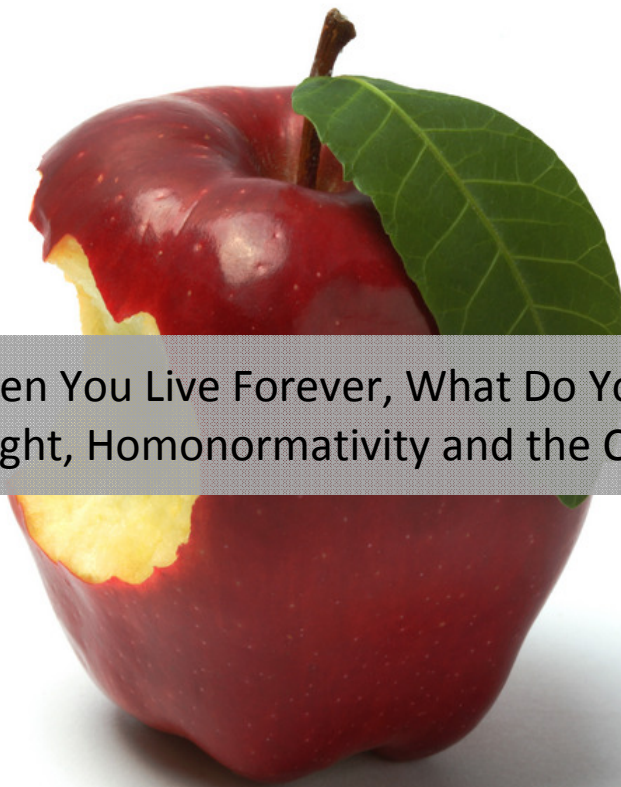


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When You Live Forever, What Do You Live For?:
Twilight, Homonormativity and the Cult of Carlisle

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1. Chapter One: The Queer Spectrum: Vampiric Otherness and Defying the Heteronormative

Without question, the most prolific period for vampire literature has been the last two centuries (Silver and Ursini 34).

While vampires have had many names, faces and iterations throughout centuries of mythology, they have always occupied an othered status, the monstrous deviant standing in opposition to human innocence and intention. This project seeks to explore the evolution of the vampire as a deviant character using Stephenie Meyer's *The Twilight Saga* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

The legend of the vampire is almost as old as human beings themselves. As described in Alain Silver and James Ursini's *The Vampire Film: From Nosferatu to Bram Stoker's Dracula: Second Edition* almost every recorded cultural history includes some mythology of vampires or vampire-like creatures and behaviors, going as far back as *The Odyssey* (Silver and Ursini 18, 31). However, it was the mythos of Eastern European and Balkan vampire that inspired the model of the vampire in the Christian West (18). But what exactly is the vampire that was born out of this assimilation of oral traditions? Alain Silver and James Ursini choose a fairly comprehensive, though by no means all-inclusive definition written by Anthony Master from *The Natural History of the Vampire*.

The vampire throughout the world can be divided into two basic manifestations.

The spirit of a dead person [or demon] is the first and the second is a corpse,

reanimated by his own spirit or alternatively by a demon, who returns to suck at the life of the living, depriving them of blood or some vital organ in order to maintain its own vitality (19)

Vampires are the deviation of a formerly living person who has returned to feed off of humanity for their own survival. Manifested as such within the Christian West, the vampire is a social and moral monster that defies both God and man as an abnormality. Through his or her behavior and biology, the literary figure of the vampire opposes the cultural norms of humanity embodied by heteronormative society.

In the introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet*, Michael Warner establishes the concept of heteronormativity, a term describing a societal norm based on heterosexual standards of living. Heteronormativity is rooted in a clear delineation between man and woman in sex, sexuality and gender roles within society. A heteronormative view is one rooted in the reproductive futurity of heterosexual coupling. Its “privilege lies in heterosexual culture’s exclusive ability to interpret itself as society;” its somehow uncompromised ability to set the standard for social norms that posits anything in opposition to the heterosexual or heteronormative as deviant from the natural standard – an “othering” that Warner claims is rooted “not merely in theoretical lapses but historical pressures” (*Fear* xxi, xxiv). Lisa Duggan, a professor of social and cultural analysis at New York University, further elaborates on the standards of heteronormativity, stating that “it posits a norm – the heterosexual identity – that is undeniably valuable in any society and any culture, that seems to characterize the vast majority of humanity, and without which civilization would simply evaporate: and it attempts to judge homosexuality by the standards of that norm” (Duggan 56). In this norm, heterosexual coupling, marriage and reproductive futurity, are all posited as normal, thus vilifying anything that stands in opposition to this hetero ideal. Homosexuality is that other to heterosexuality, the queer deviation from the normal standard set by the pro-heteronormative

culture now prominent in society. For the purposes of this project, human beings, who represent society in both texts, will be the heteronormative. After all, in both *Dracula* and *Twilight* human beings are the cultural majority, whose investment in children and futurity, morality and socio-political ethics sets the standard that casts vampires as a deviation that is opposes them. This then posits vampires as that queer deviation to the standards of human normalcy.

While the term queer often implies homosexuals or the sexually queer – bisexuals, transgendered people and other deviants from the norm of heterosexuality – queer is a term whose reach extends beyond sexuality. According to the Oxford English Dictionary on-line, queer can be defined as:

“1. a. Strange, odd, peculiar, eccentric. Also: of questionable character; suspicious, dubious. Cf. [QUARE](#) *adj.*;

1. With *the*: that which is queer (in various senses). *rare*.

2. *colloq.* (freq. *derogatory*). A homosexual; *esp.* a male homosexual.”

Queer has a multiplicity of meanings and can therefore be read and applied in a multiplicity of ways. Indeed, Warner states that “[...] queers live as queers, as lesbians, as gays, as homosexuals, in contexts other than sex” (*Fear* vii). Queer is itself a problematic term – and not just because the very definition of queer used in opposition to heteronormativity serves to reinforce the idea of the hetero as a standard for normalcy in many ways. Queer is a term that encompasses much more in its scope than a word like “heterosexual” does, so it is not a category in the same way the latter is. As Warner says, “[...] there is no comparable category of social analysis to describe the kind of group or nongroup that queer people constitute” (*Fear* xxiv). Class is “conspicuously useless,” and status – while better – “does not account for the way the ascribed trait of a sexually defined group is itself a mode of sociability” (*Fear* xxiv). Indeed, queer speaks to too many ideas – culturally, socially, sexually – to be wholly ascribed to one mode of description.

As queer is a term that is neither a classification nor classifiable, it is malleable enough to be translated and used in other contexts besides the purely sexual. Ironically, “queer” as a modifier is quite similar to “heteronormative;” heteronormativity encompasses much more than just heterosexuality – it embodies an entire social system that values heterosexuality as a necessary tradition within which to impel economics, social standards, politics, etc. Heteronormativity, therefore, cannot just be a category of sexual orientation, because heterosexuality predicates not just sexual desires but a way of life. Warner states that “‘queer’ gets a critical edge by defining itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual [...]” (*Fear* xxvi). While *Dracula* plays with homoerotic undertones¹ that certainly go against heterosexual standards, the vampire as an undead, immortal creature presents not just a threat to sexual standards, but the fear of a queer threat against cultural standards of living as well.

Lee Edelman discusses the role of the queer within society and the hetero fear of queerness in his book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Edelman describes the political role of queerness as that which “names the side of those *not* ‘fighting for the children,’ the side outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism. [...] *queerness*, by contrast, figures, outside and beyond its political symptoms, the place of the social order’s death drive” (Edelman 3). According to Edelman, queerness is considered deviant in that it is antithetical to the value placed by heteronormative society in the figure of the Child, an embodiment of the reproductive futurity that results “naturally” from hetero coupling and creates some sense of meaning for humanity by creating a narcissistic sense of immortality and longevity. He elaborates to say that the figure of queerness destroys the self, “the agent of reproductive futurism,” and politics, “the means of its promulgation.” If reproductive futurism is the bedrock of heteronormative society, then the self and politics that propel that futurism are integral parts of the foundation of

¹ This will be laid out more fully later on during a discussion of Count Dracula as a reactionary character.

society – a foundation that queerness inherently threatens by refusing to support it.

Vampirism is a threat to this idea of the Child not only in that it is an actual danger against the Child's safety and well being, but in that its immortality renders useless the need for biological reproduction in the form of new offspring. Rather, vampire reproduction springs from a transformation that moves the victim beyond death into the excesses of an immortal life.

The death drive which Edelman credits the queer as embodying is the surplus, the excess, a consequence of the Symbolic order of meaning upheld by heteronormativity, that names the “negativity opposed to every form of social viability” that the queer is called forth to figure (9). The death drive is just as it sounds, a drive towards death, destruction and the complete negation of those qualities of social existence characterized as propelling life – survival, propagation of the species, the strive for meaning, etc. These excesses embodied in that seemingly antithetical drive are *jouissance*, which can be translated as enjoyment or pleasure. *Jouissance* is the excess or remainder that Edelman believes queerness embodies while evoking the death drive (25.) In the vampire, we will see a queer character who literally embraces the death drive as he or she not only survives beyond death to live in those excesses, but as a character that – in the case of Dracula specifically – works actively against the propagation of human life. In Edelman's more political usage of queer, we continue to see how the term describes a figure whose deviation goes beyond the merely sexual, threatening the fabric of society through its constant and varied refusal of life and meaning as posited by the heteronormative structure in power – a figure certainly embodied in the immortal threat of the vampire.

But what about the Cullens, Dracula's antitheses within this argument of vampire queerness? Their role as queer characters figures quite differently within this project as they choose not to embrace the queer's intrinsic relationship to *jouissance* and the death drive, but instead to embrace homonormativity as a means of self-regulation and normalization. In her book *Twilight of Equality?*

Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy, Lisa Duggan describes homonormativity as “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption” (50).

