



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

Sympathy for the Devil

Humanizing the Villain

Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs í ensku

Alda Hanna Grímólfsdóttir

Febrúar 2013

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Summary

Vampires in literature have gone through certain physical and psychological changes since stories about them started gaining popularity. There has been a noticeable shift from evil vampires to good ones, the vampire is no longer the easily detectable villain. The novels *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (1897), *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice (1976) and *The Twilight Series* (2005-2008) by Stephenie Meyer will mainly be used as reference to point out how the vampire image has evolved, how the vampire is usually portrayed in modern literature, the shift from the horror to the romance genre and the emphasis on the good vampire.

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Introduction

Modern vampire stories such as the *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer (2005-2008), *The Sookie Stackhouse* novels by Charlaine Harris (2001-present), and the *Vampire Academy* by Richelle Mead (2007-2010) seem to have more in common with the romance genre than horror. Even in Bram's Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and perhaps more in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) some emphasis on romance is detected though these novels still mainly belong to the horror genre. Writers of vampire stories today seem more intrigued in exploring the human element and social factors of the vampire rather than their evil nature. Why would writers want to humanize the vampire? Are the authors projecting their humanity onto vampires, making them struggle with their dark sides, like humans do, exploring their humanity? When did this movement towards romance start? When did we see the first good vampire and how have they evolved since then?

Since the late 80's and 90's there has been a tidal wave of new authors writing within the paranormal romance genre. By creating the vampire Louis, and giving him sympathetic characteristics, Anne Rice opened up a new chapter in vampire fiction and has been very influential for vampire story writers. What causes the attraction of the sympathetic vampire today? This paper addresses this shift from horror to romance, the representation and personification of good and evil in modern vampire stories and the human traits the vampire seems to have acquired along the way, such as "a soul", conscience, expressing regret and being able to fall in love. Does the "good" vampire pose as a threat, and if so, to whom?

Good and Evil

It is difficult to find a simple definition of the words good and evil. The concepts are too broad and subject to different interpretations. *Merriam-Webster's* online dictionary defines the word good as: "someone of a favorable character or tendency, virtuous, right, commendable, kind and benevolent". In addition, someone that has a set of morals and follows them with good intentions, these morals are in accordance with the rules of society. Evil is defined as morally reprehensible, sinful, wicked, a bad character or conduct, causing discomfort, repulsion, and causing harm. Someone lacking morals and disobeys, with harmful intent, the rules of society. In his book *Slayers and Their Vampires: A Cultural History of Killing the Dead* (2006), Bruce McClelland explains that evil is a threat to human survival and while death is universal, evil is selective in the way that it is always directed at someone or something (1-2). Evil comes in many forms, it is not possible to rely only on appearance to detect it.

McClelland also mentions evil manifestation, how evil can manifest in the natural world through demons, spirits, beasts, even humans (who could more than likely be the most dangerous form of evil because most humans do not bear physical marks such as horns and tails that can usually be identified with evil beings and humans are therefore considered more innocent than the other beasts). Good and evil are usually regarded as opposites, opposing forces battling each other (McClelland 1). Is evil, then, the opposite or the absence, or perhaps just the withdrawal of good? What is the one without the other? "To label something evil is to magically circumscribe it and to effectively push the obligation of proof of goodness onto the thing so designated." (McClelland xiii). How do we determine what is good and what is evil, and can one be considered both

good and evil at the same time? These are all valid questions when trying to find an appropriate definition of the modern interpretation of these two concepts.

Evil can be defined as someone or something deliberately causing harm to others.

Vampires have usually been considered evil, most known vampires drink the blood of humans or animals, they hurt them or kill them while doing so. However, vampires portrayed in modern literature and popular culture such as movies and TV shows are very different from the 18th century folkloric vampires or even earlier versions of folklore or legends. The modern vampire is usually an elegant, attractive and very sexually appealing individual that humans are drawn to while the older folkloric versions of vampires were typically depicted as ugly, disgusting peasants. In most modern vampire stories, there are usually a few good vampires thrown in the mix with the evil ones. The good vampires show sympathy, remorse and guilt over their killings, they fall in love and even have a soul, all characteristics of a normal human being. These are all traits which, when coupled with immortality, incredible strength and supernatural powers make them very appealing. The evil vampires show no remorse, they enjoy their kills, and show no respect for life, which is why they take it so easily. The main object of the older folkloric type of vampire stories, that were told before the 18th century, was to scare and/or disgust the reader with descriptions of the vampires' physical appearance and behavior.

Vampires

In many cultures throughout the world one can find ancient as well as modern stories of vampire-like creatures in various forms. *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead* by J. Gordon Melton (1994) includes a chronology of vampire stories. It states “Belief in vampire-like creatures probably goes back in human experience long before written record” (xiii). After the publication of John William Polidori’s short story *The Vampyre* in 1819, this new image of a thin, pale, dark haired man with long canine teeth in a cloak has now become the symbolic version of the vampire around the world. The long, sharp teeth have become the essential characteristics for the modern day vampire while the folklore rarely mentions them (Barber 44). Polidori’s creation was later adapted into a play which became very popular and sparked an interest in the vampires around Europe. Polidori proved very influential on the work of writers of vampire theme, among them was Bram Stoker, the author of *Dracula*.

