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The New Woman persona in “Dracula” and the “Twilight” series: An elliptical struggle of social order

Silvia E. Herrera
University of Texas-Pan American

THE NEW WOMAN PERSONA IN *DRACULA* AND THE *TWILIGHT* SERIES: AN ELLIPTICAL STRUGGLE OF SOCIAL ORDER

A Thesis

by

SILVIA E. HERRERA

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Rebecca Mitchell
Chair of Committee

Dr. Melynda Nuss
Committee Member

Dr. Marci R. McMahon
Committee Member

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis will explore the existence of the New Woman persona found in the Gothic works, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight series*. By exploring this persona, we can shed light on the internal struggle, comprised of Victorian gender roles and one's desire to seek greater liberation, which results in the presence of an elliptical struggle that finds itself at a constant state of progression and digression. In order to have a greater understanding of the New Woman persona, we must explore both works' themes of the uncanny figure, sexuality and female heroism. Through the exploration of these themes, metaphors will be used to distinguish a deep relationship between both works. The parallels drawn between these characters will prove the internal struggle women underwent in order to achieve a cathartic state, resulting in the existence of the New Woman persona in vampire literature.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in the memory of my father; a man who taught me discipline, work ethic, and to dream. May this work please his interest for the supernatural and the unknown.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I accredit Dr. Rebecca Mitchell in encouraging and inspiring me to read and write about *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series. If it was not for her persuading me to remove myself from my comfort zone, I would not have written this thesis and explored vampire literature. I thank her for her kind words and motivation.

It was a great honor to have Dr. Melynda Nuss and Dr. Marci McMahon on my thesis committee. These individuals were chosen for a reason, for they helped mold me into the writer I am today. I am grateful for their wisdom and guidance.

I wish to thank my family and friends who encouraged and supported me to achieve my potential and beyond; my father who worked hard to give me an education, my mother for listening to me, my sisters for supporting my endeavors, my two best friends for always being by my side through the good and the bad, and my dear muses, G. and S., who constantly provided endless amounts of motivation and laughter during stressful writing sessions.

A special thanks to Miguel for occasionally sitting right next to me, dictating everything I said and challenging my arguments. These discussions were very beneficial in conjuring and improving my arguments.

To each of the above, I extend my deepest appreciation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION:

THE NEW WOMAN IN GOTHIC LITERATURE

At my nearest bookstore, I noticed a display with an abundance of books piled upon one another. The cover of the book was a ruffled red and white tulip centered on a black background. I then noticed a sign that stated “Best Seller.” I grabbed the book with one hand and read the title, *New Moon*. I decided to read the back cover and reviews. I was baffled as to why this book would be a best seller. My curiosity led me to purchasing and reading the novel. I wish to say I was delightfully moved by these characters, especially by the female protagonist, Bella. Though, the word pathetic is the word that comes to mind when I think of Bella. She seemed so backwards and out of place for a twenty-first century woman; a horrible role model for any young teen or woman. Who would have known then that my contempt for this character would ultimately be the stepping stone in the initiation of my thesis.

Upon my attendance in a Comparative Literature course, Dr. Rebecca Mitchell requested for the classroom to write a comparison essay on two literary works. Dr. Mitchell asked what I was planning to write about, and I explained to her my topic. She felt that I needed to remove myself from my comfort zone, since I enjoyed writing about psychoanalytical theory. She asked me what I currently was reading, and I replied with *New Moon*. I explained my disdain for the novel and characters. She smiled and then said, “Write about that! Compare it to another vampire work.” I explained to her that I had never read a vampire novel, not even the epitome of gothic

horror *Dracula*. That was all she needed to hear. “Then, you will write a comparison between *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series.”

The bestselling novels *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series encompass the essence of the gothic genre and have made their way into the hands of millions. A question often posed about these well known works is: why are these vampiric works, with untraditional female protagonists, so popular in society? In order to have a greater understanding of their popularity and influence to society, this introduction will explore the spheres of the authors and readers, with regards to the historical context of the novels’ publication and response.

