

**The development of the vampire image throughout the decades: Dracula  
and the Twilight Saga**

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## Introduction

Two of the most iconic vampires are Count Dracula from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Edward Cullen from Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*, both representing different perceptions of the undead. Every generation creates its own nightmares and horror stories, but Dracula has been haunting the audience for centuries. While Dracula embodies horror, power and menace, Edward is conflicted and charming. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century vampire evolved into a romantic, sparkling, and desirable figure instead of his frightening, cruel and disturbing predecessor. They are indeed still blood-driven, but their attractive appearance and converted personalities allows them to live in a human society. In my thesis, I will argue that the vampire theme changed drastically from the depiction of certain characters to the reputation of the topic, giving us different interpretations of the always relevant subject: these changes, whether they adapted to the transformations in the reader community or in the social situation, forever changed the way we think of vampires.

Gothic literature has always fascinated me because it can be so versatile and complex. Indeed, literary works change drastically over the decades, but we might not think about the reason why. Why do these changes occur, and what causes them? I wanted to see what influenced these huge changes, specifically in gothic works. There is much research dealing with the topic of the transitioning of literary genres, but I was curious to see these changes regarding only one themes. Given the wide range of themes possible to investigate, I narrowed down my study to the changing representation of vampires.

During my university studies, I read many kinds of gothic novels from several much-appreciated authors and countless gripping topics. Two of them always stood out for me; Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*. Vampire legends can be traced back for centuries. These creatures are usually depicted as dark, fearful enemies that keep humanity in terror. Of course, these myths changed as time passed by. Vampires have long been a staple of literature, evolving from creatures of terror to romanticized figures. The evil-possessed creature who hunts (and haunts) humans and has a lust for blood somehow became a lovable and misunderstood being.

What causes such a drastic change in characterisation when the base concept of the novel is the same? Did the presentation and depiction of women change in the books in line with reality? In my thesis, I will investigate these questions by comparing some of the key aspects of these works. Moreover, I will consider not only the changes in terms of the characters in each work but also the place of women and the public reaction to both works. Dracula and Edward, though both are creatures of the night, represent vastly different visualizations of the gothic vampire, which reflects a significant cultural change between the periods in discussion.

In chapter 1, I will deal with the contrasting depictions of these iconic figures, while examining how their characteristics, abilities and roles evolved throughout the decades, and demonstrating the transformation of the vampire. I also considered the aspects that can contribute to the atmosphere and the setting of the mood. My hypothesis is that the vampire ideal changed together with the taste of the audience, making these creatures “softer” as time went by. I examined these changes by comparing the two male vampire protagonists, Dracula and Edward. Dracula as a character couldn’t fulfil the needs of the readers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which made the changes evident in Edward’s character.

The reception of a literary work is a crucial element of my analysis. In chapter 2, I will examine why and how these works received contrasting reactions, while highlighting the significance of their different cultural and literary backgrounds. Despite the shared themes, the audience has had different interpretations of the books. I examine the literary approaches, the social changes and the portrayal of the vampire myths that contributed to the varying reception, giving us a better understanding of the changing views related to the vampire theme.

Another crucial aspect of the narratives is the portrayal of women. In chapter 3, I will examine the portrayal of female characters and draw a parallel between fiction and reality. I believe that literature often represents the real world, including the social situation of women. Stoker’s work portrays strong Victorian values, while Meyer’s offer a more modern perspective, yet still grappling with similar themes. I explain how female characters negotiate their roles in both narratives, focusing on the oppressive power of the social expectations and its interpretations in popular literature, taking into consideration the age gap between them. Even though the two works were written many decades apart, not much has changed regarding this aspect.

Given the huge variety of horror and vampire novels available today, it is necessary to understand the changes and the origin of these themes and topics in order to interpret them. I believe that literature represents reality, no matter the genre. It is a powerful tool as it can be very influential to the readers. A piece of literature can represent different views of social problems, the opinions of individuals and can reflect issues from reality, even if the topic is something unreal, much like vampires.

## Chapter 1

### **Similarities and differences between *Dracula* and *Twilight***

The depiction of Dracula and Edward Cullen, though both being vampires, represent vastly different interpretations of a gothic vampire due to the differences between the cultural contexts they were created in. *Dracula* is a product of the late Victorian era, and the main protagonist symbolises the classic gothic villain designed to evoke terror and fear, while Edward presents a complex and appealing, more contemporary protagonist of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This analysis will deal with the contrasting portrayals of these iconic figures, examining how their characteristics, abilities and roles changed, thus demonstrating the evolution of the vampire figure.

The most obvious difference between the actual characters are their abilities and characteristics. While both of them share the supernatural essence of vampirism like immortality, enhanced abilities and a thirst for blood, their characteristics and powers differ significantly. When we mention Dracula and Edward Cullen, we can't help but think about two different types of vampires, with most of the traits unlike and only a few similar. The portrayal of Dracula in Stoker's novel demonstrates him as a classic gothic villain, who symbolises pure evil with a sinister atmosphere. Edward, on the other hand, is a misjudged loveable individual, who tries to blend into the human society while being morally confused. Not only their characteristics but also their abilities, weaknesses and background story change drastically throughout the books.

#### **1.1 The original context: Count Dracula**

In retrospect, Dracula serves as the paradigmatic, or typical, representations of the vampire figure, offering a traditional portrayal of the classic supernatural villain. Dracula is depicted as the devil himself, an evil vampire who refuses to rest in the grave and keeps the citizens in terror. Jonathan, who is the solicitor the Count hires, arrives at the castle with strange circumstances. His destination is nowhere to be found on his map, and the gossip he heard about his soon-to-be host is quite terrifying. Wolves howl all the way, and mist masks the night until he can't see. These signs are all sinister foreshadowing about the rest of the book.

The first obvious clue referring to Dracula as the subject of terror — after the spine-chilling atmosphere — is his reflection, or more specifically his non-reflection. When Jonathan Harker is busy shaving himself in the mirror, the Count enters the room. They have a few words, and when Jonathan looks back in the mirror, he sees no trace of the Count there. He gets confused, while the host is still standing by the door: “But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! The whole room behind me was displayed; but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself” (Stoker 2011, 30). Other mysterious aspects are lingering around the main character of the book. Throughout the story, Dracula stays in the shadows for a long time. His name gets associated with twilight and mysterious fog as the story goes on.

## **1.2 The controversial individual: Edward Cullen**

The depiction of the vampire in the case of Edward changed drastically compared to Dracula. While initially perceived as a mysterious and dangerous figure, Edward Cullen’s portrayal ultimately emphasises his attractive nature, creating a romantic but sometimes confusing protagonist. Meyer minimised the demonic aspects of Edward and gave him a fairytale-like presence (Charmaine, 138).

Similarly to Dracula, Edward has a dark and fearful atmosphere that everyone can feel and see. However, while he is described as a mysterious lone wolf who everybody fears to approach, his overall image is undoubtedly desirable. When the female protagonist, Bella Swan, first sees him, she can only focus on his stunningly beautiful appearance. While he gives off a menacing atmosphere, Bella is attracted to him anyhow. For the readers — and for Bella — he is surrounded by mystery and seems unpredictable. He is often in deep thoughts or may even be in some kind of inner conflict with himself. Within the group he is always with, he is the hardest to approach. From afar, he almost acts hostile towards Bella; “He stared at me again, meeting my eyes with the strangest expression on his face- it was hostile, furious. [...] He was leaning away from me, sitting on the extreme edge of his chair and adverting his face like he smelled something bad” (Meyer, 23-24).

Moreover, Edward looks like a person who would not like to be friends with anyone. As Bella later gets to know him and his intentions, the impression she had before changes. He would like to keep Bella safe from the most dangerous species on Earth; his own. He warns her many times throughout the book to keep herself away from his family and his world, because

she could get hurt. Furthermore, he avoids eye contact for a long time during the first half of the story for the same reason. However, when their feelings change for each other, he gets overly protective and watches her every step, to stay out of trouble. This kind of dedication is somehow both romantic and overbearing. Apart from him being a bit awkward, he shows his charming side as well, and his old-fashioned way of talking makes him stand out in a good way.

