

## ABSTRACT

### RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS IN THE FILMS TWILIGHT AND NEW MOON: AN IDEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

by Maura Dianne Burke

This study examined the relationship dynamics in the films Twilight and New Moon. The study was founded on the principles of ideological analysis, which postulates that all cultural artifacts are reflections of society's ideals, norms and anxieties. To that effect, the study focused on the romantic relationship dynamics between the key characters in the films and how these relational dynamics relate to the anxieties and norms and values of the dominant culture. Additionally, the study examined the role of "Otherness" and non-normative relationships within the films. The study also looked at the point of view, or Gaze, in Twilight and New Moon. The study found that messages contained within these films expressed a desire to revert to traditional male-female relationships. The presence of a Female Gaze in the films was also supported. Finally, the study found that the films reflect society's generalized fear of the "Other."

RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS IN THE FILMS TWILIGHT AND NEW MOON:  
AN IDEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Maura Dianne Burke

Miami University

Oxford, Ohio

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Advisor:\_\_\_\_\_

(Dr. David Sholle)

Reader:\_\_\_\_\_

(Dr. Ronald Scott)

Reader:\_\_\_\_\_

(Dr. Kathleen Johnson)

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Dianne Marie Burke. My mother's courageous battle with breast cancer taught me how to be strong, resilient and to live each day to the fullest. Through her unwavering support, unconditional love and understanding, she made me the person I am today. Without my mother I can truly say I would never have come this far. She stood by me when times were beyond tough. She taught me compassion, humility and the ability to overcome whatever obstacles came my way. She was always there for me with a warm hug and a soothing voice. She was the only one who truly understood the challenges I faced. I miss her with all my heart. The moral lessons she instilled in me have helped to keep me on the proverbial 'correct path.' I know she is proud of me. I love you my beautiful mother. I carry a piece of you within my heart everywhere I go....forever and ever.

***Dianne Marie Burke (1947-2007)***

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## Chapter One

### **Introduction**

In the past three years, there has been an influx of vampire narratives in the form of novels, film and television. These narratives appear to be, largely, an American phenomenon. Vampire narratives have existed since the beginning of recorded history and are remarkably adaptable. Indeed, the vampire has grown and changed with time. Each era, each political regime and each social shift brings with it a new idea of vampirism. As Nina Auerbach (1995) states in her book Our Vampires, Ourselves, “Every age embraces the vampire it needs” (xi).

It is easy to dismiss folklore, science fiction narratives and horror narratives as mindless entertainment. However, all of these narratives are cultural artifacts which, when studied, reveal the underlying values, fears and anxieties of the dominant culture. Literary scholar Jack Zipes (1983) uses the many different versions of the fairy tale “Little Red Riding Hood” to illustrate his claim that fairy tales were (and still are) consciously created by the ruling classes to reinforce societal ideals and values. In the book The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood Zipes (1983) states that there is no way to ever bring closure to the fairy tale of “Little Red Riding Hood” because the young girl will always perish at the hands of the ‘Big Bad Wolf.’ However, “[Little Red Riding Hood] is always reincarnated in some retold form to mark shifts in our attitudes towards gender formation, sexuality and the use of power” (xii).

Like fairy tales, science fiction narratives and vampire narratives are cultural artifacts containing important messages. As such, they deserve more scrutiny than they currently receive. The resurgence of vampire narratives over the past few years cannot be attributed to simple “teenage hysteria.” By studying these texts, scholars may gain insight into the values and beliefs of the dominant culture. In the book Culture and Technology, authors Murphee and Potts (2003) state that science fiction narratives are the “leading cultural forum for ideas about technology’s role in social change” (96). Murphee and Potts (2003) also state that the science fiction narrative “usually contains fantastic elements, projections into the future or a parallel universe. But these elements of fantasy are extrapolations from principles of science or existing technologies” (98).

This thesis will argue that vampire narratives are a component of science fiction. Science fiction narratives exist as a subgenre of the horror narrative. Both science fiction narratives as well as horror narratives rely upon fantasy, disreality, altered states and subconscious desires. Vampire narratives especially tend to rely heavily on the issues of altered states and

subconscious desires. Auerbach (1995) lends credence to the notion of vampire narratives as culturally significant artifacts, stating that the very title of her book, Our Vampires Ourselves was chosen because it “makes fear an ongoing cultural and personal presence...it must steep itself in political and ideological ambience” (3). Many other scholars echo Auerbach’s assertions. In the article “Vampires Among Us,” author Rodney Clapp (2003) links contemporary vampire narratives to the recent terrorist attacks on American soil: “Especially in post-9/11 fictions, vampires do not immediately look different from ordinary human beings. ...They speak our language and outwardly conduct their lives like ordinary citizens. Yet, like Osama bin Laden, they want our blood” (45). Vampire narratives may serve as important cultural artifacts which, through careful reading and scrutiny, reveal the underlying values, fears and anxieties of society.

### **Statement of Research Interest**

This thesis will examine the cultural significance of the recent influx of vampire narratives with a particular focus on films. Assuming that vampire narratives, like fairy tales, folklore and science fiction, convey important information about cultural beliefs, values and fears, this study will examine contemporary American vampire narratives in order to determine the underlying themes and evidence of societal norms and fears contained therein. To that end this study will focus, specifically, on how romantic relationships are framed in popular contemporary vampire films and what they convey to the public. In addition, this study will analyze the role women play in contemporary vampire narratives.

### **Primary Research Question**

This analysis will, in terms of traditionally proscribed gender roles, focus on how the role of woman is framed in the film adaptations of Stephanie Meyers’ Twilight and New Moon.



### **Secondary Research Questions**

In order to address the primary question, this analysis will also look at:

1. In terms of proscribed gender roles in romantic relationships, how is the relationship between Bella and Edward framed and what message does this convey to society? Likewise, how is the relationship between Bella and Jacob framed and what does this convey to society?
2. By looking at the film narrative framing, composition and the point of view or “Gaze” as Mulvey defines it, how are men and women presented in Twilight and New Moon and what does this convey to the audience?
3. Do Meyers’ vampire narratives express a desire to return to the nostalgic notion of romanticism, where men occupy the role as savior and women the weak character in need of rescue?

### **Scope of Thesis**

This analysis will utilize an ideological analysis of the film adaptations of Stephanie Meyers’ Twilight and New Moon. American author Stephanie Meyers became an overnight celebrity with the publishing of her first novel Twilight; the first book in a series about teenage vampires. The series deal with the teenagers’ love lives, and the trials and tribulations they face. By solely focusing on the film adaptations of the first two narratives in Meyers’ series the analysis will be able to focus on the key trends and themes contained within the films.

This study will analyze four “key” scenes from the film adaptations of Twilight and New Moon. These pivotal scenes were chosen because they reveal the relationship dynamic between Bella and Edward and the relationship dynamic between Bella and Jacob. Additionally, these scenes will prove useful in terms of investigating the idea of a point of view or Gaze.

### **Methodology**

The overarching methodological approach I will use to study these contemporary vampire narratives is that of ideological analysis. I will also be using gender and film analyses. Ideological analysis is based upon the idea that all cultural artifacts are significant and reflect the views, fears and anxieties of the dominant culture. In her article “Ideological Analysis and Television,” author Mimi White (1986) writes that, “ideological analysis aims to understand how a cultural text embodies and enacts particular ranges of values, beliefs, and ideas” (qtd. in Allen 163). Furthermore, ideological analysis strips bare the nicely organized view society has

towards its own values and beliefs. Ideological analysis unveils the viewpoints and interests of the hegemonic “ruling class.” White (1986) claims that ideological analysis can help lift the veil of “false consciousness...[enabling] people to understand how the system—even, perhaps, their own television shows—help perpetuate” the oppression of individuals who do not fall into the predominant or upper classes of society (qtd. in Allen 165). By utilizing ideological analysis to analyze Meyers’ films I hope to discover just how these artifacts are significant by uncovering the cultural values, fears and anxieties contained therein.

### **Literature Review**

Sexuality is quite often, one of the most prominent themes in any vampire narrative. This sexuality refers not only to the vampire itself, but also to the vampire’s victims and the other characters within the narrative. Along those same lines, the theme of gender relations is often key. The relationships between human beings, the interactions between males and females, the relationships between males, and the relationships between females warrant further scrutiny. The relationship dynamics between males and females in vampire narratives has shifted considerably in the past decade. Finally, most vampire narratives can be read in such a way so as to ascertain society’s fears and anxieties regarding non-normative members of society. These minoritarian characters may be of a different race, gender or sexual orientation. This study’s literature review will discuss the history of sexuality and vampire narratives, the cultural significance of vampire narratives (including a brief overview of how ‘Otherness’ is related to vampire narratives) and the role of women in contemporary vampire narratives. Additionally, this literature review will examine several theoretical viewpoints, discussing how they relate to cinema studies and, in particular, vampire narratives.

From ancient folklore to Stoker’s Victorian masterpiece, Dracula, to the popular vampire narratives of today one thing is obvious--sexuality and the vampire are inextricably linked. The vampire has often been compared to the incubus (male) or succubus (female), creatures who, in the middle of the night, enter a victim’s room and lay upon the sleeping person, nearly crushing the breath out of them, and forcing them into sexual activity. It is wise to begin with the most recognizable vampire of all time, Bram Stoker’s character Dracula. Dangerous, yet sensual and irresistible at the same time, Dracula was indeed a blood sucker extraordinaire. In the 1932 film adaptation of Stoker’s novel, when the suave, darkly handsome Bela Lugosi sinks his teeth into his female victims, both Mina and Lucy moan and writhe with pleasure and pain, almost as one

does when being penetrated by a lover. For these victims, the vampire's feeding is a pleasurable, almost orgasmic experience. To that end, Dracula is feared not only because of his potential to kill and maim, but also because of his ability to seduce and lead young virtuous women "astray."

In Werner Herzog's 1979 adaptation, Nosferatu the Vampyre [Nosferatu: Das Phantom der Nacht] (German title) the relationship between the vampire and Lucy is, once again, sexual in nature. Her relationship with the Count is a heterosexual one, albeit non-normative as it takes place with an "Other." In the article "Nosferatu the Vampyre (1979) as a Legacy of Romanticism," author Martina Luke (2009) claims that the relationship between the vampire and the women he encounters is not explicitly sexual, but rather, romantic. The movie reads more like a tale of unrequited love rather than a traditional vampire film. Herzog's vampire is portrayed as a confused and lonely creature searching for comfort and understanding: "The Count is at the same time a horrifying monster and a pitiable creature desperate for love...in one scene Dracula reaches out for Lucy and is rejected and quickly withdraws, emotional pain quite visible in his face and gesture" (154). While Herzog's creature possesses a sort of humanity, he still hungers for, and must have, the blood of young women. In the article "Vampires, Anxieties, and Dreams: Race and Sex in the Contemporary United States," author Shannon Winnubst (2003) describes Count Orlok: "with greedy lust in his eyes [the vampire] leans in to take his victim's blood, a thinly veiled act of penetration" (12). Historically, this symbolic act of penetration has been framed as either heterosexual or homosexual—depending on the narrative in question. The drinking or "sucking of blood" is thinly veiled metaphor for sexual activity. The article "The Compulsions of Real/Reel Serial Killers and Vampires: Toward a Gothic Criminology," (2003) states that "blood is frequently an unconscious equivalent for semen" (Picart & Greek 38). A male vampire suckling the neck or, often times, the breast of a young nubile woman also signifies the act of breastfeeding.

And, while male vampires are highly sexualized creatures, female vampires may be even more so. In the article "Blood Lust and the Fe/Male Narrative in Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992) and the Novel (1897)" Nystrom (2009) includes a quote from Ernst Jones (1993), who states that:

The female vampire's bloodsucking is equivalent to oral sex. She sucks innocent male's blood as if she were sucking the semen from his penis...But the vampire also threatens to bite, to draw blood and sever the penis. Vampirism combines a

number of abject activities: the mixing of blood; the threat of castration; the feminization of the male victim. (qtd. in Nystrom 66).

Lesbian vampire narratives are quite common. Author Andrea Weiss (1992) has devoted an entire book to the study of lesbians in film. Vampires and Violets provides an in depth look at several different film genres, including that of the contemporary vampire narrative. Weiss (1992) has an entire chapter, “The Vampire Lovers” devoted to the discussion of lesbian vampire narratives. Weiss acknowledges the “fame” Dracula has garnered. However, she claims that Dracula faces competition—by way of the lesbian vampire:

The lesbian vampire is more than a negative stereotype. She is a complex and ambiguous figure, at once an image of death and an object of desire, drawing on profound subconscious fears that the living have toward the dead and that men have toward women, while serving as a focus for repressed fantasies...the lesbian vampire operates in the sexual rather than the super natural realm. (84).

Lesbian vampires, then, have traditionally been portrayed as *highly* sexualized creatures. Like their male counterparts, they seek out that which satisfies their hunger (sexual or otherwise).

One of the most well known lesbian vampire stories is Le Fanu’s Carmilla (1872). Carmilla is believed to have been inspired by the true story of Countess Elizabeth Bathory, an early seventeenth century Countess of Hungary (now Slovakia) who bathed in the blood of young girls, believing it would give her the gift of eternal youth. Like Elizabeth Bathory, beautiful, eternally young Carmilla preys upon the blood of young girls. Carmilla arrives at the girls’ homes under the guise of attending a party. Her mother brings her to the soiree and then must leave due to a family emergency. Carmilla stays with the noble family for a few weeks (after which her mother is supposed to return to collect her daughter). Over the course of several nights Carmilla and the host family’s young daughter become close friends. Carmilla begins to visit the young girl during the night. These visits are inherently sexual in nature. However, in LeFanu’s Carmilla, the relationship between Laura (the young aristocratic girl) and Carmilla goes beyond the pleasures of the flesh. LeFanu implies that Carmilla falls in love with her victims, and they with her. Her nightly feeding is an act of love and not of monstrosity. In an excerpt from LeFanu’s Carmilla Laura describes the nightly dalliances:

[Carmilla] used to place her pretty arms around my neck, draw me to her, and laying her cheek next to mine murmur with lips near my ear, ‘Dearest, your little

heart is wounded; think me not cruel because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and your weakness; if your dear heart is wounded, my wild heart bleeds with yours. (qtd. in Weiss 87).

The Carmilla tale is interesting not only because of its sexual nature, but also because of the relationship between Carmilla and her victims. Carmilla acts as a mother-figure to her victims. She seduces them, soothes them, calms them and loves them. This unique mother-daughter relationship “appeals to deep, dark fears of the insatiable female, the consuming mother, the devouring mother, woman as monster, the ‘vagina dentata’” (Weiss 103). In other words, Carmilla represents the strong woman – the demanding mother, the nagging wife, the mother scolding her child.