According to *The Element Encyclopedia of Vampires: An A-Z of the Undead* by Theresa Cheung, Vlad the Impaler, prince of Wallachia and son of Vlad Dracul terrorized his citizens in the 15th century (624). The name Dracula means son of the dragon/devil (Cheung 625), and was originally an honorary name derived from the Order of the Dragon. The writer Bram Stoker was so intrigued with this name and its meaning that he named his most famous character Count Dracula. Along with his name, Vlad himself is also believed to be one of the historical inspirations for Dracula (Cheung 625). Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* introduces the ultimate vampire villain (Melton xvi). The character’s charm and charisma almost masks his evil and violent temper (Cheung 188), he appears to be well dressed and sophisticated but with superhuman strength and speed. A

“combination of elegance, horror, and crudeness” (Cheung 187). This sophistication and elegance has little in common with the typical description of the 18th century folkloric vampire described to be filthy, bloating leeches or corpses, with no fangs or special abilities. There was no sophistication or charm. Dracula was indeed evil, a cold hearted murderer, nonetheless, Bram Stoker managed to give the vampire a makeover of sorts, he endowed the monster a sophisticated look so it was more suitable to appear in front of human society than before but the evil core still remained intact. Dracula showed no mercy in his killing, despite his elegant demeanour, for instance he chose his victim, Mina, for his personal revenge. Dracula knew the rules of society and how to portray himself, but his main goal was always to satisfy himself and his needs, if someone stood in the way of that, he killed them coldheartedly. Stoker gave this old grotesque evil a charming new face.

The fiction industry has changed the concept and the image of the vampire through the ages, it has changed from an dishevelled peasant with long fingernails and ruddy face appearing in tales from throughout Europe in the 16-18th century or even earlier, to the 19th century’s tall elegant gentleman in a black cloak (Barber 2). In the 18th century there was an outburst in the popularity of vampire stories and they became more widely known than ever before. Before the elegant creature of the 19th century was introduced, the vampire was a monster, pure horror to look at or be around, there was nothing good or elegant about it, a source of evil that one could not imagine; a monster that kills to drench its thirst or hunger, for its pleasure and survival. The folkloric concept was that of an evil creature that fed on blood. The face of the old vampire was never pale but rather red from all the blood it drank, the body was swollen and not lean as in modern

day fiction (Barber 41-42). This change in appearance helped vampire stories gain popularity and made them more appealing to the readers.

Count Dracula has been one of the most popular fictional characters to ever be filmed (Stoker xxiv). *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Dracula* from 1931 with Bela Lugosi are among the most famous movies tackling the subject, but it was *Bram's Stoker's Dracula* by Francis Ford Coppola in 1992 that made a dramatic return for the Count, Coppola opted for a more romantic take on the story with a new level of attraction. As Fred Botting states in his book *Gothic* (1996):

Monsters, in this romantic transformation of gothic, find themselves increasingly humanised while villains become increasingly alluring: repulsion cedes to attraction as horror gives way to romance. (2)

He continues by saying: "Giving Dracula a lover's suffering role diminishes his villainy and monstrosity, and makes him into something of a victim, his wounds demanding sympathy and adding to his allure" (2). Coppola's romantic take on the subject only works by creating a weakness in the character for the readers to sympathise with. In the Bram Stoker's original version of the novel, the Count is never perceived as a victim or a weakling, only a monster and a murderer. This rules out any kind of romantic notion for the character, he remains the villain of the story. By adding a weakness, there has been a shift in readers perspective and appreciation for the monster. This transformation from the ugly, scary monster to the sophisticated gentleman as well as the increased popularity of the vampire genre has helped create and form a new type of vampire, a sympathetic one.

The shift from horror stories to romance novels.

Vampires in literature first appear in the Gothic genre and still belong to Gothic fiction.

“Gothic signifies a writing of excess. It appears in the awful obscurity that haunted eighteenth-century rationality and morality” (Botting, *Gothic* 1). The setting usually gives a gloomy and mysterious atmosphere, often old houses with historical value like Dracula’s castle. Passion, terror, excitement, uncertainty, ghosts, and monsters are all themes of the Gothic, it aims to produce emotional effects on its readers. This becomes a mean to reassert the values of society. By crossing social and aesthetic limits Gothic novels set out to warn of danger of social and moral transgression by presenting cautionary strategy in a dark and threatening form (Botting, *Gothic* 5).

