

Vampires – A Mirror of Society?
Functions of the Vampire in Stephenie Meyer's
Twilight Series

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that the work presented here is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and the result of my own investigations except as acknowledged.

Graz, 11th December, 3013

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(Mag. Julia Lehrer)

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1. Introduction

In the past years, I watched all parts of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Series* and read the books as well. Of course, I noticed the enormous fascination with this vampire-love-story. Honestly, I absolutely enjoyed the plot and liked the way it is presented.

Nevertheless, during my studies it was repeatedly emphasized that every literary piece, be it a movie or a book, fits into the time it was produced or written in and reflects characteristics of that particular age.

Inspired by various critiques of the modern vampire story, I was wondering if a teenage romance with a vampire as its main character can seriously be what arouses people's contemporary interest. Therefore, I decided to deal with the *Twilight Series* in more detail; especially why it can evoke so much enthusiasm.

As the main characters of the story are vampires, I assumed that the hype must involve these creatures. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to find out if the vampire fulfills any special function that explains or rather justifies why thousands of people, especially teenagers, flood the cinemas, empty book and DVD shops and are simply drawn to Stephenie Meyer's vampire stories.

To figure this out it is necessary to start with the history of vampires: what they are, where they come from, why they have been popular film characters in the course of history, etc. I decided to further deal with *Bram Stoker's Dracula* on the one hand and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* on the other to be able to compare the modern vampire of the *Twilight Series* to ones of earlier times. Consequently, I am going to start with the definition of the modern vampire, including its characteristics as well as critical remarks about it.

The main part of this paper is a detailed analysis of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Series*, including necessary information about plot, characters and themes. A subsequent comparison to the mentioned historical movies shows how the vampire has changed and if there are any noticeable traits of the traditional vampire left.

1 Introduction

Vampires - A Mirror of Society?
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Twilight Series

The final part of this paper deals with an interpretation of what has been found out and a conclusion stating if the vampire, like the title already suggests, is a mirror of society, and especially if a concrete function of the modern vampire can be revealed, using the example of the *Twilight Series*.

2. What is the Vampire?

Due to the current tremendous hype surrounding vampires and the great number of films and books about them, nearly everyone will recently have watched a vampire movie, seen a series or read a book, and is therefore familiar with the topic. It seems to be clear what vampires are, where they historically come from and what their function is. (cf. Day 2002:11)

Being asked about one's ideas of a vampire, the highly probable definition would be an immortal, supernatural, pale-faced creature with dark hair and long sharp canine teeth that kills humans by drinking their blood to survive and that burns in the sun. In addition, it is allergic to garlic and holy water and cannot hurt a person who believes in god and holds a cross. (cf. Kell and Deutsch 2010:50) This is, however, neither what vampires are in today's literature and movies, nor is it the original, historical idea of the vampire.

2.1. Theories

In the following chapter I am going to try to find out the origins of the vampire, where it comes from, and what it was meant to be.

2.1.1. General notes

First of all, a vampire is a living corpse and is undoubtedly affected by people's beliefs, but there has never been a clear definition. Nevertheless, there are two basic theories: (cf. Schaub 2008:12f)

The first theory states that the real vampire was a revenant that only existed in Southeastern Europe and differs considerably from the distantly related undead in different regions. All vampires in other parts of the world were supposed to have immigrated or been displaced there and to be from Southeastern Europe originally. (cf. Schaub 2008:12f)

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The second theory states that the vampire was just a regional creature, which was a member of a huge group of undead who were all relatives. (cf. Schaub 2008:13)

Nachzehrer and 'smacking dead' are examples of other undead belonging to this species. Nachzehrer are corpses, known in central Europe, which withdraw vitality from surviving members of their family or friends by means of calling or of telepathic powers. However, they do not leave their coffins. The affected persons do not become Nachzehrer themselves. 'Smacking dead' do not leave their graves either. They eat the bed sheet and thus symbolically suck energy out of their living relatives. (cf. Butler 2010:5; Schaub 2008:13)

Ad theory 1:

A vampire differs from other undead by specific features: It returns from its coffin and usually kills people by sucking their blood. Besides, one is transformed into a vampire by being bitten by one; and, it can turn into atrocious figures or animals and have sexual contact with humans. (cf. Schaub 2008:13ff) This confirms that vampires are their own species and are not related to other undead.

Furthermore, the Nachzehrer was, according to historical notes, compared to the vampire also found later in Western regions. This proves the first theory as well; namely, that real vampires only existed in Southeastern Europe first and then spread all over the world. (cf. Schaub 2008:14ff)

Ad theory 2:

Still, there are arguments that the Southeast-European vampire is not the origin of all undead but is merely unique. Ideas and beliefs about vampires and different undead were even often mixed up within the same region. Many similarities were found and it was just differentiated between good and bad ones, whereby the vampire was definitely seen as a harmful undead. The belief in vampires obviously also existed in Western regions. (cf. Schaub 2008:18f)

2.1.2. Reason for belief in Vampires

It is now clear that people believed in vampire-like creatures because there were numerous rumors dealing with the dubious resurrection of dead who caused all kinds of damages. Although this was impossible, people believed these stories; they were afraid and tried to find ways to protect themselves against these creatures. (cf. Schaub 2008:21)

When people died, it was hence important to follow specific rites such as closing the dead's eyes because otherwise they ran the risk of becoming a vampire. If these methods failed it was found out that humans could be protected with garlic or by putting burial objects in the coffin. Impaling, beheading and burning are known as common methods to finally kill them. Religious items such as crucifixes were originally not needed to destroy vampires. (cf. Schaub 2008:21, 67f)

2.2. Vampire image

Vampires were mostly imagined to look similar to humans. According to different ethnic groups vampires had red, bloody eyes and a pale face. This commonly known vampire appearance (pale face, long sharp canine teeth, sexually appealing) did not exist in history but was created by literature and film. (cf. Day 2002:vii; Schaub 2008:11ff)

Apart from different beliefs of members of specific ethnic or religious groups or cultures, all vampire-like creatures are caught between life and death, human and animal, and either suck blood or living energy, thus harm humans. Furthermore, they embody humans' deepest fears like death, the dark side within oneself, fear of sexuality, etc. (cf. Schaub 2008:27)

2.3. Beginnings of vampire fever in history

Although first notes about the existence, myths, beliefs and stories about vampires were found in the Late Middle Ages, the idea was not new then. People have been afraid of dead, or rather undead, since the beginning of humankind as there have

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already been pictures of impalements of vampire-like creatures in Babylon in 1700 BC. (cf. Klewer 2007:17; Schaub 2008:26)

Towards the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, people in Europe were afraid of illnesses, starvation, poverty, war. Contemporaneously, people had their first experiences with teratology about dead who rose from their graves and killed people. It was thus a logical consequence that all kinds of fears were frequently reflected in vampire stories because undead were mysterious and highly unknown beings that even people in higher positions in society dealt with. (cf. Butler 2010:27; Schaub 2008:46f)

The superstition and obvious uncertainty of people were completely contradictory to the predominant Age of Enlightenment. In fact, people should have been critical and intellectual but they were instead afraid of this change in society. Vampires very often occurred in connection with natural disasters, epidemic plagues, war or economic crises and served as scapegoats. (cf. Klewer 2007:14; Schaub 2008:48f)

At the end of the 18th century, which was the end of the Age of Enlightenment, vampires became less important and the enigma about vampires could at least be partly dispelled. (cf. Butler 2010:52; Schaub 2008:147f) For me, this is a logical consequence, probably due to the fact that people had a higher level of education and that many mysteries, legends and miracles could be disproved by the evolving knowledge of natural scientists. Therefore, for the moment people did not need mysterious creatures like vampires which they could make responsible for their fates and fears.

At the beginnings of romanticism, the idea of a vampire figure that abused its supernatural powers just for killing people indiscriminately seemed ridiculous. Moral responsibility and being engaged in the search for identity and mental pain became central concerns. (cf. Butler 2010:86)

2.4. Dracula

Dealing with the history of vampires, it is indispensable to mention Dracula, probably the most famous vampire ever. Bram Stoker created this archetype of a vampire in his phenomenal novel *Dracula* in 1897.

2.4.1. Historical Figure

Legend has it that the universally known figure of Dracula is based on Vlad III, a former prince of Wallachia – a region lying between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire – who lived between 1431 and 1467. (cf. Butler 2010:108)

He was the son of Vlad II, who became honored by an order aiming to protect Christianity, named '*Order of the Dragon*', due to his brave fight against the Turks. The Romanian word for dragon is *dracul*, where Vlad II's second name *Vlad Dracul* derived from. Vlad III was called *Vlad Dracula*, which means that he was the son of the dragon, also interpreted as son of the devil. (cf. Butler 2010:108; Porter 1992)

Vlad III was known for offering resistance to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. He needed to protect his country and Christianity, which was threatened by the Turks after the fall of Constantinople. In the course of liberating parts of the country, he went across the Danube with his army and killed thousands of Turks. In 1462 he was jailed but finally managed to re-conquer the Wallachian throne. Vlad III was killed in 1467 in a battle against the Turks. (cf. Dukes 1982:44)

Throughout his reign, Vlad III commonly tortured and executed people by impaling them, an atrocity he became famous for. The main idea was that people should die slowly and suffer a lot. He thus used blunt stakes to avoid a rapid death. Apart from impaling a hundred thousand people, he also cruelly burned, blinded, and scalped people, cut off parts of their bodies, and mutilated mostly women's sexual organs. (cf. Dukes 1982:44)

Due to his preference for impaling not only enemies but also a huge number of men, women and even children, he was given the name *Vlad the Impaler*. (cf. Porter 1992)

Still, Vlad Tepes was celebrated as a national hero in Romania, which was naturally contradicted by other East European nations. Hence, there exist a number of different stories about the former Wallachian prince influenced by different perspectives and views. (cf. Dukes 1982:44)

2.4.2. Vlad III, alias Dracula

Despite critical voices, Vlad III is commonly assumed to have influenced Bram Stoker when creating Dracula, the vampire that is known all over the world and has influenced a whole genre. Bram Stoker's vampire does not only have the name, which Vlad III was given as the son of an honored member of the '*Order of the Dragon*' and lives in Vlad III's country, but the movie also adopts impalement, the prince's preferred method of torturing people, as the only possibility to kill an immortal vampire. (cf. Porter 1992)

3. Vampires in literature and film

3.1. Literary genre

One option for categorizing movies is to divide them into genres. A genre is known as a system of cultural conventions, which roughly means that movies of one genre deal with the same themes, symbols or motives, or deliver the same message. Films of a different genre differ according to the specific historical background they are produced in, though the idea and the symbols remain the same. For analyzing a genre it is thus advisable to compare movies deriving from different periods and look for similarities. Having identified the characteristics of the particular genre it cannot be too difficult to find out which components vary regarding the historical background and the cultural circumstances. (cf. Faulstich 1988:79ff)

Vampire movies, and of course vampire literature, have already become a genre in themselves as they are constantly changing and being shaped by cultural and historical factors, which is very typical for a genre. (cf. Gateward 2004:paragraph 3) Vampires have been part of literature and movies for ages. From the 17th to the 19th centuries there were numerous books and plays about vampires and there is still a hype among vampires today. Therefore, by looking at selected vampire movies it must be possible to determine the variable components and the different functions of vampires in literature and movies in the course of history, which is the focus of this paper.