### 1.3 Physical appearance

The physical appearance of the characters can tell us many aspects; the impression the author wanted to emphasise, the intentions of the protagonists together with the inner qualities of them. Dracula's physical description in the novel emphasises the aristocratic origin with his terrifying nature, blending the noble features with his predatory characteristics, creating a truly gothic figure. Stoker was probably influenced by Henry Irving's stage appearance in the play *The Dream of Eugene Aram*. He described his character as "the awful horror on the murderer's face", and "the fixed face set as doom, with eyes as inflexible as Fate" (Stoker 2013, 286). In *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula*, the following is explained: "Irving's ability to capture the facial expressions of the great villains comes through on many occasions. Some of his most famous roles may have flashed across Stoker's minds as he was writing the novel [...]" (Stoker 2013, 286). Stoker presents him as an elegant nobleman and a predator, embodying the dual nature of his character.

Furthermore, Dracula's appearance suggests more about his wicked, supernatural presence. His features are sharp, with piercing eyes and an unsettling presence which makes him stand out from ordinary people. Every inch of his appearance reinforces the idea that he is something beyond human, a creature of night and son of the undead. When Jonathan Harker first saw him, his astonishment was immediate. In his journal, he describes the Count as a tall old man in black clothes who is as pale as the wall. When he touched the Count, his skin was stone-cold, and later he noticed how strange it looked, which made Jonathan shiver: "Hitherto I had noticed the backs of his hands as they lay on his knees in the firelight, and they had seemed rather white and fine; but seeing them now so close to me, I could not but notice that they were rather coarse — broad, with squat fingers. [...] As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder" (Stoker 2011, 21).

Even though he first saw him as an old man, later — to Jonathan’s surprise — he sees him as someone full of life and a youthful appearance. His facial features are strong, has a high nose bridge, arched nostrils and a domed forehead. His massive eyebrows almost turn into a unibrow, and his bushy hair curls into a huge mess. The peculiarly white and sharp teeth made his smile cruel-looking; his pointed ears made him a bit fairy-like. Jonathan also noticed his long and fine nails that were cut intentionally to a sharp point.

Apart from these, the most striking attribute of the Count was his eyes, which gleamed in a deep red colour: “I saw the Count lying within the box upon the earth [...] and the red eyes glare with a horrible vindictive look which I knew too well (Stoker 2011, 452). His tall and imposing presence gives him a commanding atmosphere, and his movements also emphasise this. He is portrayed as a slow-moving person with an unnatural, predatory grace. Due to his aristocratic heritage, he also speaks in an old-fashioned way. His voice is deep, commanding and, on account of his hypnotic powers, often slow, which draws people in. His overall appearance is intimidating and eerie, which brings goose bumps, terror and anxiety to people who witness him.

In contrast, Edward Cullen’s appearance in *Twilight* emphasises his otherworldly beauty, creating an alluring and almost approachable figure in contrast to Dracula’s intimidating, predatory, and animalistic presence. Edward Cullen drinks blood just like Dracula does, so why is one accepted by humans and the other one not tolerated? Him being physically attractive and looking like a seventeen-year-old, made him desirable for every girl in his school. His looks allow him to blend in with the other normal students without being suspected as a vampire. In the book, he is described in great detail by Bella. When she saw the Cullen family at the beginning, the first thought that crossed her mind was how they are so much alike. “Every one of them was chalky pale, ... they all had very dark eyes ... they also had dark shadows under those eyes ... though their noses, all their features, were straight, perfect, angular” (Meyer, 19). His appearance is sometimes described as almost divine, making a strong impression that an average human cannot evoke. He has the perfect skin that everybody dreams of, free from any kind of blemish, freckle or imperfection. In contrast, Dracula being suspiciously alarming in every way possible – but mostly his looks – makes people avoid him at any price.

A huge difference between the two characters is their eyes. While Dracula has piercing, hypnotic, glowing red eyes which suggest intimidation, Edward’s have a golden sheen to it. In

the book series, it is described that his eyes turn black when thirsty, which Bella finds out soon in the narrative: “I vividly remembered the flat black color of his eyes the last time he’ glared at me [...] Today, his eyes were a completely different color; a strange ocher, darker than butterscotch, but with the same golden tone” (Meyer, 47). She tries to interpret this phenomenon by believing he wears contact lenses. Edward has bronze-tousled hair instead of the Count’s black, slicked-back hair, which gives him an effortlessly attractive and youthful look. Moreover, unlike Dracula, his fangs are not visible all the time, making him appear more human. Thus, his overall presence is both mysterious and alluring, but not necessarily scary.

While in the case of the Count, there were many noticeable changes in terms of the visual representation of the main protagonist in the adaptations versus the novel. Many adaptations were made after the appearance of Dracula such as *Nosferatu*, and the famous personification of Béla Lugosi, but most of them left out important details about the Count’s appearance. These attributes are all shown in the later adaptations, but there are some other ones which are left out from the representations of the character. First, in the book he has a clean shaved face with a moustache: “Within, stood a tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache, [...]” (Stoker 2011, 18). The one and only adaptation that included the less appealing details about the Count’s appearance was the German unauthorized silent film titled *Nosferatu*, where the director made him look rat-like. On the other hand, the director left out the aristocratic details about the Count’s appearance, and only focused on the predatory features, evoking fear among the viewers. Another abandoned detail is the hairy palm. Similarly, this can only be read in the original novel and cannot be seen anywhere else. Third, the directors’ depiction of his hair also differs from the narration: mostly it is shown as a slicked-back, pitch-black style with a V-shaped hairline. Fourth, the fangs also appear differently, in most of the reworks these are only sharp at the canine teeth and are often hidden from the outside world. We can only see the Count’s canine teeth when he is about to suck a human’s blood. Finally, the most common visualization of his clothing comes from the famous adaptation from 1931 with Béla Lugosi as the personification of the character. In the movie, he wears a black tuxedo with a bow tie and a cape with a high collar. This style became the definitive Dracula image for decades. Webb states that “Bela Lugosi will forever be the Count” (35).

#### 1.4 How did the abilities change, and what do they represent?

Why are the two protagonists so differing when the base concept is the same? Like their appearances, their abilities also provide us an insight into their intentions and their true characteristics.

Dracula's supernatural abilities are counterbalanced by his weaknesses, creating a strong and complex but, in the end, defeatable villain. In the book, Dracula is able to turn into various forms; such as a bat, a wolf or become mist. He can alter his appearance by taking a more youthful look despite his age. Another frightening feature of his is the animal-like behaviour. He also can command creatures like wolves, bats and rats as he pleases. At one point in the novel, Jonathan witnesses his descending from a wall upside-down:

But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror when I saw the whole man slowly emerge from the window and being to crawl down the castle wall over that dreadful abyss, face down, with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings... I saw the fingers and toes grasp the corners of the stones, worn clear of the mortar by the stress of years, and thus using every projection and inequality of move downwards with considerable speed, just as lizard moves along a wall. (Stoker 2011, 40)

Another interesting ability is his hypnotic power. He can control the minds of people. The most well-known case occurs later in the novel, as he takes control of Mina Harker and marks her in order to make her a vampire. He is also able to erase the memories of victims and makes them believe that their experience was not real, just a dream. He used this power along with his luring ability on Lucy quite early in the novel:

I didn't quite dream; but it all seemed so real. [...] I remember, though I suppose I was asleep, passing through the streets and over the bridge. [...] Then I had a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes, just as we saw in the sunset, and something very sweet and bitter all around me at once; and then I seemed sinking into a deep green water [...] my soul seemed to go out of my body and float about the air. (Stoker 2011, 118)

Unlike in *Dracula*, mind control is non-existent in *Twilight*, but telepathy is. Vampires often manifest special abilities like seeing the future or influencing the emotions of those around them, therefore Edward can read minds, and they use it every so often. For example, when Bella is having lunch with Jessica, Edward listens to her thoughts. In the narration, it is mentioned that he uses this ability to get a better understanding of normal people and make it easier to fit in. After he meets Bella, he also makes good use of it for the sake of protecting her from any kind of danger that might occur. He is surprised to learn that this ability does not work on Bella, while it works on everyone else around him. This small disadvantage becomes a central part of the plot later on.