Gothic literature is one of the inspirations for modern horror literature, the horror genre itself has evolved from it. Gothic writers rely heavily on creating an atmosphere of terror, horror and mystery that is explained as the story progresses, ghosts and monsters with the feeling of dread in a dramatic setting (Cheung 262). The horror genre aims to frighten the reader, it focuses on creating a scary atmosphere and often leaves an open ending, not satisfying the reader’s need for closure. The romance novel genre focuses primarily on the relationships and love between individuals, it usually has an optimistic or a happy ending that is emotionally satisfying for the reader. The romance gothic novel keeps a few monstrous figures to try and retain the excitement and build up a suspense for a greater response, often in a mystery themed story (Botting, *Gothic Romanced* 4). This genre explores the darker side of human nature in a dark setting like the gothic described here above. Gothic is still used for a certain type of literature today. A different kind of Gothic movement emerged in the late 1970’s with rock music mixed

with gothic elements such as introspective and dark lyrics, often exhibiting religious symbolism (Melton 264). Its characteristics include the celebration of the dark sides of life, melancholy, a fascination with death and a vampirish look (Melton 265). The style usually included dark morbid period-style clothes, a Victorian hairstyle and crucifixes. Around that same time Anne Rice was publishing *Interview with the Vampire* and she became one of the most famous writer “of the Gothic style of literature for the modern age” (Cheung 264). Before Anne Rice’s publication in 1976, most of the popular vampire stories were written from a human viewpoint, the narrator being the victim or an observer of the horror, but in her novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, Rice shifts the narrator’s view to the vampire, making the vampire the sympathetic character of the story (Seddon) giving the reader a glimpse into the mind of the villain. This shift marked a great change in vampire fiction, and because of the popularity of Anne Rice’s books, more writers followed suit and the sympathetic vampire has become the popular choice for the genre. Angel, a character in the popular TV show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) created by Joss Whedon later got his own spin-off (1999-2004) because of the character’s popularity. Angel was a vampire whose human soul was restored and aimed to help and protect others from evil. Even though Anne Rice was not the first to write from this viewpoint, she dug deeper into the vampire’s psyche than anyone before her, making the vampire more relatable (Seddon). The reader’s attention is deliberately pointed away from the evil nature of the vampire as a predator to more human features, making the vampire more acceptable to society (Zanger 20). The vampire looks and acts human, sometimes it is even described as a valid member of society with a job (Angel works as a detective in the TV series). The sympathetic character of the story is open for interpretation (Zanger 21). As Zanger points out, with

the role of the sympathetic character being unclear, the reader needs to choose whom to identify and sympathize with and it is usually the lesser of two evils (21). McClelland addresses this same problem, how to identify evil in modern vampire stories (2). When the readers cannot easily distinguish the evil one from another member of the community, they try to find something in the character's behaviour that suggests malevolence or something threatening to another individual and therefore is deemed the villain (2).

Sheridan LeFanu was probably one of the first writers to plant the seed of doubt into the reader's mind about the vampire's evil nature. At first he encourages the reader to see Carmilla, his main character and a vampire in his short story *Carmilla* (1872), in terms of traditional stereotypes, then later he reveals depths which indicate her humanity and the readers inhumanity (Veeder 211). The vampire is now seen as a victim instead of the predator and is touchingly human in its passion (Veeder 216-217). LeFanu helps us draw the diverse elements of our own dual existence of good and evil closer together (Veeder 220). But the vampire Carmilla is still a monster, the reader needs to look for signs of good human traits to make her sympathetic.

The newest types of good vampires kill for different reasons than before, the old evil ones killed for food or to satisfy their evil nature, the modern vampire, on the other hand, refrains from killing and feeding, if it attacks it is either for a personal reason, most likely for its own, or a loved one's survival (Zanger 23). For example: In *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer from 2005, Edward is an excellent example of the good vampire, he murders James, a character that threatens Bella, his true love. To keep Bella safe, Edward removes this threat, this dangerous man who will not stop at nothing to kill her. The killing of another has become less trivial than the vampire's personal story, the

focus is not on the act itself but the feelings and reasons behind the killing, and often it can be justified with reasons such as in the example above.

The modern vampire stories are more often about relationships between a vampire and a human, their interactions and feelings toward each other, marking the shift from horror to romance. New feeding habits, Edward in the *Twilight* series chooses to feed on animals instead of human blood, and the synthetic blood beverages in the *True Blood* television series (2008-present Alan Ball) that are based on *The Sookie Stackhouse* novels, make it possible for human beings and vampires to co-exist without humans being just a source of nourishment for the vampire. Human beings are no longer just cattle for vampires to feed on. Why are writers adding these layers to the vampire story? Is the modern reader demanding more depth and complexity to the stories?

Dracula

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is constructed around diary entries, letters, newspaper articles and other accounts of events, mainly recorded by the main characters in the book.

Firstly, the reader is introduced to Jonathan Harker's journal, a solicitor who is on his way to Transylvania to meet with a client, Count Dracula. The count is a tall old man with sharp looking teeth, very red lips and a white moustache, usually dressed in black. Soon after his arrival Mr Harker discovers that he cannot leave the castle on his own accord, he also learns that Count Dracula is not all he seems to be. The Count never eats, is never seen between sunrise and sunset, he can climb down walls and is extremely strong for an older gentleman. His hand is cold as ice and his complexion is extremely pallid. Jonathan encounters three ladies on an expedition around the castle, and Dracula saves him before they are able to kiss (bite) him. Dracula's reasons for