3.2. Function of Vampires in literature and film

Before dealing with historical examples of vampire movies, I am first going to try to find out general reasons why used to and continue to be so present in literature in film.

3.2.1. Cultural transformation – threat of cultural history

Butler claims that vampires commonly occur in times of cultural identity change or when the culture or history of a region is threatened. This assumption derives from

Serbia being politically and religiously unstable as they were endangered by Eastern and Western states and their faiths. (2010:39ff) This theory also applies to the Industrial Revolution or to the time of Hitler's Third Reich. (cf. Oppenheimer 2012:411)

Furthermore, vampires show up at times of anxiety such as modernization with respect to scientific, political, governmental or technological changes. (cf. Butler 2010:164) The vampire somehow serves as a personification of human's deepest fears. (cf. Klewer 2007:54)

That is roughly what has been found out in the first chapter about history. Vampires always occurred when people were afraid of something or when they had to undergo changes and lacked knowledge and appropriate education about it; hence they were afraid of something new that was introduced (e.g. in the 17th and 18th centuries, at the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment).

3.2.2. Question of Identity

A vampire – in contrast to a werewolf, for example, – resembles the human being in many ways. However, appearances are deceiving; the vampire is not human at all but a supernatural, predominantly immortal creature that possesses quite a number of traits humans are striving for. Not only are we fascinated by its mystic appearance and its erotic charisma but also by its dark side, which makes us aware of our own. (cf. Klewer 2007:55)

Still, the vampire image cannot be generalized because it evolves over time like humans and their anxieties, desires and concerns. It is a figure that occurs through different ages but it constantly changes according to the particular circumstances. We associate vampires with threats and turn them into symbols of our anxieties and concerns. (cf. Day 2002:11f)

Therefore, the vampire is an ideal figure for dealing with human identity, whereby it serves as a metaphor for it. (cf. Gordon and Hollinger 1997:3ff)

3.2.3. Human desire

The vampire has always been a mystical creature. Nevertheless, it is generally known that vampires are able to elude the most feared thing by humans, namely death, as these creatures enjoy a life for eternity and are immortal. The outcome of this is that vampires have developed as the symbol or metaphor of human desires and wishes in general. (cf. McMahon 2009:193f)

3.3. Excursus: Rites of Passage

In his book *Rites of Passage* Arnold van Gennep, a French ethnologist, addresses rites that every human undergoes at various stages of life. They constitute a change between different social and personal states of life. These rites exist due to suspected danger concerning the passages and they serve as some kind of protection for the 'interstages'. (cf. 1986:13ff)

3.3.1. General theory

According to van Gennep we go through rites of passage at birth, childhood, puberty, engagement, marriage, death, etc., depending on the region, religion and culture we belong to. Generally, it has to be distinguished between secular and religious life. The first one includes education or career progression, for example, and does not consist of many rites. Religious life, on the contrary, is full of rites and is therefore the focus of van Gennep's explanation. (cf. 1986:13)

Van Gennep writes about many religious rites, for instance, that Christians, Buddhists and Muslims were not allowed to enter parts based on their particular religion. Besides, there were various ceremonies and initiation rites in connection with joining groups or crossing country's frontiers. Whenever a foreigner wants to enter a group's territory, members of this group force them to go through different rites. (cf. 1981:36ff)

Rites dealing with death and funeral are essential for this paper. There are rites which depend on the different ideas of afterlife. (cf. van Gennep 1986:142) It is particularly important to follow these rites as explained in the first chapter because

otherwise the deceased would not be able to find their peace in the realm of the dead.

Van Gennep divides all rites of passage into three phases. The first one is the separation from previous life (including preliminal rites); the second one is called liminality (including liminal rites), which is the phase in between the separation and the aggregation; the final phase, when you find your new identity and try to adapt to the '*new life*' (including postliminal rites). (cf. van Gennep 1986:21)

At any rite of passage one crosses a threshold, which according to Turner derives from a German word, meaning 'thresh', where the husk of a grain is removed and its core is revealed. (cf. 1985:198) In a broader sense this can mean that people have to abandon at least parts of their personality and habits to be able to adopt a new stage of their life.

3.3.2. Van Gennep's theory and vampires

Essentially, we go through rites in order to escape something, start a new life or get new chances. This somehow sounds as if this theory was made for the nature of a vampire. Every vampire was once human. His human lifetime can be described as preliminal phase, which ends with the ominous bite (to categorize as a rite). Then liminality starts, which is the process of transformation. Finally, the vampire needs to adapt to its new life, which would then be the postliminal phase. Nevertheless, a vampire experiences more rites during his eternal life.

It is not possible to cross any threshold without being invited to do so. A vampire therefore always needs permission to 'enter the human world', whereby an unwilling victim basically has the choice of crossing the threshold to the evil or not. (cf. Hennelly 2005)

For this paper the fact that rites and passages come along with crises and dangers on the one hand, and that any crossing of thresholds requires an invitation or rather an agreement on the other hand, can be interesting. Particular films probably stick more to van Gennep's theory or focus more on the phases and rites of passage than others, which can be significant for further analysis.

3.4. Summary

The vampire often serves as a metaphor for specific concerns and problems as well as desires that people or societies face. (cf. Day 2002:12) These are either personal crises, natural disasters, wars, illnesses or epidemics, and the vampire is regularly the scapegoat or at least the symbol for this problem. Van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* contains interesting theories that can well be adapted to vampires and their lives. In the following chapters I am going to analyze the function of a vampire by Van Gennep's theory about rites of passage and crossing thresholds.

4. The vampire movie – themes

At first sight all vampire films seem to deal with the same topics. Immortality and eternity are probably the most common themes, followed by the loss of innocence, human desire, coming of age, sexuality, etc. However, using the examples of *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* I am exemplarily going to try to find out what have been the real functions of using the vampire figure in literature or rather film in the course of history.

4.1. Bram Stoker's Dracula

Bram Stoker's Dracula is a movie, directed by Francis Ford Coppola in 1992, starring Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder, Anthony Hopkins, Keanu Reeves, etc., based on Bram Stoker's novel of the same title. (cf. Coppola 1992)

4.1.1. Plot summary

Vlad Dracula (Gary Oldman), the main character of the movie roughly experiences the same like Vlad III (cf. chapter 2.4. of this paper). When he arrives back home after having defeated the Turks he finds his dead wife having committed suicide because she had got a wrong message about Vlad Dracula's death. He swears by God to take revenge. Inflamed with anger he stabs a cross, which is placed on an altar in front of him, and suddenly blood is pouring out of it. When he drinks the blood Vlad Dracula is turned into Dracula, the legendary vampire that influences a literary genre over periods. (cf. Coppola 1992)

About two hundred years later Jonathan Harker (Keanu Reeves), a solicitor, is heading to Transylvania to close a deal with Count Dracula. Dracula is spellbound by a picture of Jonathan's fiancée, Mina Murray (Winona Ryder), who looks exactly like his dead wife Elisabeta. He absolutely needs to find her. Dracula adores Mina while he is feeding off her best friend Lucy, who he finally transforms into a vampire. Even Professor van Helsing, a Dutch doctor, who is an expert on and hunts vampires, fails at protecting her. (cf. Coppola 1992)

Meanwhile, Jonathan has managed to flee from Dracula's castle and marries Mina, although she is hopelessly intrigued by Dracula. Professor van Helsing and his colleagues hunt Dracula, destroy his coffin and try to kill him. By chance Mina and Dracula meet again. Although he reveals his identity and confesses the crimes he has committed, Mina still loves him. Dracula finally starts transforming her into a vampire, too. (cf. Coppola 1992)

At the end Dracula is caught by his hunters. Being totally weak, he is lying in the chapel where everything began and asks Mina to release him. She does so, kisses him for a last time and impales him. (cf. Coppola 1992)

4.1.2. Themes

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was the dominating vampire novel of the 19th and 20th century and its main character is still known as the traditional and original vampire. (cf. Day 2002:15) It is full of typical vampire-features and topics. In the following few paragraphs I am going to work out why Stoker would have decided to deal with a vampire as main character of his novel.

Although Coppola, the director, did not exactly adapt Stoker's novel, the following themes mostly derive from concerns at the time when the novel was written (1897, one hundred years before Coppola's film adaption) (cf. Kane 2006:98). The covered issues are predominantly related to the Victorian Age. (cf. Pikula 2012:283ff) I am, however, just going to mention selected themes that are useful for this paper.

4.1.2.1. Modernity – new technologies

A noticeable theme in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* is the occurrence of new technology which people started to be interested in at the beginning of modernity.

Mina, for example, uses a cinematograph, which is described as "A wonder of modern civilization", (Crier, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, 00:44:30) she writes her diary entries on a typewriter and they use a telegraph. All these technologies suggest a highly modern influence. The vampire here serves as the evil that can be fought through new knowledge and new technologies. (cf. Johnson 2010:75f; Pikula 2012:284)

4.1.2.2. Historical / Cultural anxiety

Dracula, living in and coming from Transylvania, wants to go to England to pursue Mina. Therefore, he asks Harker to teach him the English language, in order to be seen as one of the English. In a letter to Mina, Harker writes: "The Count has insisted I remain for a month to tutor him in English custom." (Letter from Jonathan Harker to Mina, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, 00:35:36)

Dracula is seen as a foreigner invading England's capital. This can be associated with the fear of the invasion of England. Though the referred historical context goes beyond the time when Dracula was written, this "social anxiety" is rather typical for the end of the Victorian Age. (cf. Johnson 2010:77f)

The end of the 19th century historically was the time when Britain's powerful position in the world started declining, important markets for Britain's goods were lost and other states, such as Germany and the USA gained political and economic power. (cf. Arata 1990:622)

Arata calls this above mentioned phenomenon that permeates the whole story 'reverse colonization'. It deals with the fear of a world power such as Britain, which usually colonizes others, of suddenly being colonized. The positions of colonizer and colonized seem to change. The vampire metaphorically represents a threat to a whole country. In a broader sense the characteristics of a vampire's desire for human blood, e.g., can also symbolically stand for the intention to conquer the country. (cf. 1990:623ff)

4.1.3. Van Gennep

Bram Stoker's Dracula does not focus much on Dracula's transformation and we hardly get to know any preliminal circumstances. He is basically transformed by himself in order to take revenge. The whole film takes place after his transformation into a vampire, which is the postliminal phase. However, at the time as a vampire Dracula does not make much effort thinking about his existence as a vampire and how he is supposed to behave. Hardly anything can be said about the rite of Dracula's transformation as this is not a central point of the movie.