LeFanu describes Carmilla not only as a vampire, but also as a tender lover. Carmilla is not devoid of feeling. However, contemporary narratives portray Carmilla as a lusty nymphomaniac who preys on the blood of young virgins. In one of the many (and arguably most popular) films adaptations of this tale, The Vampire Lovers (1970), Carmilla slinks into young Emma’s room wearing a sheer, low cut negligee. Carmilla tells Emma to try on one of her dresses. Carmilla then seduces Emma, finally feeding directly from her breast. The sensual feeding ritual continues night after night until young Emma dies.

A more recent take on the tale of LeFanu’s Carmilla can be seen in The Hunger (1983). In this film, Miriam Blaylock (Catherine Deneuve), a stylish eternally young (yet centuries old) vampire seduces an equally young Dr. Roberts (Susan Sarandon). This film also contains a very explicit, and very long, sex scene. Both Deneuve and Sarandon lie naked on a bed. Sarandon lies back as Deneuve strokes her, kisses her breasts and performs oral sex. The scene ends with Deneuve biting Sarandon and herself – and the two women sharing their blood.

Two beautiful young women get completely naked and pleasure each other for hours. This lesbian scene, not unlike a pornographic movie, appears to cater to the male viewer. Both women are young and strikingly beautiful. For the viewer, nothing is left to the imagination. Thighs, breasts, pubic mounds and various sex acts are displayed in a manner one might consider teetering on the edge of soft core pornography.

While many vampire narratives revolve around lesbian lovers, a large number of narratives also deal with heterosexual female vampires. In Stoker’s Dracula, the character of Lucy is portrayed as a flirtatious and somewhat uncouth young woman. Lucy teases and taunts

her many suitors and often makes suggestive remarks to these men. In one scene of Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation of Stoker's novel, Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992), Lucy approaches Quincy Morris, reaches towards his groin, and gasps "Oh Quincy, it's so big! Can I touch it?" before removing Morris' large sword from its holster. Lucy becomes one of Dracula's victims and she begins to stalk the living, feeding on the blood of young children. When the undead Lucy is confronted by her fiancé she opens her arms and seductively asks him to come to his wife. Lucy is ultimately hunted down, staked through the heart, and beheaded for her monstrous, bloodsucking acts. In her article "Blood, Lust and the Fe/Male Narrative in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and the Novel (1897)," author Lisa Nystrom (2009) states that "this serves as a grave warning to all women who entertain the thoughts of following Lucy's wayward example" (70).

Mina Harker, on the other hand, represents the "new woman" of the Victorian age. Mina has a respectable position in society and in the workforce. In the article "Dracula, Stoker's Response to the New Woman" author Carol Senf (2004) states that Mina also has a "sense of economic independence" (338). Mina however, remains a virginal and pure "lady" throughout the novel. She does have a sense of independence yet she "upholds all the ideals of feminine purity and gentility" (Senf 67). Nystrom (2009) argues that Mina's role as a pure woman is what ultimately saves her from Dracula. Unlike Lucy, Mina never acts in a hyper-sexualized manner and in the end, this is what saves her from transforming into a "monster." There appears to be a message here. Sexuality is acceptable if it is expressed in ways society deems to be "normal." Women can be sexual, but they must keep that aspect of their lives private. To engage in sex is one thing, but to act in a sexual manner so blatantly is seen as improper.

Nystrom (2009) claims that the foundation of Stoker's Dracula is the idea of the power of the "New Woman" and the fear these women inspire in men. Many Gothic novels, Dracula included, portray women as "Others." Nystrom (2009) states that "the male hatred and fear of woman's awful procreative power and her Otherness" (73) lays at the root of Female Gothic. In other words, males fear the power of the woman, and the threat she imposes upon them with said power. Lucy, because of her state of 'hypersexuality' is vulnerable to seduction. Mina, on the other hand, keeps her sexuality somewhat hidden and conforms to the societal norms. Dracula cannot possess Mina because she is in control of herself and her emotions.

In her article “From Page to Stage: Narrative Strategies in Lochhead’s *Dracula*,” author Anne-Kathrin Braun (2001) echoes Nystrom’s arguments regarding Stoker’s *Dracula* as a novel infused with fear of the downfall of the patriarchal system: “The repression of sexuality which finds its uncanny embodiment in the figure of Dracula is only the predominant representative of patriarchal society’s various attempts to relegate and delimit women’s participation in decision making processes” (196). I agree with this analysis. In Stoker’s novel Mina is eventually seduced by Dracula. She is sexually attracted to Dracula and has intimate contact with him. However, her repentance is what saves her from becoming a full vampire. Mina becomes partly transformed (once bitten by Dracula) but never becomes a true vampire. Her disgust with her own behavior can be seen at several points throughout the novel. After her encounter with Dracula she feels shame and repents. Mina, once again, refuses to lose control of her emotions and her sexuality. Once bitten by Dracula, Mina, disgusted with the prospect of having Dracula’s demonic presence within her body cries “Unclean! Unclean!” (Stoker 316). In the end, she places the life of her husband against all else. Mina is a dutiful wife.

In contemporary vampire narratives, women are not, usually, vampires themselves. Rather, they are lovers and/or friends of the vampires. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was a popular American television series from 1997-2003. The show revolves around sixteen-year-old Buffy Somers, a beautiful, buxom blonde from California who just happens to be the world’s greatest vampire slayer. Buffy is the “chosen one”—destined from birth to be a vampire slayer. The cast of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is fleshed out by Buffy’s pals and cohorts, known as the scooby gang. The scooby gang includes: Rupert Giles—a genteel older man who is Buffy’s mentor and trainer, Xander Harris and Willow Rosenberg—Buffy’s geeky friends and social outcasts, and Cordelia Chase—a beautiful, bitchy brunette whose job it seems, is to make every less than perfect teenager at Sunnydale High School’s life a living hell.

Buffy has garnered a great amount of critical feedback – both positive and negative. Many scholars including Lorna Jowett, Lynette Lamb, Rachel Fudge and Patricia Pender, believe that *Buffy* can be described as a postmodern feminist series. I agree with their assertions. They argue that she alone is responsible for killing the demons and keeping her community safe. This, claims creator Joss Whedon, was what he intended Buffy to be. In Jowett’s (2005) *Sex and the Slayer*, creator Joss Whedon states that Buffy is not the “blond girl in the alley the horror movie who keeps getting killed” (qtd. in Jowett 29). She is not the “I felt bad for her [the “slasher” film

victim] but she was always more interesting to me than the other girls. She was fun, she had sex, she was vivacious, but she would get punished for it” (qtd. in Jowett 29). Buffy shares many things in common with this doomed character. Buffy is pretty, blonde, vivacious, popular, fun loving and sexually active. But, unlike the “alley girl” Buffy does not pay. Instead, Buffy makes *others* pay – with their lives.

Buffy is caught between trying to be a normal teenager, and, as the “chosen one,” having to slay vampires. In her article “Thwack! Pow! Yikes! Not Your Mother’s Heroines,” author Jennifer Pozner (2002) writes that Buffy, when cornered by a gang of vampires “does what most high school girls wish they could do—thanks them for dropping by, tells them she’s not in the mood, and kicks them into another dimension, literally...How’s that for a role model?” (qtd. in Pender 37). Except for her vampire-slaying abilities, Buffy is just like any other teenage girl. True, she slays vampires, but like most teenage girls, she worries about boys, fusses over her looks, complains about her hair and is repulsed by bugs. Just because she is a vampire slayer doesn’t mean she can’t be a girly-girl too! Rachel Fudge (1999) claims that even though Buffy is the consummate girly-girl, she still embodies feminist qualities because of her “anti-authority stance, her refusal to be intimidated by more powerful figures...Buffy is an ongoing lesson in sisters-doing-it-for-themselves ideology” (qtd. in Pender 37).

While many theorists believe Buffy is inherently feminist in nature, others claim that Buffy is nothing more than another silly, giggly teenage girl prototype. This disagreement among scholars is commonly referred to as the “Good Buffy/Bad Buffy” problem. In her article “Narrative Criticism: The Sad State of Teenage Television” Lynette Lamb (1999) lambasts Buffy for being nothing more than another silly television series targeted at teenage girls. She links Buffy to other television shows of the time, including *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and *Felicity*, stating that in these shows “women and girls are portrayed no more fully or honestly than when I was a teenager 25 years ago” (qtd. in Pender 36).

Buffy seems to be telling young girls that they can be pretty, popular, sexy and still be confident and in charge. Women who survive do not need to be unattractive, bookish and completely a-sexual. Buffy, Jowett (2005) claims, is the “hot babe” who slays vampires, “she is not ‘Buffy the Lesbian Separatist’...she *is* a girly-girl” (42). In other words, powerful, independent women do not need to compromise their femininity. It is just as easy for a long-haired, feminine woman to slay a vampire in makeup and cute shoes as it is for a short-haired,



plain looking woman in Birkenstocks. In fact, femininity and “femaleness” can be key components of strength and power. If we look at power as being a component of femininity, this makes perfect sense. The fact that a woman may be viewed as ultra feminine in no way negates the inherent power she possesses. Her power *stems from* her femininity.

Vampire narratives have historically been an outlet for the expression of non-normative desires and experiences. Sexual preference, race and gender play pivotal roles in historical and contemporary vampire narratives. Homosexuals, the poor, the disabled, the marginalized and the ill are all minoritarian groups who are often discriminated against. In fact, from Eastern European folklore to today’s popular culture movies and films, vampires have been consistently linked to racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, disease, the unholy etc. Winnubst (2003) states that “Jews, like whores and blacks and queers—are vampiric—in the fantasy life of Western European and North American psyches” (7). Take, for example, Stoker’s description of Count Dracula, “[His] face was strong—a very strong—aquiline with high bridge of the thin nose....with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily around the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion” (Stoker 23). Additionally, Stoker makes it clear that Dracula hails from a Russian/Slavic (mixed) background, stating that “in his veins flows the blood of many brave races” (Stoker 22). The long nose, domed forehead and thick brows could arguably be described as “Jewish” or even “Arab” features. Thus, Dracula is what Barthes would label an “Other.” In his article “Operation Margarine,” regarding the minoritarian, or as he calls it the “Other,” Roland Barthes (1983) writes:

The petit bourgeois man is unable to imagine the Other. If he comes face to face with him, he blinds himself, ignores or denies him, or else transforms him into himself. In the petit-bourgeois universe, all the experiences of confrontation are reverberating, any otherness is reduced to sameness...This is because the Other is a scandal which threatens his essence. (qtd. in Durham & Kellner 101).

Barthes argument explains how, when confronted with the “Other,” the dominant culture finds itself in a state of cognitive dissonance. To reduce this dissonance one of several tactics may be employed. Hegemonic culture may ignore the “Other” or deny the “Other’s” very existence. Alternatively, it may try to assimilate the “Other,” thereby reducing otherness to sameness. Of course, there are cases where the “Other” simply cannot be assimilated. In these situations,

society exoticizes the “Other.” To quote Barthes, the “Other” is made into a “pure object, a spectacle, a clown” (qtd. in Durham & Kellner 101). Thus, society no longer sees the “Other” as a potential threat, but rather, imagines “the place where (the Other) fits in” (qtd. in Durham & Kellner 101).

“Otherness” and sexuality are often closely linked. In her article “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance,” bell hooks (1992) discusses how the dominant culture often seeks out the “Other” as a means of sexual experimentation. hooks claims that society has always been “confident that non-white people...were more worldly, sensual and sexual because they were different” and that the dominant society shares a common “narrative fantasy of power and desire, of seduction by the Other” (qtd. in Durham & Kellner 368). Furthermore, “Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture” (qtd. in Durham & Kellner 366). Dominant society is drawn to the “Other.” hooks touches upon how, in contemporary British slang, the phrase “getting a bit of the Other” is used to speak about sexual encounters with racial minorities:

Fucking is the Other. Displacing the notion of Otherness from race, ethnicity and skin color, the body emerges as a site of contestation where sexuality is the metaphoric Other that seeks to take over, consume, transform via the experience of pleasure. Desired and sought after, sexual pleasure alters the consenting subject, deconstructing notions of will, control, coercive domination. (qtd. in Durham & Kellner 367).

Throughout the article “Eating the Other,” hooks discusses how white males sexually exploit minority women by viewing them as mere sexual objects put in place for their (white males) sexual gratification. The men use these women as a means to an end. They view them as nothing more than exotic vessels of sexual pleasure, use them, and then cast them aside.

In terms of sexuality in today’s society, minority women are portrayed stereotypically as exotic, passionate and enthusiastic lovers. Black women especially, are viewed as being “wild” in bed. hooks writes about overhearing a group of young white male college students talking about their plans to have sex with as many minority women as they could. hooks postulates that for these young men, sex with the “Other” is a way to leave the innocence of “whiteness” behind and gain “experience” “The real fun,” hooks writes, “is to be had by bringing to the surface all

those ‘nasty’ unconscious fantasies and longings about contact with the Other embedded in the secret (not so secret) deep structure of white supremacy” (qtd. in Durham & Kellner 366).

With vampires, however, the relationship is a bit different. The vampire, as the “Other,” is often the one who does the using—sucking the blood from its victims and leaving them lifeless. The vampire is not usually the victimized “Other” who is subsequently used and carelessly tossed aside. However, there exist situations in which hegemonic culture seeks out the vampire, as the “Other,” much in the same way as the white man seeks out the black girl to get a taste of the exotic. It should be noted that this notion of using the “Other” as a sexual instrument of pleasure is not unique to males. Many women are intrigued by the possibility of a sexual encounter with the “Other.” In this situation, the white male feels threatened by the power of the black man. Shannon Winnubst (2003) writes that there is a recurring nightmare among white Americans that they will somehow lose control over their women. “It is... a dream of power, violation and purity, of strict and rigid fascination with boundaries” (Winnubst 1). In other words, the “good girl” that every white man strives to attain is in danger of being seduced by an “Other.” This notion of the seduction of a white woman by an “Other” is often characterized as a “nightmare” for the white man, “The nightmare is the scene of the black rapist, particularly a black male raping a white girl” (Winnubst 1).