Homonormativity is assimilation, an attempt by some queers to “act normal” and earn the heteronormative privilege while heteronormative society in turn works to subdue the queer threat by normalizing it. Duggan discusses the new politics of homonormativity at the center of a “clear shift that is taking place in the gay movement” (47). Called the “‘cutting edge’ of a new gay movement” by Jonathan Rauch at the 1999 Log Cabin National Leadership Conference, the Independent Gay Forum (or IGF) embraces those principles central to this “shift” in the gay movement. Bulleted under the heading of “Forging a Gay Mainstream,” the IGF outlines their ideals for creating a new homonormative gay culture, including:

- “We deny ‘conservative’ claims that gays and lesbians pose any threat to social morality of the political order.
- We equally oppose ‘progressive’ claims that gays should support radical social change or restructuring of society” (48).

While this may seem like a moderate political solution, striking a balance between two fundamental ideas, it really embraces a queer compromise – inclusivity through mimicry. Duggan elaborates later on the social reality of “the new homonormativity,” stating that equality becomes minimal access to a limited number of “conservatizing institutions,” freedom becomes an exemption from the inequalities of commerciality and “civil society,” and the right to privacy becomes mere “domestic confinement” (65-66). A “safe” queer is a homonormative queer, one who tries to blend into the normal world rather than embracing his or her queerness and defying heteronormative social constructs. The Cullens certainly embrace this compromise, especially when compared to Dracula.

Whereas Dracula is most certainly a constant threat as he preys upon and toys with his human victims, disregarding their social and moral standards, the Cullens attempt to embrace and emulate those standards so they can fit back into human society – not to infiltrate or dominate as Dracula attempts to, but purely for the pleasure of living a normal human life. Homonormativity essentially advocates play-acting the role of a normal person to allow queers to find their place within a rigid, anti-queer society.

The heteronormative fear of queerness is not a fear that queers will overthrow heteronormativity, but that they will refuse to buy into the hierarchy of hetero valorization so cherished by the heteronormative community. That which seems queer in some ways but still retains some normalcy can be merely eccentric; that which outright refuses that normalcy is a deviation. This is the central pretense around which homonormativity thrives; the idea that normalcy is to be upheld at all costs to avoid being feared as a threat to the structure of human society. The literary figure of the vampire represents this fear of the queer refusing to buy into this hierarchy; human society is all but irrelevant to them. Their only need for human beings at all is as a source of food, and in the case of more modern vampires like the Cullens they aren't even necessary for that. In the *Twilight* universe, in fact, vampires have their own culture and also their own government that exists covertly away from humanity. These queer characters are able to exist completely outside of the valorized hierarchy of heteronormativity. The vampire's ability to disregard socially-constructed positions of power based on gender and orientation shows the futility of such a system that tries to posit the "right way" that society should exist.

So how *are* vampires queer figures in relation to human society? Certainly, the leap here is more metaphoric than metonymic. As Warner and Edelman have described, queerness goes far deeper than its surface sexual implications. Rather, queer simply embraces a deviation from a rigid standard of normalcy. In the case of vampires, their queerness lies in the loss of their own

humanity, which pits them as a deviation from the community of which they were once a part. The primary terms that will be used throughout this project – heteronormativity, homonormativity and queer – are terms that are all etymologically rooted in sexuality, but have evolved within political and social discourse to refer to an entire cultural system and structure rooted in normalized ideals that are based in, but have extended far beyond, the posited value of heterosexuality. This project will use these terms as well as the history of the vampire in literature to set the stage for the vampire as a quintessentially queer character, before focusing on a comparison between Dracula, as a character thoroughly queered from humanity, and *Twilight's* Cullen family as a more humanized modern subset of the vampire culture. Count Dracula embraces this queerness, defying and at times destroying humanity. In *The Twilight Saga*, however, the Cullen family decides instead to defy the queerness that has been foisted upon them through their homonormative attempts to bridge the gap forced between them and their own humanity. If we look at human beings as the heteronormative (a social group rooted in coupling, a belief in reproductive futurity and rigid standards for “normalcy”) then the supernatural deviant, “the vampire,” becomes the queer, that which cannot occupy the realm of the “normal.” Edelman notes that:

The death drive as which the queer figures, then, refuses the calcification of form that is reproductive futurism, since the Lacanian death drive, as Žižek observes, “is precisely the ultimate Freudian name for the dimension traditional metaphysics designated as that of *immortality* – for a drive, a ‘thrust,’ which persists beyond the (biological) cycle of generation and corruption, beyond the ‘way of all flesh.’ [...] the ‘death drive’ designates the dimension of what horror fiction calls the ‘undead,’ a strange, immortal, indestructible life that persist beyond death.” (Edelman 48)

In saying this, Žižek too directly aligns the “undead” – the name by which Van Helsing classifies Dracula – with the queer embodiment of the death drive. There are further distinctions to be made

within the queer realm we have established for the vampire. If we use Dracula, the most well-known and quintessential vampire in literature, as the standard for vampirism, fully inhabiting the space of the queer, then the Cullens – a humanized sub-group of modern vampire culture – can be read as the homonormative, making a queer compromise as they attempt to assimilate into the heteronormative human race.

In order to establish Count Dracula as the standard for vampiric queerness with the Western literary tradition, we must first understand where this idea of the Western vampire comes from. According to J.P. Telotte in “A Parasitic Perspective: Romantic Participation and Polidori’s *The Vampyre*” the first appearance of the vampire in English literature was in John Polidori’s 1819 book *The Vampyre*, and it was this vampire legend that began a literary tradition (9). Though Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, published almost eighty years later, would be remembered as the quintessential vampire novel, Polidori’s monster set the stage for the undead vampire figure whose gruesome existence “def[ie]d the potential for a transcendent meaning, but also, in feeding upon the living to sustain its unnatural existence [...] suggests a fundamental perversion of normal human participation in the world” (Telotte 9-10). This was the first Westernized vampire, a monster who lived among us even as it devoured us, who set the standard for the vampire as a queer character: devoid of the transcendent meaning inherent in the heteronormative investment in reproductive futurity, a deviation from normal human society. Polidori’s model embodied the epitomic vampire that Stoker’s Count would exemplify: unnatural, a perversion of normalcy, humanity and society.

Sheridan Le Fanu’s 1872 short story *Carmilla* is a more modern Western vampire tale than Polidori’s. Its absence from this discussion of the vampire as a queer character would seem remarkable not only because of its influence on the vampire that Dracula would become, but because of its direct discussion of the vampire as a queer character: Carmilla, the stunningly beautiful girl who captivates the protagonist, Laura, is a vampire who preys exclusively on young women for

whom she harbors romantic affections. For this reason, Carmilla would seem to present the exemplary queer vampire for this argument. However her tale will remain a background reference for the remainder of this project. Carmilla's sexuality is not made an issue within the story. During the moments when Carmilla will hug and kiss Laura, or talk about them being together, Laura simply tells her to stop, or brushes it off as eccentric behavior. It is never discussed in conjunction with her monstrous nature, it doesn't isn't noticed or suspected by any character but Laura, and even as she regards it as "hateful" at moments it does not become an issue that she allows to drive a wedge between herself and her new companion. Yet, despite her strong discomfort, these moments do not turn Laura away from Carmilla. It would be difficult for *Carmilla* to contribute to this discussion of homonormativity when her sexuality is not even *mentioned* to be seen as an opposition to any moral or social standard.

As the quintessential vampire story, *Dracula* seemed the natural point of comparison for this project. After all Dracula is *the* vampire against whom "all changes must be measured." Silver and Ursini concur, saying that "Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* is, indisputably, the most influential work in vampire literature" (43). *The Twilight Saga*, meanwhile, is a modern literary phenomenon that has inspired an overwhelming resurgence in the already popular genre of vampire literature, particularly aimed at young adult audiences. The first three books sold more than 5.3 million copies in the first three years of publication, and spent a combined total of 143 weeks on the New York Times best-seller list (Grossman). By the time the fourth book was released, Stephenie Meyer and her books already had a cult following – people dressing in costume for the book release, online fan fiction, *Twilight* themed rock bands – they had become a phenomenon with teenage and adult audiences alike. In her article "In the Blood: why do vampires still thrill?" Joan Acocella also cites Meyer's incredible literary success when stating that "enthusiasm for vampires seems to be at a new peak"

(3). If *Dracula* is the story that created the Western obsession with the vampire, then *Twilight* seems to be the one that has refreshed it anew.

Dracula became a literary sensation because it was a horror-suspense novel that used a unique multi-perspective monster story that reflected the fears of a changing Victorian society. It tells the story of Count Dracula, the Transylvanian descendent of a warring clan who is discovered to be a vampire by a group of discerning humans when he attempts to move to London. Jonathan Harker is the young solicitor who goes to Castle Dracula and first discovers the Count's terrible secret and goes insane in his attempts to escape. Mina Murray, his betrothed, discovers that her friend Lucy Westenra has fallen ill shortly after a strange shipwreck on the shores of Exeter. Lucy's fiancé Arthur Holmwood calls her former suitors, Dr. John Seward and Quincey Morris, to help him care for her. Unable to discover either reason or treatment for her mysterious illness, Dr. Seward calls on his mentor Dr. Van Helsing. Van Helsing, after treating Lucy with an unexplained series of blood transfusions and amulets made from garlic flowers, explains that he believes Lucy to be the victim of a vampire. The young lady dies, and her three former suitors are all forced to believe her supernatural fate when they discover the newly arisen Lucy stalking children. Mina returns to England with Jonathan after his release from a mental hospital, and becomes to Count's next target. Armed with knowledge and the power of God to fight against the beast, the group of friends swears to prevent Mina from meeting the same fate as their beloved Lucy. The novel follows their struggle against a supernatural monster that is not bound by the same physical, social or moral standards as themselves, and their inevitable defeat of the deviant that threatened their existence.