A distinct link found in *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series is the New Woman persona, which emerged as a rebellion against Victorian conventions. In the nineteenth century, women were once thought to be “Angels of the House” who were responsible for the well being of their husband and children. Some Victorian women began to walk away from the kitchen, speak out their concerns, and therefore sought higher forms of education and took control of their sexuality, which entailed dressing for comfort and refusing to have children; these women radicalized the Victorian era and literature. New Woman writers assisted in voicing the frustrations of Victorian women. Some of these influential women were: Olive Schreiner, Kate Chopin, and Sarah Grand to name a few. Sarah Grand , a writer who removed herself from the bounds of marriage and motherhood, contributed many powerful New Woman works such as: “The Man of the Moment,” “The Modern Woman,” “The New Aspect of the Woman Question,” and “The Undefinable: A Fantasia,” all of which centered on social and gender inequality and were published in 1894. Grand’s name is often synonymous to the title of the New Woman, for she serves as an exemplary model of this woman’s ideologies. As Grand argues in “The Man of

the Moment," "when woman ceases to suffer degradation at the hands of man, she will be satisfied, and let him alone" (620).

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was published in 1897 at a time when established Victorian social and gender roles were challenged by the emergence of the New Woman persona in society, being mirrored in contemporary literature. The New Woman persona is an individual who conflicts with societies standards, taking on modern roles not relegated to women of her time, and advocates for social freedoms for the Victorian woman. Stoker made use of the New Woman persona in *Dracula* to illustrate the controversies of social and gender upheavals of the time. Nineteenth century upper and middle class Victorians could not keep their hands off the novel; they were fascinated, enthralled, and threatened by *Dracula*. The struggle between good, the Victorians, versus evil, Count Dracula, was illustrated as a wonderful metaphor in respects to the movement of feminism and its social consequences. Victorians viewed and enforced their women to be angels of the house; though, some Victorian women began to question their submissive position and sought for independence. Dracula struck a chord to its audience due to its relevance to the New Woman and her movement. Readers utilized the text as a form of escapism from Victorian society and into a window where gender roles were reversed and satisfied.

The *Twilight* series by Stephanie Meyers was published between 2005 and 2008, over a century after the publication of *Dracula*. The importance of these new novels in comparison to the epitome of Victorian horror is the reemergence of the New Woman persona, during a time period where women are believed to share equal roles with men, a standard their Victorian counterparts did not enjoy. Twenty-first century women, while enjoying an expansive repertoire of liberties, are still subjugated by various norms stipulated by the men in their society. While

Western society has evolved since the Victorian period, women are still severely restricted in various facets of society. For instance, society's expectations of women have not differed much from Victorian expectations. Women are still expected to be fruitful mothers, the guardians of the home. If a woman is divorced and childless, society rarely questions the fault of the man. Instead blame is placed upon the women, arising accusations of barrenness or unfit to be a wife. As opposed to shifting responsibility to the man, the woman is continuously being oppressed by the society that questionably accepts her. These restrictions have led to the reemergence of the New Woman persona in gothic literature of the twenty-first century, as the expression of underlying oppressions experienced by women, mirrored in the novels. While, Victorian women fought the oppression and subjugation enforced onto them, their twenty-first century progeny face similar repressions. While granted many rights, and held equal in many instances to men, women are continuously suffocated by the modern patriarchal male dominated society. As a result, the New Woman persona has once again risen in neo-gothic vampiric literature, reflecting the undying cries of the women she reflects.

Literature has the ability to invoke and provoke actions and involvement within the reader. Vast arrays of interpretations lie within the language of the text. Through the language of the text, the reader is able to travel unknown worlds, encounter the fantastic, and take on new personas by merely reading a few lines and words. To read is to essentially interpret. Through the use of the texts, *Dracula* and *Twilight series,* readers are able to bring life to the New Woman persona and her influence to the genre and self.