keeping Mr. Harker captive is to attain information about living in England, he has promised the three ladies to have their way with Jonathan after his own departure to England. The reader is then introduced to Lucy Westenra and Mina Murray, Jonathan's fiancée. Letters and diary entries explain their friendship and Lucy's sleepwalking tendencies. Around the same time she starts sleepwalking again and gets paler by each night, a ship with no living crew members arrives in Whitby, where the women are residing. This marks the arrival of the Count in England and it is evident that he is preying on poor Lucy. Lucy's three suitors are introduced to the story, Dr. John Seward, Quincey Morris and Arthur Holmwood (later known as Lord Godalming), her soon to be fiancé. Dr. Seward calls his friend Van Helsing to help determine the cause of Lucy's illness but despite their best effort and blood transfusions, Lucy dies. Lucy's beauty seems to be restored after her death, her teeth looked longer and sharper, it looked more like she was asleep then dead. With Van Helsing as their leader, the men discover that Lucy is a vampire and is preying on children, they trap her in the graveyard and put a stake through her heart and cut off her head and fill it with garlic. Jonathan Harker then resurfaces in a hospital in Budapest after escaping the Count's castle. After reading his journal, and realising the connection between his trials with the Count and Lucy's death, Mina and the others put together all of their stories and try to hunt down Count Dracula. Another story intertwined is of Renfield, Dr. Seward's patient, a zoophagus (life eating) who is willing to be Dracula's faithful servant and can be used to determine when the Count is close by. Renfield tries to save Mina from the Count, but gets killed when he tries to interfere with Dracula's intentions to turn Mina. While the men are busy trying to locate Dracula's whereabouts, he is preying on Mina and contaminates her blood, creating a spiritual connection between them. Their only hope to save Mina's soul is by

killing the Count; they track him back to Transylvania with the help of Mina's psychic connection to the Count. There they succeed in their efforts to kill him and thereby save Mina and so many others who would have shared her fate.

The horror theme in *Dracula*

In her introduction to *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, Brooke Allen explains that "Dracula has shed the status of 'fictional character' altogether and has become an authentic modern myth" (Stoker xiii). Allen also mentions the transformation of the vampire figure "from a figure of terror to a romantic outsider, a sexy Byronic hero" (xxx) and the decreasing emphasis on religious elements. The mood of the story is set right in the beginning when Jonathan Harker describes his surroundings on his journey to Dracula's castle. Dogs are howling, the area is isolated and the people superstitious and try to get him to defer or cancel his visit to the Count. Stoker focuses on the Count's physical description, often mentioning his sharp looking teeth and red lips, and bright (often red looking) eyes. His hands are very cold and when he gets too close to Jonathan, a nauseating feeling comes over Mr. Harker (25). But these features give nothing away of the monster that Count Dracula truly is; he looks like any other human, a sophisticated gentleman with what appears to be good manners and prestige. The Count can change his physical shape during either sunset or sunrise; he is first seen as the driver who takes Mr. Harker to the castle, with a long beard, then as the Count greets him at the castle with a clean shaven face except for a white moustache. After feeding for his journey to England, the Count's appearance changes. Jonathan himself described it:

There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath; the mouth was redder than ever, for on the

lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck. Even the deep, burning eyes seemed set amongst swollen flesh, for the lids and pouches underneath were bloated. It seems as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood; he lay like a filthy leech, exhausted with his repletion. (Stoker 64)

This description bears a resemblance to the stories of the folkloric vampires mentioned before, reminding the reader that this is a monster despite his usual sophisticated and even charming appearance. Jonathan notices that he has no reflection in the mirror, implying his supernatural nature, and there is fury in the Count's eyes when he notices blood, but he is able to contain himself. When they discuss battles throughout Transylvanian history, the Count speaks as he had been present at them all. When he speaks of his house, he speaks in plural, most likely referring to the sisters that live with him, his companions, they seem to share the same psychic connection that Dracula and Mina share after he feeds on her. When he is seen crawling down the walls of the castle, his cloak looks like wings, hinting at his turning into a bat later in the story. After Lucy's death, her beauty is restored, however other changes indicate the horrible creature she has become: "The sweetness was turned to adamant, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness" (250). This implies that she no longer is the innocent, sweet girl that they have known and loved. An erotic description but in a negative light, in modern vampire stories this eroticism has changed to a positive and desirable feature. The reason Dracula gives for wanting to relocate to London is that he wants to be in the rush of humanity in London, to share its life and death (27). In London he will find more companions and helpers like Renfield, a patient of Dr. Seward, who is willing to do anything for his master. Renfield wants life, but not souls, expresses guilt and regret when reminded that the one does not exist without the other.

Stoker builds up suspense and creates illusion of mystery and horror through out the story. He focuses on describing the environment rather than the actual relationships between the characters. His graphic description of Renfield's killing animals and eating insects as well as vividly depicting the beheading of the corpses and filling them up with garlic fills the reader with disgust. There is no sympathy for the vampires (after they have been fully turned). Other authors have added a new dimension to the vampire character by giving the monster some kind of weakness as discussed before, demanding the readers sympathy, among them is Anne Rice.