Twilight begins when seventeen-year-old Bella Swan decides to leave her newly-remarried mom in Phoenix, and move in with her small-town sheriff father in Forks, Washington. Though immediately welcomed into the community and the subject of many of the local youth's admiration, the newcomer feels completely isolated from everyone – until she meets the Cullens. The Cullens

are an unbelievably beautiful yet inexplicably avoided group of foster siblings who live with the hospital's top surgeon, Carlisle, and his wife. Bella immediately finds herself drawn to Edward, despite the fact that his initial reaction to her is one of seeming hatred. She soon discovers that he and his family are vampires that defy traditional Western canon, and that his distaste stems from the temptation the scent of her blood foists upon him and his "vegetarian" lifestyle.² Edward, equally drawn to Bella, decides to fight his natural desire to kill her and the two fall in love. *The Twilight Saga* follows the difficulties stemming from a human-vampire relationship.

The Twilight Saga does discuss another supernatural being that will not play a role in this comparison between humanity and the supernaturally queer: werewolves. There are several reasons why the werewolves are not relevant to this discussion, aside from the obvious lack of correlation between the werewolves and *Dracula*. First and foremost, Bella does not eventually become a werewolf herself, not allowing room to discuss that transformation or why she would choose to join their ranks. The werewolves are also human; they are just werewolves as well. Their transformations are ignited by a large vampire presence, and this gene is often skipped when there is no threat (*Eclipse* 251-2). Though they are stronger than average humans and will temporarily cease to age when the vampire threat is at its strongest, they can be injured or killed without the evisceration necessary to destroy a *Twilight* vampire.³ They can live and move among human society without arousing the same notice that Cullens do. The werewolves are not typically a group considered entirely separate from the human community, or a threat to the humans; their existence, in fact, is entirely for them to protect the humans. Therefore, they do not have to pretend to be human or normalized as the vampires do. There is also no room for a direct correlation between *Dracula* and *The Twilight Saga* as far as the werewolves are concerned. The wolves that Count

² The Cullens refer to themselves as "vegetarians" because they hunt animals instead of people (*Twilight* 188).

³ This will be discussed in more detail later on in the chapter, when the biological and physical aspects of the *Twilight* vampires are outlined.

Dracula feels such affinity for are actual animals, which he can control or transform into. The werewolves in *Twilight*, meanwhile, are a parallel race of supernatural beings that share an old animosity with the vampires. While the presence of wolves in both texts may perhaps warrant such consideration in a future discussion, for the purposes of this paper they will not join the discourse as points of comparison.

The comparison in this essay between *Dracula* and *The Twilight Saga* goes beyond just pitting a modern phenomenon against the book that started a literary trend. Both stories handle the queer character of the vampire – and his or her queer status – in very different ways. There are three specific ideas that will be explored throughout this essay: the physical and metaphysical characteristics of the vampire; the perceptions of monstrosity and humanity in these texts; and the role of relationships. The markedly different physiognomies of Count Dracula and the Cullens will be discussed in direct correlation with their ability to fit in with human society. The presence of supernatural powers within each text will also be examined, particularly as they relate to vampires' physical and spiritual connection to their own former humanity. Perception, as the hallmark of social standards, will be considered in three integral ways: how the humans in each story perceive the vampires; how the vampires perceive humanity; and how their perception of humanity in turn influences how they see themselves. Finally, the sociability of the vampires in each text will serve to exemplify the value they place on human standards of relationships, families, coupling and children. The hundred-plus years separating the books provide a stark point of contrast for not only how these stories each handle issues of normalcy, deviancy and humanity in the vampire novel, but also the cultural contexts in which these stories were set and written, and how that influenced the creation of the vampire as a character.

2. Chapter Two: Let's Get (Meta)physical: The Evolution of the Vampire

According to Nina Auerbach, author of *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, “Earlier vampires may not have been mortal, but they could pass as human” (94). Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* was a beautiful young woman with every sign of life: “She was slender, and wonderfully graceful. Except that her movements were languid – *very* languid – indeed, there was nothing in her appearance to indicate an invalid. Her complexion was rich and brilliant; her features were small and beautifully formed; her eyes large, dark and lustrous; her hair was quite wonderful” (103). The narrator, Laura, comments frequently throughout the story on Carmilla’s striking beauty, blushed cheeks and outward appearances as a young woman of Laura’s years. Carmilla only takes on the appearance of “a sooty black animal that resembled a monstrous cat” when she feeds, and her connection with the animal is not suspected or discovered until she is recognized by another gentleman whose daughter she has already victimized (Le Fanu 115). Indeed, her lovely and normal appearance gives off every sign of life and humanity, making it easy for her to avoid suspicion for what she truly is.

Compare this to the rather striking and distressing description of Dracula given by Jonathan Harker, the English solicitor sent to Transylvania to help the Count buy property, upon their first meeting: “Within, stood a tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to toe, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere. [...] his hand grasped mine with a strength which made me wince, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed as cold as ice – more like the hand of a dead than living man” (Stoker 25-6). Upon further examination once they are inside the castle, Jonathan finds him of a “very marked physiognomy:”

His face was a strong – a very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and particularly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely everywhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own

profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor.

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 close to me, I could not but notice that they were rather coarse – broad, with squat fingers. Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal. (27-8)

Jonathan's initial reaction is uncanny; Count Dracula's physical appearance is described in ways more like an animal than a human – hairy palms, sharp claws and fangs, pointed ears. This is a distinct difference from the sympathy with which the seemingly delicate, human form of Carmilla was met by Laura's family. Despite the Count's initial kindness and hospitality towards his guest, Jonathan cannot help but find his host immediately repugnant. However, it is not just his bizarre appearance that keeps Jonathan alienated from his host even before the reality of his captivity sets in. The Count lives alone, showing affection only towards the wolves that surround his castle in lieu of neighbors, "the children of the night" (28). Auerbach cites his fondness of the wolves specifically as one of the characteristics that made Dracula frightening to Victorian readers: "His empathy with 'children of the night' rather than with humans released a dimension of fear: the fear, not of death and the dead, but of being alive" (Auerbach 94). Part of what made Dracula so uncanny for early

audiences was his seemingly human form despite his unworldly affinity to animals. Count Dracula himself changed the face of the vampire forever by defying the former Western vampire tradition and embracing a supernatural entity who was more monster than man.

The Cullens of *The Twilight Saga*, the new vampires, have a much easier time fitting into society. Compare Harker's first glimpse of Dracula with Bella's first sighting of the Cullen children:

They didn't look anything alike. [...] And yet, they were all exactly alike. Every one of them was chalky pale, the palest of all the students living in this sunless town. Paler than me, the albino. They all had very dark eyes despite the range in hair tones. They also had dark shadows under those eyes – purplish, bruise-like shadows. As if they were all suffering from a sleepless night, or almost done recovering from a broken nose. Though their noses, all their features, were straight perfect, angular. But all this is not why I couldn't look away. I stared because their faces, so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful. They were faces you never expected to see except on the airbrushed pages of a fashion magazine. Or painted by an old master as the face of an angel. (*Twilight* 18-9)

Bella finds their faces unexpected in that they look more like they belong on magazine covers than in the real world – a far cry from the alienating visage of Dracula. The Cullens are still distinct from human beings, but in a way that invokes jealousy, not fear. Whereas Dracula is something alien, other than human, the Cullens appear simply superhuman, beautiful and graceful beyond what seems normal but not frightening. Their beauty is a biological adaptation, a trait of the modern vampire designed to help them lure in their prey; and while it always catches an unsuspecting human off-guard, it does not repulse them the same way that Dracula does, allowing the Cullens an easier time living amongst humans than their 19th century counterpart.

The *Twilight* vampires are also quite distinct from Dracula in other physical ways. Count Dracula, while immortal, is able to age – both forward and in reverse. When Jonathan first meets him, he is described as an old man. However, when he sees him next at Hyde Park Corner after returning to England, he is shocked and horrified to discover that Count has “grown young”: “[H]e gazed at a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard [...] [Jonathan] said, as if to himself: - ‘I believe it is the Count, but he has grown young. My God, if this be so!’” (Stoker 197-8). The Count, we have reason to believe, was aboard the *Demeter*, the ship that mysteriously shipwrecked shortly before his appearance in England. According to the captain’s log-book, crew members disappeared mysteriously over the course of the journey and that the men had been suspicious that “something” sinister was aboard the ship with them (98-102). The captain’s log ends in a most distressing and mysterious fashion as more of his crew disappears around him and he worries what he shall say when he arrives to port. When the ship does finally wreck in Exeter, the ship is derelict save for one dead seaman lashed to the wheel, and a mysterious large dog which ran off the boat as soon as it struck land and disappeared (96-7). We discover later that the Count, aboard the *Demeter*, fed off of the entire crew as the ship brought him to England, and then – refreshed and replenished into a new youth – escaped the wreckage in the form of an animal.

The *Twilight* vampires, meanwhile, seem almost entirely immobile in time. Edward has been seventeen since he nearly died at the turn of the century from the Spanish influenza; Rosalie lives an unhappy existence as a vampire knowing that her unchanging body means that she can never live her human dream of having a child; this menopausal state that she occupies is the direct cause of her incredible jealousy of Bella’s humanity and her general distaste for her. The only mention of vampires aging seems to be in special circumstances: for instance, Vladimir and Stefan, two ancient Romanian vampires who join the Cullen to witness against the Volturi are described as powdery-skinned they are so aged, and with dark burgundy eyes and black garments— a much more

expected description for a vampire (*Breaking Dawn* 627). When asked how they came to look the way that they do, so distinct from all the other vampires surrounding them, Vladimir explains that “We sat still for a very long time [...] We sat on our thrones and thought ourselves gods. We didn’t notice for a long time that we were changing – almost petrifying” (*Breaking Dawn* 631). It seems that time only affects the physicality of the *Twilight* vampires in extreme circumstances, whereas Dracula ages and must feed to reverse that process. However, feeding does have an impact on the physical appearance of the *Twilight* vampires. Vampires naturally have bright crimson eyes; but the Cullens, as well as the Denali clan (another vegetarian vampire family) have golden eyes. When Bella first meets Edward and believes that he hates her, she notices his eyes are black; when he returns to school the next week, she is confused to see that they are now a topaz color. She learns that their eyes grow darker the longer they go without feeding, whereas they take on a golden color because they subsist only on animal blood.