Dracula has typical evil abilities, while Edward has a more ‘softer’ approach. The classic gothic villain’s skills in *Dracula* are one by one used for hurting humans and gaining power over them. However, Edward has less harmful ones – except for the super strength –, with which he could not actually cause damage for anyone.

### **1.5 How the setting influences the atmosphere in *Dracula***

Setting plays an important role in emphasising the mood, contributing hugely to the atmosphere. *Dracula* is set in the late-Victorian era. There are several places in the storyline, starting from Transylvania in Eastern Europe to the more modernized cities of England, such as London and Whitby. These two settings are in high contrast with each other, while Transylvania is the land of ancient folklore and potential danger, England offers a civilized view with more advanced technologies. Dracula’s castle is the ideal example of a gothic setting; it is a dark, isolated fortress resembling terror and the power of the Count. This mesmerising structure is located on a cliff edge, surrounded by mountains. The interior is just as threatening as the outside, with the labyrinth like hallways and countless rooms. An excerpt from Jonathan’s journal describes Dracula’s castle in detail:

Before us lay a green sloping land full of forests and woods, with here and there steep hills, crowned with clumps of trees or with farmhouses, the blank gable end to the road. [...] Beyond the green swelling hills of the Mittel Land rose mighty slopes of forest up to the lofty steeps of the Carpathians themselves. (Stoker 2011, 7-8)

Suddenly, I became conscious of the fact that the driver was in the act of pulling up the horses on the courtyard of a vast ruined castle, from whose tall black windows came no ray of light, and whose broken battlements showed a jagged line against the moonlight. (Stoker 2011, 16)

The protagonist is surprised by the location of the castle, and we can sense fear from his sentences. These aspects add up, creating a truly frightening and gothic atmosphere which sets the mood for the rest of book.

## **1.6 Changes of setting in *Twilight***

*Twilight* offers us a less typical gothic setting with modernized elements. The atmosphere resembles some gothic elements but unlike other works in the same genre, the plot is focused on romance instead of mystery or terror.

“Instead of living in a decaying Gothic castle, the Cullens live in a glass house with ample daylight”, write Lukic and Matek (84). They also point out that while the depiction of the Cullens has evolved from the time when sunlight would make vampires wither, they are still in danger of exposure when touched by sun rays, as it makes their skin sparkle. Thus, they choose their place of living according to weather that would allow them to go unnoticed. The small town of Forks, where, according to Bella Swan’s inner monologue, it “rains on this inconceivable level” and the number of sunny days is very few. Still, the Cullens’ home emphasizes their desire to blend in, live as humans, alongside humans.

*Twilight* is set in contemporary times, making it easier to relate for the dedicated audience. The primary place in the story is Forks, Washington, which is a small almost abandoned town, where even the sun doesn’t shine. Since there are more rainy and foggy days

here, this place makes the perfect spot for creatures like them. The gloomy and isolated atmosphere contributes to the mystery that fills the book. While Dracula's castle symbolizes his power and his terrible personality, the Cullen's home reflects their wealth and sophistication. Similarly to Dracula, they live in a secluded area, surrounded by nature. Their home is nothing like Dracula's, it is bright and airy with modern architecture. It represents a safe place for everyone who lives there, a place where they can be themselves. Bella gives us a detailed description of their home when she first sees it:

And then, after a few miles, there was some thinning of the woods, and we were suddenly in a small meadow, [...] The trees held their protecting shadow right up to the walls of the house that rose among them, making obsolete the deep porch that wrapped around the first story. [...] I don't know what I had expected, but it definitely wasn't this. The house was timeless, graceful [...] It was painted a soft faded white, three stories tall, rectangular and well proportioned. (Meyer, 348)

The setting is a bit similar to *Dracula's* in terms of mood, but the details are quite contrastive. While Dracula's home gives us a truly gothic atmosphere, the Cullen's home makes us feel calmer, while it looks modern and is more suitable for a family home. These facts ultimately contribute to the depiction of the characters, as these reflect on their traits. The vampires of *Twilight* wish to live close to humans, choose not to consume their blood, go to their school, work in their hospital saving their lives day in and day out, and have chosen their place of residence according to this desire, all while keeping them safe from being discovered. "The contemporary vampires no longer wish to exist without the system, but to integrate and become accepted members of the community, which is why they must (and are willing to) blend in", explain Lukic and Matek (84)

## 1.7 How much do we know about the characters' background?

What happens when we don't know much about a certain protagonist's past? The uncertainty brings us in an eerie mood, perfectly emphasising the gothic atmosphere. The other side is when we know too much about their former life. While the amount of information emphasises the importance of the past, it doesn't leave us wondering about the events but rather gives us a better understanding of that certain character's feelings.

### 1.7.1 Dracula's mysterious past

The little bits of information given to us leaves the reader with uncertainty, making us question the origin of Dracula. Dracula's background, while shrouded in mystery, is presented as a Transylvanian nobility with a dark past and a potential pact with the devil. In Stoker's *Dracula*, the Count's background is not revealed fully through the narrative, but by his own works and the research of Professor Van Helsing. He speaks excitedly about his origin to Jonathan during the first days of his stay. "In his speaking of things and people, and especially of battles, he spoke as if he had been present at them all. This he afterwards explained by saying that to a boyar the pride of his house and name is his own pride, that their glory is his glory, that their fate is his fate" (Stoker 2011, 33-34).

The most obvious part, considering the facts about him, is that he is a noble man. From his conversation with Jonathan, he expresses strong feelings about the war, which suggest that he lived through it. He ends his conversation with Jonathan about this topic as follows: "The warlike days are over. Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told" (Stoker 2011, 35). Towards the end of the book, we get to know more about his origin when the protagonists are doing some research in order to make the fight with the Count easier for them. He turns out to be the descendant of Voivodes of Transylvania, who fought against the Turks: "He must, indeed, have been that Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk, over the great river on the very frontier of Turkey-land" (Stoker 2011, 289). His castle is filled with relics from the past, which reinforces the long history of it.

Throughout the story, we can determine two uses of English; a non-standard foreign language influenced one, and a standard English. The standard one is used by a larger group of

characters, such as Jonathan and the two female protagonists. The Count's use of English can be conveniently distinguished by his dialogues in the book, which enhances his national identity. At one point in the book, he has a discussion with Jonathan about how he would feel in England:

Well I know that, did I move and speak in your London, none there are who would not know me for a stranger. That is not enough for me. Here I am noble; I am boyar; the common people know me, and I am master. But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not — and to know not is to care not for. (Stoker 2011, 24)

He expresses his thought about moving to England and becoming a commoner, like everyone else in his country now. From this dialogue, his use of English is clear, there are intentional grammar mistakes, and usage of words. The national heritage changes his way of speaking, ensuring the reader to be aware of it. This illustration of the differing language can be achieved because of the narrative style. "The novel presents Mina and Jonathan using shorthand writing to capture the sounds of dialect speech [...]" (Jacobson and Simpson, 683). As Setiyawati points out (133), the Count even instructs Jonathan Harker to aid him with his pronunciation, as he does not want to seem like an outsider.