Vampire narratives provide the viewer with what Rosemary Jackson (1997) calls a “paraxic” world: The vampire exists within our (human) world and reality, and relies upon connections to the human world. However, the vampire also occupies a space in our world which we, ourselves, are not permitted to enter. The vampire exists in a world where he is free to transgress “boundaries and [challenge] the constraints that we face every day” (qtd. in Schopp 233). Unlike in science fiction narratives which contain creatures and other “monsters,” the vampire does not occupy a world that is completely removed from that of the dominant society. As such, the vampire provides an outlet for many of society’s sexual desires that are deemed non-normative. Vampire narratives allow the viewer to validate sexually “deviant” desires and curiosities with “oral, necrophilic, incestual [sic], homosexual” natures (qtd. in Schopp 233). The vampire myth allows the vampire to “become more than simply an archetype of some static cultural desire and fear; it now constitutes a mirror that reflects shifting cultural desires and fears” (232). In other words, the vampire myth allows one to step outside of society’s proscribed

social norms and acknowledge, and thus validate, other “non-normative” desires and needs. Myth provides a space for the audience to “subvert social order” (232).

Nina Auerbach (1995) also discusses the idea of vampirism providing a safe space for the exploration of one’s desires and ‘perversions’ stating, “To emulate a vampire is to be a spectator disappearing into a spectator: we listen, talk, watch, without touching or becoming” (181). In other words, in this dual space—one that exists neither solely within nor outside of our reality, we have the unique ability to dabble in our alternative desires—without jumping in completely. When applied to sexuality, on the most basic level, Auerbach is alluding to homosexuality. Philosopher Michel Foucault bolsters this argument. He emphasizes that it is important to note that when *Dracula* was written, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, psychiatry was just beginning to earn its place in the scientific arena. Thus, the idea of homosexuality began to change: “homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or ‘naturalness’ be acknowledged” (qtd. in Schopp 232).

Since vampire narratives express the concerns, fears of anxieties of the dominant, normative society, it is during times of change when the manifestation of the vampire tends to shift. Changes in cultural values lead to changes in vampire narratives. The article “Practical Orientalism-Bodies, Everyday Life and the construction of Otherness” provides us with a lens through which to see how society’s fears and insecurities manifest themselves in contemporary cultural artifacts. The article deals not with the United States, but with the changing socio-political state in Denmark. The authors, Haldrup, Koefoed & Simonsen (2006), claim that the rising resentment towards the Other in Denmark is closely linked with the “changing political semiotics of Europe” (173). Before the European Union was formed, there was a sharp division between Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Western Europe valued democracy and freedom. Western Europe considered the Eastern European countries, whose values included communism and totalitarianism, as threatening “Others.” After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the divisions of East and the West were no longer clearly defined and “the identity of spaces in Europe became much more blurred” (174). The “good” West was now integrated with the “bad” East. Naturally, the Western Countries felt threatened by this “external Other” – an “Other” who, unlike an “internal Other” did not belong within their country and was always a feared outsider.

This article resonates today as we live in a world without borders, where more and more people are immigrating and travelling abroad and coming in contact with the “Other.” Furthermore, the election of the first black President has shattered the proverbial glass ceiling for African Americans. This thesis will assume that contemporary world events such as those mentioned above, have and will continue to influence the tone of contemporary vampire narratives.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

Along with the general methodological approach of ideological analysis, this study will utilize psychoanalytic film theory (including scopophilia) as well as the film theories of Laura Mulvey to ascertain meaning from the texts. The following section provides background information on each of the aforementioned theories.

#### **Psychoanalytic Theory, Scopophilia and Laura Mulvey’s “The Gaze”**

In his “Three Essays on Sexuality,” Freud named scopophilia as a major component of the developing sexual self. Scopophilia, or “the love of looking” at other people’s bodies is apparent in children and even infants. Children possess an innate desire to see and “make sure of the private and the forbidden” (Mulvey 30). In other words, we are “hard-wired” to want to look upon or “gaze” at others.

In 1975 Laura Mulvey published her groundbreaking work, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” Mulvey details Freud’s work in psychoanalysis, stating that “Psychoanalytic theory is thus appropriated here as a political weapon, demonstrating the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form” (28). Thus, Mulvey argues that contemporary film narratives are structured around a patriarchal society and that “the cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking”(31). According to Mulvey, the male is always the bearer of the look and the female is always the observed. The male possesses the active gaze and the female is the passive recipient of the male’s gaze. Again, Mulvey builds off of Freud’s psychoanalytic theories and claims that on screen, females (passive) pose a problem to the male (active) viewer. The female lacks a penis which, in turn, signifies the threat of castration. However, even though she poses this threat of castration, the male *wants* to look at her. Therefore, the male must assuage his castration anxiety by either voyeurism or fetishism. Voyeurism involves “watching, in an active controlled sense, an objectified other” (31). In contrast, fetishism involves the substitution of a fetish object, or turning the image of woman herself into a fetish object, so that

the image becomes reassuring rather than dangerous: “The beauty of the woman as object...she is no longer the bearer of guilt but a perfect product, whose body, stylized and fragmented by close-ups, is the content of the film and the direct recipient of the spectator’s look” (Mulvey 23).

Mulvey claims that cinema is created solely to satisfy the scopophilic desires of the male. Since women do not share the fear of castration, when it comes to cinema, female viewers have no one to look at and no one to identify with. Mulvey states that “the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification” (34). Even in situations where it may appear the male is the object of the female gaze, Mulvey claims this cannot be: “A male movie star’s glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of the gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego...” (34). Lorraine Graham and Margaret Marshment (1989) seem to offer the best argument as to why scholars find it difficult to argue that female spectators can possess an active gaze. In the introduction to the book The Female Gaze, Graham and Marshment state that Mulvey’s theory is difficult to argue with because of its ties to psychoanalytic theory:

It proved difficult, theoretically, to move outside its parameters. Cultural analysts found it difficult to criticize the use of ‘blanket’ terms culled from psychoanalytical discourse without entering into debates about the usefulness of psychoanalysis...What we do share is a sense of unease about the adequacy of psychoanalysis...to analyze the complexities and contradictions evident in popular culture. (5).

Still, many scholars believe that the female can possess an active gaze. In other words, a Female Gaze does exist. I happen to agree. I would argue that just as men enjoy looking at the female form, women enjoy gazing upon the male body. In fact, in an essay written later on in her career, Mulvey shifts her argument, coming up with a way to theorize a female spectator who does, in fact, identify with the male gaze. In her article "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by 'Duel in the Sun,'" Mulvey (1981) argues that the female spectator *can* possess an active gaze. However, she later recants these arguments.

In the article “Film and the Masquerade,” author Mary Ann Doane (1982) also claims that women can possess an active gaze. However, unlike heterosexual males, women cannot experience fetishistic or voyeuristic pleasures since the relationship or, rather, separation between the woman possessing the active gaze and the object of the gaze cannot be psychically

defined. As Doane puts it, in essence, the woman is gazing upon herself. She occupies a dual role: as the spectator and as object of the gaze.

Eva-Maria Jacobsson (1999) in her article “A Female Gaze?” uses the film Fatal Attraction to argue for the existence of the Female Gaze. Jacobsson (1999) claims that throughout the film the character engaged in the active role of gazing is actually a woman (Alex) and the object of the gaze is a man (Dan): “(Alex) is in complete control of the situation, she is powerful. She wants him and intends to get him on her premises. The camera is reflecting Dan as a schoolboy, he is being seduced, he is the object of her gaze, of the audience's gaze and an object portrayed by the camera” (12). However, throughout the film the “gaze” shifts back and forth from a Male Gaze where the female is the object of desire and a Female Gaze where the male is the object of desire. The movie begins with a Female Gaze but ends up with a Male Gaze. “The protection of the ‘male gaze’ is taken care of by turning Alex into a psychotic, monstrous person. She becomes something extraordinary, a threat which has to be dealt with and ultimately disposed of” (20). As the source of anxiety, Alex then, must be destroyed. Yes, Jacobsson claims, there is a Female Gaze. However, the Female Gaze, according to Jacobsson (1999), is only possible by “a mere cross identification with masculinity. The femininity is repressed and the character attracts more masculine features. Masculinity is the norm, determining the feminine gaze. Alex puts on typical masculine signifiers, the sex roles are reversed” (16). Only by becoming more masculine and adopting male traits can a female possess an active gaze. Alex possesses an active gaze because she lacks the necessary characteristics of the stereotypical female. She is unmarried, has no children, is focused on her career and is the aggressor in the relationship. Initially she takes on a masculine role. Only later on in the film does she become femininized, thus losing her active gaze: “The fear of changes in society is projected onto the women, and by forcing the women to adapt to the norms and rules they become controllable” (21).

As I argued above, just as males take pleasure in viewing and objectifying the female bodies, so too, do women. In the article “Women’s Porno: The Heterosexual Female Gaze in Porn Sites ‘For Women,’” author Terrie Schauer (2005) claims that in studies dealing with pornographic websites for men, “Feminist researchers have consistently argued that in the West, women are generally positioned as erotic ‘leitmotif’—their bodies displayed and positioned for an imagined male viewer, and visually sectioned and dismembered with individual parts

photographed for audience-contemplation” (53). Regarding pornography for women, Schauer (2005) claims that the female gaze often fragments the male object, thus emphasizing its most sexualized body parts: “in women’s porno as in popular gay male porn, buttocks, back and upper-body muscles are accorded significant attention by the camera, as well as, of course, the penis” (57). Women, therefore, like men, are sexual creatures who enjoy viewing the nude bodies of the objects of their desire. To that end, during my analysis of the film adaptations of Twilight and New Moon, I will be operating under the assumption that there is a Female Gaze and that is not always tied to psychoanalytic theory.



## Chapter 2

### **Women, Sexuality and Relationships in Vampire Narratives**

This chapter will explore the role of women in vampire narratives throughout history. In particular, the sexuality of women in vampire narratives will be analyzed at length. This chapter will also analyze the relationship dynamics between males and females in vampire narratives. Since the main purpose of this study is to analyze the romantic relationship between Bella Swan and Edward Cullen as well as the relationship between Bella Swan and Jacob Black, this analysis will focus mainly on heterosexual relationships in vampire narratives. These heterosexual relationships include vampire with vampire, human with vampire and human with human.

#### The Gothic Period

Bram Stoker's (1897) Dracula, a touchstone text for vampire enthusiasts everywhere, offers scholars a wealth of material regarding female sexuality and romantic relationships. Therefore, it is only fitting that I begin this analysis with Stoker's Dracula and several of the film adaptations of the novel. The aim of this analysis is *not* to uncover the homosexual meanings hidden with Stoker's text. However, in order to examine the role of many of the female characters within the novel, Dracula's sexuality must be briefly examined.

I believe that Dracula is heterosexual. Others argue that he does indeed act in very "queer" ways at times. For example, upon meeting Jonathon Harker, Dracula's actions are very genteel. He leaves Harker with elaborate notes, feeds him the finest food and drink, and acts the consummate host. Still, Dracula hunts and feeds mainly on female victims. In the article "Cruising the Alternatives: Homoeroticism and the Contemporary Vampire" Christopher Craft (1997) argues that this heterosexual feeding is actually a "displacement of homoerotic desire" (qtd. in Schopp 235). Craft claims that "all erotic contact between males, whether directly libidinal or thoroughly sublimated, are fulfilled through a mediating female, through the surrogation of the other, 'correct' gender" (qtd. in Schopp 235). I disagree with this argument. I am more inclined to agree, somewhat, with Auerbach's (1995) argument that in many modern adaptations of Stoker's novel, directors and producers attempt to "soften Dracula's concept for women by making him fall in love with Mina, aiming to promote her as is co ruler, but in Stoker's original, Mina is only a pawn in his battle against the men" ("Our Vampires, Ourselves" 82). I believe Dracula seeks to feed and he seeks to obtain property: he wants to possess people and it does not matter to him if his possessions are male or female. To that end, he uses both

males and females as pawns to get what he desires. It could be argued that he uses Renfield as a pawn much in the same way he uses Mina.

Dracula's castle also houses a harem of young, lusty female vampires who exist, it appears, solely to serve him. However, Dracula's relationship with them does not appear, on the surface, to be sexual in nature. At one point in the novel these vampire women attempt to seduce Harker and almost succeed in feeding upon his blood. This upsets the Count greatly. However, Dracula does not act as one would expect a jealous lover to act. Instead, when his "brides" attempt to feed on Harker his response is quite poignant and, some scholars claim, laced with homosexual undertones: "How dare you touch him, any of you! How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me" (Stoker 51). As I stated before, I do not believe Dracula is homosexual. The reason The Count reacts this way is due to the fact that to him, these women are viewed not as independent beings, but rather, as property. Along the same lines, human beings are nothing but possessions to Dracula. Therefore, Harker is not of any romantic interest to Dracula. Instead, he is a possession and a pawn for Dracula.

While Dracula's current relationship with the lusty vampire women inhabiting his castle is not sexual in nature, Stoker hints at prior sexual relations between Dracula and his "brides" or "daughters." In the article "Suddenly Sexual Women in Dracula," author Phyllis Roth (1977) claims that Dracula's harem of women are his daughters with whom he has had incestual relations. In the article "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*," author Christopher Bentley (1972) agrees. When Dracula refuses to allow these vampiric women to feed upon Jonathon Harker they lash out at the Count: "You yourself never loved; you never love" (43). Dracula responds with "Yes, I too can love, you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so?" (43). This, Bentley (1972) argues, implies an "incestuous relationship has existed between them" (27). Christopher Craft (1984), in his article "Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" states that the women who inhabit Dracula's castle are "the incestuous vampiric daughters" (168) of the Count. Other scholars claim that these young women are Dracula's brides and that Dracula's anger at them for attempting to feed upon Harker is simply that of a husband scolding his disobedient wives. In the article "Fictional Conventions and Sexuality in *Dracula*," author Carol L. Fry (1972) states that "Dracula's castle is inhabited by his 'wives,' who were at some earlier time his victims" (37). Fry (1972) describes how these women became Dracula's property, "He has loved them

with the vampire's phallic bite, and they have become outsiders, Un-Dead..." (37). The message here is that no matter what their relation to Dracula, these women are bound to him sexually. They are his possessions.