It is not, however, just the physical distinctions between Count Dracula and the vampires of *The Twilight Saga* that distinguish them from one another. In his essay on “Metaphor into Metonymy: The Vampire Next Door,” Jules Zanger states that one difference between the old and new vampires is the sense of the metaphysical that seems to have vanished since Dracula’s days. Dracula was able to change shape, control the weather and exercise telepathy to hypnotize and control. He is portrayed as “the earthly embodiment of supernatural Evil,” a direct foil to God’s magnanimous splendor and light (18). We know that he has an affinity for animals – wolves in particular – and can shape-shift into a dog or a bat. Count Dracula also has no reflection and a supernatural aversion to the religious symbols, horrifying discoveries Jonathan makes when the Count comes up behind him as he is shaving:

Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder, and I heard the Count’s voice saying to me,
 “Good morning.” I started, for it amazed me that I had not seen him, since the

reflection of the glass covered the whole room behind me. In starting I had cut myself slightly, but did not notice it at the moment. Having answered the Count's salutation, I turned to the glass to see how I had been mistaken. This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! [...] This was startling, and, coming on top of so many strange things, was beginning to increase that vague feeling of uneasiness which I always have when the Count is near; but at the instant I saw that the cut had bled a little, and the blood was trickling down my chin. [...] When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demoniac fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat. I drew away, and his hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it was ever there. (Stoker 36).

The Count immediately attempts to laugh off the incident, throwing Jonathan's mirror out the window and dismissing it as a symbol of man's vanity. For Jonathan, however, this is the moment that solidifies the bizarre experiences he has had thus far and his uneasiness with the Count. Suddenly, Jonathan begins to see himself as a prisoner within the "veritable prison" that is Castle Dracula.

Meanwhile, when Bella finally confronts Edward and he reveals the truth about his family and vampires in general, it is easy to see why she did not suspect them for what they are. The vampires of the *Twilight* universe defy the mythos surrounding the Count and his more supernatural exploits. Edward explains to Bella that much of popular vampire canon is shrouded in myth, hence his family's easy adaptability into human society (*Twilight* 185-6). They cannot shape-shift or manipulate the elements. They have reflections in mirrors and appear in photographs. They are not affected at all by religious artifacts – in fact, the Cullens house is decorated with Christian symbols

from Carlisle's youth – and they have no more aversion to garlic than any other human food. The only peril these vampires would face in the daytime would be explaining their sparkling, glittering skin, which is an aesthetic predatory trait to help them lure in their prey. This is the result not of a supernatural background, but the biological adaptations of a hunter. The *Twilight's* vampires characteristics – superhuman speed and strength, unparalleled beauty, heightened sense of smell, hearing and vision – are all designed to help them attract and capture their human prey. They are also not as vulnerable as Dracula, because they are not bound by the same physical and earthly rules that he is. While Dracula can be caught off guard and killed, the Twilight vampires can't sleep, and the only way they can be destroyed is to be torn apart into pieces by either vampire or werewolf teeth – the only substances strong enough to cut through their marble-hard bodies – and burned before they can regenerate themselves. Compared to the supernatural specter of Dracula, the vampires of the *Twilight* universe are vampires in biology only, a physically superior enhancement of their former human selves. This makes the *Twilight* vampires much closer to human than Dracula on at least one level, which not only helps them to fit in with human beings better physically, but likely keeps them feeling closer to their own humanity than a creature as deviated from his past as Dracula is.

Magic and mysticism, which are large components of the canon created by the Dracula myth, are also handled in a unique way by Meyer. In *Dracula* we are made aware of the Count's many supernatural abilities, but they are never explained or understood; we are simply to take them as a part of what characterizes the vampire. The only supernatural powers that appear throughout *The Twilight Saga*, meanwhile, are explained as the biological enhancement during transformation of latent human abilities: Edward, who can read minds – except for Bella's – was unusually perceptive to people's thoughts and feelings in his human life; Alice was institutionalized in her human life for her psychic visions; Jasper was always able to diffuse tense situations in his life as a Civil War soldier,

and is now able to manipulate the feelings in a room; and Bella discovers that the reason Edward cannot read her mind is because she is a natural shield – a power she develops into a physical protection to keep her family safe from the Volturi in *Breaking Dawn*. The only shape-shifting in the book is explained as a biological evolution of the werewolves in the La Push tribe. None of the vampires we meet have the hypnotic powers of Count Dracula, and they must all walk through a door rather than slip through the cracks as a thick mist. Again, any potentially supernatural element that would be expected from a monster story is explained as material, not magic, furthering the notion that the *Twilight* vampires are simply an advanced deviation from humanity and not a completely separate species.

The new vampire is now created as more of a biological deviation from humanity than a mythical one, still possessing incredible strength, speed and agility, and often avoiding daylight, but without the garlic allergies and fear of religious artifacts. In fact, as Zanger puts it, the new vampire is demythologized, and “more nearly resembles a member of a secret society or subversive political association [...] merely ethnic, a victim of heredity.” No longer solitary, magical or the embodiment of evil, the new vampire is communal, mundane, a “secular sinner” (19). According to Leonard Heldreth and Mary Pharr, the editors of *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature*, the modern vampire becomes the “heroic antagonist,” as oxymoronic as the earlier descriptions of vampires as “the living dead” (1). It implies someone both “admirable and subversive,” this new, ethnic vampire of which Zanger speaks. The contemporary vampire, meanwhile, has become something which is terrifying yet alluring, “chic and active in a universe where ambiguity prevails.” The incredibly culturally-idealized character of Edward Cullen from *The Twilight Saga* exemplifies this terrifying yet alluring contemporary vampire. In her article “Why have teenage girls been bitten by the Edward Cullen bug to devour the *Twilight* novels?” Tanya Gold talks to both fans and psychotherapists who recognize the complexities of the ambiguous monster of the new vampire. “Edward Cullen is the

lover the young girl desires and fears” – a “Vanity Fair” monster, beautiful and sympathetic. Unlike Dracula, who is immediately introduced to the reader through Jonathan Harker’s eyes as jarring and alien in both behavior and appearance, Bella is intrigued with the beautiful Cullens, identifying with and pitying them as fellow outsiders in a close-knit small town. The modern vampire is a victim of his vampirism as much as his victims are, and Edward certainly embraces Zanger’s “admirable and subversive” ethnic vampire as he struggles to defy the his innate vampiric tendencies for the betterment of himself and the preservation of mankind. The modern vampire could be seen as reflecting the moral ambiguities that have been brewing throughout the twentieth century and into the modern day – an entity that both frightens and intrigues us.

3. Chapter Three: Perceptions of Monstrosity and the Queering of Bella Swan

“That’s what I like about science fiction,” Meyer says. [...] “You take people, put them in a situation that can’t possibly happen, and they act the way you would act. It’s about being human.” And sometimes there’s nobody quite as human as somebody who isn’t. (Grossman)⁴

With the emergence of the new morally ambiguous vampire, there has been a shift in the relationship between human and vampire. Zanger demonstrates this by citing how thoroughly each of the humans in *Dracula* is explained and understood, given as least as much weight as the Count himself. Meanwhile, in more contemporary communal vampire stories, the vampires are often the protagonists and it is their relationships with each other, and not with humans, that are explored. Zanger asserts that this diminishment of the human victim creates the “good” vampire, “the reluctant killer, the self-doubting murderer” for whom we must root (21). In some other modern

⁴ Grossman, Lev. “Stephenie Meyer: A New J.K. Rowling?” Time.com. Time Magazine, 24 Apr. 2008. Web.

vampire stories, such as those written by Anne Rice, humans are incidental characters, background food sources that are unimportant to the daily lives and governance of the vampire protagonists. In *The Twilight Saga* particularly we get to see the human in a very different light than most vampire stories because humans aren't even a food source to the protagonists. Nor do the Cullens feel the desire to dominate or control humanity in the same way that Dracula does. Rather, they envy the humans for having what they no longer possess themselves, and attempt to recapture their own lost humanity by assimilating back into human society. However, this integration into human society allows not only a continuation of that strong modern focus on vampire relationships, but a new kind of vampire-human relation that is rooted in emotion and not survival. This evolution of the new vampire provides opportunities for more complex interactions and relationships with humans than *Dracula* allowed. Dracula was limited to a narrow range of emotions he could feel for his human victims – hunger, hate, bitterness and contempt (Zanger 22). The new vampire, meanwhile, is a more emotionally complex creature, who can experience love, attachment, betrayal – all the emotions requisite for them to recreate human relationships. This influx of human emotions also allows the vampire room for other very human conditions: self-judgment, self doubt, even the self-loathing experienced by Edward Cullen in the *Twilight* books. While the new vampire has not become more human, it has certainly become more humanized through mimicry and a capacity to blend into human society – the homonormative assimilation technique.

We've seen how Count Dracula's strange behavior and bizarre appearance make him an off-putting character even before he has behaved in suspicious or frightening ways. The Cullens, meanwhile, attract attention in a much different way, which greatly influences how they are perceived by human eyes. When Bella first espies the Cullens in the school cafeteria, she is naturally distracted by their unparalleled beauty and shocking grace and agility (*Twilight* 18-21). When she asks her classmates about them, they explain the widespread cover story the Cullens use about their being

a foster family, and it is clear to Bella from the way they are discussed that they aren't popular with the other students. Upon realizing this, she "felt a surge of pity and relief. Pity because, as beautiful as they were, they were outsiders, clearly not accepted. Relief that I wasn't the only newcomer here, and certainly not the most interesting by any standard" (*Twilight* 22). This moment not only introduces the ever-present distinction of the Cullens from their human counterparts, but also how quickly Bella aligns herself with them. They appear so human, so sympathetic to her, that she is not frightened when she finds out that they are vampires; in fact, she identifies with them more readily than she does her human peers, and is also more comfortable with them than her human peers. She elaborates on both of these later, noting that "People always felt strangely ill at ease with the Cullens, almost afraid for some reason they couldn't explain to themselves. I was a rare exception to that rule. Sometimes it bothered Edward how very comfortable I was with being close to him. He thought he was hazardous to my health – an opinion I rejected vehemently whenever he voiced it" (*New Moon* 14). Despite their best efforts to blend into human society, the Cullens are constantly aware of the ways in which they are not successful and may occasionally arouse suspicion; they are closeted, constantly aware of their queerness by their inability to fit in with "normal" people.