Interview with the Vampire

In *The Interview with the Vampire*, Anne Rice tells us the story of the vampire Louis. The novel marked the shift that changed the reader's view of the vampire. Like *Dracula*, the story belongs in the horror category but there is more of an emphasis on romance and even eroticism in the storyline. The book starts with a meeting between the vampire Louis and what appears to be a young journalist. The vampire wants to tell his story, and to have it recorded. He begins his story with his family; they owned a plantation in Louisiana close to New Orleans in 1791. When Louis was 25 years old, his brother died when he fell down brick stairs after an argument they had. His brother's death left Louis devastated, he blamed himself and started drinking uncontrollably. After moving his mother and sister to New Orleans, the slaves on the plantation started talking about a ghost that had been seen on the grounds, and then Louis was attacked and left close to the point of death. This was the doing of the vampire Lestat, who wants the plantation and family money and offers Louis eternal life in return. Louis agrees to this and after turning Louis into a vampire, Lestat moves in with his blind father who is still a human. Even as a vampire Louis has a high regard for life and when

he learns that he can survive on animal blood, he stops taking human life. Louis soon realises that for Lestat being a vampire is about revenge and envy and he despises Lestat for that and feels superiority over him. However, Louis is afraid that Lestat still has a lot to teach him about the vampire life so he stays with him in hope that Lestat will teach him. At the same time when Lestat's father is dying, the plantation workers rebel, they have for a long time suspected that something is wrong with their master and there have been so many unexplained deaths on the plantation. Louis kills Lestat's father and they both flee into the city. Before Louis has the chance to leave Lestat, Lestat turns Claudia, a 6 year old girl that Louis attacked and left for dead, into a vampire. This compels Louis to stay with Lestat and they form a dysfunctional family together. Later Claudia's true feelings regarding her being trapped in a child's body for eternity surface, she despises both Louis and Lestat for turning her at that age. Seemingly forgiving Louis but hating Lestat for their actions, she hatches a plan to escape from Lestat. They both want to leave him and try and find more of their kind, Claudia poisons Lestat and they leave him for dead in a swamp and board a ship to Europe. They only encounter mindless creatures around Europe until they reach Paris where they meet Armand and his coven. Louis is fascinated with Armand and they seem to be drawn to each other. They learn the only rule vampires have is they must not kill their own kind, something Claudia is guilty of, or so the reader is led to believe. During their first encounter, Louis calls Santiago, a member of Armand's nest of vampires, a buffoon and angers him, Santiago doesn't trust them and senses that they have broken the vampire rule since their maker is not with them. Louis wants to leave Claudia and she convinces him to turn a woman for her, so she will be taken care of and he can go his own way. But when Lestat shows up, Santiago's suspicions is confirmed and the coven captures Louis,

Claudia and Madeleine, the new vampire. Louis is trapped in a coffin but Armand rescues him, Claudia and Madeleine suffer a worse fate, they were left in a courtyard to die in the sun and only their ashes remain. Louis sets fire to the theatre where the vampires work and live, afterwards, he leaves the city with Armand. After all this, Louis is changed, and his relationship with Armand suffers, in the end they travel to New Orleans where Louis finds Lestat in a bad shape, hoping for Louis to come back to him. The story ends with Louis finishing his story and the journalist asks him to turn him, Louis is furious that he has learned nothing from all this, attacks him and then leaves. The reader is left thinking the journalist will try to find Lestat to ask him to turn him since Louis refused.

The vampires in *Interview with the vampire* and their humanity

Anne Rice's novel *Interview with the Vampire* became immensely popular especially after the adaptation into a successful movie. The main difference between this novel and other vampire stories is that the viewpoint of the narrator is no longer a human observer or a victim but the expected villain himself. As stated before, she dug deeper into the soul of the vampire than others before her and allowed the reader to feel sympathy for this creature of the night. Unlike in *Dracula*, where the reader struggles to find sympathy with the vampires, after their change their human personality seems to evaporate and they become pure evil; Louis, on the other hand, seems to hold on to his traits. He is depicted as a deeply troubled character who through out the story deals with what is known as human problems. He has a high regard for the life of others and never laughs at death or enjoys taking the life of others like Lestat and Claudia do, no matter how often he is the cause of death. As soon as he learns that he can survive on animal blood, he chooses to stop killing humans, for moral reasons, at least for a while. Louis

always feels sympathy for others, and tries to help people when he can, for example: after Lestat kills Babette Freniere's brother, Louis's neighbour, and she is left alone to take care of her family, Louis is the one who appears to her like a ghost in a dream, giving her advice on how to move on and deal with matters at hand. He takes very good care of his sister and mother and when it becomes necessary, he takes Lestat father's life because Lestat is unable to. Lestat expected Louis to feel the need to kill instinctively, like Claudia did, but it is suggested that Louis is not like any other vampires. It is not in his nature to kill, he still hangs on to that part of his humanity. Claudia is furious when Louis at first denies her to turn Madeleine and says to him: "Your evil is that you cannot be evil" (261) and she despised him for it; she felt she had suffered because of it. If Louis had been truly evil, he would have killed her and she would not be trapped in that little body, Lestat would not have been able to turn her and she would have died like she was supposed to. Louis dies a little every time he kills and he even goes to church at one point and decides to confess his sins. Louis feels love, somewhat towards Babette, for Claudia, and for Armand, he shows concern and tries to protect them. He has feelings for his sister, when he sees her visiting his grave decades after his death. When Claudia begs him to turn Madeleine and all her anger turns towards Louis, she gives him a mortal blow. She is furious and tells him how she has suffered because of his actions, about her misery being trapped in such a young body unable to live a life as an adult: "To give me immorality in this hopeless guise, this helpless form" (266). She hated him as much as she had loved him before she found out that it was Louis that was the cause of her situation, if he only had killed her, she would not have suffered as a woman trapped in a child's body. Not being able to care for herself in the way other adults do, always having to rely on others. After Claudia's outburst, something snaps in Louis and