The most fascinating fact, however, is not mentioned in the book; it is only implied: how did he become a vampire? Van Helsing suggests in the narrative that the Count might have made a pact with the devil or was cursed for life. Though these are not confirmed, both of these reasons seem possible. Stoker might have left this part of the information out, because he didn't think about this particular part of the story either. In an interview for *British Weekly*, he answered a question relating to the origin of the vampire legend, admitting his guessing in the topic:

It rested, I imagine, on some such case as this. A person may have fallen into a death-like trance and been buried before the time. Afterwards the body may have been dug up and found alive, and from this a horror seized upon the people, and in their ignorance they imagined that a vampire was about. (Martens)

### 1.7.2 A tragic background

The detailed description of Edward's past gives us a better understanding of his melancholic nature and highlights his vulnerability. His story reveals a tragic origin, with an unwanted transformation leading to internal conflict. Unlike *Dracula's* story, Edward's is revealed gradually during the book, and we get to know his whole past. Meyer created a full backstory for Edward's character, clarifying all the possible questions that could emerge in the reader. He was born in Chicago, 1901 and lived there during the outbreak of the Spanish flu. When he was 17, he contracted the disease and was really close to dying from it. His mother, in fact, did pass away from this deadly sickness. Dr. Carlisle managed to find him just in time. Edward was in unbearable pain and on the brink of death, when Carlisle made a difficult decision and in hopes of saving his life he turned him into a vampire. After the transformation, Edward was furious and couldn't accept his new existence. He explains that if he had a choice, he would not choose to become immortal. He struggled for a long time, because he couldn't adjust to the heightened senses and the thirst for blood. Over time, his saviour showed him how to control his impulses, and that is when he decided to become a "vegetarian" vampire. As he was transformed at the age of 17, he stayed in that form ever since. He, along with his family settled in various places over the years, in case anyone would suspect something about their identity. He explains to Bella that they never stayed for long in one place, they always moved without saying a word to anyone. Eventually, they moved to Forks to live a peaceful life.

We get to know much more about Edward's background, therefore it doesn't give us the same eerie feeling as *Dracula* does. Since the plot in *Twilight* is more character-driven, we have to know everything about them. This aspect takes from the gothic atmosphere and makes the readers feel more like they are reading a romance.

### 1.8 Are vampires in *Twilight* domesticated?

If we mention the vampires in *Dracula* and *Twilight* side by side, we can almost certainly say that the ones in *Twilight* act like they are domesticated. They are sociable, try to act as human as possible, and it is explained that other vampires try not to locate themselves in a family structure and avoid belonging to someone. "Most won't settle in any one place. Only those like us, who've given up hunting you people [...] can live together with humans for any length of time" (Meyer, 313). He refers to his family as not like "other" vampires, who live a

nomadic lifestyle. When he introduces Bella to their house, he adds “No coffins, no piled skulls in corners; I don’t even think we have cobwebs...” (Meyer, 356). With this sentence, he wants to emphasise that they are not the stereotypical vampire family, or anything like a predator like beast as in *Dracula*. In the world of *Twilight*, Edward is considered to be a “vegetarian” vampire, which goes against everything we read in *Dracula*. This fact also adds to the process of domestication. Pramod Nayar argues in his thesis that Edward went through a series of domestication together with the other vampire characters in Meyer’s novel (64). The fact that they attend school and try to blend in with humans emphasises this idea. He, together with his family, only drinks animal blood, which allows them to live without killing humans. “I can’t be sure, of course, but I’d compare it to living on tofu and soy milk; we call ourselves vegetarians, our little inside joke” (Meyer, 200). This particular part of the plot is deeply in contrast with *Dracula*’s, where the protagonist only lived to feast on humans. Meyer based Edward, together with his “family,” on vampire stories but made them appear more humane. Edward is deeply conflicted about his nature and tries to keep as much of his humanity as possible. He is also compassionate about human beings, tries to understand them and keeps up with the changing habits of theirs. He attends high school to blend in with them and learn about their society discreetly. Considering his ideology, falling in love with a human was bound to happen.

### **1.9 Edward as a Byronic hero**

Edward’s character went through a lot of change compared to *Dracula*. Many people believe that he can be considered a Byronic hero. What is a Byronic hero exactly? Marin explains in her research that these characters have “heroic virtue” while having dark qualities at the same time. They are marked by splendid personal qualities have hidden sins, and other versatile attributes (81). Edward fits in the Byronic hero role perfectly, and as Liv Randi explains, he is “attractive, in an unusual, sometimes sinister way” (18). He is beautiful and terrifying at the same time, he wants to give the best to Bella, but he still remains dangerous to be with. As Stephany Mendoza explains, Edward has the qualities of a Byronic hero; a cursed, damned fate, a bitter view of the world and the affinity for danger (9). He is involved in a taboo relationship with Bella, and as he realizes the consequences, he leaves her in order not to hurt her. Even though leaving his love behind was his idea, he soon realizes that he cannot live without her. Mendoza quotes Stein as saying that the Byronic hero also has traits like the “resistance of authority, and seeking vigilante justice on his own terms” (15). She also further

explains that Edward lives up to these facts too. He creates his own rebellion against the vampire culture – which he didn't want to be part of in the first place – by refusing to drink human blood. He protests against his being and refuses any kind of joy in his life. Edward clearly has the qualities of a Byronic hero, but there are some parts of his personality that doesn't fit the category. Mendoza recalls Lutz's statement, in which she explains that "The Byronic hero in his purity can, by definition, never be redeemed by becoming a couple" (19). Nevertheless, Edward achieves salvation when they become a couple. She further argues that there is no such thing as a definitive Byronic hero. Each generation adds or takes certain traits that form a hero like that. In this sense, taking into consideration Edward's qualities, he can be considered a Byronic hero.

#### **1.10 *Twilight*: a gothic work with elements of romance, or something different?**

Just like *Dracula*, *Twilight* could be considered a gothic fiction in terms of genre. A typical gothic work has elements of darkness, castles, cemeteries, mystery, disillusionment of the characters and most importantly the atmosphere of terror. Considering these facts, *Twilight* is definitely not an ordinary gothic novel. Lukic and Matek express their opinion on how the gothic as a genre might not be the best category for *Twilight*:

Meyer focuses on a chaste love story results in the total absence of the Gothic sublime and her novels become in effect romanced advice on sexual abstinence for contemporary teenagers and serves as an affirmation of the notion that there is an ideal soul mate for everyone and that the proper way to consume love is within the confines of marriage and, consequently, a traditional nuclear family. (87)

Moreover, gothic works typically don't have happy endings, whereas *Twilight* offers us a beautiful, happy conclusion at the end. Thus, the book cannot serve as a gothic work considering this fact, but rather as a typical love story. Meyer's book series does not reach the requirements of the gothic genre. "Stories such as *Twilight*, that (ab)use the Gothic for cosmetic purposes, stripping it of its natural complexity, do not even attempt to be a part of the genre nor they aim toward literary quality" (Matek, 90). Gothic novels' tendency to use the supernatural as an explanation to what we can now scientifically prove is also not present in Meyer's saga,

given how the vampires and werewolves, together with their myths, are used for different purposes, to make the story more interesting and intriguing.

### 1.11 Conclusion

Dracula and Edward represent two different interpretations of a vampire. Dracula has a classic take on appearance, abilities and weaknesses, evoking fear among the readers. His castle and background, or lack thereof, add to the mysterious and fearful atmosphere. Edward's appearance transformed completely as new needs emerged from the reader community, changing the vampire image forever. "The vampire characters' potential to deal with a variety of relevant social and psychological issues becomes secondary in the market race. The vampire becomes an ideal lover; the allure of the 'bloodsucker', and of the Gothic in general, is used merely as a twist which gives romance novels and series a market advantage" (Matek and Lukic, 89). They also suggest that the reason for authors wanting a more generally attractive and acceptable vampire figure can be due to what they call "commercial proliferation", the result of which is a more approachable, generally attractive version of these supernatural beings (82). The representation of a vampire got more alluring and different takes were made towards the understanding of a once fearful creature. From a classic villain the vampire became a Byronic hero, who still shows some resemblance to its ancestor, but is ultimately a loveable and misunderstood being. Their appearance suggests their inner qualities and intentions. From the changes discussed before, we can conclude that vampires in *Twilight* are made 'softer' and are most likely to be domesticated. The expectation towards the vampire changed: "the modern vampire story is one about self-control, about man struggling to master his worst impulses [...] through whatever means necessary" (Matek, 88). The evolution of the vampire genre started from a symbol of terror to a figure of romantic longing. While *Dracula* laid the foundation for the modern vampire myth, *Twilight* reimagined it for a new generation, with the perfect demonstration of how literary works are not only products of their era, but also the subject of the present and future time.