Vampirism, in Dracula, as well as in other narratives is nearly always characterized by a heightened sexuality. In Stoker's Dracula the undercurrent of sexuality within the novel is almost exclusively heterosexual. In nearly every sub-plot of the novel (most of which revolve around the notion of romantic or sexual love) it is males who are chasing and lusting after females and vice versa. This applies to the vampires as well as to the non-vampires. Bentley (1972) states, "The prominent vampire attacks in the novel are always on members of the other sex; the female vampires attempt to make Harker their prey and Dracula attacks Mina Harker and Lucy Westenra" (27). In fact, throughout Stoker's novel, vampiric women are portrayed as overtly, almost hypersexual. They possess an ability to seduce and mesmerize their prey. Harker's description of his encounter with the vampire women at Dracula's castle is a prime example of the hyper-sexualization of vampires. After wandering into a forbidden part of the castle, Harker is approached by three young women:

All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips...There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive...I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstasy and waited – waited with beating heart. (Stoker 39).

These female vampires are overly sexual, so much so, that Harker cannot control his lust. While he is afraid of these creatures, and wishes to be faithful to his fiancé, Mina, he cannot help but give into the temptation. As such, he lays back, closes his eyes, and waits to be bitten.

In terms of the relationships between the mortal characters, sexuality is only briefly touched upon. When it comes to the relationships between Lucy and her fiancé, Arthur Holmwood, and Jonathon and his fiancé (and later wife) Mina, sexual relations between these couples are scarcely mentioned. Furthermore, when romantic desire between these couples is mentioned, it is only briefly alluded to--masked in symbolism and metaphor. In the article "Sexual Symbolism in Dracula," author Christopher Bentley (1972) states "Stoker's living characters (that is, those other than vampires) are, both men and women, models of chastity"

(26). For the most part this is true. The only time Stoker's mortal characters behave in an overtly sexual manner is when they are seduced by a vampire and/or when, after being bitten, they begin to change from human to vampire. Take for example, the transformation of Lucy Westenra. Both in Stoker's novel as well as in many of the film adaptations (save for Francis Ford Coppolla's 1992 Bram Stoker's Dracula) Miss Lucy Westenra is portrayed as the consummate lady. An aristocratic young woman, Lucy has suitors from all over Europe arriving at her house daily to ask for her hand in marriage. Lucy is implied to be a virtuous young lady, and thus, it is implied that she is a virgin. She is described as soft and angelic looking, her hair described as "golden ripples of sunshine." However, once bitten by Dracula she begins to transform into an overly sexualized creature.

In Francis Ford Coppolla's film adaptation, Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992) Lucy, having never been able to consummate her relationship with Arthur Holmwood, becomes increasingly more sexualized as her transformation from mortal into vampire begins. She is shown wearing a sultry red night-gown, following Dracula into the garden, and lying on a bench with her legs spread (clearly indicating oral sex) as he sucks her blood. When van Helsing and the others try to save her she is shown in bed, with her skimpy nightgown all askew, exposing her erect nipples. She pants and then growls and lunges at the throats of her suitors and Dr. van Helsing. After her death, in an attempt to convince her fiancé Arthur that she is "un-dead" van Helsing brings a group of men to her tomb. She is absent but soon returns, holding a young child, her pale face smeared with blood. Seeing her fiancé, she drops the child and advances upon him: "She still advanced, however, and with a languorous, voluptuous grace said: 'Come to me Arthur. Leave those others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!'" (Stoker 253-254). Arthur advances towards her but is stopped by van Helsing who tells him he must do his duty and give Lucy peace. Stoker describes, in detail, Lucy's death:

The thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut and the mouth was smeared with crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like the figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing

stake whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it.  
(Stoker 258-259).

When destroyed by a stake through the heart, Lucy's reaction and death is a sexualized, orgasmic experience. The stake, being driven into her "deeper and deeper" is obviously a metaphor for sexual intercourse. Her facial contortions, her quivering body and her foaming at the mouth are all indicative of an orgasm. Finally, the spurting of blood from the "mercy-bearing stake" is equivalent to ejaculation. Arthur, having never consummated his relationship with Lucy, is now able to do so. He is able to possess Lucy. He defeats Dracula and reclaims Lucy as his own by fucking her. After her death, Lucy, free of Dracula's influence, returns to the once virtuous, sweet young lady she previously was:

There in the coffin no longer lay the foul thing we had dreaded and grown to hate that the work of her destruction was yielded to the one best entitled to it, but Lucy as we had seen her in life with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity....One and all we felt that the holy calm that lay like sunshine over the wasted face and form was only an earthly token and symbol of the calm that was to reign forever.  
(Stoker 259).

Mina Murray, Jonathon Harker's fiancé, is also bitten by Dracula. However, she never becomes as outwardly sexual as Lucy. Stoker makes it clear that Mina fights against turning into a vampire. Unlike Lucy, Mina is a strong woman and has the willpower to resist Dracula. After being bitten she detests the thought of poisoning her husband, stating "I must touch or kiss him no more!" (Stoker 303). When Dracula does feed upon Mina her reaction is much different than Lucy's. Where Lucy loses control and enjoys her dalliances with Dracula, Mina is repulsed. After biting Mina, Dracula forces her to drink his blood. Stoker describes how Dracula pins Mina down, holds her arms away from his face, slices open his chest, and presses her head against the gushing wound: "The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer, forcing it to drink" (Stoker 302-303).

In most of the film adaptations of Stoker's novel Mina is portrayed as nothing but a dutiful wife. In Francis Ford Coppola's Bram Stoker's Dracula, when she learns that her husband is very much alive in the Carpathians, yet gravely ill, Mina goes to him, marries him, and nurses him back to health. Likewise, in Murnau's 1922 film Nosferatu, Ellen (Mina) gives up her life for her husband, Thomas Hutter (Jonathon Harker). Once Ellen suspects something is

wrong with her husband she reads The Book of Vampires and learns the only way she might save her husband: “a woman pure in heart must willingly give her blood to him, so that he loses track of time until the cock's first crowing” (Nosferatu). Once she realizes that the only way to undo what The Count has done to her husband is to give herself to the vampire completely that is exactly what she does. Ellen dresses in a gauzy white linen nightgown, leaves her bedroom window open and climbs into bed waiting for the vampire to come to her. When he enters her room she does nothing to protect herself. She is awake, but leaves her eyes closed and waits for Count Orlok to approach her bedside. She does not protest when The Count sucks her blood. So enthralled with sucking the blood of a beautiful young woman, The Count does not notice when the sun begins to rise. The cock crows, signaling dawn, and The Count dies. His death frees Ellen’s husband from the terrible grip of the vampire. Unfortunately, Ellen also perishes. She has lost too much blood. She gives her life to save that of her husband. She made the ultimate sacrifice without ever even being asked.

From 1922 through the early 1970s, the majority of vampire narratives were simply adaptations, or spin-offs, of Stoker’s Dracula: Nosferatu (1922), Dracula (1931), Dracula’s Daughter (1936), Son of Dracula (1942), House of Dracula (1945), Dracula (1958), The Brides of Dracula (1960), Dracula: Prince of Darkness (1966), Dracula Has Risen from the Grave (1968), Taste the Blood of Dracula (1969), Scars of Dracula (1970), Dracula AD 1972 (1972), Blacula (1972) The Satanic Rites of Dracula (1973) etc. There were a handful of films during this timeframe that were not directly associated with Dracula. However, these films were still quite similar to Dracula in terms of plot, themes and character development. Nearly all would be considered ‘gothic’ vampire narratives.

During the 1960s-1970s the production company *Hammer Studios* “created” a new genre of vampire movie. Using Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s 1872 novel, Carmilla as a foundation, *Hammer Studios* produced a series of movies called the *The Karnstein Trilogy*. These films revolve around lesbian vampires. The series includes three films: The Vampire Lovers (1970), Lust for a Vampire (1971) and Twins of Evil (1972). Having already analyzed the romantic relationships in Dracula and Nosferatu, for the purposes of this study, it will be more beneficial to skip over the rest of these adaptations of Stoker’s work. Instead, I will turn my attention to the romantic relationships portrayed in vampire films and television series from the 1970s to the present.

## Vampire Narratives from the 1970s

In the mid-1970s vampire films began to change from the stereotypical gothic horror/romance films. In the book Celluloid Vampires, author Stacey Abbott (2007) dedicates an entire chapter to vampire narratives in the 1970s: “The Seventies: The Vampire Decade” (75). Before the 1970s most vampire films were set in Europe and usually involved mythical creatures residing in drafty castles. The representation of the vampire, and thus the vampire narrative, changed in the 1970s. Abbott (2007) claims that in the 1970s, the vampire became “directly engaged with the reinvention of modernity” (75). During this period the vampire ceased to represent a nefarious, mythical creature. Instead, the vampire became modernized. The vampire lived in, and became a product of, American culture: “This period of radical change removed the vampire from its mythic representation, reinvented it as a modern vampire, and relocated it to America” (Abbott 75).

Perhaps one of the most influential, yet lesser known, vampire films from the 1970s is George Romero’s Martin (1977). The main character, Martin, is a teenage/young adult vampire. Martin, like all vampires, must feed upon human blood in order to survive. However, mythical deterrents such as garlic, sunlight and religious trinkets have no effect upon Martin. One of the first scenes in the movie provides the viewer with an up close and personal account of Martin’s feeding ritual. Martin selects an attractive young woman and attacks her as she gets ready for bed. Martin drugs his victims before killing them so that they will not feel any pain or endure any suffering. Martin struggles with the young woman before finally stabbing her with the needle. A few moments later she passes out. Martin slices her wrists and drinks her blood. After feeding, he has sexual relations with the woman’s corpse. His sexual activity with these women is not necrophilic in nature in that he desires to make love to a live woman, but, being a shy boy, he has not had the opportunity to do so. He attempts to make his feeding ritual personalized and “loving.” Furthermore, his tenderness towards the females almost seems like an act of reverence rather than one of perversion. He gently cradles the woman’s body, kisses her, and rolls on top of her. He grasps her arm and drags it across his body and over his shoulder so that she is, in effect, embracing him as he makes love to her. The scene is more pathetic and sad rather than horrifying and revolting.

Martin calls a radio talk show under the pseudonym “The Count” and talks to the announcer (who believes Martin is calling as a prank) about his limitations as a vampire, namely

his inability to have an intimate relationship: “Then they [humans], they have the other... the sexy stuff....whenever they want. I've been much too shy to ever do the sexy stuff. I mean, do it with someone who's awake. Someday maybe I'll get to do it - awake - without the blood part. Just do it with somebody...then be together and talk all night” (Martin). Martin’s wish comes true. Since moving in with his grandfather he works doing odd jobs for a neglected housewife, Mrs. Santini. Mrs. Santini, who appears to be in her mid-thirties, comes on to Martin on numerous occasions. At first Martin is shy and withdrawn. In fact, he refuses to even speak with Mrs. Santini. She however, uses Martin as a sounding board. She tells him about her problems. She has been having problems with her husband and is very depressed. She drinks during the day and rambles on and on while Martin paints, cuts her grass etc. She doesn’t understand why Martin is so quiet and aloof. Yet, at the same time, she wishes she could be the same way. At one point she tells him that she wishes whatever “he has” is catching. She wants him to give it to her. Over time the two become close. After several months Martin builds up the confidence to give Mrs. Santini what she wants and to give in to his own desires. “You want me here for sex, don't you?” (Martin). Martin asks. “I never really did it before, I was always too shy. But I've decided I'd really like to do it with you” (Martin). The next scene shows a naked Mrs. Santini lying on top of Martin post-coitus. This being Martin’s first sexual experience with a live person, he comes across as very naïve and innocent. After sex Mrs. Santini lies on the couch crying. Martin looks puzzled and finally exclaims “You’re worried about getting a kid, aren't you?” (Martin). Her problems are so complex that the viewer never really learns what she is crying about. However, Martin, the naïve and insecure boyish lover assumes it must be a fear of pregnancy: “I know, you are afraid of having a kid! I knew I should have worn one of those things” (Martin). She smiles, accepting his naïve attempt to understand her emotional distress. She explains that she cannot have children and asks his opinion on the matter. He says nothing. This pleases Mrs. Santini who states, “That's why you're so nice to have around Martin. You don't have opinions” (Martin 1977).

The relationship between Mrs. Santini and Martin is very unique. Each seems to use the other. Martin wants to experience sex with a living human. Mrs. Santini is a frustrated and self destructive housewife who uses Martin as a pseudo-therapist. She talks to him, even though she gets no valuable feedback. She is horny, so she has sex with him as well. The makings of a tale of love which cannot be appear to have fallen into place. However, that is not what happens.



Martin does not love Mrs. Santini. She never loves him either. Martin returns to her house later on in the week to find she has committed suicide by slitting her wrists in the bathtub. Martin is shocked, but not saddened as one would expect. Instead he muses that it is for the best—that he shouldn't have any friends as they confuse things. Again he calls into the radio show under the pseudonym of “The Count.” He tells the radio announcer about how, when it comes to vampires, the movies have it all wrong:

And that's another thing about those movies. Vampires always have ladies. Sometimes lots of ladies. Well, that's wrong too! You don't need all that.... I mean, if the magic part was real and you could make them do whatever you wanted to... Well, that would be different. In real life, in real life you can't get people to do what you want them to do. (Martin).

Neither Martin nor Mrs. Santini have control over their lives. In an ironic twist of fate it is Mrs. Santini who turns out to be Martin's downfall. His grandfather finds out that Mrs. Santini was found dead—with her wrists slit. He assumes Martin is to blame. He returns home and kills Martin with a stake through the chest.

### Vampire Narratives in the 1980s

In the 1980s a significant number of vampire films were targeted towards, and involved, teenagers/young adults. In some of these films the youngsters attempt to rid their communities of the blood sucking creatures. In other films the teenagers are vampires themselves. The film The Lost Boys, a 1987 “cult classic,” is a film worth analyzing. This film is unique in that it involves a group of teenage vampires as well as a trio of teenage vampire “slayers.” The film also deserves to be studied because of the relationship between the main character, Michael and his love interest, Star. The plot of the film is rather straight forward. Michael, his single mother, and his younger brother, Sam move to southern California to live with their grandfather. Michael, a sullen teenager, has a habit of taking off and going for long walks down to the boardwalk. It is there that he meets Star. Star, a striking young woman, is dancing to music played by a local band. As she sways on the dance floor Michael stares at her—almost mesmerized. Star smiles at him. He follows Star along the boardwalk only to see her hop aboard a motorcycle and ride off with a rather motley looking crew of teenage thugs.