changes him. He sees her pain and suffering and it destroys him, he is never the same afterwards “What has died in this room tonight is the last vestige in me of what was human” (273). He breaks a promise to himself never to turn another into a vampire when he turns Madeleine and with it Claudia’s power over him is broken. After all this and Claudia’s death and his revenge, Louis explains to the journalist that he never changed, his humanity was lost. However, there are signs that he is still holding on to his values. He becomes extremely mad when the journalist asks him to turn him, and refrains from hurting or killing him, suggesting he still has a high regard for human life. Anne Rice focuses more on portraying complex relationships than building up a horror theme, for instance the love triangle between Louis, Lestat and Claudia on one hand and then the relationship between Louis and Lestat, and Louis and Armand on the other. Rice even manages to make the reader feel sympathy for the close but unnatural relationship Louis has with Claudia, but it is only perceived unnatural because her mind is trapped in a child’s body, the reader is aware that her soul has matured and she has the mind of a woman not a child. Even though the emphasis is on the good vampire today, there will always be the need for a villain, a human villain to a sympathetic vampire would only result in a narrative of a modern type of bullying. Good and evil rely on each other, there will always be a need for the evil vampire. Lestat is a good example of the evil vampire, he is selfish, uncontrollable, does what he wants, when he wants to. He shows no respect for human society or life, does not hesitate to take lives, shows no sympathy or guilt. He lives on revenge and hate. He shows some feelings for Louis and Claudia but only for his selfish reasons, wanting to be taken care of and having their company, but he does not care about them. Otherwise, Lestat would not have made them suffer like he did. Compelling Louis to turn Claudia and then killing

Claudia and Madeleine as a revenge of Claudia's betrayal. Lestat is a threat to other vampires as well as humans. Louis was at first not a threat, he tried living on animal blood, not harming any humans or turning them until pressure from his loved one, Claudia, made him do it. The main difference between the vampires in *Dracula* and Louis is that Louis still holds on to his humanity, he has a conscience, shows remorse and feels the repercussions of his actions, his killing; he is still part human while *Dracula* and Lucy are pure monsters.

The *Twilight* Series

The *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer starting in 2005 has become one of the most popular vampire stories since *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice in 1976. The books have now been adapted into extremely popular movies, appealing first and foremost to young adults. Unlike *Dracula* and *Interview with the Vampire*, the series rarely touches the horror theme that has been a common theme in vampire stories, but Meyer stays on the subject of romance with a bit of action and suspense on the side.

The first book, *Twilight*, introduces Isabella Swan (more commonly known as Bella), a teenage girl who moves from her mother in Arizona to her father, Charlie, who lives in a small town in the Olympic Peninsula of northwest Washington State called Forks so her mother would be free to join her boyfriend in Florida. At school Bella sees Edward Cullen and his family for the first time, right away she realises that they are different from other people and is intrigued by them, however, her first encounter with Edward suggests that he detests her without knowing her and he even tries to switch the only class they share (later Bella learns that his reaction was due to her irresistible smell). After being absent for days, Edward returns to school with different coloured eyes and

makes an effort to get acquainted with Bella. He later saves her from an awful accident, leaving her with the feeling he is not of this world, as all evidence point towards him having extraordinary powers. Later, Jacob Black, a young Native American from a reservation close to Forks called La Push, tells Bella stories about the cold ones that indicate that she might be on the right track in discovering what Edward really is. After Edward saves Bella for the second time from a group of men planning to attack her in Port Angeles, her suspicion about Edward being a vampire is confirmed and with the secret being out, they start a relationship despite Edward's attempt to warn Bella that he is dangerous for her. Bella gets acquainted with his parents, Carlisle and Esme, and his siblings Emmett, Rosalie, Alice and Jasper and learns the family secrets, about their philosophy of not hurting or feeding on humans and their special abilities and talents that come with the eternal life. It seems as some unusual abilities they had as humans become stronger, even supernatural, when turned into a vampire. For example: As a human Jasper was very charming but now he can affect the mood of those around him. Alice was sensitive, as a vampire she can see the future in a way and Edward can read minds, all except Bella's. During a family outing, the Cullen's along with Bella run into a pack of travelling vampires, one of whom is James, a tracker, who decides Bella will be his next victim. The Cullen family tries to keep Bella safe and get her away from Forks by sending her with Alice and Jasper to Phoenix. James, however, tracks her down and manages to get her away from her protectors and almost kills her. Arriving at the last minute, Edward saves Bella and is successful in sucking out the poison from a vampire bite without killing her.