## Chapter 2

### Changes in reception and its causes

From the different classes I attended, I came to the conclusion that the reception of the works will play a major role in deeper analysis. To understand the different reception of the two books, it is essential to recognize that these emerged from different cultural and literary backgrounds. While both explore the themes of vampires, the approach and the targeted audience diverge significantly, which leads to the contrasting reactions. This chapter will examine the social changes, the changing literary taste, the differing portrayals of the vampire myth, and how these affected the reception of the two works.

#### 2.1 The rise of the vampire theme

The vampire topic has been around for decades, but how did it appear in literature? Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was not the first novel with the topic of vampires. Other works like Heinrich August Ossenfelder's *The Vampire* (1748), or Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Christabel* (1797) dealt with this topic before, but why was *Dracula* considered different and new? Charmaine Tanti states in her thesis (125) that *Dracula* was a milestone in the popularisation of the vampire story, as it represents the arousing fears of the citizens of England during the 1890s. These fears include colonisation, racial mixing, the invasion of foreigners and the New Woman phenomenon. *Dracula*, being a foreigner who would like to move to England with the intention of colonising — or, in other words, transforming people into vampires — embodies these fears:

During the Victorian times, sudden outbreaks of contagious diseases were thought to be caused by the deceased. These folkloric beliefs led to the decapitation of those people, who were believed to have turned into vampires after their death. The undereducated part of the society couldn't explain the sudden sicknesses, but still wanted to have some kind of interpretation about them. This is how "vampirism" became a fearful "disease" that threatens society. (Charmaine, 127)

*Dracula* embodies the topics that were relevant at the time. The readers had a mainly negative opinion about the work, while they read about the struggles and threats of the real world.

## **2.2 Immortality**

To understand the negative reception of *Dracula* better, we have to consider the public opinion regarding one of the main topics of the book; immortality. Immortality as a concept was considered a controversial topic during Victorian times, due to the highly religious and philosophical debates which were the characteristics of this era. Brüntrup quotes the Bible saying “flesh and blood can never possess the kingdom of God, and the perishable cannot possess immortality” (7). Many of these beliefs emphasized that the afterlife grants immortality, most of the citizens feared this topic overall. The more intellectual thinkers questioned whether eternal life would be a blessing or a curse. Some of the more highly regarded thinkers of that time believed that the word “eternal” means being out of time, thus eternal life is a punishment, a state of being rather than an everlasting duration. According to Frederick Denison Maurice’s article in the *Nineteenth Century Christian Magazine*, Christians believe that eternal life is a gift from God, given to them as salvation. They think that “the body is a prison for the soul, and once it’s freed by death, the soul is able to see heavenly for all eternity” (Trafton). Other studies written during this era explains, that eternal life is an extension of life’s struggles. Given the differing beliefs, the negative reception is evident. Moreover, other literary works that appeared before explored the themes of immortality and portrayed it as dangerous and unnatural. A great example is *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde, which portrays the main protagonist as someone who suffers with his life while his soul is trapped in a painting forever. His immortality is unnatural and dangerous, as it will eventually lead to the character’s downfall.

## **2.3 The power of reception in numbers**

The reception of the works can be best illustrated by giving exact figures to measure the popularity. *Dracula* was not a literary phenomenon immediately. Unlike today, the sales were quite hard to track back then. According to Stepanic’s article, *Dracula* was not the author’s most popular work and was indeed not commercially successful. Only half of the first edition copies were sold, specifically 1500 out of the 3000. What resulted in the change of sales today?

Stephanic explains it simply, with the changing times. *Dracula* stayed the same, but the interpretation of his being changed within people. “Dracula, as a character, has grown to represent the changing times for every generation since the novel’s original inception” (Stepanic).

*Twilight* on the other hand, evoked different opinions, quickly gaining the author fame. Meyer’s work appeared 5<sup>th</sup> on the New York Times bestseller list and remained there for 143 weeks, which is a huge achievement for the author. Her book series made it to the headlines many times. *The Bookseller* regarded her achievement as follows:

Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*, the first instalment in the US novelist's hugely popular dark romance series of the same name, has become only the 13th novel to sell more than two million copies in the UK since the turn century. [...] Last week, the book sold 16,672 copies in the UK, taking its total sales to date to 2,005,609. (Toor)

## 2.4 The impact of adaptations

Adaptations make a huge difference in the rise of the reputation for the books. As for Stoker’s *Dracula*, the adaptations brought a significant shift in the story’s reception. As Margaret L. Carter says, “although Count Dracula is slain in the final pages of Bram Stoker’s novel, throughout the subsequent century he has enjoyed innumerable resurrections in film and literature” (1). The first authorized stage play was produced by Hamilton Deane in 1924. Hamilton altered the appearance of Dracula, making him look more aristocratic. This change made the play well-received and appealed more to the British audience. Due to the huge success of the play, a few years later in 1927 it was performed on Broadway starring the famous Béla Lugosi. The book became more and more well known, resulting in further adaptations. According to Margaret L. Carter (2), together with the first adaptation of the original work started the romanticization of Count Dracula. His interpretation, making the main protagonist more alluring than Stoker’s, resulted in a shift towards creating a sympathetic character. Starting from this point, several interpretations were written following the same progress of creating a less monstrous character, and the best example for this is *Twilight*. Universal Studios became interested in buying the rights for *Dracula* and eventually bought them for 40,000 USD.

A few movies and years later, *Dracula* became the best-selling gothic novel, a classic. Nowadays, this remarkable work is a must-read, and some even call it the best vampire story ever written. The novel's reputation today is greater than ever, almost everyone praises it.

## **2.5 *Twilight* — A *Dracula* adaptation?**

The most important question is, did Meyer take inspiration from *Dracula*, or from somewhere else? Can we consider *Twilight* as an adaptation of *Dracula*? The vampire topic never faded completely, in fact, it became more popular throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century with countless serious, horror, dramatic, melodramatic and comical film and novel adaptations. With the technical developments and contemporary views, it was evident that a book with the same underlying topic, but different aims would soon be written. With the appearance of *Twilight*, the good old vampire topic got freshened up, and the audience was curious about the new approach.

How did Meyer create such a unique variation of vampire? As Liv Randi recalls the author's words (7), Meyer didn't do any research beforehand, while she wished to create her own fantasy. "The only time I really did any research on vampires was when the character Bella did research on vampires. Because I was creating my own world, I didn't want to find out just how many rules I was breaking" (Meyer). Considering Meyer's statement, she was not directly influenced by *Dracula*, but we must consider the fact that it is Stoker's novel which heightened the vampire topic.

## **2.6 A take on the epistolary style**

Was the bad reception of *Dracula* due to the narrative style? The epistolary style became popular during the 18<sup>th</sup> century but had become less common in the latter decades. Can *Dracula* be considered an epistolary narrative? Wicke regards *Dracula's* narrative style as "a narrative patchwork made up out of the combined journal entries, letters, professional records and newspaper clippings that the doughty band of vampire hunters had separately written or collected" (Wicke, 469). Bram Stoker ditched the old-fashioned style of prose and decided to freshen it up by using diary entries and letters which he applied throughout the full length of the book, being inspired by epistolary styles from before. The epistolary style of the novel is

considered inadequate, which answers the question of why it was declined in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. “This assumed inadequacy of epistolary novels was part of the reason for its decline, but Stoker’s use of external sources and multiple narrators, sets *Dracula* apart from even a true epistolary form.” (Ainsworth, 2). As Ainsworth recalls Joe Bray’s statement, “The epistolary novel is often thought to present a relatively unsophisticated and transparent version of subjectivity, as its letter-writers apparently jot down whatever is passing through their heads at the moment of writing” (2).