Today, *Dracula* is seen as the epitome of gothic horror that offers a psychoanalytical view into the fears and desires of Victorian society. For contemporary Victorians, the novel did not achieve the same fanfare and recognition of modern day readers, due to its symbolic

relevance to Victorian sexuality and gender role reversals. In fact, *Dracula*, at that time, was placed into the popular canon of adventurous fiction. According to Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal, they stated that, "*Dracula* seemed commonplace in 1897 in part because it was one of many fantastic adventure stories pitting many Englishmen against foreign monsters" (ix). While some viewed the novel as ordinary, other nineteenth century reviewers and critics were captivated and elevated of its creativity. *The Daily Mail* reviewed *Dracula* on June 1, 1897, as a quintessential work that surpassed some of the great horror works of the time; the review reads, "In seeking to parallel to this weird, powerful, and horrorful story our mind reverts to such tales as 'The Mysteries of Udolopho,' 'Frankenstein,' 'Wuthering Heights,' 'The Fall of the House of Usher,' and 'Marjery [sic] of Quether.' But 'Dracula' is even more appalling in its gloomy fascination than any one of these" (Rev. of *Dracula*, by *The Daily Mail* 363). When published in America in November 1899, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reviewed *Dracula* as "one of the most powerful novels of the day…the story is told in such a realistic way that one actually accepts its wildest flights of fancy as real facts. It is a superb tour de force which stamps itself on the memory" (Rev. of Dracula, by *San Francisco Chronicle* 367). Advanced Victorian readers were appalled and attracted to *Dracula* due to its controversial context of gender and social role reversals. The *Bookman* reviewed *Dracula* on August 1897 as an extraordinary work "since Wilkie Collins left us we have had no tale of mystery so liberal in manner and so closely woven. But with the intricate plot and the methods of the narrative, the resemblance to the stories of the author of the 'The Woman in White' ceases; for the audacity and horror of 'Dracula' are Stoker's own" (Rev. of *Dracula*, by *Bookman* 366). This review lightly touches the surface of how "liberal" the novel is in respects to social and gender reversals. For the advanced Victorian

reader/ thinker, *Dracula* was approached, not only as a fictional horror, but as a biographical analogy of the repressions felt of the time.

Female Victorian readers found themselves unconsciously identifying with *Dracula's* female protagonists, Lucy and Mina. The reader's identification with Lucy and Mina creates an internal recognition of the self's conflict between the desire to conform to societal gender norms versus the liberation of attaining an identity that is not governed by society. This conflict brings to light the reader's subliminal ambition to follow the New Woman persona's ideology of female liberation. Readers, who were too fearful of being out casted or disowned by a society, illustrated their aspiration to display New Woman behavior by losing themselves within the pages of the text. Consequently, through the reader's association with the female protagonists in *Dracula*, they are able to live vicariously through a double figure; the double figure being the New Woman persona. According to Jacques Lacan, the double is produced by the "mirror stage," which is the identification of oneself "when [one] assumes an image" and is the "apparatus in the appearances of the double, in which physical realities, however heterogeneous [in majority cases, but not restricted to], are manifested" (442-443). While Julia Kristeva states that a double gives the subject a temporary identity and is the "unconscious substance of the same, that which threatens it and engulfs it" (246). In other words, the reader is able to express any repressed desires, needs, or wants through the usage of another figure, in order to protect oneself from scrutiny and abolishment. The presence of the New Woman in Gothic literature allows for the reader to create a social connection with the female protagonists, thus generating a vehicle for escapism from everyday norms. Today, *Dracula* is marked as an influential piece in female feminism, by conveying the emergence of the New Woman in Victorian society and its authority

in gothic literature. Even in the twenty-first century, readers find themselves identifying with the New Women found in *Dracula* and other gothic works.