Bella realizes the Cullens are different from her first sighting of them; however, she does not begin to grow suspicious of their humanity until Edward saves her from an accident in the school parking lot. Crossing the lot in mere seconds when a van loses control and speeds in her direction, Edward stops the truck with one hand, saving Bella's life (*Twilight* 56). Her own initial theory involves superhero lore until she learns that the Cullens aren't welcome on the Quileute land. She flirts with Jacob, then fifteen, and tricks him into sharing secret tribal lore that describes the Cullens as *the cold ones*: blood suckers and human hunters (*Twilight* 124-5). Though not sure what to think initially, she has no problem conceiving of the Cullens as something otherworldly, something she doesn't understand: "Could the Cullens be vampires? Well, they were *something*. Something outside

the possibility of rational justification was taking place in front of my incredulous eyes. Whether it be Jacob's *cold ones* or my own superhero theory. Edward Cullen was not...human. He was something more" (*Twilight* 138). Despite her seeming ease with the Cullens being vampires, though, Bella can't help but seem to place some value judgment on their supernatural status. When reflecting on her frustration about being unable to be honest with her father, Bella narrates that "It was against the rules for normal people – *human* people like me and Charlie – to know about the clandestine world full of myths and monsters that existed secretly around us" (*Eclipse* 13). Though Bella is genuinely not concerned about the fact that Edward is technically not even of her same species, she seems unable to disconnect her sense of humanity as being the intrinsic standard for normalcy – a standard that Edward, in his constant self-loathing and fear for Bella, seems to share.

Despite the fact that the Cullens are vampires and are therefore aligned with the abnormal both from within and without, their ability to act like human beings and not the expectation of a monster makes it easy for them to portray themselves as the former. In Jacob's section of *Breaking Dawn*, we are able to see evidence of this from the perspective of a character who – unlike Bella – was not in the slightest comfortable with the Cullens being vampires. After prolonged exposure, however, their façade eventually wears even Jacob down: when the wolf pack threatens to attack the Cullens to destroy the unborn half-vampire baby that Bella becomes pregnant with, Jacob tells his brothers "*I will stand between you and the Cullens, I won't just watch while the pack kills innocent* – it was hard to apply that word to vampires, but it was true – *people*" (*Breaking Dawn* 211).⁵ Vampires in the *Twilight* universe can choose to become quite human in personality, estranging them from their fellow vampires rather than the humans.

The Cullens pose as human because they miss being human and want a second chance to live as "normal" a life as possible despite their vampirism. Their compassion and homonormative

⁵ As the wolves are able to communicate telepathically – a biological adaptation to make them more a more effective pack – their thought dialogue is distinguished from verbal with the use of italics.

behavior shows that they place a strong value on the idea of humanity. Edward, in particular, places a strong value on humanity as natural and normal; he believes himself to be a monster, and wants to protect Bella from the burden of his perceived doom. In *Twilight*, Bella discovers the risk of dating a dangerous, otherworldly creature, when a run-in with a group of nomadic makes her the target of James, their leader's, hunt. Edward and his family do everything to protect her, but he is inevitably able to get her away from them by convincing her he has taken her mother hostage. Edward and his brothers find them and kill him, but not before he has had the chance to bite Bella. Despite the fact that her transformation would make it safer for them to sustain a relationship, Edward decides to fight his temptation and suck the venom from her system, saving her life and preserving her humanity. Later, Bella asks him to change her in order to allow them to be together, but he refuses, saying that he does not want to make her a monster too.

Edward is forced to face the consequences of leaving her unchanged in *New Moon* when a near-miss with Jasper, the family's newest vegetarian, leaves Bella injured and at risk in a house of hungry vampires. Deciding that he can no longer keep exposing her to the danger of vampire company, he breaks up with her, leaving her alone in the woods as his family leaves town without a trace. Bella spends the next several months in a lifeless, almost catatonic state. It isn't until she begins to hang out with Jacob Black the son of her father's best friend Billy, that she begins to heal and move on. In an attempt to find the meadow where she and Edward first fell in love, finds herself alone in the woods when a vampire named Laurent appears. One of the nomads who appeared with James the spring before, he has returned at the request of James's mate, Victoria, to see if Bella is still under the Cullen's protection. She is nearly killed when a pack of large wolves suddenly appear, chasing Laurent away. She soon discovers that Jacob and several other young men who live on the Native American reservation La Push have transformed into the large wolves who saved her. She discovers that his tribe, the Quileutes, have long had a treaty with the Cullens as

peaceful vampires, but that the overwhelming presence of vampires in Forks has triggered a generations-old transformation of the son's of the tribe into werewolves who protect the town from the threat of the vampires. She begins her recovery process anew, integrating into the werewolf community at La Push.

One day, she decides to cliff dive as she has seen many of the werewolves do, but does so alone and nearly drowns. Jacob saves her, and brings her home, where she is shocked to find Alice Cullen, Edward's sister. Alice, who can see the future, saw Bella dive into the water, and mistaking it for a suicide attempt, came to check on her. Edward finds out where Alice has gone and calls the Swan house to check on Bella. Jacob answers the phone, and when Edward asks where Charlie is, tells him he is at the funeral. While Jacob is referring to the funeral of one of Charlie's friends who recently suffered a heart attack, Edward misunderstands and believes Bella to be dead. He decides to go to Italy and incite the Volturi, the vampire governing body, to kill him – all of which Alice sees. She and Bella race to Italy to convince Edward that Bella is still alive – and just in the nick of time. His antics, however, are discovered by the Volturi, who insist that Bella must either be transformed into a vampire, or killed to protect their secret existence. Edward is horrified at this prospect but Bella is thrilled now that he has no choice and that she can remain with him forever as a fellow vampire. When Edward continues to argue the point with her, she asks the Cullens to take a vote on the issue. Carlisle, Esme, Emmet, Jasper and Alice all vote yes to Bella becoming a vampire (533-4). Rosalie and Edward both vote no, however, and this presents another opportunity to see not only how they view themselves but how they value humanity. Edward maintains his argument that she would be “bartering her soul for an eternity as a vampire” whereas Rosalie, jealous of Bella's humanity, tells her that “this is not the life I would have chosen for myself. I wish there had been someone there to vote no for me” (*New Moon* 541; 534). Even when leaving Bella human would put

the entire family at risk of the Volturi's punishment, Edward and Rosalie both place too much value on her humanity to consider the deviant alternative of vampirism.

Bella's complicated relationships with both Edward and Jacob become even more strained when she takes Edward back without a second thought. Insisting that the natural enmity between werewolves and vampires must keep them apart, Jacob begins to avoid Bella. *Eclipse* focuses on the age-old struggle between vampires and werewolves, as Edward and Jacob each fight for Bella's affections. The two must join sides, coven and tribe, however when they discover that Victoria has returned with an army of new born vampires to kill Bella and avenge James's death. Though their success in killing Victoria and her army leaves vampire-werewolf relations strengthened, Edward and Jacob continue their strained relationship when Bella reveals that she does love Jacob, but loves Edward more. Edward finally agrees to transform her into a vampire after graduation, and they each have one stipulation: Bella wants to have sex with Edward as a human first, and Edward insists that she marry him in order to avoid the sin of pre-marital sex. While Edward is finally convinced to protect Bella and preserve her existence by removing her from the dangers of being a human involved in the supernatural world, his one caveat is to force her into a heteronormative social role – a last ditch effort at preserving some modicum of normalcy for her.

Through their continual attempts to live as normal humans, it is clear that the Cullens place a strong value on maintaining heteronormative human society and culture; this is especially true when we consider how Edward attempts to force those values onto Bella and her humanity. Though the Cullens are no longer human themselves, they still place a considerable value on humanity – enough not only to avoid damaging it, but also actively to preserve it through a sort of cultural assimilation. Despite the fact that their status as vampires puts them in direct opposition to humanity – positing them as a threat to both normalcy and the value of life – they sacrifice all of their now-natural vampiric tendencies in order to play the parts of normal people. They have extremely

heteronormative family values, rooted strongly in heterosexual coupling, a stable family unit, and the unstoppable preservation of the child. They deny the excesses of their own queer status in order to preserve the social status quo, and despite their immortality, seem to place the same values on futurity and meaning as their human counterparts. But why are they so much more connected to humanity than Count Dracula? It is hard to say for certain, especially when considering that we never get to opportunity in *Dracula* that we do in *The Twilight Saga* to learn much about the Count's human life, or how and why he became a vampire, how he has fared since his transformation, and how that has impacted his perceptions of himself and humanity. *Twilight*, meanwhile, provides ample information about the Cullens that can be used to create some potentially enlightening comparisons between the two.

As Edward explains to Bella the reason that he and his family choose to deny their vampiric nature, he says "The others – the majority of our kind who are quite content with our lot – they, too, wonder at how we live. But you see, just because we've been...dealt a certain hand...it doesn't mean that we can't choose to rise above – to conquer the boundaries of destiny that none of us wanted. To try to retain whatever essential humanity we can" (*Twilight* 307). This essential humanity seems to be what distinguishes the Cullens from most of their counterparts, this attachment to their human lives. Unlike Count Dracula, who wants to learn as much as he can about English language and culture from Jonathan to better allow him to blend in, the *Twilight* vampires are not learning to mimic humanity, but rather to implement their memories of being human to inspire how they live as vampires. We find out very little from Dracula about his past as a human; all we discover is that he is a Transylvanian noble from an old family (Stoker 34). When he does discuss this it is not with nostalgia for his old life, but rather in discussing his desire to maintain an old property, much like his beloved Castle Dracula, when he moves to London because he enjoys the shadows and privacy. Much in the way physiognomy makes him more distinct from humans than the Cullens' appearance

does them, his apparent lack of attachment to his human memories and life creates an emotional distance between himself and humanity as well.