### **2.6.1 Opinions on the epistolary form nowadays**

The epistolary narrative style today is very much appreciated, even though it faced some negative opinions at first. Even if the audience is familiar with the topic of *Dracula*, the narrative comes as a surprise for many first-time readers. Stoker combined many of the conventions of gothic novels and created his own narrative style and structure by combining the intentionally left out entries and the first-person experience, enhancing the gothic atmosphere. In *The Diary Novel*, Lorna Martens explains:

The first-person account is a useful device in narratives where the author wants to withhold information and thereby prolong suspense. The reader is given a partial view of the situation, yet is left as mystified as the character himself about the true situation. Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) is a celebrated example of a work that uses multiple diaries to unfold the story. (276)

Though there were readers, who couldn’t adjust to the unique narrative style, critics appreciated the new approach Stoker made and thought it was ground-breaking. Some believed that the writer used this technique marvellously, achieving to retain the reader's attention until the end of the complex and long plot. Alexia Ainsworth explains that the narrative style Stoker used was undoubtedly the best choice:

Stoker's unique treatment of his subject separates *Dracula* from the other novels of his time while also creating sensations of doubt and inundation for both the characters and the audience. Thus, the mixed epistolary form is an essential component of what makes this work so memorable. (Ainsworth, 3)

With the first-person narrative, Stoker achieved to describe events and characters in such a precise and unique way that the reader can become one with the characters. Moreover, the reader becomes an active participant in the book, while they can read the inner, private thoughts of the protagonists. The author also creates a sense of uncertainty about the fate of some characters with the lack of letters or diary entries. At a point in the novel, Jonathan is unable to communicate with Mina for a long time. Since he cannot write, we cannot track his journey, making us wonder about his well-being.

## 2.7 Is simple the way to go?

The narrative style of *Twilight* is simpler than *Dracula's*. Most of the negative critiques it got were due to the simplistic and repetitive narrative and the poor characterization. Stephen King regarded Meyer's expertise in an interview with *The Guardian* as "can't write worth a darn. She's not very good" (Flood). Although his critique was quite harsh, Meyer's fans reacted defensively, "Steven [sic] King doesn't know what a real book was if it hit him in the face. He's just a bloody guy who is jealous of Edward's good looks" (Flood).

Why did Meyer choose a simple and understandable narrative? *The New York Times* regarded the book with the following comment: "the book suffers at times from overearnest, amateurish writing" (Spires). As an outsider, the book might seem like something that was written unintentionally simple, but Meyer used plain sentences for better understanding willingly. The author wanted to create a book that was accessible to everyone and could be understood easily. Another concerning factor for some is about the appeal. Even today, many who read the book think that it is overly melodramatic, some consider it shallow and label it as a guilty pleasure book. An American book review magazine called *Kirkus Reviews* regarded this topic as follows: "Edward's portrayal as a monstrous tragic hero is overly Byronic, and Bella's appeal is based on magic rather than character. Nonetheless, the portrayal of dangerous lovers hits the spot; fans of dark romance will find it hard to resist" (Brown). There is nothing

wrong with calling a book a guilty pleasure work, since despite it, most of the audience read it over repeatedly.

Meyer wanted a more appealing story for the readers — who are mainly teenage girls — with the vampire topic as the base concept. Undeniably, a gothic work like *Dracula* would not have satisfied the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century teenage readers entirely, so she altered it to their preferences: “Meyer’s focus on a chaste love story results in the total absence of the gothic sublime and her novel(s) become in effect romanced advise on sexual abstinence for contemporary teenagers and serves as an affirmation of the notion that there is an ideal soul mate for everyone [...]” (Matek, 87).

## 2.8 Conclusion

Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* is considered a classic literary work today, but what is a classic novel exactly? Italo Calvino explains that “Classics have a timeless quality to them – they never seem to get old. [...] Classic texts have long standing reputation – both good and bad. [...] Classics stir up opinions and create controversy but are never diminished by it” (16-18). *Dracula* fits the description perfectly; the topic and characters didn’t age, the reputation and opinions although changed are still relevant, which makes the work a classic.

*Dracula* initially got mixed reviews and started from a disadvantage because of the innovative structure and controversial themes, but gradually ascended to its current status as a gothic masterpiece. It’s slowly gaining popularity was pushed by the theatrical adaptations and cinematic interpretations. *Twilight*’s rapid rise to a bestseller was led by a devoted readership, standing in high contrast with *Dracula*’s delayed success.

## Chapter 3

### The representation of women in the two works

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was published during the Victorian times, therefore its society serves as a lens through which we can examine the rigid expectations of women. Throughout the narrative, female characters resemble the two ends of the social roles; the gentle obedient wife, and the flirtatious girl who has gone off the rails. This presentation prevails the view of women as dependent and the subjects of punishment as they dare to deviate from the roles. While separated by over a century, the two works compared in my study offer contrasting yet similar portrayal of women.

#### 3.1 The impact of social situation on the depiction of women in literature

The portrayal of women in *Dracula* reflects Victorian social norms, presenting them as either a sinner who cannot live up to the expectations of society, or the ideal type of women, who later will get rewarded for living her life as intended. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was published in 1897, at a time when Victorian social gender roles were at their peak. During this era, women were dependent, had limited rights and were expected to be submissive, pure and to be devoted to their husbands and families. Marriage and motherhood, as Senf also points out, were their primary goals (35). After marriage, their personalities change into socially accepted ones. If a woman was unmarried, she was looked down upon and lacked opportunities. Stoker wrote his book during the rise of the idea of New Woman. This terminology was created in reaction to the changing situation of women in Victorian society, representing a threat to the conservative citizens. Silvia E. Herrera argues that in Stoker's novel the New Woman era is strikingly noticeable and intentional (3). He portrayed this concept with the changes happening to Mina and Lucy during the storyline, the pair even acknowledging this new phenomenon (Senf, 35).

In Stoker's novel, the contrasting fates of Mina and Lucy illustrate the social expectations on women, with Mina being the ideal and Lucy being the cautionary example. White explains in her thesis, that Mina is the perfect representation of the early feminist cause and Lucy is depicted as a 'sexual animal' who is a threat to the other characters (38). As Lukic and Matek explain, the fact that Dracula only targets women is an obvious choice from Stoker. He wants to emphasise the emerging problem of the "New Woman" by making them look vulnerable and considering them as the "weak link" (86).

### **3.2 The bitter fate of Lucy**

The New Woman ideologies visibly appear in Lucy's fate, while she is playful and flirtatious, something that was a deterrent to the Victorian era. While she was engaged to Arthur, she was still pursued by other men. She expresses her opinion towards the pointless monogamy: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it" (Stoker 2011, 76). As Senf explains, "(The New Woman) felt free to initiate sexual relationships, to explore alternatives to marriage and motherhood, and to discuss sexual matters such as contraception and venereal disease" (35).