Both *New Moon* (2007) and *Eclipse* (2008), books two and three in the *Twilight* series, are mainly centred around Bella and Edward's encounter and fight with Victoria, the

female vampire that accompanied James in the first book. She seeks to avenge her dead mate. In *New Moon*, Edward decides to leave Forks to protect Bella, while he is gone she forms a close friendship to Jacob Black. Bella gets attacked by Victoria but is saved by a pack of wolves, later it turns out that Jacob himself is a werewolf and belongs to this pack. Werewolves and vampires are mortal enemies, however, many years ago the Cullen family and the werewolves from the reservation made a pact that allowed them to live in peace by respecting the boundaries. When Bella jumps off a cliff (*New Moon*) after Victoria's attack, Alice misinterprets the vision and informs Edward that she is dead. Edward then goes to Italy to provoke the Volturi, an old Italian coven, so they will destroy him because he no longer has the will to live. Bella and Alice save him but by doing so they put Bella in danger, the Volturi either wants her dead or made a vampire since she knows of their existence.

In *Eclipse*, Victoria creates an army of newborn vampires, something that is forbidden by vampire laws, in order to help her kill Bella and the Cullens. Despite their disagreement, the vampires and werewolves agree to an alliance and work together to protect Bella. Members of the Volturi arrive to deal with the newborn army and are not happy that Bella has not been turned. Bella then agrees to marry Edward.

In *Breaking Dawn* (2008), the final book in the series, Bella and Edward get married, Bella becomes pregnant with their child, something they did not think possible. The pregnancy poses a threat to Bella's life, the baby seems to be growing at an unnaturally accelerated rate and seems to be sucking the life out of Bella. To save Bella during childbirth, she is turned into a vampire. Renesmee, their child, turns out to be Jacob's Black soul mate, he imprints on her, something that werewolves do when they lay eyes on somebody they are meant to be with. A misinformed vampire believes that

Renesmee is an immortal child, and informs the Volturi who decide to destroy the Cullens. The Cullens fight back and finally convince the Volturi that they are of no threat to the vampire society and they can leave them alone to live in peace with their family.

The vampires in *Twilight* and their humanity

Edward Cullen is the perfect example of the good vampire. He regards himself as sort of “vegetarian”, feeding only on animals. Edward had a rebellious phase during his adolescence as a vampire where he fed on human blood for a short period of time.

“Because I knew the thoughts of my prey, I could pass over the innocent and pursue only the evil” (Meyer 299). This suggests that Edward had a conscience. The Cullen family have in common that they choose not to feed on humans, like Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*. Bella explained to Edward what Jacob had told her: “He said your family wasn’t supposed to be dangerous because you only hunted animals” (162).

Edward tells Bella “we have to be careful not to impact the environment with injudicious hunting. We try to focus on areas with an overpopulation of predators – ranging as far as we need” (188). One reason for this diet is, as Edward himself explains it “To try to retain whatever essential humanity we can” (268). The vegetarian diet does not, however, “completely satiate the hunger – or rather thirst. But it keeps us strong enough to resist. Most of the time” (164). The Cullen family all have a conscience, either built in or developed like Alice and Jasper’s and they believe that hunting and hurting humans is wrong so they have given up on it. Edward also admits that most of the human desires are still there, just hidden behind more powerful desires, he seems surprised to experience a sexual attraction to Bella, a human, but does not think it would be possible for them to be together in that way. The Cullen’s behave and feel like a

family, they protect the members of the family from danger and want what is best for the other family members, even allowing a human in their midst so Edward can experience happiness.

Edward often shows concern and compassion for Bella, he cares if she is cold, tired or hungry. He seems to understand that she is unhappy and suffering living in Forks, when she explains to him how she is placing her mother's interests above herself by moving there and points out "That doesn't seem fair" (*Twilight* 42). Bella asks him "Why does it matter to *you*?" (42) and Edward mutters "That's a very good question" (42) in reply as if he does not yet know what feelings he has for Bella or why he is concerned.

Despite knowing that it is dangerous for Bella having him near, he gives up trying to stay away from her even though later, in *New Moon*, he decides to leave Forks to keep her safe. He is surprised at Bella's reaction when she finds out what he is "You don't care if I'm a monster? If I'm not *human*?" (161). Edward does not want to be a monster but admits making mistakes. He needs to take precautionary steps before being alone with Bella and make sure he feeds, because "It's not only your company I crave!" (233), and asks her never to forget that, even the strongest fall of the wagon.

Why does it matter to Edward that Bella is suffering? He cares about another person and tries to keep her alive. He shows love for his parents, for Bella and his siblings. Edward has a conscience, shows regret, anger, jealousy, concern, compassion, is able to apologize for his actions, he shows interest in others, deals with temptation and is able to resist it, he also has to deal with depression as a consequence of his actions. All these are examples of normal human emotions.