According to van Gennepe, as mentioned in chapter 3.3.2., a vampire cannot cross any threshold without being invited. This is exactly what can be found in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Maybe the vampire seems to indiscriminately kill innocent victims, except for the one he loves; however, all of them are somehow drawn by Dracula and intend to have sexual contact with him. Therefore, they willingly put themselves in danger, which confirms the applicability of van Gennepe's theory on vampires.

4.1.4. Summary

In chapter 3.2 of this paper I focused on reasons why the vampire is used in literature or film. Dracula definitely is an example for dealing with anxieties. He is a symbol for threatening Britain's cultural and historical identity and he personifies the feared phenomenon of reverse colonization.

People were responsible for their problems as they metaphorically put themselves in danger by associating with Dracula. The importance of new technologies, modernization and any further development is emphasized by representing these issues as means against Dracula, meaning against evil, threats and fears.

4.2. Interview with the Vampire

Interview with the Vampire is a vampire movie, starring Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise, Kirsten Dunst, Antonio Banderas, etc., which was released in 1994 and is based on Anne Rice's novel of the same title. (cf. Jordan 1994)

4.2.1. Plot summary

It deals with Louis de Pointe du Lac, the main character (Brad Pitt) of the film, telling a reporter his life story, which is the real plot. (cf. Jordan 1994)

In his former life Louis was a plantation owner who lost his wife and child. At the age of 24 he does not want to live anymore and just wants to be released by death. Finally, he gets to know Lestat de Lioncourt (Tom Cruise), a vampire. Since Louis wants to be killed but dreads dying, Lestat turns him into a vampire. In doing so,

Lestat bites Louis, while Louis has to drink Lestat's blood, too, because otherwise he would die. (cf. Jordan 1994)

Together they experience a lot; however, Louis shortly after having been transformed into a vampire finds out that he cannot kill people to survive. Therefore, he mostly starts eating animals and becomes the first vegetarian vampire. (cf. Jordan 1994)

When Louis sucks a young girl's (Kirsten Dunst) blood in order to release her from all pain, because she is suffering from plague and lying next to her dead mother, Lestat seizes this opportunity and transforms the girl into a vampire. Thus, Lestat tries to tie Louis to him and their new daughter, Claudia. (cf. Jordan 1994)

Louis cares for Claudia as if she was his own daughter. They join together to kill Lestat, who is an immoral beast in their eyes. Since they fail, they escape to Europe. There they get to know European vampires, led by Armand. They are shocked of the underdeveloped and retarded creatures that pass themselves on as their relatives. Finally, they are punished for the worst crime a vampire could commit, namely to kill another vampire. Claudia dies and Louis is released at the end. (cf. Jordan 1994)

The film ends with Lestat being tremendously weak and transforming the reporter into his new vampire companion to regain living energy. (cf. Jordan 1994)

4.2.2. Themes

Apart from the common vampire related themes Anne Rice uses the vampire figure to deal with much more profound concerns. Like in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* the topics mentioned in the further analysis derive from the time when the novel was published (1979). In the following paragraphs I am going to deal with the topics that are relevant for this paper.

4.2.2.1. Gender roles

Anne Rice deals with the role of men and women in a very special way. She tries to get rid of all clichés and the focus on eroticism and sexuality. (cf. Tomc 1997:98f)

There are hardly any female characters, neither human nor vampires, in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*. She somehow tries to establish a "gender-free" world.

The only important female character is transformed into a vampire when she is a child. All other women disappear quite soon after they have appeared. (cf. Tomc 1997:98f)

4.2.2.2. Homosexuality

In order to avoid women's characteristics as well as eroticism and sexuality in this regard, Rice even uses homosexuality. *Interview with the Vampire* is even often described as a gay romance. Except of some homosexual affairs Louis and Lestat are often seen as a gay couple, while Louis is said to choose Lestat over Armand in the end. (cf. Tomc 1997:98)

4.2.2.3. Identity

Louis once asks Lestat: "but you must know something about the meaning of it all, you must know where we come from, why we...", while Lestat answers "Why? Why should I know these things?" (Louis, *Interview with the Vampire*, 00:24:46)

Louis, the vampire of a new generation obviously wants to know why he exists and what he actually is. He tries to find out his identity, while Lestat, the much older vampire seems not to care about his role in society.

Louis in particular has become a reluctant personality refusing any vampire tradition. Thus, he becomes a rebellious role model for humans. (cf. Köppl 2010:236f)

Once, when Louis and Claudia flee to Europe to escape Lestat on the one hand, and to find more of their kind on the other hand, they are totally shocked by European vampires. Their ancestors look totally different from them and they seem to be mentally and physically retarded, which again underlines the self-development of Rice's new generation vampires.

4.2.2.4. Moral

The new vampire tries to feed off animals because he respects humans and their lives. Whenever Louis falls back and kills a human, he feels guilty. He is aware of human ideals and morals and wants to adapt to them to be a good vampire. (cf. Schuler 1997:156)

Anne Rice consciously constitutes her vampires in a considerably different way to the earlier ones. She thus wants to demonstrate that the vampire and its image have changed like humanity has changed. (cf. Tomc 1997:96)

4.2.3. Van Gennepe

Louis is like Dracula, transformed at the beginning of the story, because he is completely unhappy and wants to die. He is freed from a personal crisis. The big difference to *Bram Stoker's Dracula* is that Louis is very much aware of his change. He wants to know everything about his new life. Louis is searching for many answers and tries to adapt to his new life. However, he also criticizes things and wants to change them. This movie as well as *Bram Stoker's Dracula* takes place at the postliminal stage but it focuses a lot on the process of finding the new identity, which stresses the function of the vampire in this piece, namely the search for identity.

Vampires are again permitted into human spheres which mostly result from sexual affairs. At the end, the journalist to whom Louis is telling his story even wants to be bitten by him. He refuses to do so but Lestat seizes this chance and gains new living energy by transforming him into a vampire.

One interesting aspect is that Claudia is transformed into a vampire when she is a child, which means that she stays a child forever. This can be seen rather critically and even Claudia herself complains that she will not experience growing up and going through all stages of life, including the particular rites of passage.

4.2.4. Summary

In contrast to *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, at the time when *Interview with the Vampire* was written people were obviously more educated and had fewer anxieties. This film mainly functions as a quest to define identity, which is done by dealing with vampires who resemble humans, understand them and serve as role models for them.

When a vampire is searching for his identity and wants to find out about his origins, his past and his function, this makes readers start thinking about the same questions.

4 The vampire movie – themes

Vampires - A Mirror of Society?
Function of the Vampire in Stephenie Meyer's
Twilight Series

Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* mainly aims at making people aware of their own identities and reflect on the purpose in life.

5. The modern vampire

5.1. General features

Looking backward at the previous chapters, the vampire was a frightening creature, which was created by people's superstition, belief, fear, lack of knowledge and education. It was made responsible for epidemics, illnesses and all kinds of threats to humankind. Later it was used as a figure to question, criticize and challenge human identity and morals.

Currently, vampires seem to be more popular than ever. However, their image has completely changed. The modern vampire is a good, human-looking vegetarian, who glitters in the light of the sun like thousands of diamonds. Furthermore, it is resistant to garlic, the rosary and crosses. It can only be killed by being beheaded and being thrown into fire. Nearly all rules and ideals of the traditional vampire seem to be neglected. A modern vampire is elegant, charming, mostly rich and generous and well-dressed. (cf. Kell and Deutsch 2010:50ff)

5.2. Critiques

Zanger refers to the new vampire as a creature that usually appears in community; it has friends and a family. Referring to Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, she is of the opinion that movies with modern vampires make fun of humans as victims, who are totally interchangeable. Furthermore, in recent movies there were hardly any human figures; vampires only interacted with vampires. It would not be possible to identify with any human characters. (cf. 1997:18ff)

New Vampires are described as humanized beings that can have human interests and encounter feelings like love, affection, frustration, hate and betrayal. Additionally, they tend to get the image of serial killers. (cf. Zanger 1997:22)

In new vampire stories the transformation into a vampire sometimes even appears as a release for the person, the chance to start a new life and finally become happy. (cf. Carter 1997:31)

The frightening and horrendous figure of a vampire, epitomized by Dracula, has become an object of desire and admiration; the audience feels sympathy as well as empathy for it. (cf. Köppl 2010:244)

With regard to van Gennep's theory about rites of passage, the new vampire does, according to Zanger, not need permission for crossing the threshold to human beings any longer. (cf. 19)

Die Ärzte, a German Punk-Rock Band wrote a song, titled "Der Graf", which was released in 1998, dealing with the loss of the count. The song describes the count's former being that epitomized a frightening and evil blood sucker. Now he is referred to as an anachronism in the sense of a figure that does - in consideration of his metamorphosis – not fit into today's society. (Die Ärzte 1998)

5.3. Prospect

To sum up, there are reasonable doubts if the vampire is still a real vampire. However, Auerbach states that the vampire is shaping according to humans' occurring crises. Each of them somehow adapts to the other. (cf. 1996:117) Finally, there remains the question whether the vampire figure has, according to the above-mentioned critiques, really disappeared, or as Auerbach claims, "every age embraces the vampire it needs" and Edward, the main vampire-character of the *Twilight Series*, representing the modern vampire, might be the vampire our age needs. (cf. Auerbach 1997:145)

In the following chapter I am going to focus on Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Series* as probably the most popular example of the modern vampire including the content, the main characters and the covered themes. Mainly, I am going to try to elaborate on the question of the function of the modern vampire, if it is just a commercialized Hollywood figure serving as entertainment for teenagers or if it is the vampire our society needs after all.

6. Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Series*

Stephenie Meyer's four books (*Twilight* (2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007), and *Breaking Dawn* (2008) have been adapted for screen and have already been released on DVD. The last part, *Breaking Dawn*, consists of two parts, so that there are five DVDs in total.