Throughout the novel, Lucy suffers from an unknown illness with strange symptoms, which turns out to be from Count Dracula. She is unable to take care of herself, and her life depends on men around her. She needed blood transfusions many times, and only a male character could give her that. Not only that, but she dies twice during the novel, which represents that women who didn't live a morally acceptable life end up suffering. Professor Van Helsing tried to keep her alive the first time, but despite his efforts, the Count sucks the last of her blood out, ending her life as a human being. She becomes a victim of the villain, which can be seen as a loss of innocence, she is helpless against Dracula's influence. After her death, she transforms into a vampire and becomes dangerous in the eyes of her relatives. She is seen as menacing, a creature that needs to be destroyed: "The sweetness was turned to adamant, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness. [...]. At that moment the remnant of my love passed into hate and loathing; had she then to be

killed, I could have done it with savage delight” (Stoker 2011, 254). Her story ends tragically when her fiancé kills her for the second time. Arthur drives a stake through her heart before Van Helsing cuts her head off and stuffs her mouth with garlic, all in the name of “freeing” her from Dracula’s influence. “He (Arthur) looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and sprouted up around it” (Stoker 2011, 260). This kind of mutilation is brutal, but at the same time, it represents the Victorian desire to control women. Her death symbolises the idea at this period in history, a woman who lost her purity should be condemned. She plays a passive role throughout the narrative, does not try to fight the villain or make decisions, and ultimately gets “saved” by men who eventually take control of her fate.

As Lukic and Matek argues, that Stoker expressed his concern with women getting more familiar with their sexuality, threatening the male-centered social order they so conveniently live in. They also refer back to Pykett’s words in their thesis, saying that many doctors during the Victorian era believed that the more a woman’s brain is developed, the more infertile they will get. This meant a threat to the survival of the human race. Stoker expressed his sympathy for this subject by punishing Lucy because of her way of living. (86).

### **3.3 A reward for living a moral life**

Mina is depicted as the ideal Victorian woman. She is intelligent and has a pure soul. Her character is emotionally strong and plays an important role in defeating Dracula — by helping men. She is a devoted wife and would do anything for her husband. Mina Harker’s character embodies the ideal woman, who despite her crucial role in Dracula’s defeat, stays dependent and loyal to her husband. Her story takes a different turn than Lucy’s since the characteristics are not similar. She resembles everything a Victorian man would want; loyalty, modesty, and intelligence but also dependence.

Likewise, she gets infected by the Count, but unlike Lucy, she stands up and takes action by showing self-control and huge inner strength. Her encounter with the villain plays a crucial role in defeating him. As her story unfolds, she meets the Count in a very strange situation. She awakens in the middle of the night as the vampire forces her to drink from his blood. After the unfortunate evening, a mark appears on her forehead, suggesting that

she had been influenced by the devil himself and will turn into a beast like him soon. Unlike in the case of Lucy, the male characters swear to each other to save her, whatever it takes. They soon discover that the mark she was given by the Count can be a blessing for them. Now, she has a unique connection with Dracula in the form of a psychic link, that allows them to track him. When she is under hypnosis, she can describe the surroundings of his and are able to chase him back to Transylvania. On the other side, when they start to head towards the location, her behaviour becomes more vampiric. Her morality and strength are shown the best when she asks the men to kill her in case of a full transformation. “You must promise me, one and all – even you, my beloved husband – that, should the time come, you will kill me” (Stoker 2011, 399). She is not there when the real confrontation of Dracula happens, only drives them to the right place. Mina is saved when Dracula gets stabbed and beheaded. Her previous self is restored, as if nothing had happened: “the snow is not more stainless than her forehead! The curse has passed away!” (Stoker 2011, 453). She gets to have a happy ending since she lived a pure life as it was expected. Overall, she fought against corruption, and as a reward, she got to live with her family. As we can see, women are only presented as side characters. The novel portrays them as either idealized figures or victims of corruption. According to a study by Silvia E. Herrera, Stoker made a clear point about his views on the rise of women:

With respect to Stoker’s gender and the time period, he made certain his female protagonists did not achieve the liberation the New Woman sought for, by retrogressing them into true Victorian women. Victorian disapproval of the New Woman’s ideologies consequently resulted in Stoker’s decision in violently murdering Lucy for transforming into a vampire and denouncing Mina from heroine to housewife and mother. (28)

### 3.4 Changing times – changing fates?

While *Twilight* presents a range of female characters, Bella Swan, despite appearing more independent than the women in *Dracula*, still occupies a mainly passive role. Each of the characters play a different role in the story, but the main focus is on Bella. Even though the first book was written in 2005; some aspects did not change compared to *Dracula*. Though seemingly progressive, as Bella appears more independent than Victorian women, she continues to perpetuate certain traditional roles and dependencies. Meyer's book was regarded many times as an anti-feminist work because of the highly stressed viewpoint throughout the story. Some readers argue that considering the advancements of feminism in the twenty-first century, the book describes anti-feministic ideologies. One of the readers named Rebecca Walker expressed her feelings towards the book in her blog as follows: "Bella Swan [...] and other main characters are gender stereotyped to a fault. Abusive, misogyny and an embracement of lookism run rampant throughout the 500 pages of the first novel. *Twilight*, and her experiences with teen romance and/or love are truly a masterpiece on how to have an unhealthy relationship" (Walker).

Bella might seem like an independent character in contrast with Mina or Lucy, still she is fully dependent on Edward's protection. She cannot live without him, not only in a romantic sense but also in terms of protection. Furthermore, she requires rescuing many times during the plot. A great example is when she gets followed and cornered by a group of men with the intention of harming her. Just as when the situation intensifies appears Edward in his car, and he orders Bella to go with him: "'Get in,' a furious voice commanded. It was amazing how instantaneously the choking fear vanished [...]" (Meyer, 171). This part is the perfect example for how vulnerable Bella is depicted and how the male dominance plays a huge role in this book as well.

The two works, although being separated by decades, give us similar representations of women. The gender roles have not changed during these years, women are still expected to have children and care for their family and husband. In *Twilight*, female characters have more freedom, they can choose their fate but are still ultimately dependent on male characters.

Apart from Bella, other female characters who possess supernatural strength often fall into traditional roles, all of them ultimately having some kind of supportive role. The more

significant characters are the vampires from the Cullen family. Female vampires are physically strong, but still have traditional roles. Esme plays the mother figure in the story, Rosalie lost her chance at becoming a mother, and Alice though being an independent character is stuck in a relationship with Jasper. They all have some kind of supportive role towards Bella, as she gets involved in their family. Alice is Bella's closest ally in the story. She is the one who supported their forbidden relationship from the very beginning. Her character revolves around her relationship with Jasper. When it comes to Rosalie, she acts cold towards Bella at first, but as she gets to know her, she reveals her tragic and dreadful story as an act of trust. She was attacked by her fiancé and his friends and was left there to die alone. As she got transformed by Charlice, she also lost her chance at becoming a mother, which was her ultimate goal in life. When she finds out that Bella is expecting, she becomes very supportive and protective and adores Renesmee after birth. Esme has the most passive role out of all. She is depicted to be a protective "mother" and serve as a nurturing figure. She loves her husband and their "children". In *Twilight*, the importance of becoming a mother is highly emphasised. Not only Rosalie's story highlight the significance of giving birth, but Bella's ultimate goal is to have children.

In some way or another, all of the female side-characters emphasise the traditional gender roles, which we could see in *Dracula* as well. The situation of women undeniably changed in reality, but Meyer still offers us the same views as Stoker did.

### **3.6 Are they really different?**

What changed exactly between the depiction of the characters? Did the passing decades make a difference in terms of characterization?

The biggest contrast between the two books is the driving force that female characters are exposed to. In *Dracula*, they are victims of male aggression due to the Count's predatory nature, while in *Twilight*, Bella is overly protected by male figures, including the whole of Edward's family. There is a transition of a female character in both works, Lucy's in *Dracula* and Bella's in *Twilight*, but the consequences and outcomes are unlike. Lucy, as said before was a victim of the villain, she did not choose to become a vampire, therefore she gets transformed against her own will. The conversion of hers is slow, she gets weaker,

sleepwalks and somehow becomes unnaturally beautiful over a shorter period of time. After her resurrection, she becomes aggressive and cruel, her predatory nature is irrepressible.