The next time Michael runs into Star she invites him to join her crew for a motorcycle ride to the bluffs. On the surface, it appears that Star acts as a pawn for the other vampires. The

viewer later learns that Michael was supposed to be Star's possession--her first kill. She lures Michael with her beauty and convinces him to join them as they travel to their hideout (an abandoned resort hotel which was destroyed in an earthquake long ago). The group of vampires torments Michael. They offer him Chinese food and then tell him he is eating maggots: "Maggots, Michael. You're eating maggots. How do they taste?" (The Lost Boys). Michael looks into the container and realizes that it is indeed filled with maggots. He vomits and stumbles around as the other vampires mock him. When Michael composes himself David tells him that it was not maggots, but rather, plain white rice. Michael scoffs at the idea of eating any more of it. David, the unofficial leader of the group of vampires laughs and, handing him the carton of plain rice, says "What, you don't like rice? Tell me Michael, how could a billion Chinese people be wrong?" (The Lost Boys). Star comes to Michael's defense, telling the others to "leave him alone!" David, the ringleader, offers Michael a drink from an elaborate goblet saying "Have some of this Michael. Be one of us" (The Lost Boys). Michael stares at the goblet and raises it to his lips. Star again comes to his defense saying "Don't. You don't have to Michael. It's blood" (The Lost Boys). Michael, not believing Star, drinks from the goblet. His transformation from human to vampire begins.

Michael, still unaware of what he is becoming, begins to feel ill. Star tries to warn and help Michael but is unsuccessful because her power is so limited (due to her physical weakness from never having fed upon human blood). Michael asks her, during his transformation, what is happening to him. She hugs him gently and weeps, saying she wishes she could help him but she cannot. She comforts him and the two make love. Michael falls in love with Star and it is implied that she falls equally in love with Michael. Star tells Michael that he was supposed to be her first kill. Only once she has killed can she become a full vampire. But she tells Michael she cannot kill him because she loves him. However, she is becoming weaker and weaker because she has not fed upon human blood. Likewise, Michael cannot become a full vampire until he performs his first kill. Star rebels against the rest of the vampires and asks Michael to help save her and Laddi (her daughter who, after being bitten, is suffering from the same fate). Michael rescues both Star and her daughter. Star appears extremely weak and almost lifeless as Michael carries her limp body out of the abandoned hotel. Michael takes her to his home where he tries, but ultimately fails, to protect her. The vampires soon show up and it appears as if Michael and Star are facing imminent demise. However, in a comedic twist,

Michael's quirky grandfather arrives to save the day. He drives his jalopy into the house and impales the head vampire, thus freeing Star, Michael and Lanni from their current condition. Un-phased, the grandfather just shakes his head and says, "The one thing I could never stomach about Santa Carla, all the damn vampires" (The Lost Boys).

Throughout the film Star *appears* weak and helpless. This is not the case. She is, in a way, stronger than her male 'rulers' because she is able to resist the temptation to feed upon the blood of humans, no matter how sickly she becomes. Michael was to be her first kill, after which she would become a full vampire. However, Star refuses to feed upon Michael and, putting her own life in jeopardy, actually tries to warn him about his fate. Because she has not fed upon human blood, Star becomes weaker physically as the story progresses. Therefore, her illness and relative helplessness *do not* stem from her femininity.

#### Vampire Narratives in the 1990s

In terms of the 1990s, arguably the most popular and recognizable vampire narrative is *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* which ran from 1997-2003 on the WB television network. The series was a spinoff of the movie *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992), which was, ironically, considered a "flop" by critics and viewers alike. Buffy Somers, the heroine of the popular television series, becomes romantically involved with several different male vampires throughout the series. The most important of Buffy's romantic relationships, I would argue, is with Angel/Angelus. Angel appears in season one, albeit rather briefly. He is a recurring character throughout the series. In the episode *Angel* (season one) he helps Buffy to defeat "The Three," a particularly dangerous gang of vampires, and soon after becomes romantically involved with Buffy. However, Buffy learns that Angel is not as benign as he seems. He is a vampire—the undead. However, unlike other vampires in the series, Angel is not entirely bad or demonic. Angel's evil alter ego, Angelus, was created by Darla (another vampire who has a recurring role in the series) when she bit him and turned him into a vampire. For a very long time Angel was an evil creature. He admits to Buffy that he killed his family as well as friends and even innocent children. However, Angel's soul was restored when he fed upon the blood of a young gypsy girl. Her family, in an act of vengeance, restored Angel's soul. Because he possesses a soul, Angel is capable of human emotions – love, fear, guilt, empathy, pity etc. Thus, he ceased to feed upon humans.

Of course there are other vampires with whom Buffy has romantic relations, however, Angel is set apart because of his love for Buffy as well as his motivation to redeem himself. In

the article “Sex and the Single Vampire: The Evolution of the Vampire Lothario and Its Representation in *Buffy*” author Diane DeKelb-Rittenhouse (2002) states:

Angel...is motivated by the desire to redeem himself. Angel must resist his own impulse toward sexuality not only because of the danger it poses to his partners but also because of the danger physical intimacy can pose to him: if it provides him with one moment of true happiness, it will cost him his soul. (150).

Angel’s desire to redeem himself is motivated by the very sight of Buffy. Therefore, “the very vehicle that can spell Angel’s damnation, his love for Buffy, and the sexual expression he gives that love, may also be key to his salvation” (150). Furthermore, Angel is positioned as Buffy’s first true love – an epic teenage romance. In her book Sex and the Slayer, author Lorna Jowett (2005) states that their “relationship is always coded as a doomed romance: he is a 250-plus-year-old vampire with a history of demonic evil and she is the teenage slayer, fated to fight evil; yet against the odds they fall in love” (62). Buffy is Angel’s salvation as well as his downfall. In season two, because he is intimate with, and falls in love with, Buffy, Angel reverts to the evil Angelus. He loses his soul. In the article “Sex and the Single Vampire: The Evolution of the Vampire Lothario and Its Representation in *Buffy*,” author Diane DeKelb-Rittenhouse (2002) describes the relationship between Buffy and Angel in great detail, stating that “Angelus returns when Angel’s one moment of happiness with Buffy in [the episode] Innocence costs him his soul” (144). Angel’s happiness resulting in the loss of his soul makes sense since the curse placed upon him by the gypsies is intended to make him suffer. When he next sees Buffy he tells her that their lovemaking was something he would rather forget, “You’ve got a lot to learn about men, kiddo...you were great, really...I thought you were a pro” (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*) as he laughs and walks away from her. Buffy tells him that their intimacy was a “big deal” and then tells him never to touch her again before crying and whispering “Angel, I love you” (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*). Buffy goes home, lies on her bed and weeps as any young heartsick girl is wont to do.

Throughout her romantic relationship with Angel, as well as her other sexual liaisons throughout the series, Buffy maintains her power. There are times when her power as the slayer *appears* to be diminished by her love for Angel. Jowett (2005) states that:

Angel is older and more experienced and allegorically he is the dangerous older boyfriend, Buffy the young girl led astray...Buffy’s emotional engagement with

Angel leads her to neglect her responsibilities as the Slayer at several points...thus Buffy's feelings for Angel make her, as her mother points out, 'just like any other young woman in love.' (63).

However, Buffy's lapses in judgment are eventually, rather quickly, remedied. After tormenting Buffy and trying to humiliate her, Angelus seeks to hurt Buffy. He taunts and threatens to kill her friends. Giles tells Buffy that Angel is only trying to make this harder on her. Buffy, having already cried her eyes out, replies "He is only making it easier. I know what to do. I have to kill him" (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*). Despite the fact that she loves Angel, she understands her role as the slayer must always come first. She refuses to jeopardize the lives of her friends for Angel. Rather than kill Angel she kills his master. When she confronts Angel he scowls at her and laughs, saying "You can't do it...you can't kill me" (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*). Buffy concedes, beats him up, and then says "Give me time" (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*).

Another characteristic of the Angel/Buffy relationship that is particularly poignant is the objectification of Angel's body. In most of the intimate scenes between Buffy and Angel it is Angel whose body is on display. The camera, however, often pans over Angel's naked abdomen. This objectifies him and makes him into a sex object. Lorna Jowett (2005) states "From very early on Angel's body is displayed for the female protagonist, Buffy, and for the viewer. The tension inherent in this display of the masculine body is that it actually has the effect of feminizing the character by positioning the male as a sexual object to be looked at" (155). The scenes between Buffy and Angel bolster the argument of a Female Gaze. Buffy is never overly sexualized to the extent that Angel is. Her relative sexual reluctance, though she is not a virgin, is another characteristic she shares with Clover's notion of the "Final Girl."

The notion of the "Final Girl" has been applied solely to "slasher" type horror films. I believe it applies to Buffy as she is a type of "Final Girl." In the most basic terms, the "Final Girl" is the sole survivor of the "slasher" horror film. Not only is this young woman a survivor, she is also a fighter. She fights for her survival and ultimately defeats her aggressor. In order to write her book, Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film, author Carol Clover (1992) carefully viewed and scrutinized over 200 "slasher" horror films from the 1970s-1980s. What happens to these women in "slasher" films is usually very predictable; they end up as victims. This is part of what has drawn in audiences for decades. Alfred Hitchcock remembers a friend giving him advice director to director telling Hitchcock, to "Torture the

women!” (qtd. in Clover 42). After a while these young women in film (before the arrival of the Final Girl) appear as a faceless mass—big breasts, long hair, skimpy clothing, late night sex romps, pot smoking, and beer-guzzling sex-pots. Clover (1992) nails it when she writes that “tits and a scream” (35) are all that is required of these actresses.

The “Final Girl” is different. The “Final Girl” is the lone witness to the horror perpetrated upon her friends. She sees the bloodshed, she faces the killer and is slashed, violated, chased in almost every way imaginable. We see her “scream, stagger, fall, rise and scream again” (35). Yet she does not die. She somehow lives to tell the tale. She fights back. In the 1981 film Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Part II the sole survivor (and “Final Girl”) Ginny outwits the killer, Jason Vorhees. While running from him she stumbles upon an abandoned shack in the woods. She walks in, intending to hide from Jason, but she soon learns that this is where Jason lives. In the center of one room sits Jason’s mother’s head (Mrs. Vorhees was killed in the original Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>) surrounded by candles – almost as if Jason has created a shrine to his dead mother. With Jason closing in on her quickly, Ginny comes up with an ingenious plot to outsmart Jason. She takes Mrs. Vorhees’ sweater (which lies next to the candles) and puts it on. As Jason enters the room Ginny smiles and says “Jason you have done your job and mother is pleased.” She continues to speak to him as if she were his mother, thus causing him to become confused, and giving her the opportunity to hack at him with a machete and run away. In A Nightmare on Elm Street, “Final Girl” Nancy kills Freddy by outsmarting him. She realizes that he can only attack children while they are asleep. The dream world is Freddy’s realm. To kill him Nancy realizes she must *remove* him from his comfort zone. She concocts an elaborate plot to lure Freddy and pull him out of her dreams and into the real world. This is exactly what she does and this is how she defeats Freddy.

The “Final Girl” possesses a unique set of characteristics which set her apart from her peers. Take for example, Laurie from Halloween, Stretch from The Texas Chainsaw Massacre and Marti from Hell Night. All of these characters share a common set of characteristics that allow them to survive the nightmare perpetrated upon them. For one thing, the relative chastity or “sexual reluctance” as Clover puts it, of the “Final Girl” sets her apart. This sexual reluctance is even evident even in her name which tends to be unisex (Marti, Toni, Laurie). Regarding the “Final Girl,” director John Carpenter, states that there is “one girl who is the most sexually uptight [and she] just keeps stabbing the guy with the knife. She’s the most sexually

frustrated...the one that killed him. Not because she's a virgin...because all that repressed energy starts coming out" (qtd. in Clover 48). The "Final Girl" tends to be the "academic" among her friends. She is the one who is concerned with homework, her grades, and college. Clover writes that the "Final Girl" is "intelligent, watchful, and level-headed; the first character to sense something amiss and the only one to deduce from the accumulating evidence the pattern and extent of the threat..." (44).

Shifting back to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, interestingly, Buffy marks a dramatic change from what Carol Clover coined the "Final Girl." If we assume that Buffy Somers is indeed a "Final Girl," then the series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* marks a dramatic change in Clover's notion of the lone surviving female. Buffy is not a scholar, nor is she sexually repressed. She is pretty and popular. Nonetheless, she shares numerous traits with the "Final Girl." First off, her name, "Buffy" is not overly feminine (a common trait of the "Final Girl"). Buffy is almost always the one who senses when danger is near. She has an acute sense of her surroundings. She often tries to warn others of impending danger. Buffy is never content to simply "escape" danger. Instead she kills her aggressors. Buffy uses wooden stakes, flame throwers, bows and arrows, fire etc. She makes sure to let her enemies know that she is in charge. And often times she seeks revenge against those that hurt her and/or her family and friends. Despite being the slayer, Buffy is still a typical teenage girl. She dislikes her schoolwork, dozes off in class, sneaks boys into her room, sneaks out to go to parties etc. In the episode "Never Kill a Guy on the First Date," when told she should take her career as a slayer more seriously and not worry so much about boys Buffy responds, "This is the 90's. The 1990's, in point of fact, and I can do both. Clark Kent has a job. I just wanna go on a date" (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*). In fact, throughout the series Buffy has numerous boyfriends and is sexually active as well as popular. This is different than Clover's vision of the "Final Girl" being relatively virginal and pure. Buffy can have a boyfriend, have sex, look good, worry about her wardrobe and still save the world from vampires. In the episode "Prophecy Girl" Buffy states, "we saved the world! I say let's party" (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*).

This chapter provided an in depth analysis of the role of women in vampire narratives from *Dracula* through *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Over time the relationship dynamics between males and females shifted. Female characters in vampire narratives from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century tended to be weak and submissive. This weakness of the female character gradually

disintegrated over time. In Martin the female character is portrayed as a wise, older woman who helps Martin lose his virginity. Mrs. Santini possesses the dominant role in this relationship. Mrs. Santini invites Martin to sleep with her. Martin, the vampire, comes across as rather weak and naïve. In The Lost Boys, the character of Star initially appears to be weak and defenseless. However, upon closer examination it is clear that she is in fact a strong character. Star's weakness stems from her determination not to drink human blood. Her rebellion against her rulers may make her physically weak, but her spirit is strong and determined. Buffy Somers, the heroine in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is portrayed as a strong and fearless vampire slayer. Her role in the world is to slay vampires. At the same time, Buffy is a teenager in love. She falls deeply in love with Angel and is hurt when he leaves her. Still, despite her longing for Angel, she remains strong and continues to defend the world from the vampires. Her ability to slay vampires in the face of adversity is a testament to her strength.