6.1. Plot Summary

Twilight starts with Isabella Swan, called 'Bella' (Kristen Stewart), a seventeen year old teenage-girl, leaving Phoenix, where she lived with her mother, to stay in Forks with her dad, Charlie. She could not have expected that this relocation would change her whole life because she gets to know Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson). At her new school several schoolmates compete for Bella's attention including Jacob Black, or Jake (Taylor Lautner), who later becomes her best friend. However, she cannot keep her eyes off of Edward. Very soon she finds out that he and his family are vampires, though they do not drink human blood but feed on animals. She thus becomes more and more spellbound by him, which jeopardizes her life afterwards. Their progressing relationship is endangered by other vampires, the bad ones who kill people and suck human blood. They especially want Bella since she keeps company with the Cullens and knows their dark secret. Edward manages to rescue her at the end of this part when she is bitten by an evil vampire (Victoria's boyfriend) and he thus prevents her from becoming a vampire. He sucks all the venom out of her blood, so that she stays human. They finally swear to stay together forever and for the first time she expresses her desire to be a vampire. (cf. Hardwicke 2008)

In *New Moon* Edward wants to protect Bella by ending their relationship and leaving her. He pretends not to love her anymore, which breaks her heart. Being without Edward makes her life meaningless. Soon she finds out that with risky activities she can get Edward's attention. For instance, she goes to a group of bikers Edward once saved her from. Bella hears his voice because Edward appears in her imagination whenever she places herself in danger. From this moment on she tries to expose herself to danger whenever possible. Often, she is rescued by her friend Jacob, who

turns out to be a werewolf, the rival of vampires. In the end, Edward mistakenly believes that Bella has died while cliff-diving. He consequently decides to punish himself and step into the sunlight, which would reveal his identity as a vampire to humans. This would provoke the Volturi, the leaders of the vampires, who would probably kill him. Alice, Edward's sister, and Bella can just prevent him from doing so. Again, Bella and Edward swear to never break away from each other. The date for Bella's transformation also seems fixed by graduation and Edward unwillingly agrees to turn her into a vampire himself, provided she marries him. (cf. Weitz 2009)

In *Eclipse*, Edward and Bella face new challenges. There are unknown vampires who seem more powerful than usual ones. They are newborns who are murdering indiscriminately. In this part Bella definitely decides in favor of Edward instead of Jacob, who has always loved her. Nevertheless, vampires and werewolves unite to defeat the new enemies, who turn out to be lead by Victoria, who is aiming at avenging her dead boyfriend and killing Edward's girlfriend, Bella. Vampires and werewolves succeed and Bella finally accepts Edward's proposal. (cf. Slade 2010)

Breaking Dawn consists of two films. The first one starts with Bella and Edward's wedding, followed by their honeymoon. Staying on a beautiful island, Edward finally agrees to have sex with Bella and Bella gets pregnant. The fetus grows unexpectedly fast and sucks all energy out of Bella so that she is nearly starving. Still, she insists on having the baby. Shortly after the birth, Bella is in danger of dying and Edward does not have any choice but to transform her into a vampire. He injects his venom into her blood and bites her more than once. It works, Bella becomes a newborn vampire, though the transformation is very painful. (cf. Condon 2012)

This is how the very last part starts. It deals with Bella's adaptation to the world of vampires. Being in good control of her thirst, she can even hold her baby who is half human, half vampire in her arms, The Volturi want to fight the Cullens because they believe that Bella and Edward's child, Renesmee, is an immortal child (a child who has transformed into a vampire) and in former times immortal children used to be dangerous, responsible for huge destruction and are therefore outlawed. With the help of relatives, friends from all around the world, and especially Alice, they manage

to convince the Volturi of the child's innocence. Bella, Edward and Renesmee can live happily forever. (cf. Condon 2013)

6.2. Analysis

Not only due to the fact that Meyer dominates the USA TODAY's bestseller list and sets records comparable to Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling (cf. Memmott and Cadden 2009) do we know that the *Twilight Series* is incredibly successful, and female teenagers are especially drawn to it. Reading the books, watching the films or even only the trailers, it soon proves itself to be written for teenagers.

Below I am going to list the most important characters as well as the main themes covered by Stephenie Meyer that seem to be important for further analysis, including a possible function, of the modern vampire.

6.2.1. Characters

6.2.1.1. Bella Swan

Bella is described as a normal girl. Her shyness, lack of consciousness and self-esteem make her appear as a rather inconspicuous, mousy character. She neither possesses any special skills nor is she a very cool or popular girl. She is furthermore unwilling to open up to others and reveal her feelings. (cf. Day 2012:67) However, when Edward enters her life, she suddenly faces a lot of challenges, difficult decisions and perilous situations. She loves Edward endlessly, would sacrifice her life for him and wishes for nothing more than to become a vampire herself. (cf. Blasingame 2012:49ff)

6.2.1.2. Vampire Characters

There are two main groups of vampires in the *Twilight Series*. On the one hand, there are Edward and his family and on the other hand, there are the Volturi and the newborn vampires.

6.2.1.2.1. *Edward Cullen*

Edward, the central vampire, was born in 1901. At the age of 17 he was bitten by Carlisle, who saved his life by transforming him into a vampire. Characteristically for vampires he looks like a seventeen year old for the rest of his life, thus for eternity. Except for a short period when he was curious about human blood, he exclusively feeds on animal blood, which means that he is a vegetarian among vampires, like all of his family. Edward lives together with his adoptive parents, Carlisle and Esme Cullen, his brothers, Emmet and Jasper, as well as his sisters, Rosalie and Alice, in a house in Forks and is in the same grade in school as Bella.

Edward can hardly resist Bella's blood; however, his biggest strength is his ability to control his thirst. He is furthermore characterized by his responsibility and sensitivity. Edward is a contemporary 'superman' by virtue of inhumanity: he is handsome, super-fast and super-strong and is able to read minds, with the exception of Bella's thoughts, which proves that she means a lot to him. (cf. Wallis 2011:159; Weinstock 2012:29ff)

6.2.1.2.2. Other vampires

Besides the Cullen family and their relatives, there are the Volturi, the most powerful and influential vampires that establish and enforce all important rules. There are also newborn vampires that threaten the Cullens. They have been transformed within a period of one year, are enormously strong and possess special abilities. All these other vampires feed on human blood and consequently kill humans.

6.2.2. Themes

6.2.2.1. Relationships

6.2.2.1.1. *Schoolmates*

At the very beginning of *Twilight*, there is a scene at college when the schoolmates are playing volleyball at the gym. Mike, one of them, takes notice of and is visibly attracted by Bella. Jessica, another schoolmate, being infatuated with Mike, becomes jealous and goes directly between them.

In a later scene the girls from school are going to buy ball gowns. Bella intends to go to a special library situated near the store to do research on vampires, and therefore only asks if she can come with them.

Another situation that depicts Bella's relationship to her friends is when Edward has left her in *New Moon* and Charlie suggests that his daughter go back to her mother's place and find friends there because she never meets her friends in Forks. Bella instead claims to like her friends in Forks and calls Jessica to go out with her. Jessica's answer, "I was surprised you called at all, you know?" (Jessica, *New Moon*, 00:31:18) reveals their true relationship. When they are finally out, Bella catches sight of motor bikers and impetuously heads towards them to see Edward preventing her from getting in danger. She shortchanges her friends and Edward is the only important person for her.

To sum up, from the moment of their first interaction there has been some kind of rivalry between the girls. These scenes exactly describe Bella's general relationship to human schoolmates, especially girls, throughout the whole *Twilight Series*. She neither cultivates friendships nor cares about friends at all. Bella is not really interested in any peer relationship; she loves Edward and her friends are just her number-two choice whenever he is not there or she needs them to get to him. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

Apart from all that, Bella is admired by boys at school who are attracted by her, and by girls who envy her because of her special love for Edward and for the fact that she can in some way escape into her own world with him. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

6.2.2.1.2. Jakob Black

Jake is the first adolescent Bella meets after arriving at her father's in Forks. She has known him since they were little and they soon become good friends. From the very first moment he is always there for her, helps her whenever she needs him and cares for her. He repairs her car, provides her with motorcycles, saves her life when she jumps off the cliffs and finally agrees to protect her against the evil vampires and even cooperates with the vampires of the Cullen clan, which is a no-go for werewolves.

One time, Bella and Jacob are taking a walk at the sea when Jacob starts blabbing about interesting stories:

Jacob: It's just like an old scary story. [...] Did you know Quileutes are supposedly descended from wolves? [...]

Bella: Like werewolves? [...] So what's the story about the Cullens?

Jacob: Well, they're supposedly descended from this, like.. "enemy clan." ... But they claimed to be different, so we made a treaty with them. If they promised to stay off Quileute lands, we wouldn't expose what they really were to the pale-faces. [...] It's just a story, Bella.

(Jake, *Twilight*, 00:32:11)

This is the key scene when Bella finds out that Jake knows a lot about Edward's and the Cullens' secret. From this moment Bella starts researching and finally finds out about their nature of being vampires.

Very soon it turns out that Jake has fallen in love with Bella. He wants to protect her from vampires and mostly intends to keep her from being transformed into one. Still, Bella raises Jake's hopes and admits to loving him but begs Jake not to force her to decide between Edward and him. Although he needs to accept that Bella has decided in favor of Edward, Jake does not give up and always protects her.

All in all, although she pretends to be concerned about Jake, Bella again uses him to get information about Edward on the one hand and to be near Edward on the other hand. Whenever Bella meets Jake, Edward gets angry and wants to be with her. By

hanging around with a werewolf, she manages to provoke Edward's closeness and concern.

6.2.2.1.3. Charlie

Charlie is Bella's father, whom she decides to stay with because her mother has remarried. Before leaving her mother to stay with Charlie, she says: "It's not about Forks, it's about Dad. I mean, two weeks a year, we barely know each other." (Bella, *beginning of Twilight*)

This already describes Bella's apparent relationship to her father, which is not very good. Bella behaves rather closed-minded, uncooperative and sometimes nasty. Charlie, on the contrary, "hasn't shut up about it since [she] told him [she was] coming". (Billy Black, *Twilight*, 00:04:15) He obviously loves her, cares, feels responsible and does everything for her.

He furthermore feels the need to protect her from Edward and tries to draw her attention more to Jake. That is maybe the key problem as Bella fears that Charlie does not accept her love for Edward. In fact, Bella loves her father, which comes out in various scenes, e.g. when she is afraid that the bad vampires could hurt Charlie. Additionally, when she needs to leave Forks temporarily, she hardly has the heart to abandon him. She always apologizes for having lied to or hurt him.

Still, Bella distances herself from her father because he interposes himself between her and Edward.

6.2.2.1.4. Renee

Bella's relationship to her mother is seemingly better than that to her father. Before she intends to be turned into a vampire, which takes place before graduation, she visits her mother in Florida. In this scene it is apparently hard for Bella to accept that as a human she will probably never see Renee again. When her mother congratulates Bella on her graduation and presents her a patchwork of many T-shirts they have bought together, Bella reacts extremely emotionally.

Bella's mother, in contrast to Charlie, supports her daughter's relationship to Edward and is glad that she has found a boy who really and honestly loves her. This maybe leads to the fact that Bella apparently loves and respects her mother more.