Meanwhile, learning Carlisle's history as a human is integral to understanding why the Cullens live as they do because Carlisle is not only their patriarch within their foster family façade, but their vampiric father as he transformed them. He was the son of an Anglican pastor who led an anti-vampire campaign over three hundred years ago, and he was transformed as he led an attack against a coven of local vampires (*Twilight* 332). He managed to drag himself into hiding until the transformation was complete, and avoid the temptation of human blood; he has never killed a human. Carlisle was forcibly transformed into a vampire, something he was raised to loath and fear as a deviation against humanity and God. He already had a very strong value judgment about vampires and how they fit into the world before he joined their ranks. When he was forcibly transformed, he determined to do everything in his power to retain his essential humanity and fight a fate that had been forced upon. This desire to defy his vampiric nature completely influences how he has raised his vampire children and taught them to see themselves; not as a superior or separate being from humans, but as a deviation that must deny itself for the sake of preserving humanity. He transformed the members of his vampire family within the last few moments of each of their lives. Fully aware of the consequences of being a vampire, Carlisle will only transform someone when they have no other choice in order to save their lives.

The circumstances under which they were each transformed into vampires, particularly with Carlisle as their father, left each of the Cullens not just attached to their own human histories, but quite humane as well. Edward and Rosalie are the only two he transformed who have ever killed humans – Edward hunted “bad guys” during a brief rebellious stint where he left Carlisle and pursued human blood, and Rosalie murdered the men who beat raped and beat her near to death. Rather than embrace the *jouissance* of a life of incredibly queer excess – super speed and strength,

unparalleled beauty, heightened senses – the Cullens seem to appreciate the second chance to live, and do not immediately separate themselves from humanity the way many of their more content peers do. Rather than embrace the power and freedom of a new life and a new state of being, they endeavor to spend eternity trying to recreate their former humanity. However one must question *why* the Cullens do so. The more traditional human-hunting vampires who they meet are all quite pleased with their lot, enjoying the excesses of speed, strength and beauty that immortality has granted them, indicating that the Cullens, too, could be quite content to live in their own society, interacting only with humans at meal time. Yet they choose to sacrifice the quality of the blood they consume – and therefore, the nutritional benefits of each meal – by hunting wild animals instead of humans. This they could do while still living as nomads, or even with the Volturi – Carlisle did so during his youth as a vampire (*Twilight* 340). And yet, they choose to sacrifice their natural instincts and desires, their nourishment, and their own comfort and stability by continually attempting not only to spare human society but also to live among it.

This is not to imply that all of the vampires within the *Twilight* universe are homonormative; more nomadic vampires have so greatly deviated from civilization since their transformations that they make Count Dracula, with his mansion home and financial stability, seem positively human. Within the context of *The Twilight Saga*, in fact, the Cullens are a rarity, viewed by their supernatural contemporaries as everything from amusing eccentrics to weak human sympathizers. The Cullens are making a cultural choice, a choice to “be normal” even when they are not – a choice that Meyer is aligning with the good, thereby pitting their every more traditional vampire foe – James, Victoria, Laurent, the Volturi – as the bad. If all vampires are queered to the heteronormativity of humanity, then the Cullens and their continual attempts to assimilate into humanity are the good because they attempt to normatize, to hide their true natures, whereas the “bad” vampires who do not attempt to

play human are the ever-feared, indestructible queers who will not destroy the status quo but rather disregard it altogether.

This sense of the Cullens as “the good” comes through loud and clear in these books, and for a multiplicity of reasons. The most obvious would be their choice not to drink human blood. There are, however, many other values assigned to the Cullens throughout the texts that reaffirm over and over that the Cullens are the “good guys” – socially, morally, and otherwise. The Cullens have a strong sense of exactly what being a vampire means and implies – Edward point-blank tells Bella “I don’t *want* to be a monster” (*Twilight* 187). Before he finally returns to Forks and reconciles his feelings for Bella, Edward leaves, not only to protect her from him, but also to protect himself and preserve the integrity of his promise to abstain from human blood. Carlisle, has not only never imbibed human blood, but has also completely overcome the temptation, allowing him to become a doctor. In his work he does not have to disregard his vampiric tendencies – in fact, he utilizes his superhuman skills to save his patients. He tells Bella that “What I enjoy the very most is when my...enhanced abilities let me save someone who would otherwise have been lost. It’s pleasant knowing that, thanks to what I can do, some people’s lives are better because I exist. Even the sense of smell is a useful diagnostic tool at times” (*New Moon* 34). Enjoying his heightened senses and powers as “pleasant” seems a rather disappointing alternative to the pleasures of jouissance he could experience were he to revel in his excesses the way Count Dracula or the more traditional *Twilight* vampires do. Not only has Carlisle managed to spare humanity despite his vampirism – he has found ways to use it to preserve humanity as well.

There is another relationship that Meyer’s vampires explore in interesting ways that contrasts well with *Dracula*: the relationship between man and God. *Dracula* is fraught with religious ideology, not only from the cultural and historical context within which the book was written, but also within which the story itself was set; in many ways, so is *Twilight*. The connection between the vampire and

religion will come up several times throughout this project as a cultural factor that plays into the vampire's reception by human characters, and – in the case of *Twilight* – how the vampire perceives him or herself. These concepts of reception and perception will be crucial for this argument in exploring the vampire's role in society and how they respond to it, and how that influences their decisions to embrace or deny their innate sociopolitical queerness. Indeed, throughout *Dracula* the religious cultural context in which the novel was set and written pervades the story, emphasizing not only Dracula's lack of humanity, but also the opposition to God that makes him even more alien to his mortal, God-fearing foes. Count Dracula, as the embodiment of pure evil, was a deliciously frightening demonic presence whose inevitable defeat by his mortal enemies was expected and anticipated by readers as the natural restoration of morality and social order (Heldreth and Pharr 1). He was the queer threat that had to be subdued in order to preserve the heteronormative social fabric. Victorian England, where Stoker set his story, was a world steeped in Christian religious faith, which affected the characters' perceptions of Count Dracula. Van Helsing, when explaining the vampire as the cause of Lucy's ailments, explains that she has been stricken and is now the Devil's Un-dead and must be destroyed (Stoker 218; 228). Arthur is horrified, as are Dr. Seward and Quincey, when Van Helsing claims that Lucy is now a vampire; but once they see her as a vampire and realize that she is no longer the same person, they readily help Van Helsing destroy her. Arthur thanks Van Helsing for "giv[ing] my dear one her soul again, and me peace" (246). The whole mythology of the Western vampire within *Dracula* is rooted in Christian belief that the Un-dead are the work of the Devil, an antithesis to soul's of God's creations when they have passed on from this world.

The Twilight Saga, meanwhile, set in modern America, is not written about a town or a society with very specific religious beliefs. Certainly, the centuries separating Carlisle's time from Bella's have allowed enough religious evolution to remove the suspicion of vampirism from the collective

forefront, making it easier for them to exist within society. Bella does not consider herself religious at all, so when she discovers that Edward is a vampire, she does not have the same sort of reaction that Mina did to Count Dracula. She did not believe that he was damned or did not have a soul, she did not see him as an agent of the Devil or a slight against God. And yet, Meyer, a devout Mormon, has allowed her own religious beliefs to slip into the fabric of the story through Carlisle and Edward. As the son of a pastor, Carlisle had never once doubted the existence of God in his nearly four-hundred-years. However, as he tells Bella, while he hopes even the vampire's life can have meaning, Edward is only "with me up to a point. God and heaven exist...and so does hell. But he doesn't believe that there is an afterlife for our kind [...] You see, he thinks we've lost our souls" (*New Moon* 37). Edward, who was born around the time that *Dracula* was first published, believes himself to be a perversion of his own religious beliefs, even as he lives in a more open, contemporary society whose members would not and do not all view him with the same disdain with which he regards himself.

Despite the contempt he holds for himself as a soul-less monster, Edward still has very firm spiritual beliefs. He still retains some of the religious conviction from his human days, which Bella points out to him when they are reunited at the end of *New Moon*, discussing her now-inevitable need to be transformed into a vampire herself:

"‘So eager for eternal damnation,’ he muttered.

‘You know you don’t really believe that.’

‘Oh, don’t I?’ he fumed.

‘No, you don’t. [...] If you really believed that you’d lost your soul, then when I found you in Volterra, you would have realized immediately what was happening, instead of thinking we were both dead together. But you didn’t – you said ‘*Amazing. Carlisle was right,*’ I reminded him, triumphant. “There’s hope in you, after all.”’ (546)

Certainly, his hope for an afterlife is apparent throughout *Eclipse* in his stubborn refusal to have sex with Bella before they are married. It is the only sin he has not yet committed, and yet, if he truly believed he did not have a soul, then why would this be an issue for him at all? In fact, why is he concerned about an afterlife at all? The *Twilight* vampires are nigh indestructible – the likelihood of Edward dying is extremely slim. And yet, he cannot help but retain those very human religious values that only enhance the need for us to find meaning through coupling and reproductive futurity in order to escape the reality of our own deaths. Even immortality, it seems, is not enough to challenge the very heteronormative belief in futurity that fuels much religious debate; at least, not when the character is a good guy. Edward is a hero because he retains his human (and very Christian) values – even those that cause self-loathing.

4. Chapter Four: The Vampire Next Door: Edward Cullen, Family Man

This new, demystified vampire might well be our next door neighbor, as Dracula, by origin, appearance, caste, and speech, could never pretend to be (Zanger 19).

