dracula*, "insisted that women would not be liberated until they were freed from the 'domestic mythology' of home and family that kept them dependent on men."<sup>10</sup> This idea refers to the concept of the angel of the house present in the Protestant religious dogmas of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Twenty years later, "in 1918, the British Parliament extended the vote to women householders, householder's wives, and female university graduates over the age of 30" (Burkett). As women empowered themselves, so did they empower female characters in literature. The various feminist movements up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century have changed the shape of women in literature and, in turn, changed the way the female vampire figure is depicted. I do not, however, claim that Stoker's or Meyer's vampire figure is better as they relate to the political and social context in which they were written. Although, I do believe that they are useful in seeing how, over a hundred years, the way women are depicted in literature has evolved.

Alongside the cathartic characteristic of the novels exists an opposition between the two texts regarding the expectations imposed upon the characters and how they are met. Following the beliefs of their time, the authors implemented expectations for their characters and ways in which they either followed or went against them. *Dracula*, being a Victorian novel, has a setup in which the women are, at first, seen as entities to be protected by the men. While it is true that Mina does help them with her intelligence, she is not allowed to engage in physical tasks. Lucy is restrained in her role as a pretty woman to be wooed, by the men, into marriage. While Mina is

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<sup>10</sup> See Elinor Burkett's article "Feminism" on the Encyclopaedia Britannica website for a complete overview of the various feminist movements of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

unable to completely escape the expectations set upon her, Lucy, through vampirism, can break free from the previous role she was expected to play. She gains complete freedom over her actions and desires and is then seen as drinking the blood of, which can also be seen as having intercourse with, children. This last part, with the novel being written in the Victorian period, is a warning against giving women too much freedom and seeing what depravity could then possibly ensue. An alternative is offered with the character of Mina, who has not completely transitioned. Even though she is not seen as becoming as free as Lucy, she, nonetheless, could divert from her previous supportive wife role and act as an active, and crucial, group member in the tracking of Dracula. However, she later returns to her previous role when she is freed from vampirism.

In Meyer's novel, Bella is more successful in breaking free from what the others expect of her. Throughout the entire series, her wish is to become a vampire but the two main male protagonists seek to prevent her from doing so. Edward sees vampirism as a kind of curse and would like for her to live her life a bit more before making a decision that could influence the rest of her eternal life as a vampire. Jacob, being a non-vampire, does not understand it completely but disdains it nonetheless. He sees vampirism as a kind of corruption, a defiling element that would negatively change Bella by taking her down a dark path. However, Edward is forced to turn her during the complicated birth of their child and once Bella becomes a vampire, she feels better and more complete than she ever was. Meyer invites the reader to see her as better than she previously was since "Bella's 'achieved' vampire physique is awesomely beautiful and physically hard. Just as the hard body in western culture stands for purity, hyperintellectuality, and transcendence of the flesh" (Dunn 118). She manages to break free from the male expectations set upon her by becoming a vampire and showing that she only benefited from transitioning.

The opposition of various elements and powers from the two novels brings forth the perspective of how the vampire, seen as the other, has developed over the years. Through the way in which it is represented, it is possible to observe how the outsider's representation has changed. From a defensive stance that warranted being wary of strangers to a desire to learn things about them, humanity's behavior toward the other has become one of acceptance. It is, however, interesting to point out that Meyer uses a vampire figure which is akin to Dracula in the figures of the Volturi. Those vampires from Europe who come to America to pass judgment on Bella's children create fear in the Cullens. Could this be some lingering fear of the outsider present in Stoker's novels and others of its kind that have made their way into Meyer's series? Could this lingering fear betray Meyer's view of acceptance of differences? I believe this older vampire figure is an acknowledgment of what has come before Meyer's take on the vampire myth and has served the purpose of opposing the old to the new and to see how both are in fact in constant dialogue. By opposing the two novels, it is also possible to see how the intellectual and technological advancements have shaped the vampire's behavior. After all, since the vampire is humanity's twisted reflection, it is natural that it should change and grow in tandem with its creator.

## Conclusion

From Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to Stephenie Meyer's *Breaking Dawn* from the *Twilight Series*, the vampire's nature undergoes crucial changes. The possibility of good vampires opened up with time, and has led many of its key features to be altered. Through this thesis, I propose that both novels suggest a version of the vampire myth that suits their time and that these versions can be seen as a development instead of two separate ideas.

A discussion between Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Stephenie Meyer's *Breaking Dawn* has shown how the vampire has evolved in both its physical and metaphorical dimensions. To conclude this study, I would like to briefly discuss how another issue is raised through the vampire myth and how it is relevant in all of the novels used in this discussion. The notion of marginalization can be found throughout the entire collection of texts that belong to vampire literature. Both Stoker and Meyer, willingly or not, touch that matter. Stoker, by depicting the vampire "as someone who threatens and terrifies precisely because he is an outsider," describes a tendency by the humans in his novel to push back the vampire, the outsider, to a status of being outside of humanity (Stevenson 139). Even though this notion has been touched earlier in this study, it is necessary to highlight it as it is still present in modern vampire literature as it can be seen in Meyer's novels. Despite the relative peace that exists at the end of *Breaking Dawn*, the characters are still referred to as vampires and werewolves. By using categories to separate the characters in her novels, Meyer herself creates the margins that split the characters into groups. While there is a kind of unity amongst the groups, as discussed earlier, that unity is composed of multiple small groups and not a big all-inclusive one.

Stoker and Meyer have both portrayed vampires that can pass as humans with their physical appearance but even though those vampires are able to live amongst humans they are not recognized as such. In Meyer's series that idea is reflected in the location of the Cullen family's house. It is located in the woods, far from the lodgings of human beings. They, quite literally in Meyer's novels, live on the margin of society to keep their vampire nature a secret. This secret is of utmost importance to them as if their true nature came to be known by the inhabitants of the town, the vampires would quite literally be recognized as outsiders and be pushed out of humanity. Stoker's view on the matter is similar to Meyer's as the count is first encountered in his castle which exists on the very edge, or margin, of the European territory. The castle itself feels supernatural to the human characters as if, like the vampire, it did not belong to the world of humans. Later, as the count is able to enter the English society, he is marked out and is forced to go back to his castle that exists on the margin of humanity.

This study has been centered on entities that belong to the realm of literature but which reflect issues that are at the very core of humanity. It is but one attempt amongst many others to help us define who, or what, we are. Instead of describing what we are, the vampire allows us to see what we are not. However, I would like to quote Kniesche as he claims that "instead of giving us a stable enemy, the vampire belongs to multiple worlds, including our own. It therefore reflects an anxiety that we, perhaps, do not know at all who 'we' are" (113). As humanity changes, so will its reflection: the vampire. Thus, the quest to know "who 'we' are" can never truly be completed. The best we can do is learn to live with each other as everybody has their own vampires: their Others that are not a part of their group or culture. Marginalization is but an attempt to find a place of belonging by association oneself to a group and by dissociation from another. However,

is the marginalization of others truly the answer or is there more to being human than promoting differences? As the progress toward acceptance is seen through *Dracula* to *Twilight*, we too have to learn to accept and live with our vampires.



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