6.2.2.2. Love

Love is a central theme in the whole *Twilight Series*. Bella has unconditionally and irrevocably fallen in love with Edward. The words "I love you" permeate the whole series but love also very often occurs in connection with words like "forever" or "every moment". This implies that it is not only love but rather obsession with a vampire. From the very first moment Bella is spellbound by Edward and cannot stand being rejected by him. Edward turns out to be her protector and he is dazzled by Bella as well. (cf. Blasingame 2012:56; Lindgren Leavenworth 2011:77ff)

Despite the many obstacles and troubles the couple comes across, they exemplify perfect and true love. (cf. Lindgren Leavenworth 2011:77ff)

Nearly as captivating is Bella's relationship to Jake, who helps Bella to overcome her breakup with Edward and finally falls in love with her as well. Bella, however, cannot return his love in the same way and is challenged by the attempt to maintain the friendship to Jake on the one hand and to not lose Edward on the other hand. Although Bella loves Jake, who is able to offer her a safe future as a human being, she decides in favor of the vampire, which means that she opts for a 'life' in permanent danger, which starts with her death. (cf. Blasingame 2012:67)

6.2.2.3. Marriage

Marriage plays an interesting role within the *Twilight Series*. Edward only agrees to fulfill Bella's utmost desire, namely to turn her into a vampire, under the condition that she marries him. Surprisingly, this turns out to be quite a problem for Bella as she is afraid of becoming a woman like her mother. She seems not to be prepared for such a huge step towards adulthood. (cf. Blasingame 2012:72, Horne 2012:34)

Because of her endless love and desire for an eternal life with a vampire she nevertheless overcomes her fear and agrees to marry him. (cf. Day 2012:70)

6.2.2.4. Identity

There are many instances throughout the series which underline Bella's insecurity, self-doubt and low self-esteem, e.g.:

Bella: I'm kind of the "suffer in silence" type. [...]

Eric: I'm on the paper, and you're news,
baby, front page.

Bella I -- no,

(Bella, *Twilight*, 00:06:12)

This scene shows that Bella does not feel self-confident and never wants to take the center. She never feels comfortable anywhere and acts like an outsider, though schoolmates try to include her and like her. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

When she gets to know Edward, her whole life changes; however, everything only starts making sense when he is around her. She adores him and his life is even more important to her than her own. She is willing to risk her own life to die for the man she loves. This does not necessarily mean that she has found her identity but rather a person that makes her happy. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

At the end of part one of *Breaking Dawn* Bella says:

As a human, I'd never been best at anything... I was pretty used to being average. [...] I just did the best with what I had, never quite fitting into my world. So this was really different. I was amazing now – to them and to myself. It was like I had been born to be a vampire. [...] I had found my true place in the world, the place I fit, the place I shined
(Meyer. *Breaking Dawn*: 523)

When Bella has been transformed into a vampire, she seems to fit in somewhere for the first time. She gives the impression of having been destined to become a vampire as she can suddenly really identify with what she is. She feels satisfied and confident. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

6.2.2.5. Attitude towards sex

Edward has a rather conservative attitude towards sex. He refuses to have sex before marriage. This involves the fact that he would never consider transforming Bella into a vampire before they are married. (cf. Horne 2012:32)

The following situation underlines Edward's attitude in place of both issues. The couple is lying on the bed, kissing passionately and Bella wants to doff her clothes:

Edward: Stop trying to take your clothes off.

Bella: You want to do that part?

Edward: Not tonight.

Bella: You... You mean, you don't...

That's fine.

Edward: Believe me, I want to.

I just want to be married to you first.

Bella: You really make me feel like I'm some sort of, like, villain trying to steal your virtue or something.

Edward: It's not **my** virtue I'm concerned about.

(Edward, *Eclipse*, 01:13:43)

This passage, which takes place before their wedding, quite clearly shows Edward's view on sex. Although he adores Bella, he holds her off of him, primarily in order to protect her. (cf. Schuler 2010:157)

6.2.2.6. Teenage Pregnancy

After their marriage, during their honeymoon Bella and Edward have sex for the first time due to Edward's religious attitude. Nobody can expect Bella to get pregnant, as it has been unknown that vampires can beget children at all. However, Bella and Edward are faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

Meyer's way of dealing with teenage pregnancy is different than expected. Other than stereotypical young people, in her story the main couple is very responsible. (cf. Kokkola 2010:175f)

Still, Bella has to withstand a horrendous pregnancy. The excessively fast growing unborn child seems to kill her and suck all the energy and life out of her. However, Bella wants to have the baby and does not even think about an abortion, although

she faces starvation and death. The situation finally turns out positively because Edward transforms her into a vampire. (cf. Kokkola 2010:175f)

Bella refuses to abort her child knowing that this could kill her. This again implies that the life of the unborn creature is has a much higher status than an ordinary human life in her point of view.

6.2.2.7. Fear of growing up

Edward has been a vampire since he was seventeen years old, which means that he is now 109. The vampire's beautiful appearance, his perfection, nobility, sacrificing and sympathetic character stress his intellectual maturity. All that makes him appear as a perfect mix of a cool teenager and a sensible adult, which Bella adores. She aims at being like him and being forever young. (cf. Kokkola 2010:177ff)

New Moon starts with Bella dreaming of her grandmother, who represents Bella in many years, while Edward stays forever young. The fear of growing up goes along with Bella's fear of being older than Edward. At least, she wants to be transformed into a vampire before twenty to remain a teenager. There is obvious emphasis on her desire to not grow old. (cf. Blasingame 2012:61)

Her transformation finally happens at the age of eighteen when she nearly dies while giving birth to her child. (cf. Kokkola 2010:177ff)

6.2.2.8. Separation

Getting closer to Edward and being a vampire herself, Bella has to separate more and more from her father and gain independence. She faces the challenge of never seeing Charlie or Renee again but still decides to leave home, marry Edward and become a vampire. She undergoes hard times and has to hurt people she loves. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

Finally, Bella establishes rules and circumstances under which she as a vampire and her father as human can maintain an intimate relationship despite their different beings. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

6.2.2.9. Death

Death is a central theme of this series because it is somehow the precondition to become a vampire at least in the sense that the human part of a person dies. Becoming a vampire usually means living forever but is completely different from human conception.

"I had never given much thought to how I would die. But dying in the place of someone I love seems like a good way to go." (Bella, *Twilight*, 00:00:20)

Bella contemplates giving up her human life once she gets to know Edward. Having a future with Edward and being able to live his life makes her consider all the necessary and devastating consequences and sacrifices, including her own death.

6.2.2.10. Contrasts

Many contrasts permeate the whole movies. There is a struggle between good and evil, a contrast between dark and light, old and new and clumsiness and perfection.

All of these opposites indicate the striking differences between the nature of humans and vampires. Vampires, especially Edward, possess traits humans, especially Bella, lack and vice versa. (cf. Blasingame 2012:56)

The dark-light image is combined with the vampire not appearing when the sun is shining. Vampires, so Edward, only go to school on rainy days, because their skin sparkles in the sunlight and their secret would be revealed. This juxtaposition of dark and light involves a further contrast within itself. Although vampires avoid sunlight Edward is usually surrounded by light, which represents Bella's point of view. Whenever he is around her she feels happy and he metaphorically brings light into her life. In *New Moon*, for instance, Bella's mood is depicted by the emergence of the moon. (cf. Blasingame 2012:57, 67; Moskowitz 2010)

Besides, Bella moves from sunny Phoenix to Forks, where the weather is usually rainy and dark and there is hardly any sunshine. (cf. Blasingame 2012:57)

Furthermore, Edward and Bella's living circumstances are apparently different. The girl lives in an old house and drives an old pickup truck, which was a present from her father. The vampire, on the contrary, lives together with his family in the dark woods in a very modern house and drives a sporty car. (cf. Blasingame 2012:58)

All these contrasts are cleverly emphasized through the movies' dark-light cycle. Dark light and rain are used to communicate a sad and troubled mood whereas sunlight visualizes a happy and satisfied atmosphere as well as Bella's fascination for Edward. (cf. Blasingame 2012:59)

6.2.2.11. Disobedience of rules/laws

The Twilight Series is permeated by many characters who disobey rules, be it traditions, moral issues or laws.

First, compared to the first chapters dealing with the history and the representation of vampires in older movies, the modern vampire appears to break all rules. The characteristic traits of vampires seem to have disappeared and to be neglected. (cf. Wallis 2011:86)

Within the vampire community the Volturi enact and enforce legal regulations which need to be exercised by the others. For instance, it is illegal to transform children into vampires and thus create immortal children. This evokes the conflict concerning Renesmee. (cf. Wallis 2011:88) Furthermore, Edward wants to break the probably highest vampire law by exposing himself to the sunlight and thus reveal his true nature as a vampire which is to be concealed.

Bella and Edward even have a relationship although contact between vampires and humans is strictly forbidden.

Bella refuses to be a common teenager but prefers the Cullens' lives. She neglects her relationship to her friends as well as being an active part of the predominant consumer society.

6.2.2.12. Morality

The importance of morality is conveyed through Edward's character as he is a vampire who attaches high importance to sticking to traditional moral ideals. He is a real gentleman, behaves like people used to in former times and represents the prototype for the perfectly reasonable adolescent.

One very good example for this is his distinctive control. He does, for example, not want to bite Bella before they are married. Actually, Bella is transformed into a vampire after their honeymoon when she gives birth to the baby, only due to the fact that she would have died if Edward had not bitten her. As the bite of the vampire is often linked to the sexual act, this perfectly relates to the fact that Edward refuses to have sex with Bella before they are married although she wishes for nothing more than that. (cf. Schuler 2010:157)

Furthermore, Edward is abstinent from human blood. He can control himself very well and he thus aims to keep human values. Bella follows Edward's ideals, as she possesses a lot of self-control as a vampire, too. She moreover acts morally when she strictly refuses to abort her child although it could kill her.

6.2.2.13. Religion – Excursus: Mormonism

At first sight the *Twilight Series* seems not to deal a lot with religion as there are neither crosses nor coffins. Still, religion is implicitly present, though in a different way than in former vampire stories. In the books occasionally Biblical matters are referred to. Still, Edward has been on earth for 109 years and he is still a virgin, which implies his religious attitude. (cf. Kokkola 2010:171; Mercer 2011:269ff)

Stephenie Meyer is a Mormon. For members of the Mormon faith, as well as for most Christians, premarital chastity is one of the most fundamental principles. Solidarity within the family is highly valued as well. (cf. Dietz 2011:100ff)

One further main ideal of the Mormon faith is that relationships are "fated"; it appears predestined whom you fall in love with. Thus, Mormons believe in eternal marriages, including a bond that reaches beyond human lifetime. Afterlife plays a decisive role for them anyway, as they have concrete expectations about what happens after death. (cf. Dietz 2011:102f)

Furthermore eternity is important in this religion. Therefore, the idea of eternal love, eternal life and eternal happiness perfectly suit to the values of Mormonism. Meyer uses the characteristics of the vampire to represent immortality, self-control and the struggle with acting morally though it lies in one's nature to act immorally. (cf. Reklis 2012:43)

In fact, Edward, representing the sympathetic and amiable vampire, embodies morals that can be seen as the ideal of Mormon belief. The Cullens attach high value to their family, whereby Carlisle serves as some kind of patriarch who guides them. This harmony within the family is further emphasized by the upcoming problems within Bella's family such as the divorce of her parents. The Cullens moreover exemplify the idea of afterlife as they continuously develop further although their human lives have already ended. (cf. Dietz 2011:101f)

Moreover, Edward and Bella serve as the perfect Mormon couple as they seem to be the "chosen one" for each other and their eternal love, which lasts after death. The Mormon idea about being able to conquer death is perfectly demonstrated by vampires, whose lives start with human death and they live forever. (cf. Bushman 2008:108f; Dietz 2011:101f; Mercer 2011:270ff)

Furthermore, Mormons, like conservative Christians, are against abortion, which is reflected in Bella's attitude towards not aborting her baby.