### Chapter Three

#### **The Twilight Hysteria**

The Twilight saga began with the publishing of the first installment of the series, Stephanie Meyer's Twilight. Twilight was published in 2005. It was quickly followed by New Moon (2006), Eclipse (2007) and Breaking Dawn (2008). Twilight became an overnight best seller. It debuted at #5 on the New York Times Best Sellers List for children's chapter books and later rose to #1. Once Eclipse was released in 2007 the trio of books spent a combined 143 weeks on the New York Times Best Sellers List. Each of Meyer's books has been, to put it lightly, a smashing success. In 2008 alone, Meyer sold 29.5 million books. A 2009 USA Today article titled, "Twilight series eclipses Potter records on Best-Selling list," states that "Stephanie Meyer's four-book Twilight series has sunk its fangs into USA TODAY's Best-Selling Books list — with no signs of letting go. Meyer's domination of the list for the past 12 months has smashed records that until now had belonged to J.K. Rowling" (Memmott & Cadden).

Twilight (the film) debuted in 2008 and grossed \$70.6 million in its opening weekend. It made \$193 million domestic and \$385 million worldwide. New Moon was released in 2009 and grossed \$143 million at the box office that weekend, \$293 million domestic and \$703 million worldwide ([boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)). The books and films have become nothing short of a pop-culture phenomenon. Fast food chains are giving away tickets to the latest Stephanie Meyer movie, fan sites have sprung up all over the web and Twilight inspired clothing, bedding, and home décor are all selling at an alarming rate. It is not just teenagers who flock in droves to see the films. Many middle aged men and women are avid Twilight fans. Twilight fans, or "Twi-hards" as they are often referred to, exhibit behavior no less 'hysterical' than the Beatles fans during the "British Invasion." "Twi-hards" (who range from elementary school children to middle aged women to senior citizens) plaster themselves with Twilight inspired tattoos, embrace vampire culture, form chat groups, and show up in droves at the theatres, screaming and crying as they push their way to the front of the line in hopes of obtaining a ticket to the premier showing of the newest film. T-Shirts emblazoned with "Team Edward" and "Team Jacob" are a common sight on middle school and high school campuses, as are Nokia phones with special Twilight themed plastic cases. But it doesn't stop with the consumers. Major corporations have used this "vampire craze" which, in all honesty cannot be solely chalked up to Meyers's works (*The Vampire Diaries* and *True Blood* are also quite popular), to make a profit. Bing,

Microsoft's new search engine designed to compete with Google, used a vampire themed commercial to promote their product. Sunny Delight, a popular fruit beverage, also capitalized on the contemporary vampire mania with a vampire themed commercial "unleash the power of the sun."

The Twilight saga hysteria is still going strong and does not show signs of letting up. The latest film, Eclipse, sold more than 30 million tickets the day it was released in June of 2010. (NYT). As of July 19, 2010 Eclipse has grossed \$552,791,897 million worldwide – a new box office record (boxofficemojo.com).

### **Plot Summary**

#### Twilight:

The 2008 hit movie Twilight, based on Stephanie Meyers' novel of the same name, revolves around seventeen-year-old Bella Swan, the new girl in town. Bella moves from her hometown of Phoenix, AZ to live with her father in Washington. A plain looking, tomboyish and sullen teenager, Bella prefers to spend most of her time by herself. She rarely interacts with the other youngsters in her town and spends hours upon hours musing about the bleakness of her mere existence. Shortly after moving to Washington, Bella meets Edward Cullen, A vampire, and falls in love with him. Their relationship is awkward from the start. Edward is immediately attracted to Bella but he will not allow himself to give in to his urge to be close to her. He eventually tells Bella that he has never wanted to taste a human's blood as much as he wants hers. Bella is instantly smitten with Edward. It is Bella who pursues Edward. She becomes determined to be with him at any cost. Edward finally concedes and the two begin a romance. Throughout the film Bella places herself in dangerous situations to be with her beloved. Edward saves her life on more than one occasion. A group of nomadic vampires discover that the Cullen family is protecting Bella and one of them, Laurent, decides he wants to feed upon her blood. The movie ends with Edward intervening in the nick of time and saving Bella from certain death. The bond between them grows stronger as the movie ends.

#### New Moon:

New Moon starts off with Bella celebrating her eighteenth birthday. She is clearly upset about "getting older." At eighteen she will be older than Edward who, as a vampire, stays eternally young. Edward and his family throw a birthday party for Bella, she accidentally cuts herself, and the Cullen family members have a difficult time controlling their desire for her

blood. As such, Edward decides it is too dangerous for him to continue his relationship with her. The Cullens move away and Bella is left in a state of extreme depression and seemingly eternal despair. In Edward's absence she takes refuge with close childhood friend Jacob Black. He helps take her mind off of things but can never replace Edward. Bella, in an attempt to make Edward step in and save her life, jumps off a cliff into the Pacific Ocean. This is only one example of the self destructive behavior she engages in throughout the movie. Edward believes she has died and decides he too will commit suicide by forcing the Volturi (an ancient clan of vampire royalty) to kill him. Bella then steps in to save her beloved. The Volturi agree to let Edward and Bella go under the condition that he change her into a vampire. She begs him to do so immediately but he does not want to condemn her and refuses repeatedly. Finally, at the end of the movie Edward tells Bella that if she really wants to him to change her, she must agree to marry him.

### **Twilight and Contemporary Society**

The films Twilight and New Moon contain important messages about contemporary culture. Key messages include a generalized fear of "Otherness" and a desire to revert to traditional male-female relationships (in which the male is the dominant figure and the female is the submissive figure). At the same time these films, through the character of Bella Swan, express a certain yearning for, or desire to experience "Otherness." Furthermore, there is evidence of a Female Gaze in both Twilight and New Moon. These messages make Twilight and New Moon interesting and meaningful artifacts for scholars and critics to analyze.

### **Ideology and Relationship Dynamics**

The dominant ideology in the movies Twilight and New Moon has to do with power and relationship dynamics. Romantic relationships, and the power dynamic between both parties is key. More specifically, a strong male and a submissive female, together make an "ideal" romantic relationship. Female characters are portrayed as extremely weak and relatively helpless. As such the female characters submit to their male counterparts. The female characters look to the male characters for support and protection. This submission and relative helplessness is evidenced in the behavior of the protagonist, Bella Swan. Additionally, this submission is further illustrated through Bella's romantic relationships with Edward Cullen and Jacob Black.

Bella is a seventeen year old girl who recently moved from her home in Phoenix, AZ to the small town of Forks, WA to live with her father. Bella's mother, a free-spirited woman who

has been divorced from Bella's father for many years, resides in Florida with her new husband. Bella is presented as a rather gloomy, sullen young girl. Her conversations with everyone from her father to her teachers to her classmates come across as forced and downright painful for her. It is her pensive voice which narrates both Twilight and New Moon.

"I've never given much thought as to how I would die...but dying in the place of someone I love seems like a good way to go" and the saga begins. While the average movie-goer may overlook this quote, it is important as it sets the tone for the entire series. Isabella Swan's character is unveiled before the viewer even lays eyes upon her. This is it. Bella's character is no more complex than her description of how she views her own demise. Nowhere, in any vampire narrative, has a woman ever presented herself as so passive and worthless. Weak and lovesick females are *relatively* common in vampire films. Take for example, Francis Ford Coppola's Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992), FW Murnau's Nosferatu (1922) and Werner Herzog's Nosferatu the Vampyre (1979). In each of these films weak female characters are plentiful. What sets Bella apart from these other weak women is that Bella actually takes this weakness a step further. She bares her neck to the viewer from the very beginning of the narrative. In a similar fashion to Murnau's character, Ellen Hutter, Bella exposes herself completely, as if to say "Here I am. Take me. Bite me on the neck. I'm yours." However, in Murnau's Nosferatu, Ellen Hutter's character weakens as the plot line develops. She is not, initially, a helpless woman. It is only at the end of the story that she lays down her life to save her husband. Bella makes clear her ambition to give up her life and her identity in the very first moments of Twilight.

Throughout Twilight and New Moon it is obvious that Bella places little value on her own life. Her whole life, from the moment she arrives in Forks, and sets eyes upon him, is lived for and through Edward Cullen. In Twilight, as the two walk through the dense forest, Edward tells her, "I'm designed to kill...I've killed people before...I wanted to kill you...I've never wanted a human's blood so much in my life...Your scent is like a drug to me...You are like my own personal brand of heroin" (Twilight). As he tells her of his desire to feed on her blood, the lovesick Bella follows him through the woods and pleads with him not to walk away from her. She tells him that it doesn't matter whether or not he wants to kill her, and that the only thing she fears is losing him.

Throughout Twilight Bella is portrayed as weak and helpless. She is so clumsy she can barely walk without knocking into someone or something and injuring herself. Edward must

step in to save her life numerous times throughout the film. In one scene, near the beginning of the film, a clueless Bella is nearly crushed by a classmate's car as she walks across the parking lot. Edward, moving quicker than light speed, dives between Bella and the vehicle and, when the car is within millimeters of crushing Bella, Edward manages to push the car away. In another scene, Bella (the daughter of a police chief) decides to walk down a dark alleyway by herself at dusk. Not only is Bella clumsy, she also lacks common sense. Naturally, Bella comes across a gang of thugs. They harass and taunt Bella. It is clear that their motive is to sexually assault her. Just in the nick of time Edward appears. His sleek, shiny silver Volvo screeches down the alley. Edward gets out and with one glare and a slight snarl the teens scatter.

Edward's most heroic "save" comes near the end of the film. And, this time, the circumstances cannot be blamed on Bella. After bringing Bella along to a vampire baseball game (after all *it is* the American pastime) Edward realizes he has unknowingly placed her in grave danger. While playing baseball, the Cullen family stumbles upon another group of vampires, one of which is a Tracker. The Tracker cannot control his thirst for human blood and can track a human virtually anywhere. The Tracker the Cullens encounter is determined to feed upon Bella. Edward takes Bella away from Forks to lay low for a while. However, the Tracker still manages to find Bella. He calls her hotel room and lures her back to Phoenix, to the very dance studio where she took ballet as a child. Ironical, isn't it? Bella, in vain, desperately tries to fight off the Tracker. He grabs her and throws her across the floor and into a glass mirror which shatters and sprays bits of glass over her body. Naturally Edward arrives to save Bella. Edward and the Tracker fight each other. The Tracker manages to throw Edward out of the window and then proceeds to bite Bella. The rest of the Cullen Clan shows up, they pull the Tracker off Bella and kill him. Bella, who during the entire time has been lying on the floor helpless, begins to convulse as the "venom" floods her veins. The only way Edward can save her is to suck the "venom" out of her system. At first he is hesitant to do so--fearing he will not be able to stop himself from draining all of Bella's blood. However, Edward refuses to let Bella become a vampire. As such, he sucks the "venom" from her system and saves her life. In the last scene of the film Bella tells Edward she wishes he had just let the "venom" penetrate her body so that she would become a vampire. Then she and Edward could live together for eternity.

Shifting ahead to New Moon, Bella's character actually weakens. When Edward tells her that she "doesn't belong" in his world and leaves her, Bella falls apart. This is the response one

would expect from a lovesick teenage girl. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, when Angel leaves Buffy she reacts in the same way. It is normal for teenage girls to weep and mourn the loss of their “first love.” However, Bella takes this mourning to an extreme. Realizing that Edward will not make her a vampire because he fears she will face eternal damnation, she tells Edward “If this is about my soul, take it! I don't want it without you” (New Moon). In her emails to Edward’s sister Alice she muses, “The absence of him is everywhere I look. There is only one way I know to see him. Maybe I'm crazy now, but I guess that's okay. If a rush of danger is what it takes to see him, than that's what I'll find” (New Moon).

The ways in which Bella goes about seeing Edward are, essentially, sugar-coated suicide attempts. At one point she places herself in harm’s way by accepting a motorcycle ride from a local thug hoping that he will try to harm her and that Edward will save her. At another point she jumps off a cliff into the Pacific Ocean in the hopes that Edward will appear to rescue her. He appears before she jumps and begs her not to do it. She tells him “You want me to be human. Watch me” (New Moon). She closes her eyes and jumps. A huge wave appears and smashes Bella against the jagged rocks. As she hits her head and begins to sink, Edward appears below her. It is not clear whether he is there to save her or if Bella is actually dying and his image appears. It is actually Jacob who saves her from certain death—pulling her from the ocean and giving her mouth to mouth resuscitation. Alice Cullen confronts Bella, echoing what the audience (one would hope) must be thinking, “I have never met anyone more prone to life threatening idiocy.” Again, the viewer bears witness to Bella’s extreme lack of individuality. She is not able to move on from her relationship with Edward. She is willing to kill herself to be with him, or even, just to see him again.

Due to botched communication, Edward fears that Bella has drowned. Alice, who is able to see into the future, tells Bella “He thinks you’re dead....he wants to die too. He is going to the Volturi. He wants to die too” (New Moon). Alice and Bella fly to Italy (where Edward is hiding out) to try and stop Edward from killing himself. The Volturi (an ancient clan of vampires) refuse to kill Edward. The festival of Saint Marcus Day (when the town commemorates the day it rid itself of all vampires) is currently going on and, since the Volturi have refused his request, Edward decides to show himself to the humans. This will essentially *force* the Volturi to kill him. Naturally, Bella shows up just as Edward is about to reveal himself in the sunlight. The two embrace and kiss passionately. The Volturi, however, are not willing to let Bella and Edward off

the hook quite so easily. Once the Volturi threaten Bella, Edward steps in to save her. Another fight ensues. The Volturi are just about to kill Edward when Bella steps in, offering her life in exchange for Edward's. The Cullens strike a deal with the Volturi, promising that they will turn Bella into a vampire. Alice tells the Volturi that Bella will become a vampire as she can see it happening in the future. The Volturi allow them to go, under the condition that Edward and Alice change Bella into one of their kind in the near future.

Once they return to Forks Bella pleads with Edward to promise to turn her into a vampire. Jacob Black appears and he steps in, "No, I won't let you. You're not going to be one of them Bella" (New Moon). Bella's two admirers, Jake and Edward face off. Bella tells Jake she loves him, but that if she is forced to choose she will choose Edward. Jacob and Edward prepare to fight one another. Bella is able to intercede, "Stop! You can't hurt each other without hurting me" (New Moon). Jacob runs off and Bella pleads with Edward to change her. Edward looks at Bella, and states "I have one condition if you want me to do it myself....Marry Me, Bella" (New Moon).