The *Twilight series* became a phenomenon for millions of women worldwide. According to Stephanie Yap from *The Strait Times*, *Twilight* has sold more than "13 million copies in the United States alone" and continues to thrive (par. 10). Joe Neumaier from the *Daily News* reports that in 2003, *Twilight* acquired the No.5 spot and rapidly moved to the No.1 spot on the *New York Times* Best Seller list for Children's Chapter Books, within a month of publication, and was named Best Book of the Year by *Publisher's Weekly*. In 2006, *New Moon*, the second installment, hit No. 1 on the New York Times Best Seller list. In 2007, *Eclipse*, the third installment, beat J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* for the top spot on best seller lists (Neumaier 34). The books were often received in two different lights; one being accredited for being a wonderful love story and another as an anti-feminist work. Liesl Schillinger, from the *New York Times* Sunday Book Review for the Children's Books / Young Adult, writes that "Meyer, the popular young-adult author, has teased her readers with the romantic confusion of a normal (well…human, at any rate) girl who's being pursued by a teen wolf named Jacob Black and is in love with a ravishing American Nosferatu named Edward Cullen" (Schillinger), thus, creating a whirl wind love story that everyone would want to sink their teeth into. Other *Twilight* readers argue that based on the advances of feminism in the twenty- first century, the series portrays anti-feministic ideologies, thus bringing women back. Rebecca Walker critiques, on her word press blog, that the series is a poor example of feminism:

> Bella Swan stars in four anti-feminist novels, the *Twilight* series. She and the other main characters are gender stereotyped to a fault. Abusive misogyny and an embracement of lookism run rampant throughout the 500 pages of the first novel,

> *Twilight*, and her experiences with teen romance and/or love are truly a masterpiece on how to have an unhealthy relationship. (LadyRebecca)

Whichever way *Twilight* is viewed, it still has managed to find its way into the homes of millions of Twi-hard fans.

Interestingly, the series seems to be tailored for a specific group of female readers. Julia Arensen, from *The Advertiser* in Australia, explains that "the series unashamedly targets teenage girls and women in general with the story of a blood-thirsty high-school romance that serves up a burgeoning love affair and tame supernatural thrills" (28). According to Stephanie Meyer, the series is centered on the theme of adolescent love, a time where love is simple and pure; in an interview conducted by Damian Whitworth for the *The Times*, Meyer explains, "Because it's the first time you fall in love, it's the first time you kiss somebody. All those feelings are so much stronger. You are not calloused up yet, you haven't had your heart broken a few times so you know how to handle it. Everything is very vivid so it's a lot of fun to write about" (Whitworth). These reviews suggest that women and teenagers alike can relate to the want and need of enduring an emotional journey of true love, in order to achieve an identity of oneself with the completion of another. In *The Adverstiser*, a forty -something year- old *Twilight* fan named Melinda Bilbey was quoted saying, "For women waiting for a real-life love, *Twilight* is the perfect fantasy vehicle. Also, as an older reader, Bella's experiences echo back to my youth and I remember what it meant to fall in love for the first time" (Arensen 28). Traditionally, women have been taught that their life is not complete until they have obtained a significant other. By having a significant other, one would have obtained stability. Even some women who claim to be independent, search for a sense of security in another to reduce the responsibilities of a single woman, such as paying the bills.

Meyer's incorporation of the supernatural figures brings success to the works. The vampires and werewolves serve as uncanny figures, which are defined as something that is familiar and yet unknown at the same time. By incorporating an uncanny figure, the vampire, readers are able to escape through the unknown. The supernatural figure exudes uniqueness and mystique; all the more reason why female readers become entranced with these figures not found in reality. They serve as an excuse to be in a constant search for the ideal suitor, which a lot more thrill seeking as opposed to just settling for any man. By living vicariously through Bella, female readers are able to escape their mundane life and run away with an ideal suitor who dwells in the realm of the supernatural, giving them an excuse to live dangerously without consequences.

Twenty-first century female readers are attracted to the gothic *Twilight* series due to its romantic and chivalric elements, characteristics uncommonly practiced today. Women of the twenty-first century are unlike the women of the Victorian era; they are free to do what they please and are considered equals to men, even though they still confront gender inequalities. Today, women carry various titles from wife, mother, girlfriend, daughter, friend, lover, career woman, volunteer, and limitless amounts of others that could lead any woman to feel overwhelmed with responsibilities, one where your identity becomes lost in a vast array of labels. In the article "Multiple Roles Make Women Susceptible", Dr. Lucille Peszat, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Stress and Well-Being in Toronto, explains that "The one big difference between today and past generations is that the majority of women are now in the workforce…women today have a completely different life from a generation or two ago... [though] they still try to follow in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents" ("Multiple Roles" C9). Eli Bay, founder of The Relaxation Response Institute in Toronto, further illustrates that women "are very hard on themselves. They feel that they have to prove themselves and that