6.2.2.14. Self regulation / Control

Self-regulation regarding feelings, longings, wants and needs also constitutes an important theme of the *Twilight Series*.

Edward wants Bella so intensely and longs for her blood. Although she is like his personal drug, he manages to resist his need for human blood and feeds off animals instead. Bella has to restrain her desire for human blood after being transformed into a vampire as well, especially when she gets to see her own half human daughter for the first time. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

Against all expectations both of them manage to control themselves excellently. Edward can have a relationship with Bella, kiss and even make love with her without hurting her. Bella can follow his ideals after being transformed into a vampire herself. (cf. Aram et al. 2009)

6.3. Summary

Considering these themes the *Twilight Series* provides a rather typical plot of a teenage romance. It deals with common concerns of young people. Teenagers, mostly girls, usually yearn for eternal love and Edward represents the ideal man, a handsome and well-mannered adolescent, being deeply in love with the girl of his dreams and protecting her vigorously. Bella, on the other hand, navigates challenges that seem rather common for teenagers. She is an outsider, who does not fit in anywhere; however, she is rebellious, struggles for independence and has her own world with Edward, where no one can control her. Finally, this is what makes her intriguing and an ideal for many young people.

Having considered all these aspects, it could be concluded that the modern vampire that is represented in the *Twilight Series* is just part of a teen-romance but has no deeper function comparable to former vampires.

7. Comparison

In the following paragraphs I am going to list selected differences and similarities between the *Twilight Series* and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* on the one hand and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* on the other hand.

7.1. Vampire relationships

In *Dracula* the vampire represents its original image of an enemy who kills humans and sucks their blood in order to survive. There are no noticeable other vampires *Dracula* associates with. Although a threat to humans, he is in a kind of relationship with a human woman, Mina, who becomes familiar with his secret and still feels attracted by him.

Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* almost exclusively deals with relationships among vampires. Louis and Lestat, both vampires, are the main characters. Except for Claudia, who is turned into a vampire as a young girl, there is no human character to identify with. Humans only play the role of victims. (cf. Zanger 1997:21)

Interestingly, in the *Twilight Series* the basic relationship in the whole plot is between Bella and Edward, a human and a vampire. Their bond is much stronger than the one between Count *Dracula* and Mina. On the contrary, there are evil vampires, too, who kill indiscriminately and consider humans exchangeable victims. (cf Zanger 1997:21)

On the one hand, it is obvious that there is some relation to the original vampire story of *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. On the other hand, there are evil vampires that do not have any further contact to humans but only drink their blood to survive. This suggests the idea that the *Twilight Series* consists of a mix of 'old' and 'new'. It goes back to the roots and appreciates traditional values whereby it adapts new ideas as well. This can be seen as a conscious link between past times and today.

7.2. Vampires and blood

The original vampire is exclusively dependent on human blood in order to survive, which influences the vampire in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

Yet, the contrasting idea of a vegetarian vampire in the *Twilight Series* is not new. Anne Rice introduced with Louis the first vampire that tries to feed on animal blood, which partly works. There is a popular scene when he drinks the blood of a poodle as well as that of rats but he often relapses and kills humans.

Edward finally personifies the perfection of self-control and abstinence in this regard. Except for a short period in former times, which took place long before the first part of the movie when Edward was curious about hunting humans, he exclusively drinks animal blood. Again, the vampires hostile to the Cullen family kill humans and feed on their blood.

In this regard Meyer further elaborates the innovative idea of vampires who evolve into humanlike creatures. The whole Cullen family is vegetarian. Again their moral attitude is further emphasized by the Volturi and the newborn ones, who still represent atrocity and social malady.

7.3. The vampire as the other

The vampire is often referred to as 'the other' in the sense of an outsider or an alien. (cf. Carter 1997:27) Dracula is living isolated in his castle in Transylvania and wants to be part of London's society, which comes out when he asks Jonathan Harker to teach him the English language. Still, he does not manage to integrate and become one of them but is rather segregated during the whole story. The vampire represents human fears; people are afraid of him and do not want to deal with him.

Ann Rice's Louis neither feels associated with vampires nor does he belong to human society. He vigorously tries to disavow being a vampire, killing humans and sucking their blood. Therefore, he tries to pursue human ideals and morals. Louis is a vampire he cannot really identify with, but he stays an outsider or rather an enemy for humans as well.

Edward plays a special role in this context. He is a vampire, which makes him 'the other' from the human's point of view. Still, he associates with humans, adopts their moral attitudes and rules and is even in love with one of them. Nevertheless, being the perfect male makes him 'the other' for vampires. He thus cannot be referred to as a real outsider but he still functions maybe as a secret foreigner, which makes him interesting for humans. (cf. Sommers and Hume 2011:157f)

The modern vampire further develops the pursuit of being integrated into human society which makes him an intriguing role model for humans. The other vampires again remind us of the idea of outsiders and enemies.

7.4. Coffin

The coffin is a traditional symbol that is associated with the vampire. It appears in various scenes of *Bram Stoker's Dracula* but not in *Interview with the Vampire*. Edward even makes fun of it: Bella, being in Edward's room for the first time, is apparently surprised about the furnishings and Edward asks her amusedly if she had expected any coffins in there.

This is an example where the new vampire points out that he has progressed further and does not stick to outdated customs.

7.5. Van Gennep

7.5.1. Rites of passage

Generally, the *Twilight Series* contains many aspects dealing with van Gennep's theory around rites of passage. For example, in *Interview with the Vampire* it was frowned upon that Claudia, the young girl, was transformed into a vampire when she was a child. Bella gets to know the vampire somewhere between childhood, puberty and adolescence as well. Edward strictly refuses to deprive Bella of her human life and transform her into a vampire before she is adult. He wants her to experience as much as possible as a human being. (cf. Köppl 2010:244) Still, from the teenage

girl's point of view the date of the transformation comes to the forefront; the earlier the better.

At the end of *Twilight* Edward says "prom is an important rite of passage – I don't want you to miss anything" (Edward, *Twilight*, 01:44:52).

Edward thus acts in accordance with what van Gennep tries to say about the importance of going through rites of passage, whereas Bella cannot wait until her process of growing up stops, regardless of any consequences where she could miss important rites of passage for humans.

This distinct care for humans communicates a rather innovative attitude of the modern vampire.

7.5.2. Crossing thresholds

It has been found out that in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* vampires need permission to cross a threshold. Contrary to Zanger's point of view (cf. 1997:19) I would claim that it is the same in *Interview with the Vampire*, where vampires are permitted into human spheres mostly through sexual attractions. Although there is hardly any contact between humans and vampires, the typical procedure is that victims are usually drawn by the vampire and in a way invited to have sex, which finally turns out to be the deadly bite. The man interviewing Lestat at the end of the movie even wants to be bitten by him.

In the *Twilight Series* there is a huge contradiction as far as this theory is concerned. On the one hand, there are the bad vampires who suddenly attack unsuspecting and innocent humans and kill them. On the other hand, Bella begs Edward to transform her into a vampire. She would not accept any refusal on his part. Edward tries to keep away from Bella as much as possible until she nearly gets killed when her schoolmate loses control of his car and heads for Bella. In order to save her life the vampire needs to cross the threshold.

Van Gennep's idea does in this sense not apply to the complete *Twilight Series*. The one kind of vampire does not need any permission or rather would never wait for any. Edward and in further consequence his family, on the contrary, vigorously try to

refuse the invitation into the human sphere. However, they do not seem to have any choice but to cross the threshold. Edward is even forced to transform Bella into a vampire to prevent her from death.

This contrast regarding van Gennep's theory successfully stresses Edward's character and his relationship to humans, especially Bella. His sensible abstinence makes it clear why Bella cannot resist him.

7.5.3. Vampires and liminality

Another interesting aspect in this regard is Wallis' argument that Edward and his family are stuck between two stages. They are naturally vampires. However, in the course of their pursuit to be good ones, spurning human blood, appreciating and following human values and trying to obey human and vampire law, they are neither typical vampires nor are they humans at all. Therefore, according to Wallis, the new vampire is somehow caught within liminality. (cf. 2011:86) This does not apply to the Volturi and the newborn vampire, who are real vampires.

This phenomenon can hardly be found in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* because Dracula intensively tries to integrate into society but there is no evidence that he strives for being human. Louis, on the other hand, tries to adopt human morals but often relapses.

7.6. Time Kane's theory

According to Kane every genre evolves over time or rather reflects changes in society and so do vampire narratives, which are a subgenre of horror fiction. (cf. 2006: 3ff) Along these lines the vampire figure changed from a villain or rather a threatening invader (cf. 2006:21ff) via an erotic creature (cf. 2006:43ff) through to a vampire who is placed within everyday life situations. Within the last period of vampire stories it became common to combine the vampire genre for example with high school teenage dramas. Moreover, the vampire gained some kind of hero status. (cf. 2006:88ff)

Syntactic and semantic elements are the basis of movies that change over the evolution of a genre. Kane mentions seven components characteristic for vampire stories in this regard, including the look, the bite, the infection, the expert, the cross, the vampire and the destruction. (cf. 2006:192) These can be defining elements for the development of the vampire genre in general and the function of the vampire in detail. Below I am therefore going to compare the occurrence of these elements in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* to *Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire* and the *Twilight Series*.

7.6.1. The Look

The look describes the moment when the vampire looks at his potential victim or an enemy and implicitly communicates his position of control over the opponent. (cf. Kane 2006:192)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* the vampire is able to control his victims as he manages to set them in a state of trance. They start to giggle and are reminded of their lost love and their former life. (cf. Kane 2006:194)

In *Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire* the vampire stares closely at the eyes of the victims, which makes them obey the vampire's will. (cf. Kane 2006:194)

In the *Twilight Series* Edward appeals to Bella so much that she cannot resist the temptation to be near him. The vampire in a way provokes similar attraction towards her like Dracula did. However, Edward tries to avoid eye contact and thus makes Bella addicted to him. The evil vampires do not seem to possess such a manipulating look but rather they surprise their victims.