Bella's story, on the other hand, is quite different. She chooses to become a vampire and expresses many times throughout the series how badly she wants to become immortal, so she can stay by Edward's side for eternity. This aspect also adds to the fact, that *Twilight* can be considered a romance, instead of a gothic work. She asks Edward many times to make her a vampire, but he always refuses to do so, while he wants to keep her innocence for as long as possible. In her case, the transformation is depicted as fulfilling her desire. As opposed to Lucy's process, hers was intense and painful. In her case, the procedure was not as simple. After she became pregnant with Renesmee, the infant drained all of her strength and destroyed her body, given she was a half-human, half-vampire child. Bella got in the situation where she was on the brink of dying, and eventually her heart stopped. In order to avoid losing her, Edward injected venom into her heart, turning her into a vampire and saving her life. As a vampire, her personality stays the same, she retains her morality and self-control. She also can control her lust for blood, enabling her to stay close to her family and relatives. She thrives as a vampire as it allows her to live happily with her child and husband for eternity, achieving the ultimate goal.

The only huge difference between the female protagonists of the two works are their fates. While in *Dracula* women cannot choose their fates, in *Twilight* Bella wants to become a vampire for the sake of love, and does everything to make it happen.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

If we consider the time difference these works have been written in, the portrayals of women is strikingly similar. In *Dracula*, the Victorian gender roles dominate the fates of the two female characters, making them either cautionary examples, or illustrating the expected lifestyle. The New Woman persona influenced not only Stoker's work, but Meyer's too, as this topic will continue to reemerge in literary works. "It is the persona that will continue to exist as long as women are subjected to endure the oppressions relegated to them by society" (Herrera, 99).

Despite the illusion of freedom, *Twilight* still offers a male dominated plot that pushes female characters into traditional gender roles.

## Conclusions

In my thesis, I wanted to examine the development of the vampire topic throughout the decades with the help of the two famous gothic novels; Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*. I answered questions about the change in characterisation, the reception and the depiction of women.

First, I have examined the portrayal of the vampire in terms of their interpretation, their appearance, abilities, background, and how the setting contributes to the atmosphere. I have found out that the vampire image turned "softer" in the past years compared to the original depiction, which can also be seen in other works like *Vampire Diaries* as well. Other interesting facts that reinforce this idea are the domestication of the vampires and making a Byronic hero out of the originally villainous protagonist. I also mentioned how commercial proliferation plays a big role in the changing of certain characters. These characters adapted to the needs of the market, making them more appealing to readers.

For better understanding and further analysis, I have taken into consideration both the critical and community receptions of the works. I have started with analysing the opinion on the theme in the given eras and found out it plays a huge role in the popularity of the works. The vampire theme in the Victorian era was considered controversial, due to it being highly religious, with many philosophical debates. These views obviously changed with time, which raises the question; what changed the perspective of people? Of course, the depiction of the characters differ in the works, but the concept stayed the same. With the developing techniques, many adaptations appeared that made the topic more favourable for many. I have also considered the question about *Twilight* being a *Dracula* adaptation and found out that it is not necessarily a direct creation of the original work, but since *Dracula* resulted in the fame of the topic, its influence is undeniable.

The narrative styles played a huge part in the critical reception of the works. The special epistolary style of *Dracula* made it underrated at first, but these views quickly changed as the readers saw the opportunities in it. On the other hand, Meyer's simple narration didn't receive good critiques either, as she oversimplified it. These factors also contributed to their historical importance as either only having a high fame or becoming a classic in literature.

I have also wondered if the depiction of women changed in line with reality. I have considered the depiction of women in both novels taking into account the ongoing social situations at the time of their appearance, and the results surprised me. Stoker's novel

represent strong Victorian values, including the dependence and traditional gender roles. These ideas also appear in *Twilight*, which do not resemble the changes that happened in reality.

In conclusion, I believe that literature acts like a chameleon, it changes and adapts to serve the needs and expectations of the readers. Though it not always reflects reality, but deals with problems of the real world. The topic is just one aspect, as literary works are very complex. They always tell us about the problems in reality, even if the topic is about vampires.

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## Összefoglalás

A szakdolgozatom vizsgált témája a vámpír ábrázolásának fejlődése az eltelt közel másfél évszázad alatt, Bram Stoker *Drakulájától* Stephenie Meyer *Alkonyatáig*. Az ezen belül vizsgált területekhez tartozik a karakter változása, a művek fogadtatása és végezetül a nők helyzete. Az összehasonlításomban figyelembe vettem a művek között eltelt időt, valamint a megváltozott olvasói közönséget is.

Az első fejezet a két fő vámpírkarakter, Drakula és Edward összehasonlításáról szól. A célom az volt, hogy szemléltessem a kettejük között felmerülő különbségeket és hasonlóságokat mind a kinézetük, mind a képességeik terén. A fizikai kinézetük közt egyértelmű a változás, a képességük jelleme pedig kiemeli a belső tulajdonságukat. A könyvek hangulata szintén eltérő; míg a *Drakula* hátborzongató és félelmetes élményt nyújt az olvasóknak, az *Alkonyat* ettől eltérő módon egy modernebb, családiasabb hangulatot ad át. A végső megállapításom a legnagyobb különbséget foglalja magában; az *Alkonyat* vámpírjai egy "puhább", domesztikáltabb szerepet kaptak. Tekintve az egyértelmű példákat, nem is volt kérdés, hogy maga Edward is átesett egy hasonló folyamaton, hiszen rajta látszik a legjobban a változás az eredeti gótikus karakterhez képest. Edward szerepe és mivolta Drakulához képest 180 fokos fordulatot tett, hiszen sokak szerint byroni hősnek tekinthető.

Az imént felsorolt változásokhoz nagyban hozzájárult a művek fogadtatása is. A második fejezetben taglalom a megváltozott reakciók eredetét, valamint az okokat, amelyek ehhez hozzájárultak. Első sorban összevettem a két mű sikerét, ebből megtudva az olvasók és kritikusok véleményét. Tekintve, hogy a *Drakula* első éveiben nem volt elismert, szerettem volna ismertetni az útját a mai kimagasló sikeréhez. Ehhez a sikerhez sok tényező járult hozzá; a különböző adaptációk, a megváltozott olvasói közönség, valamint az elsőre furcsának tűnő sajátos episztoláris elbeszélésforma. Hasonlóan az *Alkonyat* is kapott mind pozitív, mind negatív kritikát, bár a fogadtatása elsőre is kimagaslónak bizonyult.

A nők helyzete a művekben szintén fontos tényező, hiszen ezzel betekintést kapunk a világunkban zajló folyamatokba is. A harmadik fejezetben a nők szerepét hasonlítottam össze, figyelembe véve a könyvek keletkezésének dátumát. Először a *Drakulában* szereplő két női karaktert hasonlítottam össze, hiszen elég eltérő sorsuk van. A műben erős Viktória korabeli ideálok figyelhetők meg, melyek kihatással vannak a női karakterek szerepére és bemutatására. Lucy, akit legjobban a szabadszelleműség jellemez, sanyarú sorsra van kárhoztatva mivel nem tett eleget az elvárt szerepek abszolválásának. Mina, aki igazi viktoriánus elvárásoknak megfelelő jellemzőkkel rendelkezik boldog lezárást érdemelt ki magának. A két női karakternek összességében nincs valódi szabad akarata, teljesen a férfi karakterektől függenek. Az *Alkonyat* ezzel szemben több női karaktert állít elénk, de a sorsuk nagyban nem változott meg. Bár távolról úgy tűnhet, hogy a nők sokkal egyedülállóbbak, még mindig a férfiktól függenek. A viktoriánus elvárások még mindig jelentős szerepet játszanak a történet alakulásában, a valóságban bekövetkezett változások ellenére is.

Összességében arra a következtetésre jutottam, hogy a közönség és a társadalmi helyzet nagyban befolyásolja a karakterek ábrázolását, valamint betöltött szerepüket. Fontos az olvasónak tisztában lennie a háttér folyamatokról, hiszen csak így tudjuk teljes mértékben értelmezni az adott irodalmi művet.