Does Edward pose a threat to anyone besides himself? He might be more dangerous than the boy next door when he is angry, but he does not want to cause harm or hurt other people. Edward only poses a threat to those who try to harm the ones he loves, the only people in any real danger were the guys who followed Bella in Port Angeles, but he manages to keep himself under control by distracting himself so he does not go after them, reminded by the fact that they are human. He also had a difficult time constraining himself the first time he met Bella but managed to keep himself in control. But then there was James, who hurt Bella and is unquestionably bad and a vampire, not human, therefore Edward can justify killing him, so he will not hunt or hurt anyone again. This is an excellent example of the typical hero image. He is not a threat to other humans, but he is a threat to dangerous and evil vampires that seek to destroy human lives. Edward is not a threat to his community or anyone close to him, he knows how to control himself and his anger when needed, and is therefore not the villain of the story even if he is a vampire. It is difficult to determine the villains in the *Twilight* series because they share the same features and talents as the heroes (the Cullen family for example). They all sparkle in the sunlight, are extremely fast, strong and beautiful. They bear no distinct physical features that human beings can use to identify them as dangerous so they can try to avoid them. The Cullen family and most of their friends choose not feed on humans, like Louis. They all try to work and function in the human society and show affection and concern for Bella and accept her into their family. They are all essentially good. Meyer has taken the vampire story one step further than Stoker and Rice, and almost severed the tie to the horror genre. The shift from the evil to the good vampire is almost complete, even if Edward struggles with Bella's closeness at first, no one can

label him as evil. The focus is now more on the romantic relationship between two individuals of different species than anything else.

The modern vampire: a friend or a foe

The modern vampire is showing a wider range of emotion than before, Edward Cullen from *Twilight* shows concern and love for Bella, and he struggles with internal conflict of whether or not to leave Forks for Bella in both *Twilight* and *New Moon* to keep her safe even though it means heartbreak for him, because he can not bear to be apart from her. Carlisle Cullen has compassion, devotes his life to save humans as a doctor, he spends his day at the hospital, after years of training to make himself immune to blood. Louis from *Interview with the Vampire* struggles with regret and self-loathing after feeding on Claudia, the 6 year old; he hates himself for not being able to stop from biting her. He is the cause of her being turned and he feels that it has destroyed all of his humanity, however he is still living according to his principles as before, just with a lack of passion or interest due to his loss.

Since certain types of good modern vampire have stopped killing human beings for food can they still be considered evil? The good vampires suffer from the bad reputation of evil vampires, not able to redeem themselves, take the Cullens for example, it took them a long time to convince the werewolves that they meant no harm to humans. One of the main changes from the earlier vampire stories is how vampires depicted in modern literature try to fit in society, when the old ones try to stay secluded and away from population unless it was for feeding. Dracula lived in a very secluded and barren land, he wanted to be closer to population, both to feed on and turn into helpers and companions. The modern vampires have started blending into society, in *Twilight*, the

Cullen's attend school and maintain a job, they interact with humans on a daily basis. They are no longer feared, able to walk in daylight, just not direct sunshine without exposing themselves, it will not kill them, just expose them as different from others. Today the vampire tries to co-exist in human society and thereby follow their human rules of conduct. Edward is the perfect example of the new good modern vampire; he never wants to do any harm to others. He shows emotion, understands the needs of others and is willing to sacrifice himself in the interest of others. Almost every human being is capable of evil, most people have the strength to perform violent acts against others, Edward is no more of a threat than any other, people can lose control at any given time, it is the same with good vampires. However, Edward can be more dangerous than a human. Because of his physical strength and the consequences of him losing control could be more devastating in regards to that than if a normal human being would do the same. The vampire is a predator and its instinct is to kill.

Conclusion

The vampire theme is more popular than it has ever been, with books, TV shows, and movies on the subject. It does not seem to matter whether it belongs to the horror, romance or comedy genre, respectively the theme is still attracting big crowds of new readers and viewers as well as keeping the old faithful ones. The subject's popularity continues to rise in all forms of media. The face of the vampire has certainly changed through the ages, from a disgusting leech to an attractive youngster with a dangerous side that is able to procreate. Readers of modern vampire stories would most likely not be able to even recognise the older vampires if they were to see them, such is the difference in their appearance. One take on the recent popularity could be the new fresh female perspective. Most of the romance themed stories today seem to be written by female writers who dominate the young adult fiction section at the moment, the readers seem to be mostly female as well. Ever since Anne Rice changed the rules by her different take on the subject by showing the vampire in a more positive light, as a character that readers could be attracted to despite its blood lust, vampires physical appearance and psychological state has started resembling humans more and more.

The makeover trend, started by Bram Stoker and Polidori has done wonders for the monster's sex appeal. There is an ever growing attraction to the tall, dark, slightly dangerous stranger. As an added bonus these vampires can now walk among us in broad daylight, without people detecting their true nature. What explains this immense interest for the new type of romantic and sympathetic vampire? Is it willingness to accept people belonging to a different type of culture, perhaps even a new type of culture, a need to re-invent the standard image?

The struggle between the vampires' humanity on one side and predator instinct on the other could be a reflect on today's society. Modern media has replaced the fictional vampire with a new type of monster, rapists, pedophiles and murderers are more likely to be lurking in our midst. We have become more afraid of our fellow humans than of characters from books or movies. The good modern vampire is mostly just a threat to himself, much like humans, we are our own worst enemy.

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