The modern vampire thus possesses manipulating powers; however, Edward as representative of modern vampires avoids making use of them in favor of his moral attitude.

7.6.2. The Bite

The bite covers the way in which the vampire bites the victim, including the reaction of the victim. (cf. Kane 2006:194)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* the bite scenes are demonstrated rather erotically. The deadly bite usually follows a sex scene between the vampire and his victim, who does not realize what happens, usually due to the erotic atmosphere. (cf. Kane 2006:197)

In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* various bite scenes which are partly introduced by sexual contact permeate the movie. In these cases victims do not notice what is going on because of their sexual arousal. Contrarily, vampires often just kill their victims indiscriminately. (cf. Kane 2006:197f)

In the *Twilight Series* the bite is not linked to sexuality or eroticism at all. Edward strictly refuses to bite Bella until he is forced to transform her in order to avoid her death. The evil vampires do not share any emotions with their victims at all.

7.6.3. The Infection

The infection explores the response of the victim to the attack and vampirism in general and how the newborn vampire adapts to its new life as a vampire. (cf. Kane 2006:199)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* the main vampire seems to be ashamed of 'being a monster'. Although he wants to bite Mina, he still suffers from a crisis of conscience when she wants to be transformed into a vampire. Infected victims usually suffer from breathlessness, get pale skin and fangs. (cf. Kane 2006:201)

In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* the victims mostly have the choice whether to be transformed. Those who decide in favor of becoming a vampire out of an unbearable personal situation are drained of their own blood and have to drink vampire blood in return. The transformation is extremely painful. (cf. Kane 2006:201)

In the *Twilight Series*, Edward, like Dracula, feels ashamed for being a vampire in the presence of his beloved one. He considers himself a monster and tries to prevent Bella from associating with him. Bella, similarly to Mina, decides for herself that she wants to become a vampire. She is, however, the only privileged one in this regard because victims of evil vampires are killed without exception. Due to the fact that

Bella desires to become a vampire, she manages to adapt perfectly to the world of vampires.

The idea of a human who yearns for becoming a vampire and perfectly identifies with the new life is an innovation accompanying modern vampire stories.

7.6.4. The Expert

The expert includes the character of the 'vampire specialist', who is mostly the vampire hunter. (cf. Kane 2006:202)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* Abraham Van Helsing takes the role of the vampire expert. He has hunted vampires all his life, is equipped with crucifixes, wooden stakes, holy water, etc. (cf. Kane 2006:205)

In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* there is no human expert dealing with vampires. Nevertheless, there is a rising debate over the purpose of these creatures. Louis, for instance, arouses curiosity about what he is and why he exists. (cf. Kane 2006:205)

In the *Twilight Series* there is no expert, which might be a consequence of the vampire being integrated into human daily life and society.

7.6.5. The Cross

The cross deals with the reaction of a vampire being confronted with a crucifix and how the cross occurs in the movie. (cf. Kane 2006:206)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* the cross plays an important role as vampires manage to melt it away. When Dracula is faced with a cross, it burns and explodes. (cf. Kane 2006:208)

This element is not applicable to Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* as there are no crucifixes or other cross-like figures. (cf. Kane 2006:208)

In the *Twilight Series* there is no cross either.

7.6.6. The Vampire

Vampire means the character itself, its traits, appearance and behavior. (cf. Kane 2006:209)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* the count takes the shape of many different creatures including a wolf, a bat, an old man, a prince, etc. Dracula's character, appearance as well as his mannerisms depend on the form he is in. (cf. Kane 2006:212)

In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, on the contrary, all vampires keep their outward appearance as humans and adopt vampire characteristics such as a pale face or cold skin. (cf. Kane 2006:212)

In the *Twilight Series* vampires do not transform into animal-like creatures either but look like human beings, which again proves that the vampire is integrated into human society and considered one of them.

7.6.7. The Destruction

The destruction explores how the vampire is finally killed. (cf. Kane 2006:213)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* there is a fight at the end of the movie where Harker cuts Dracula's throat and stabs him. Finally, Mina pushes a knife through the heart of the count, who has turned back to his former appearance and his head is chopped off. (cf. Kane 2006:216)

In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* one method of killing vampires is to let them drink human dead blood, which nearly kills Lestat. Fire, furthermore, causes the death of vampires. When Louis and Lestat set fire, all vampires are beheaded and die. Claudia and her newly-transformed vampire mother die of burning in the sunlight at the end of the movie. (cf. Kane 2006:216f)

In the *Twilight Series* the vampire no longer burns or dies when he is exposed to sunlight, he is resistant to holy water or crosses and cannot be killed by human means. The only possibility to kill a modern vampire is to dismember the body and burn the parts immediately afterwards because otherwise they are able to reconstruct themselves. (cf. Wikia 2013)

7.7. Summary

To sum up, it is obvious that Meyer does take up characteristics of the traditional vampire but mixes them with new and innovative ideas. It comes out very clearly that the modern vampire still has many original traits but he has progressed over the years.

In consideration of the change of the elements mentioned by Kane it is obvious that Edward adopts many characteristics and manners of the original vampire epitomized by Dracula but in an innovative way. For instance, he possesses the power to influence humans, especially Bella, by looking at them but he tries to avoid doing so.

Other elements have visibly evolved from Dracula via the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* through to Edward. The bite is no longer essential, Edward explicitly refuses to bite Bella, and there is no necessity of an expert or a cross. These developments underline the transformation of the vampire towards a human-like figure that represents something special, supernatural and desirable.

This contrast between old and new, traditional and modern, is further emphasized through the existence of the Volturi and the hostile newborn vampires within the *Twilight Series*, as they represent almost the opposite of what the Cullens stand for.

In consideration of van Gennep's theory, the modern vampire seems to care about humankind and respect human life including necessary rites of passage. This makes him even more like one of us.

8. Interpretation

In consideration of the content and themes, the *Twilight Series* appears like a typical teenage romance. The vampire seems to have no function at all because a love story could also be successful without vampires but starring a normal human male character. Bella could be attracted by a cool, maybe bad guy as well. A partly complicated love story in which the protagonists have to navigate several challenges definitely does not provide an extraordinary plot of a movie where supernatural creatures were indispensable.

A possible message of the *Twilight Series* can in light of its themes be that true love overcomes any boundaries. It can further suggest not to have sex before you are married or to fight for your love to be happy ever after. Meyer's reason for having a vampire as main character of her books could also be that one probably will not go broke writing vampire stories for teenagers, who are very impressionable. (cf. Blasingame 2012:21; Moskowitz 2010)

At first sight, all critiques, including the song by Die Ärzte, claim that the count (or rather the vampire) has completely lost its original function and the idea behind films dealing with vampires is obviously irrevocably mistaken. The vampire figure in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* was once used to demonstrate human and cultural anxieties and to analyze them. In *Interview with the Vampire* – though already criticized – the vampire served, for instance, to challenge human identity and to search for the sense of life. In Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Series* the vampire seems to be dispensable and just used as means of entertainment, neglecting any traditional ideas of these beings.

The author herself claims that it was a dream about a teenage couple lying in the sun on grassland, when the skin of the young man was shining like thousands of diamonds that inspired her for writing this bestselling series. According to her statement she neither intended to create a literary piece nor did she intend to make the New York Times bestselling bestseller list. Her aims were just fun and entertainment. (cf. Blasingame 2012:23ff)

Still, the *Twilight Series* has evoked a hype among vampire films that has never been there before. Young people are crazy about it. (cf. Kell and Deutsch 2010:14) In the following section I am therefore going to try to find out, if there is more in it than meets the eye; if the modern vampire maybe does have some kind of function that can be compared to the original vampire. Maybe the Cullens, especially Edward, represent the modern vampire our age for some reason needs.

Possible messages that could be conveyed through the mentioned themes are elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Assuming that the *Twilight Series* is a teenage movie, a possible function of the vampire can only be connected to teenagers and it can therefore just mirror young people's society.

Bella is the main human character, representing adolescents, especially teenage girls. Her function of personifying teenagers is highlighted by the fact that her schoolmates envy her for her special relationship to Edward. Bella can be characterized as mousy, insecure, unhappy and lacking self-confidence.

The only thing she is sure of is that she loves every trait of Edward and cannot live without him. She shortchanges all her friends and schoolmates in order to be near him or to get him back, which underlines her intention to escape a normal teenager's life to Edward's life. Even the relationship to her parents depends on the fact if they tolerate Edward as her boyfriend and approve of their liaison. She gets along rather well with her mother, who is of the opinion that Edward is a good boyfriend for Bella, whereas she often quarrels and has many conflicts with her father, who is against him.

Bella and Jake have a very special relationship. They are best friends and share many interests and traits. However, when Bella gets to know Edward, the vampire continuously stands between the two of them. Jake, however, is completely against Bella's love for Edward on the one hand because he loves her himself and on the other hand because he fears that Edward could hurt her. Therefore, in favor of her love for Edward Bella is even willing to sacrifice her friendship with Jake.

Bella's unsuccessful search for identity as a human stands for her absolute desire for something that is missing in her life. Due to the fact that she can suddenly identify with what she is when she is a vampire, it is highlighted that it is Edward or rather being like Edward that she has always been longing for.

Bella's hopeless incompleteness in absence of Edward emerges when he leaves her in *New Moon*. Her changing moods which are highlighted through various contrasts and dark/light effects as well as her character development during the series are remarkable. (cf. Dietz 2011:105)

Moreover, it is obvious that despite her weak personality she undergoes a total character transformation. After having found out that she can see Edward's apparition which reminds her to take care of herself, she puts herself in danger whenever possible. Bella suddenly becomes brave and strong and starts a number of dangerous adventures. Approaching a probable future with Edward, she furthermore develops into a good daughter, a good friend and a better person. (cf. Blasingame 2012:58ff)

All the contrasts that occur during the whole story, no matter if dark vs. light, good vs. bad, happy vs. sad or old vs. new can be projected onto the teenager's continuously changing mood. Especially the contrast between dark and light, which is consciously linked to Bella's mood whether she can be together with Edward or not, emphasizes that the vampire brings light into her life. (cf. Blasingame 2012:57)

All these themes elaborated in detail in chapter 6. of this paper emphasize Bella's desire for a future with Edward or rather for a future like Edward's.

8.1. Edwards appeal

What is so special about the modern vampire; what are teenagers striving for?

Edward is a vampire, an undead and a supernatural. Actually, he is 109 years old, which means that he was born at the beginning of the 20th century. He was turned at the age of seventeen and stays seventeen for eternity. The vampire exemplifies an old generation appreciating former traditional values and his character is shaped by the time when he lived. He somehow projects former ideals on today's society. (cf. Reagin 2010:1ff) This includes the ideal picture of the Cullen family Bella desires to be part of. They live together harmoniously and support each other whenever they are in trouble, even if this goes against the grain of their morality. They simply cooperate instead of playing somebody off against someone else.