While Bella's primary love interest is Edward Cullen, she also has feelings for Jacob. Jacob Black appears in both Twilight and New Moon. When Bella first arrives in Forks, Jacob accompanies his father, Sam to visit Bella and her father, Charlie. Jacob is a Native American teenager of the Quileute people and attends school on the reservation. He is fifteen years old with long dark hair and a near perfect physique. It is clear from the beginning that he is romantically interested in Bella. While Edward is gone, Jacob takes over the role of Bella's caretaker. While he and Bella have always been acquaintances, once Edward leaves, Jacob and Bella grow close. Bella uses Jacob as a kind of escape from her worries. She and Jacob begin to spend time together, building, repairing and riding dirt bikes, seeing movies etc. Jacob would like to be more than friends with Bella. Bella clearly has feelings for Jacob, but she is still in love with Edward. Of course, being Bella, she continues to place herself in dangerous situations. Depressed over her lost love, Bella decides to take a walk through the woods to the spot where she and Edward once spent time lying in the grass and daydreaming. Once she is alone in the field she finds herself in imminent danger. Laurent, a vampire with whom the Cullens have had disagreements in the past, finds Bella and is determined to kill her. Realizing she has no way out, Bella closes her eyes and whispers "Edward, I love you" (New Moon). Just as Laurent is about to strike, a large pack of wolves pounce out of the brush, baring their teeth and growling at

Laurent. The pack of wolves consists of Jacob Black and the rest of his werewolf brothers. They kill Laurent and save Bella's life.

Jacob, who is now a werewolf, tells Bella that he can no longer be her friend. He tells her that he is no longer a "good kid." Bella figures out what has happened. Jacob has become a werewolf like Sam and the other boys on the reservation. Upset, she drives to his house and confronts the rest of the werewolves (all teenage boys from the reservation). Yelling at them she hits Paul who becomes enraged and turns into a werewolf in front of her eyes. He charges Bella. Jacob appears, and seeing that Bella is in danger, he too turns into a werewolf and charges his brother, Paul. Bella manages to escape but looks back to see the two brothers fighting each other. They tear at each other, rolling across the lawn, biting and growling at each other. Essentially, they are fighting over her—Jacob is fighting to protect Bella and Paul is fighting to possess Bella. Bella is, throughout both Twilight and New Moon, a possession which is sought after. Jacob wants her. Edward wants her. Laurent and his coven of vampires want her. Bella is a weak character who is at the mercy of her surroundings. Whoever ends up possessing her will ultimately decide her fate.

Throughout New Moon Jacob is incredibly sexualized. His body is perpetually on display. In nearly each scene involving Jacob, he appears shirtless. In one scene, where Bella falls off a dirt bike and hits her head, Jacob removes his T-shirt to wipe away the blood from her face. Bella lies bleeding against a rock, yet the camera focuses on Jacob's naked abdomen, panning over his bulging biceps and his smooth glistening caramel colored skin. His physique is the epitome of masculinity and Bella herself tells him this.

The relationship dynamics in Meyers' Twilight saga are unique. While submissive women are common in vampire narratives, no woman has ever been portrayed quite like Bella. I argue that, when it comes to vampire narratives, Bella is the most submissive and weak woman of all time. Bella's romantic relationships in Twilight and New Moon support my claim that she is indeed, a helpless creature. If one compares their relationship to romantic relationships in other vampire narratives it is immediately obvious that the Bella/Edward relationship dynamic is something unique.

Throughout Twilight and New Moon Bella makes it clear that she is not a "normal" teenage girl. Bella does not care about makeup, clothes or boys. She has no hobbies. School does not seem to interest her at all. She plays no sports (perhaps due to the fact that she has no



coordination). As her own person Bella simply does not exist. She has no hopes, dreams or goals. She simply exists. Not until Edward Cullen comes along does Bella have a purpose. Once she meets Edward her life is lived for and through him. She wants to belong to Edward Cullen.

As I stated above, the messages the audience receives from Twilight and New Moon express a desire to return to the relationship “ideals” of times past where males work and support the family and females act as companions to the male head of the household. The message appears to be that women must have a man in order to achieve happiness in life. When Edward leaves Bella she uses Jacob as a substitute male to protect her and stand by her. At no time throughout the two films is Bella ever without a male protector in her life.

### **The Female Gaze**

I argue that in both Twilight and New Moon a Female Gaze is present. In both films the male body is displayed and objectified. Both Edward Cullen and Jacob Black are highly sexualized characters. In contrast, Bella Swan is not sexualized. Instead she is portrayed as a tomboy. Wearing long dark clothing, Bella’s body is never put on “display.” The camera work throughout both films also suggests a Female Gaze. In the following section I will analyze four specific scenes from the films Twilight and New Moon to show that a Female Gaze is present in both films.

The first time Bella lays eyes on Edward is a scene worth examining. I believe it exemplifies the notion of the Female Gaze. Bella and her new friends are eating lunch in the cafeteria when the Cullens walk in. As her giggly teenage girlfriends chatter on about boys, Bella looks out the window to see the Cullen family passing by. When the camera is fixed upon the Cullens, the scene is filmed in decelerated motion, so that every glance, every stride and every movement is emphasized and impossible to overlook. Bella’s eyes are transfixed upon these new, unique, classmates as they enter the cafeteria. The shots of the Cullens walking into the cafeteria are, once again, filmed in decelerated motion.

Edward is last to enter the cafeteria. As he walks up to the door the musical score changes and becomes louder, building up until Edward opens the door to the cafeteria and reaching a crescendo as he enters. Bella asks “Who’s he?” (Twilight). She stares at the handsome young man entering the room. The camera provides a close up view of Edward’s face. It is set in stone and nearly emotionless...so pale it almost emits a glow. Edward’s eyes

are fixed to his right, although he does not appear to be looking at anyone or anything in particular. It should be noted, however, that Bella and her friends are positioned to Edward's right during this shot. This is a subtle indication, so subtle it could easily be missed, that Edward notices Bella from the moment he enters the room. Bella's friend Jessica jabbers on about the Cullens and regarding Edward, says, "Apparently no one here is good enough for him...seriously don't waste your time" (Twilight). Edward cracks a slight half-smile, indicating that he has either heard what Jessica said or he knows what she is thinking and he finds it somewhat humorous and/or flattering. The camera cuts back and forth between Bella and Edward. Bella gazes at Edward and the viewer sees, through her perspective, the mysterious and handsome young man who glares back in her direction. Edward raises his eyebrows slightly and Bella turns away. A cutaway, close up shot focuses on Edward's face, again in a freeze frame. His chiseled features, sensuous lips and high cheekbones are impossible to ignore. He stares back at Bella with dark deep set eyes. His mouth, once in a sneer, opens slightly as he takes a deep breath and then quickly looks away.

This scene is powerful because it shows the viewer that a relationship between Edward and Bella has begun to form. Additionally, it provides the viewer with a first look at Edward Cullen. Edward, who strides across the cafeteria confident, yet with an air of mystery, *knows* he is being watched. The smile on his face when he hears the girls talking about his looks and bemoaning his unavailability indicates that he *enjoys being looked at*. This enjoyment of being looked at is one of the arguments of scopophilia. Scopophilia, essentially, is the "love of looking." However, it can also refer to the pleasure of being the object of the gaze or the enjoyment receives from being looked at. It is possible that Edward would find himself empowered because Bella wants to look upon him. Both males and females enjoy being looked at. Some argue that women get dressed up and don makeup and perfume because they want to be looked at. Likewise very fit males often jog shirtless, knowing that others will stare longingly at their bodies. Being the object of the gaze is not necessarily a passive role. It can be quite empowering. Thus, while Edward does not wish to have a relationship with any of the girls at Forks High School, he still appreciates the attention he receives and enjoys being the object of the Female Gaze.

Another scene where the Female Gaze is evident takes place outside of Forks High School – in the parking lot. Bella's Biology class is going on a field trip. Bella stands off to one

side, waiting to get on the bus. Edward Cullen is walking on the opposite side of the parking lot with Alice and Jasper. Bella stares at them. Her friend Mike Newton, who has a crush on Bella, walks up to her and obscures her view of Edward. “Look at you, huh? Bella, you’re alive” (Twilight) he jokes (this scene occurs shortly after Bella’s brush with death). Even though he stands right in front of Bella, Mike’s face is blurred by the camera. Edward Cullen, who stands across the street, can be seen very clearly. It is clear that Edward knows Bella is watching him.

Despite Mike being less than a foot from Bella, it is clear that she is focusing on Edward and could care less about what Mike has to say. Mike, a bumbling teenager, asks Bella if she will go to the Prom with him. Bella pays no attention to Mike. She is staring at Edward. The entire time the camera cuts back and forth between Bella and Edward. Edward looks at Bella, his head is cocked slightly to the left, and he cracks a half smile. His facial expression is a mixture of curiosity and contempt. He can either hear the exchange between Bella and Mike, or he can read Mike’s mind (as Edward has the ability to read minds) and he is curious to see Bella’s reaction. He is also irritated that Mike has distracted Bella from looking at him.

“So what do you think” (Twilight) Mike asks Bella. Bella has clearly not heard anything Mike said and she appears confused. At this point, Mike’s character is now in focus and Edward, off in the distance, is blurred by the camera. Bella lies to Mike, telling him that she cannot go to the Prom with him as she will be in Florida that weekend. Dejected, Mike walks away. The camera cuts to Edward who grins, and although the viewer cannot hear it, appears to elicit a laugh as he turns and walks towards the bus. This entire exchange is filmed through subjective shots. Whoever Bella focused on is presented clearly and in focus by the camera. Other characters in the frame are heavily blurred. What this says is that Bella possesses the active gaze. Whoever is lucky enough to be the recipient of Bella’s gaze is presented clearly.

Once Bella learns what Edward is (a vampire) she decides to confront him. School is letting out and she stands in the parking lot staring at Edward. Bella’s hair ruffles in the wind and her eyes squint as she looks at Edward Cullen walking across the parking lot. Edward meets Bella’s gaze and turns towards her. The camera cuts back and forth between close-ups of Edward’s and Bella’s faces. Bella’s facial expression is one of sadness and anger and she does not verbally acknowledge Edward as she passes him. The camera shifts and focuses on Edward

as he turns and watches Bella walk away. His lips part slightly, his eyes glance downwards, he blinks and then sets off after Bella.

In the woods, Edward tells Bella what he is and that he is dangerous and that he thirsts for her blood. Bella, of course, tells Edward that she “doesn’t care” and that she is not afraid of him. He grabs her arm and tells her that he is taking her “up the mountain, out of the cloud bank. You need to see what I look like in the sunlight” (Twilight) The camera focuses on Edward’s determined face as well as on Bella who clings to Edward’s neck as they “fly” up the mountain. When they reach the summit he puts her down and walks over to a ray of sunlight. “This” he says unbuttoning his shirt while facing away from Bella “is why we don’t show ourselves in sunlight” (Twilight).

The camera closes in on Bella’s face. Wide eyed, she gasps in anticipation. Edward slowly turns towards Bella. Breathing heavily, his chest heaving, he shimmers in the sunlight. “This is what I am” he says. His face emotes a kind of sadness, almost as if he fears rejection from Bella. He continues to breathe heavily, as he looks towards Bella. The camera provides a close-up of Edward’s abdomen which sparkles and glistens in the sunlight. “It’s like diamonds,” Bella gasps. She stares at him and as Edward begins to turn away she says “you’re beautiful” (Twilight). Again the camera pans over Edward’s sleek, shimmering abdomen.

The final scene I analyze has to do with the relationship between Jacob Black and Bella Swan. Once Edward is gone, Bella relies on Jacob Black for comfort and friendship. After a disastrous night at the movies with Bella and Mike (when Mike makes a pass at Bella and Jacob becomes infuriated) Jacob stops returning Bella’s phone calls. A determined Bella gets into her beat up truck and heads over to Jacob’s house. It is pouring rain as Bella pulls into Jacob’s driveway. Jacob can be seen walking across the scene through the rain. The camera cuts to a close up of Bella, who is clearly watching Jacob as he moves across the yard. She is still sitting in her truck and her face is obscured by the rain as well as the windshield wipers of her truck. Nevertheless, the viewer sees her face – pensive yet determined.

Bella is clad in dark clothing from head to toe. Jacob, or “Jake” as Bella calls him, is wearing cutoff shorts and no shirt. As Jacob walks away from her Bella yells his name. He stops and slowly turns towards her. The music stops and all the viewer hears is the patter of the rain and an occasional thunder clap. As Bella and Jacob stand about a foot apart the camera moves in from a long distance shot to a close up of Jacob. Jacob’s black hair is now cut short,

and it is sopping wet, clinging to his face and neck. His muscular, tan, *naked* abdomen is impossible to overlook. He is as the epitome of masculinity in this scene. He tells Bella to go away. At this point the camera is focused on Bella's face, but Jacob's neck and chin are in full view to the right of the screen. As Bella tries to plead with Jacob, the viewer can see the veins in his neck bulge and his face wobble a bit as he tries to control his anger. He sticks to his ground, so to speak, and runs off with his brothers, leaving Bella alone in the rain.

While both Edward and Jacob are sexualized throughout the movie, Jacob is never feminized in the way Edward is. Jacob is always stern, strong and hyper-masculine. His skin is the color of coffee and his rippling muscles bulge rather than sparkle. Even the difference in facial expressions between the two males bolsters my argument that Edward is feminized and Jacob is not. Jacob's features are chiseled and set in stone. He rarely smiles. Edward, however, often appears sad and wistful. The close-ups of his face are reminiscent of images of a supermodel from a fashion magazine. His lips are parted sensuously, he has bedroom eyes which give off a 'come hither' look and his skin is pale as alabaster.

While I do believe that a Female Gaze is present in Twilight and New Moon, it is troubling that Bella remains so weak throughout the series. It is important to point out that in any movie there are numerous different gazes at work. There is the spectator's gaze, the intra-diegetic gaze (the main character's gaze) and the camera (the director's gaze). I believe that, in Twilight, both the intra-diegetic and the camera's gaze are female. In other words, Bella's gaze is an active Female Gaze. From the very beginning Twilight was created and conceived by females. Meyers' novel became a female screenwriter's project and finally ended up with a female director: Catherine Hardwicke. Hardwicke was fired by the production company before she could begin directing New Moon. Many speculate that Hardwicke's views clashed with the views of the predominately male production company, Summit. In the article *Why Twilight's director got the boot* Patrick Goldstein (2008), who writes the weekly blog *The Big Picture* for The Los Angeles Times, states that "Hardwicke's abrupt departure has also fueled rumors that she clashed with the all-male hierarchy at Summit. It's a charge often leveled at Hollywood's largely all-male executive ranks, which has a woeful track record of hiring female filmmakers on mainstream studio projects" (1).