Zanger claims that in order to speak of the “new” vampire, we must distinguish it from the “old” one, Bram Stoker’s Dracula who, he says, “against all changes must be measured” (17). Despite not being the first vampire to make his way into English literature, *Dracula* has had a long-lasting impact that has posited it as the standard within the Western vampire literary tradition, thereby creating Count Dracula as this “old” vampire. Zanger immediately sets out to distinguish the new vampire from the quintessential old figure presented in Count Dracula, beginning first with the communal nature that has developed since Dracula’s days of solitude. Auerbach notes that “Stoker austere expels from his tale of terror the ‘intimacy, or friendship’ that had, since Byron’s time, linked predator to prey” (65). We shall see the Cullens of *The Twilight Saga* struggling in immortality to hold onto the last threads of the human lives they have left behind as they attempt to

live in human society; we have no such connection between Dracula and humanity. The new vampire, meanwhile, is a communal creature who lives with and in relation to other vampires, in relationships akin to those that humans share in day-to-day life (18). This can be seen in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, Joss Whedon's hit show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Charlaine Harris's *Sookie Stackhouse* series and its *Trueblood* television counterpart, as well as in *The Twilight Saga*'s Cullen family. The family dynamic shared by the Cullens is just one of the many examples of them embracing and mimicking a heteronormative standard that will be discussed in more detail throughout this project.

Zanger notes that another major distinction between the old vampire and the new is the shift from singularity to communal existence. Count Dracula lives in solitude, whereas the Cullens live together as a family, not a coven. Whereas "Carmilla aspired to see herself in a friend[,] Dracula, in one of his few self-definitions, identifies only with a vanished conquering race whose token is not a mortal but an animal" (Auerbach 64). While much more of Dracula's day-to-day existence is shrouded in mystery than the Cullens' are, from what we are led to believe about the Count he has no friends or personal ties to the human world that go beyond the business relationships he carries on. Dracula's only companions are three female vampires who he essentially keeps imprisoned within his castle and uses as servants – very much akin to his dominant nature over human beings, as well. His few social interactions, such as his visit from Harker, happen only when absolutely necessary. Dracula, living richly in almost complete isolation, is not a part of the surrounding human community. In fact, when Harker changes from train to carriage to complete the last leg of his journey to Castle Dracula, we get an opportunity to see how Dracula is viewed by a small subset of the human population when they learn where the Englishman is headed. Though Harker cannot understand their foreign words, he clearly registers the fear in their eyes and their voices, their pleading, and the rosary that is forced upon him by a terrified woman. Dracula has completely

isolated himself from the community by embracing his deviancy and makes no effort to bridge the gap between himself and humanity. His motivations for such secrecy come across plainly enough; he maintains as much anonymity as possible, conferring with humans only when it is necessary to achieve his ends without attracting suspicion – as is the case when he calls Jonathan Harker, the solicitor's clerk, to Transylvania to help him legally secure property in London, a more fertile hunting ground.

The Cullens, meanwhile, live as a family unit, with Carlisle and Esme as the parents and the children living as siblings, seemingly embracing heteronormative values of coupling and futurity. Carlisle is a doctor at the hospital, and all five children are students at the local high school. They go out into public – albeit minimally – are known throughout the community, and have a place within that micro-culture same as any citizen in any small town. The Cullens live as many middle class American families, working and educating their children. When Bella and Edward begin dating, some of the Cullen children begin to interact a bit more with their human peers. Though Bella notes that some people are still uneasy with the Cullens for reasons they can't explain, this does not hinder their attempts to assimilate back into human culture. In fact, the more Alice and Edward Cullen, for instance, attempt to “act normal” and interact with Bella's friends the way human teenagers would, the more their classmates warm up to them. Though they appear quite human, the Cullens are only able to blend in with society in ways Dracula can't because they are willing to deny themselves and play human in order to be accepted back into the culture from which they've been expelled.

The Cullens seem more human than vampire because they *are* a family – not a coven, not a group of nomads – but two heterosexual parents and their adoptive children. As their bodies are unchanging, vampire women are virtually menopausal and cannot reproduce by human means. Certainly, Carlisle's transformation of the children could be seen as a form of biological

reproduction, with him as their father and creator. One could even go so far as to say that his transformation of Esme was their first sexual encounter, the first penetration between man and wife. They still recognize themselves as a family in the human sense, with Carlisle and Esme as the parents who adopted when they could not have their own children. The fact that the Cullens are a “family” is further aligned with the good when Garrett, a nomad who stands witness with them against the Volturi, declares:

I have witnessed the bonds within this family – I say *family* and not *coven*. These strange golden-eyed ones deny their very natures. But in return have they found something worth even more, perhaps, than mere gratification of desire? I’ve made a little study of them in my time here, and it seems to me that intrinsic to this intense family binding – that which makes them possible at all – is the peaceful character of this life of sacrifice. (*Breaking Dawn* 717-8)

Here, the Cullens’ family values are inextricably aligned with their decision not to partake of human blood, sacrificing their own desires for a “peaceful,” more human(e) existence.

It’s not just the need for family, but also the need for romantic relationships as well, which exemplifies the ways in which Meyer tries to place value on the Cullens decision to behave more culturally human than vampire. Count Dracula did not have room underneath his evil bloodlust to feel love or companionship – he has no mate. The bond between mated vampires is incredibly strong for *the Twilight Saga* vampires generally – Victoria spent more than a year and two books relentlessly trying to avenge James’s death before meeting her own demise. But once more, Meyer’s vampire myth allows her vampires’ sacrifice to create relationships usually aligned with humanity. Eleazar, another member of the Denali clan, explains how even the incredible bond between traditional vampire partners pales in comparison to emotions experienced by those vampires who don’t drink human blood, saying that “anything weaker than the bond between partners is in danger.

In normal coven, at least. Those are weaker bonds than those in our family, though. Abstaining from human blood makes us more civilized – lets us form bonds of true love” (*Breaking Dawn* 603). Edward is initially very cautious when he begins his first-ever relationship with Bella, telling her “I’m new at this; you’re resurrecting the human in me” (*Twilight* 304). It seems that not only are the Cullens and the Denali clan more humane because they chose to abstain from human blood, but that they are also rewarded with more human characteristics such as romantic relationships and human emotions.

Breaking Dawn concludes the saga with Bella and Edward’s wedding. Bella and Edward go to a private island on their honeymoon, where finally having sex with Edward leaves Bella questioning whether or not she wants to remain human longer to continue enjoying those moments. Her pondering quickly comes to a halt, however, when she makes a shocking discovery: she is pregnant with Edward’s child, something for which they have no precedent. The story then switches to Jacob’s perspective, from which we discover that Bella, now in love with her unborn baby, is refusing to let Carlisle operate and remove the half-vampire. Her pregnancy is accelerated and killing her; and the Cullens are working non-stop to find a safe way to transform Bella and deliver the child so they may both survive. Jacob, unable to sit back and watch Bella die, attempts to fall out of love with her, but is unable to do so. An accident forces Bella into unexpected labor when her placenta detaches and the baby tries to chew its way out of her. Edward and Jacob are able to deliver the baby, who Bella has named Renesmee for both her and Edward’s mothers, and Edward administers vampire venom throughout Bella’s body in order to save her.

Bella’s pregnancy is an interesting turn in the story, and not just because it seemed an impossibility for a human and vampire to conceive together. Edward’s hesitation to turn Bella into a vampire stemmed from his desire to not hinder ability to have human experiences; when he finally does concede, he tries to bargain for the amount of time before her transformation and for her to

have the experiences he deems as important to a human even as she expresses no interest in them: going to her prom, attending college. She tries to convince him that she does not feel like she will be missing any of these human experiences because she does not place the same value on them as he does – not even having children (*Breaking Dawn* 27-8). However, when she does unexpectedly find herself pregnant, everything changes:

What happened to change everything was that a soft little nudge bumped against my hand – from inside my body. [...]

From that first little touch, the whole world had shifted. Where before there was just one thing I could not live without, now there were two. There was no division – my love was not split between them now; it wasn't like that. It was more like my heart had grown, swollen up to twice its size in that moment. [...]

I'd never really understood Rosalie's pain and resentment before. I'd never imagined myself a mother, never wanted that. It had been a piece of cake to promise Edward that I didn't care about giving up children for him, because I truly didn't. Children, in the abstract, had never appealed to me [...]

This child, Edward's child, was a whole different story.

I wanted him like I wanted air to breathe. Not a choice – a necessity.

Maybe I just had a really bad imagination. Maybe that was why I'd been unable to imagine that I would *like* being married until after I already was – unable to see that I would want a baby until after one was already coming... (127;132)

This is perhaps the most heteronormative moment with the entire saga. Bella, throughout the series, has been shockingly understanding about the supernatural happenings around her and fairly nonjudgmental about what standards of normalcy people should be held to. Despite her desire to commit to Edward, she was initially very hesitant to marry him as she has bad experiences with her

parents' own young marriage, which ended in divorce while she was a small child (*New Moon* 540-1). She agrees to marry him in exchange for something she wants – pre-vampiric sex. Only by agreeing to marry him and follow his turn-of-the-century standards for relationship decorum is she allowed everything she wants: to have a sexual relationship with Edward and to be transformed into a vampire by him. After she marries him as a condition of their agreement, she discovers she likes it; despite having no interest in or desire for a child, she suddenly finds she likes that idea once it is a reality because it is *Edward's* child. Though most of the familial relationships throughout *The Twilight Saga* are not as heavy-handed as this example, Bella's unexpected pregnancy is one moment where it is fairly apparent that the author is imposing her heteronormative values on the characters in the text. The idea of reproduction in *Twilight* as a whole also speaks to their more normative values: Count Dracula transforms people into other vampires for purposes of domination; the Cullens only transform someone for companionship.

Following Renesmee's birth, the story then returns to Bella's point of view, as she describes her painful transformation. When she finally awakens three days later as a vampire, she discovers that she has unnatural powers of self-control; she also discovers that Jacob has imprinted on Renesmee. Imprinting is an ancient werewolf rarity in which a young werewolf will meet his soul mate, no matter what age they are, and is suddenly unable to see anyone else romantically. Though she is initially horrified, she is later thrilled as their imprinting not only strengthens to relationship of the vampires and the werewolves, but allows Jacob to remain a part of her life without the animosity and rivalry he formerly shared with Edward. Bella is even able to let her father back into her life, although without revealing the truth. She suddenly finds herself incredibly happy – beautiful, strong and immortal, with a loving husband and child, and a large family that includes her closest friends. Now married, a mother, and lying to her father about her true nature in order to maintain the perfect family façade, Bella Cullen is now another homonormative vampire suppressing her own

potential jouissance and excesses for the sake of pretending to be exactly what she was before her transformation. Everything seems to be going perfectly - except for the constant fear that Edward and Bella feel over the uncertainty of their daughter's future as she continues to age and develop rapidly.