Edward can be seen as a special representative of youth. He is definitely not a typical teenager as he is well-dressed, behaves respectfully and in a friendly way towards adults, is reasonable and feels responsible for others. Edward possesses extreme self-control, which is rather untypical for vampires. Instead of challenging and turning against humans, especially adults, he tries to fit into and belong to society.

He therefore represents a kind of teenager-type that is not rebellious and does not try to distance himself from his parents, which appears extraordinary for today's teenagers. Neither Edward nor Bella undergo such a maturation-process. (cf. Schuler 2010:157f)

It is obvious that Bella, representing a human teenage girl, strives for being forever young. She is afraid of growing up and becoming older than Edward. This further means that in her dreams she stays an adolescent and can thus escape issues and concerns adults are facing, which reveals hidden desires of teenagers.

Bella is an untypical teenager as she is a reluctant consumer, avoids going out with friends, dressing trendily or buying new gadgets. She faces consumerism as Edward drives a new car, he lives in a perfectly modern house and he dresses well; however, he does not need to prove himself in order to be able to afford or rather achieve such

things, which can be seen in accordance with her imagination of a perfect life. (cf. Wallis 2011:89)

Compared to former vampire movies, the transformation in the *Twilight Series* is a release for Bella. As a vampire she feels self-conscious, confident and happy for the first time in her life. The dreaded bite suddenly becomes a release (cf. Carter 1997:31), namely one in order to escape or manage current crises and teenagers' daily routines and challenges.

To sum up, what Edward stands and Bella strives for is perfection, independence, and lightheartedness.

8.2. Why the fascination

Bella serves as a symbol for contemporary young people, who strive for belonging to and being accepted by society. They are afraid of failing at remaining themselves in consideration of social and job-related circumstances. (cf. Schuler 2010:158)

The vampire in the *Twilight Series* does not represent outsiders and enemies or anxieties anymore but it rather projects pubertal desire. The high amount of love and romanticism does not necessarily need to be seen as clichéd and stereotyped. The world in the *Twilight Series* moreover serves as an alternative or a utopia. The traits, values and possibilities of a vampire create a place that does not exist yet. It consists of boundless opportunities and feelings that are in contrast to the teenagers' contemporary pressure to perform no matter whether in school, in their spare time or regarding money, their resulting inherent necessity as well as their limited free time and freedom.

Young people therefore strive for getting back to the roots and being free again like they were as young children. They do not feel comfortable in today's society anymore as they are facing too much pressure. Childhood and puberty are being reduced to a rather short time and society obtrudes children and teenagers to act and be reasonable like adults.

The current higher marital age as well as the higher age when young people have children additionally proves that teenagers would not be ready to handle their life

independently, get an appropriate job and earn their living. Times have definitely changed and it must not be neglected that young people need to enjoy their childhood and be able to prepare for further steps as a consequence.

As an act of defiance children or teenagers try to hide behind a false mask and behave uncooperatively, ignorantly and indifferently towards adults. Actually, however, they are just over-challenged and afraid of failing in society, of their future and of taking responsibility.

The new vampire epitomizes everything teenagers wish for and fear. Bella's endless desire for Edward symbolizes young people's burning desire for all ideals and values the vampire stands for. Because of the vampire's ability to transform arbitrarily and his traits, which are a combination of extrasensory and supernatural powers, the vampire serves as the ideal object of desire for young people. (cf. Köppl 2010:266f)

However, this is not an overt desire but more a hidden one. This is communicated through Edward, who can read human minds, except for Bella's. She manages to deprive her thoughts of him, which can be interpreted in the way that she feels ashamed for what she wishes. (cf. Day 2012:71) For the first time she reveals her feelings at the end of the very last part of the *Twilight Series*, when she shows Edward the most special moments during their relationship and that no one has ever loved somebody like she loved him. Thus, the modern vampire is what teenagers secretly desire. They obviously do not dare disclose what they inwardly strive for. (cf. Day 2012:77)

This proves even more that teenagers are unhappy and unable to manage the current situation but they are afraid of revealing their problems.

The topicality and high importance of this topic can be underlined by an article published by Der Grazer, on March 10, 2013, titled "Jugend auf Omakurs: Kochen Stricken & Co.boomen". It deals exactly with what has been analyzed with regard to the function of the modern vampire. Today's teenagers are, according to this article, striving for former times and values, they are over-challenged to handle the current social system and long for stability, calm, less pressure and stress, etc.

8.3. Proof

In Meyer's *Twilight Series* this longing for less pressure and expectations of teenagers is perfectly highlighted by a vampire, a mysterious, frightening, historical and traditional creature, being the object of desire within a modern young adult series. The in chapter 6.2.2.10. mentioned disobedience and the number of characters breaking the law symbolize rebellion and dissatisfaction with the current situation. This idea is additionally communicated by a very well selected mix of traditional vampire traits on the one hand and totally contrasting modern ideas of a new vampire on the other hand, proven in the previous chapter dealing with the comparison of the vampire in the *Twilight Series* to those in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*. It is further confirmed by van Gennepe's theory.

In my opinion this creation of an imaginary world that provides freedom and independency for teenagers who are not exposed to any pressure makes the hype among the *Twilight Series*.

8.4. Appeal to young adults

Literature or films that appeal to young adults or teenagers should include two main points, namely "story" and "identification". (cf. Blasingame 2012:21) The *Twilight Series* consist of a clear and structured story: a romance story dealing with the complicated love between a vampire and a human girl. Identification is in my view the more important factor in this regard. The goal should be that the audience can identify with the characters and imagine what they go through. Moreover, a successful movie should touch their psychological needs. (cf. Blasingame 2012:26)

This is exactly what the *Twilight Series* does. It touches teenagers' hidden or secret needs, which perfectly works by the use of a vampire, a frowned upon but mysterious creature that used to be feared by humans. Especially its otherness makes teenagers curious and addicted to it.

9. The symbol of a mirror

The word mirror in the title of this paper has been chosen consciously as it is an ambivalent symbol that has a very special meaning that can be connected to vampires.

9.1. General aspects

Generally, a mirror is made of glass and reflects a distinct image of a person, a thing or whatever is placed in front of it. It is known as a symbol of self-awareness, mind, clearness, truth and soul as it often shows what one expects to see or reveals what is neglected. (cf. Kuptz-Klimpel 2012)

For a person it makes it possible to deal with one's self-image. Humans do not always see the same reflection of themselves every time they look into the mirror. This very much depends on their personal condition. The mirror usually plays a role in connection with the conscious on the one hand and the unconscious on the other hand. The reflection within the mirror can represent either of them, mostly depending on factors such as how one looks in the mirror, how one feels by looking into the mirror and what one expects to see. It can help to find one's identity.

The mirror is a symbol that often occurs in literature and movies. Famous examples are fairy tales such as Snow White, Alice in Wonderland and it plays a role in Goethe's Faust.

9.2. The mirror and vampires

It is common that the traditional vampires, like Dracula, abominate mirrors. They are moreover not reflected in the mirror. In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* there is a scene right at the beginning of the movie, when Jonathan Harker stays at the Count's castle and it turns out that there is no reflection of Dracula in the mirror. This constitutes an interesting metaphor. It is yet clear that the vampire stands for human desires and anxieties and serves for defining human identity. It can be referred to as 'the other' that challenges humanity. Therefore, the idea that humans do not see any mirror

image of the vampire can be interpreted in a way that humans refuse to see it because they are afraid to see any reflection of themselves in the vampire. (cf. Köppl 2010:220; Stevenson 1988:147)

In *Twilight* there is one scene at school when Bella looks in the mirror and is totally surprised to see Edward's sister Alice standing behind her. Besides, Bella is nearly killed in a room full of mirrors, which turns out to be the room Bella used to have ballet lessons in as a child.

As the vampires can be seen in the mirror by watching the movies of the *Twilight Series*, it can be concluded that the new vampire interestingly is reflected in the mirror.

9.3. Summary

The vampire has, according to history, previous movies and books, mirrored society's desires, anxieties and concerns over the years. This function of reflecting society has metaphorically been hidden because the vampire did not have any mirror image. However, the modern vampire does have a reflection, which can be interpreted as an emphasis on a more concrete function of the vampire. It can moreover in a metaphorical sense serve as kind of warning, to make people aware of their problems or rather as a demand to deal with and solve their concerns.

10. Conclusion

Stephenie Meyer maybe was just inspired by her Mormon background and she aimed to convey as much information concerning these religious ideals as possible when writing her books. It can further be argued that female adolescents simply devour the *Twilight Series* due to their need for the perfect boyfriend or the man of everyone's dreams, whom Edward represents. These are only two out of a list of many arguments confirming that the modern vampire does not have to do anything with its mythos at all.

The author does not clarify what function 'her' vampire should fulfill and all interpretations and analyses are speculations. However, having dealt with the *Twilight Series* in detail, for me it does have a rather clear message.

In the beginning chapters of this paper dealing with the historical background and the former function of vampires it was found out that the vampire always has mirrored society adapted to the time, people's problems and concerns. Many critics claim that the modern vampire constitutes a shame to its ancestors and neglects all its traditions and traits. It is true that the common imagination of a vampire used to be an immortal, pale-faced creature with long dark hair and long sharp canine teeth that kills humans by drinking their blood to survive, that burns in the sun, is allergic to garlic and holy water and cannot hurt a person who believes in god and holds a cross. However, all this has never been proved. It has been evidenced that the vampire was created by people's superstition and has thus been shaped in the course of history.

All that has been found out about former vampires, in my case, in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, proves that vampires evolve with time. Despite all the critics and Meyer's own argument that her vampire has no function at all, I am convinced that it does have a function. It clearly mirrors today's teenagers' concerns and projects their hidden problems and challenges. Taking into account the success of the *Twilight Series* and the huge number of teenagers being addicted to it, Edward Cullen, representing the prototype of the modern vampire, finally is, as Nina Auerbach once said, the vampire our age needs.

The modern vampire represents the concerns of a young society struggling with their current situation. Vampires are therefore a mirror of society and the modern vampire does not fall out of alignment but it rather pursues its ancestors' characteristics, namely to shape and to adapt.

The author's claim that she did not intend to write a story with any deeper function makes it in my opinion even more fascinating that she still created a piece that fits so accurately in the picture of our society.

Exactly due to the fact that the vampire doubtlessly mirrors society I am convinced that the tremendous hype among the *Twilight Series* should make people start thinking. Furthermore, does the article in Der Grazer prove that adolescents are over-challenged and striving for a different, imaginary world. A function of the modern vampire film can in my view furthermore be a wake-up call to change something.

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