New Moon, on the other hand, was directed by Chris Weitz. While I believe that the intra-diegetic gaze is still inherently female, the director's gaze in New Moon is a Male Gaze.

As I stated before, Bella grows increasingly weaker throughout the films. It is in New Moon where Bella is stripped of her power. It is in New Moon where Edward realizes Bella must be protected from his kind. It is in New Moon where Bella decides to try to kill herself because she cannot be with her beloved. Likewise it is in New Moon where Jacob Black must watch over Bella when Edward Cullen is not around. Looking at the box office statistics, it is evident that the Twilight franchise's viewer demographic has shifted. The audience for Hardwicke's Twilight consisted mostly of young females. When New Moon hit theatres the number male viewers increased substantially. After watching the films it is easy to see that New Moon has a more masculine edge to it. The special effects and the long, drawn out fight scenes in New Moon cater to the male demographic. The audience for New Moon consisted of 1/5 males and 4/5 females (hollywoodreporter.com). The audience for Eclipse, the most recent addition to the Twilight saga, consisted of 1/3 males and 2/3 females (hollywoodreporter.com). At the hands of a male director, the Twilight saga is catering more and more to the male demographic.

One aspect of this film that is quite poignant, and that I would like to further examine, is the feminization of Edward Cullen. It is interesting to note that Bella declares Edward "beautiful." She does not say he is handsome, or hot or sexy. She says he is beautiful. Edward is feminized in this exchange. His skin sparkles "like diamonds" and while his physique is strong and buff, he appears sad and weak. Bella tells Jacob, "You know, you're *sort of* beautiful" (New Moon). Jacob is exotic looking. He is the epitome of what most heterosexual women would consider sexually attractive. Jacob is tall, dark, mysterious, muscular and sensuous. Bella makes a distinction between Edward and Jacob by declaring that Jacob is "sort of beautiful." I believe there may be an alternative reading of the feminization of Edward Cullen. As I outline below, I believe Edward's feminization is not entirely linked to sexuality, but rather to weakness of character. However, it would be interesting to further investigate the idea of the "Gaze" in twilight by stepping outside of a heterosexual mindset.

In summary, in both Twilight and New Moon the intra-diegetic gaze is female. However, while in Twilight the camera's gaze is feminine, it becomes a Male Gaze in New Moon. The persistent weakening of Bella, until she is merely a love sick child, in New Moon exists because the camera's gaze is a Male Gaze. Rather than gaining power throughout the series Bella continues to lose strength due to the fact that the camera's gaze is male.

### **Otherness in Twilight and New Moon**

Throughout Twilight and New Moon the vampires and the werewolves are portrayed as “Others.” They exist alongside the human beings in the story but they are always the outsiders. They do not completely belong. The Cullen family of vampires must move every four or five years so as to escape detection. They find a small town to call home and after a few years, when locals might begin to think something unusual is going on, they leave and go elsewhere. While they are not hunted by humans, the vampires must still be wary of humans. If their secret were to be found out they could be in grave danger. The human characters in the films look down upon the Cullens. Bella’s friends openly poke fun at the Cullen family. Jessica tells Bella that Alice is “weird” and hints at incestual relationships within the Cullen family. When Jasper and Alice walk into the cafeteria Jessica states that they are all “together...like *together* together” (Twilight). “The blonde girl...that’s Rosalie...and the big dark haired guy that’s Emmett...they’re like a thing. I’m not even sure that’s legal” (Twilight). In case being a vampire is not enough to set one apart, the Cullen children are also outsiders by virtue of the fact that they are orphans. The Cullen children are the foster children of Dr. Cullen, a local physician who moved here from Alaska. Again, the fact that these characters are different and do not belong is emphasized repeatedly throughout the films.

Just as the vampires are portrayed as “Others,” so too are the werewolves. Jacob Black and his family are Native Americans belonging to the Quileute Tribe of Washington State. They live on a reservation and the children do not attend public school. Instead, the children and teenagers attend a private school located on the reservation. Again, these characters are clearly “Otherised” throughout Meyers’ narrative. The werewolf clan is also set apart by virtue of their appearance. The dark skin, dark eyes and long black hair set Jacob and his brothers apart from the rest of the Forks population. It is interesting to note that the Native American people in the series, the “salt of the earth” tribe from Washington State, are able to transform or “shape-shift” and morph into creatures of the forest – wolves. Meyers’ clear link between native people and animals does not go unnoticed.

Interestingly, when forging relationships, Bella appears to favor the “Other.” Even where friendship is concerned, Bella favors vampires and werewolves. Throughout Twilight and New Moon Bella appears to have little interest in spending time with her human friends. She has no desire to go shopping for Prom dresses with her girlfriends. She has no desire to attend the Prom

with her friends either. She only agrees to go out with friends to appease her father, Charlie, who is worried about his daughter. In the rare moments that she is physically with her human friends, her mind is in another place. She is always daydreaming about Edward and Jacob. Bella has a large group of girlfriends. However, she has no connection to them. The only people she feels close to are the Cullens and Jacob Black. At one point, in New Moon, Bella tells Jacob that he can't leave her "You're my best friend" she says (New Moon).

Bella's romantic relationships with Edward Cullen and Jacob Black can be read as non-normative relationships or relationships with an "Other." While Bella is pursued by numerous teenage boys at Forks High School (namely Mike Newton) she eschews these "traditional" relationships in favor of relationships with non-humans. Bella is inextricably drawn to the "Other." Her attraction to the "Other" is outside of Bella's control. She does not fully understand why she is drawn to Edward Cullen, stating, "About three things I was absolutely positive: First, Edward was a vampire. Second, there was a part of him - and I didn't know how dominant that part might be - that thirsted for my blood. And third, I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him" (Twilight).

It is interesting to note that throughout the Twilight series, Meyers appears to pit "Other" against "Other." The Cullens are outsiders and "Others." Likewise, Jacob Black's Native American clan of werewolves are also "Others." There is a dichotomy between these "Others." The Cullens are well groomed white and seemingly aristocratic "Others." The head of the household, Dr. Cullen, is a physician and the family lives in a beautiful, very large and very modern home. Furthermore, the Cullens are white. In fact, they are more than white—they are so pale they are nearly translucent. Edward Cullen is well read and well dressed. The Native Americans, on the other hand, are portrayed in a more working class light. Jacob lives in an older, somewhat rundown, house in the country. He is always working in the yard, cliff diving or tinkering with automobiles and motorcycles. Once he becomes a werewolf he lives with his brothers in a shack deep in the forest. These two "Others" share a common interest in Bella Swan. However, Bella makes it clear that she wants Edward and not Jacob. At one point she tells Jacob not to make her choose between them because she will indeed choose Edward and leave Jacob behind.

In Twilight the prospect of an alternative relationship appeals to Bella. Likewise, the female demographic may find the idea of a non-normative relationship with a vampire desirable



and even cool. However, once she begins seeing Edward Cullen she finds herself falling head over heels in love with him. The excitement of a non-normative relationship gradually wanes. In New Moon, Bella goes from being excited about the prospect of a vampire lover to needing Edward in order to make it through the day.

The role of “Otherness” in Meyers films is important. Society has undergone radical changes lately. Meyers appears to be sending a warning message about “Otherness.” However, “Otherness” is apparently somewhat subjective. “Others” who are able to assimilate into society, like the Cullen family, are portrayed as the more desirable “Others.” The Native American clan, on the other hand, is set apart from the rest of the world. The children attend school on a reservation and their interaction with mainstream society is very minimal. I believe this links back to what Roland Barthes claimed when she discussed the notion of “Otherness.” If the other is able to assimilate (at least somewhat) into mainstream society, he is accepted. However, if the “Other” is not able to be assimilated then his “Otherness” is emphasized and exaggerated and he finds himself occupying a space on the “outside” as a non-normative member of society. This concept is quite telling given the current situation of The United States of America. The first black President was sworn into office in 2009. Racial tension has increased and a generalized fear of any sort of “Otherness” is becoming more apparent in society. The current struggle over securing the borders is further evidence of this fear of “Otherness.” The issue of securing the border in Arizona has become a sensationalized news story. Likewise, the prospect of a Mosque to be built near Ground Zero has incited fear and anger among many Americans. Since Obama’s rise to power America as a whole has experienced more rather than less fear of the “Other”. Right wing political commentators like Glenn Beck, who claims that Obama is racist against whites, are (according to liberals) without basis for these arguments. Some see the rise of the “new right” as a backlash against assimilation and acceptance of “Otherness.” The political pendulum swung far to the left in 2008 and appears to be swinging even farther to the right as Obama’s Presidency evolves. No matter which side of the political fence one sits, the changes America has undergone are historic and important. Future narratives (film, television, print) will, no doubt, continue to express the fears and anxieties of the hegemonic society.

## Chapter 4

### **Conclusions**

#### The Gaze

Through analyzing the film adaptations of Twilight and New Moon I came to several conclusions. I believe that an active Female Gaze is present in both Twilight and New Moon. This gaze does not have to be linked to psychoanalytic theory, as I believe that an active Female Gaze can exist aside from psychoanalysis. The sexualization of the male body in Twilight and New Moon, when compared to how the female body is displayed is extremely interesting and relevant. The main male characters, Edward and Jacob, are highly sexualized. The viewer sees their naked abdomens, rippling muscles and shirtless chests throughout both films. At the same time, Bella is not sexualized to the extent of the men in this series. Bella is rather plain looking, prefers dark clothing and never wears anything even remotely risqué. An old tank top she dons before going to bed is as sexy as Bella ever dresses. However, even if psychoanalytic theory is added to the equation I still argue for an active Female Gaze in Twilight and New Moon. The character of Edward Cullen is feminized throughout the films. He “sparkles” like diamonds and Bella pronounces him “beautiful.” Psychoanalytic theorists might claim that this feminization of Edward removes the active gaze from him, and transfers it to Bella (who is actually slightly masculinized throughout the series). However, if, as Mulvey suggests, male viewers are able to identify with male figures in the narrative in such a way as to actively possess the female characters *as their own* it would appear that perhaps, for heterosexual males, identification with Edward may be rather difficult. It would seem that, through a hetero-centric lens, males would find it easier to identify with Jacob than with Edward. The issue of a feminized male character is something that warrants further scrutiny. However, as stated above, psychoanalytic theory aside, I argue for an active gaze in the Twilight saga.

#### Society’s Fears and Anxieties/Relationship Dynamics

The goal of ideological analysis is to analyze texts in order to decipher the underlying messages. Vampire narratives, as a component of science fiction, contain important messages having to do with the fears, anxieties, beliefs and values of the dominant culture. I believe that Twilight and New Moon both contain messages regarding the breakdown of patriarchal structure as well as anxieties about other races. It is important to note that Stephanie Meyer wrote these novels in 2005 and 2006 respectively. In 2005 and 2006 Barack Obama was not a universally

recognized figure. Therefore, I do not believe the election of an African American President was on Meyers' mind as she wrote her novels. However, I do believe that a fear of the outsider and fears of the breakdown of the family influenced her writing.

The positioning of Bella Swan (beautiful swan) as a helpless, lovesick and seemingly mindless girl who cannot even walk without falling down and needing to be rescued sends a clear message to young girls: Make sure you have a man to protect you because you can't survive on your own. Bella lives solely for Edward. Her entire life revolves around him and she relies on him to save her and to keep her alive. When he leaves her she must find a substitute male to protect her. Thus, she begins a relationship with Jacob Black. Bella's relationship with Jacob is equally problematic in that she relies upon him for everything. Bella is a weak female who needs a male to protect her. Twilight and New Moon, while nowhere near as deep and profound as say, Gone with the Wind, emphasize the same ideals of idea of romanticism and chivalry. The bottom line: Women you need a man to protect you.

The fact that the Native Americans in the novel turn out to be werewolves is also quite telling, and again, indicates society's fear of the "Other". However, throughout the novel Bella Swan's life is consumed by her relationships with these "Others". While she "comes to life" when she is with Jacob, she also faces serious danger. She is almost killed numerous times in Meyers' saga because of her relationship with the "Other". At the same time, Bella, a boring, bland teenager comes to life and blossoms when she experiences the "Other". Outsiders bring liveliness and change. Bella Swan, the ugly duckling, meets a vampire and a werewolf and transforms into a beautiful swan. The "Others", Edward Cullen and Jacob black, are glamorized throughout the movies. Going back to bell hooks' "Eating the Other," she states that ethnicity is the "spice" that livens up the blandness of the white landscape. Where Meyers' warns girls to be wary of others, the film adaptations of her novels appear to embrace the "Other" as a catalyst for change.

Meyers novels and the films they inspired also send a strong message about values and morals. None of the characters in her novels are sexually active. As a Mormon, Meyers' advocates abstinence before marriage. Sexual relationships outside of marriage are forbidden and are considered sinful. Self restraint, Meyers claims, is a key theme in her books. "I really think that's the underlying metaphor of my vampires," Meyer says. "It doesn't matter where

you're stuck in life or what you think you have to do; you can always choose something else. There's always a different path." (qtd. in Grossman 2008).

### **Further Research**

One of the most interesting, and confusing, aspects in Twilight and New Moon is the feminization of Edward Cullen. Why would Meyers feminize a male in such an overt way? Mulvey's theory of "The Gaze" is very complex and more in depth than just the shifting of power and enjoyment of looking. Mulvey also claims that male audience members identify with the male characters of a film. The male audience members may gaze upon the male characters in the film to identify with them, and, when the female image is on screen, to possess the female. In other words, through the male characters on screen, male audience members can possess the female characters as their own personal sex objects. Why then, would any male wish to identify with a feminized character? Scholars have criticized Mulvey's 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," claiming it examines the phenomenon of "The Gaze" through a hetero-centric lens. Other scholars have argued that male audience's identification with male characters on screen should also be examined outside of a hetero-centric lens. Male audience members *may* also identify with male characters on a homosexual basis. Perhaps there is an alternative reading of Twilight. I would be interested to see how scholars examine this.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to see other scholars tackle this notion of a "throwback to romanticism" in contemporary horror narratives. What are the implications of this? How far reaching is this new trend? Will it continue? Why are females now portrayed as so weak and helpless? Will this trend spill over into other horror genres such as zombie movies and the supernatural?

If, and I assume they will, these vampire narratives continue to flourish it will be interesting to see how the characters are shaped and what themes and trends are contained within the narratives. I look forward to seeing how others see romanticism, relational aspects, fear of the "Other" and The Gaze in contemporary and future horror narratives.

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