While hunting with Renesmee and Jacob, Bella realizes they are being watched and is able to discern by her golden eyes that the visitor is Tanya of the Denali, who flees the scene with a look of anguish. Believing her suffering to be caused by seeing the newly-transformed Bella in the company of one of the werewolves who kills her mate, Bella mentions Tanya's appearance to the family but quickly forgets about it. They are all forced to remember several weeks later when Alice suddenly has a horrifying vision: upon seeing Renesmee and believing that the Cullens have created an immortal child – thereby breaking vampire law – Tanya went to the Volturi and turned them in. Alice sees the entire vampire government arriving in Forks in one month to kill their entire family. Alice and Jasper flee, and the rest of the family immediately begins reaching out to vampire friends and allies to meet Renesmee and stand as witness against the Volturi that she is a half-human child who is capable of growing and learning, thereby not threatening the statute of vampire secrecy.

Bella, Jacob and the Cullens spend the next month bringing witnesses to their side and planning battle strategy with the La Push werewolves. Everyone who meets Renesmee naturally falls in love with the child, and soon several dozen vampires are all staying at the Cullen's house, ready to fight a losing battle against the Volturi for the sake of protecting the ever-important child. Bella discovers the height of her vampire abilities, and buys fake documentation for Renesmee and Jacob, allowing them the opportunity to start over if they lose the fight with the Volturi. The month passes quickly. The Cullens, the werewolves and their witnesses gather in the field Alice saw in her vision, and await the arrival of the Volturi. They are able to convince the Volturi to meet Renesmee and they realize that she is not a transformed vampire child, and kill Tanya in retribution for her false

accusation. They begin to discuss whether or not they should allow Renesmee to live when they know nothing of vampire hybrid babies and what they will grow to become. The Cullens and their witnesses all prepare to fight, to die, to protect the child. Suddenly, Alice and Jasper return with two strangers from the Amazon: a vampire, and her half-human, half-vampire nephew. The young man, Nahuel, reveals that he stopped aging at seventeen, and lives much like a full-blooded vampire. Unable to hold any further charges against the Cullen clan, the Volturi retreats. Newly armed with the news that her daughter's advanced aging will slow itself and not result in her untimely death, Bella and her family return to a life of immortal happiness.

5. Chapter Five: Deviation as Reflection: The Vampire as a Socio-Politically Reactive Character

All this is a little confusing morally. How can we have sympathy for the Devil and still regard him as the Devil? That question seems to have occurred to Stephenie Meyer, who is Mormon. Edward, the featured vampire of Meyer's 'Twilight,' is a dashing fellow, and Bella, the heroine, becomes his girlfriend, but they do not go to bed together (because of the conversion risk). Neither should you, Meyer seems to be saying to her teen-age readers. (Acocella 5)

The vampire within this project is discussed not solely as a character within the context of its specific story, but as a reactive literary figure. By "reactive," this project refers to the vampire as it speaks to and of the social thought of the culture in which it is created. Nina Auerbach, author *Our Vampires, Our Selves*, comments on the American vampire trend alongside an ever-changing political landscape:

Vampires changed with my life and times. In the 1960s, like so much else that had been denied in the '50s, they burst out of the underground crypt that had confined Bela Lugosi into the light of brightly colored Hammer films. In the 1970s, like

American Women, they broke out of their preordained plot to create self-generated news stories. [...] my depression, in the '80s, about Ronald Reagan's grinning descent over the American imagination colors my memory of vampires newly subdued. The alacrity with which vampires shape themselves to personal and national moods is an adaptive trait in their apparent uniformity masks. (4-5)

Is it too much, then, to conceive of the literary figure of the vampire as a politically reactionary character? Auerbach certainly thinks not. Moreover, Auerbach latent homoerotic undertones in *Dracula* to be a response to the Oscar Wilde case.⁶ Joan Acocella notes that "As Auerbach sees it, Stoker, spooked by the Wilde case, backed off from this rich ambiguity, thereby impoverishing vampire literature. After him, she says, vampire art became reactionary" (5). She, too, sees the vampire as a queer character, in every sense in which this essay explores the term: "The segregation of vampires from mortal society, their complicity in a restorative ideology that re-erects barriers – not only between vampire and mortal, but between male and female, rich and nonrich, queer and straight, white Christians and alien Others – affects even the vampires who spring from the homosexual culture that, in literature at least, came into its own in the 1980s" (186). Thus, the vampire since *Dracula* has embodied queerness and served as a reactionary figure to the present socio-cultural handling of the queer component of its respective community. Acocella is firm in her opinion that *Dracula* was a text quite guided by its surrounding social context, and Auerbach asserts again and again that the literary figure of the vampire became a politically reactive character with Count Dracula. Certainly, Meyer's more subtle and yet ever-present themes of social and spiritual morality suggest a certain value being assigned to the text and its characters by the author that readers are supposed to take away from it. The vampire, it seems, is still a character whose treatment is intended to speak to us about our present cultural morality.

⁶ In 1895, Irish writer Oscar Wilde was put on trial for "gross indecency" and imprisoned for two years hard labor for his affairs with other men. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_wilde. Web. 20th March 2010.

Dracula's isolation from human characters does more than just create him as a monster; it also helps to create him as a politically reactive character. His "disjunction from earlier, friendlier vampires makes him less a specter of an undead past than a harbinger of a world to come, a world that is our own" (Auerbach 63). As a novel, *Dracula* oozes with the popular cultural icons and technological innovations of the changing world at the end of the nineteenth-century. Telegrams are sent between characters as they gather information and plan their assault against the Count; Dr. Seward often records his diary on audio cylinders (which Mina transcribes with a typewriter), and the characters use the train in their travels between England and Transylvania. In her article, Acocella proposes that the use of a foreigner to embody the monstrous speaks to the socio-political horror of immigration that plagued the late Victorians (5). Acocella and Auerbach both note Dracula as a response to another "horror" that Victorians faced at the turn of the century: homosexuality. Auerbach compares Dracula, the character, to Oscar Wilde. Whereas earlier vampires possessed a ghostliness that "deflected improper intercourse with mortals," Auerbach believes that Dracula, as a "fully corporeal" monster, "has no sheltering spirituality, and so he is as vulnerable as Oscar Wilde to opprobrium and incarceration" (84). Drawing the parallel more specifically between Victorian society and Dracula, Auerbach states that by "constructing an absolute category that isolated 'the homosexual' from 'normal' men and women, medical theory confined sexuality as narrowly as Van Helsing does the vampire" (83); she indicates that the British 1890s were as haunted by the homosexual as they were by the vampire.

And yet, Meyer's vampires are divided into two camps: the majority of more traditional vampires (at least, by Meyer's mythos) and those rare examples who defy their natures to embrace a morality that is aligned with both humanity and the good, which become inextricably linked in her saga. *Dracula* was written in the context of Victorian England, a society "haunted" by the homosexual, a monster of its own clinical making (Auerbach 83). More than a hundred years later,

The Twilight Saga is written for and within the context of a modern day America, continually plagued with the issues of homosexual rights. If the vampire can still be seen not only as a reactionary character, but also as a character often aligned with homosexuality, then the presence of two different “types” of queer characters within Meyer’s work no longer seems confusing: the deviant vampire presence that threatens humanity and normalcy, and the small subset within fighting to preserve humanity and normalcy through a socio-political assimilation.

By aligning the Cullens and the Denali clan – the vampires who not only avoid hurting “normal” human people but who also strive in all appearances to blend in with them – with the good, she is positing a strong social value on their homonormative behavior. Likewise, all of the vampires whom she pits against the Cullens as antagonists are fully vampiric in their beliefs and behaviors – the Volturi and the nomads who fully embrace their jouissance and sinthomosexuality as future-negating queers and embodiments of death – the very immortal “undead” whom Žižek posits as embodying a fully queered spirit. The fully queer vampires become the indestructible, immutable queers who forego heteronormative human society completely, with no regard for the future, the family or the Child. The Cullens, meanwhile, are the queers of the IGF’s dreams, who do not “pose any threat to social morality of the political order,” and yet “oppose ‘progressive’ claims that (gays) should support radical social change or the restructuring of society” (Duggan 48).

If vampires have been reactionary characters since *Dracula*’s indication of Victorian era homophobia, we can see some interesting reflections of our own culture in the vampire of today. Count Dracula was a mystery, a fearsome deviation and an abomination against God that must be stopped for the good of human morality – certainly, a fitting reflection of the homophobic attitude towards the burgeoning homosexual that his characterization embraced. The Cullen family, meanwhile, consists of closeted, self-loathing vampires who do “not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them” – the very definition

of homonormative behavior. The horrified reactions of Van Helsing, Dr. Seward and the Harkers to Count Dracula reflect the horror experienced by Victorian citizens when faced with the monster of the homosexual. Certainly, Bella's warm reception to the truth about the Cullens indicates a change in societal attitudes over the last hundred-plus years, but she is only one person who came into the situation with a strong emotional bias already in their favor. Bella's understanding is warranted – unlike Dracula, the Cullens are completely human-friendly, just looking to make do with their current circumstances. However, instead of being able to find a new way to embrace themselves and their lives after their transcendence into queerness, they feel the only way to exist is to wear the mask of normalcy and attempt to recreate their former human lives as best as they can. The modern vampire feels like they need to hide who they really are through a homonormative assimilation technique – despite being no threat to humanity, despite being just as good, if not better, than many human beings. What, then, does the evolution of this culturally reactive character tell us about the value we now place on the appearance of normalcy and conformity versus personal fulfillment and happiness?

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