they must do everything perfectly. Unfortunately, this need to be prefect can trigger lots of stress related problems" ("Multiple Roles" C9). This suggests that women yearn to regress to the simplicity of Victorian life, and the excuse of being withheld of certain responsibilities, would ease one's mind. As a result, twenty-first century women unconsciously desire for the comfort of standardized Victorian social and gender norms, where women were once wooed, mandated a position and maintained by their husband. The liberties of today have created a backlash of women searching for the rigidity of a relationship mimicking Victorian standards. In order to fill this void, many have turned to literature, for one instance, *Harlequin* novels, to fulfill their repressed desire for Victorian chivalric ideals.

Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series is an exemplary example of a work used today to escape the realities of the twenty-first century social and gender norms. What draws the readers to the text is the reader's unconscious recognition of the New Woman persona – a repressed woman; from the women of the Victorian era to the women of today. Female readers, primarily, can relate to the female protagonist, Bella, and the internal struggles she undertakes in order to find her place in society. Women of the twenty-first century are the representation of the free woman who has more liberties than her Victorian predecessors, hence fulfilling the New Woman's goal of achieving independence from society's norms; unfortunately, the New Woman persona never demised, for she resurfaces as the repressed woman that is found today. Women are still being oppressed and are discreetly being stripped of their independent identity. Women are still expected to conform to certain standards in order to gain acceptance and recognition. Standards that were once believed to be removed are in actuality still enforced and practiced. For instance, female sexual liberation is believed to be accepted as a norm in today's society; however, if a woman is overtly sexual, her behavior is still questioned and then she is labeled as

tainted. Women feel this oppression and resort to escaping in literature. This is why female readers find themselves attracted to the Victorian chivalric behavior Edward Cullen displays unto Bella Swan. Edward's out of this world admiration and protectiveness of Bella creates for the readers a pathological desire to regress to Victorian standards in order to achieve such a suitor. Through Bella, the New Woman persona, the reader is allowed to break away into another world or time period with an uncanny figure, Edward the vampire, where social and gender standards can be reversed.

To the readers, both Victorian and modern gothic works, *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series, serve as a catalyst in achieving self recognition with the New Woman persona. In doing so, the readers live vicariously through the female protagonists / double figure in order to endure a cathartic release of the social and gender oppressions felt of the time. The New Woman figure is essential in uncovering the truth of a society's lack of equality and brings to light the internal conflicts that lie within the reader against society.

Fundamental to understanding the significance of the New Woman in these gothic works is the relationship between the author and their gender. Bram Stoker and Stephanie Meyer are responsible for creating literary works with strong popular followings, works that illustrate the emergence of the New Woman persona both in Victorian and twenty-first century society. Primarily, the author's gender signifies differing views in the representation of the New Woman persona; as well as the author's background and environment as motives for the creation of the New Woman persona in their novels.

Bram Stoker, born 1847, was considered a man of progression. Stoker was often surrounded by powerful women, women who voiced their concerns and conveyed a desire to

break social and gender norms (Senf, "'Dracula': Stoker's Response" 37). According to Harry Ludlam, Stoker's mother, Charlotte, was often described as free willed and outspoken who detained herself with "social welfare work and determined championing of the weaker sex," especially women who worked in workhouses, where she advocated for a solution to "equalize the sexes, both here and in our colonies, by encouraging emigration. In new countries, there is a dignity in labour, and a self-supporting woman is alike respected and respectable" (Ludlam 13-14). While Stoker's relationship with his mother might have been amicable, evidence suggests his relationship with his wife, Florence Balcombe, was not. Daniel Farson states that Stoker's granddaughter believed that Florence refused to have any sexual relations with him after the birth of their child (214). The disapproval of having relations with her husband, suggests a woman of outspoken courage to rebuff matrimonial intimacy; an act uncharacteristic of a Victorian woman. Therefore, Stoker's experiences with his mother and his sexual frustration due to the lack of intimacy with his wife resulted in Stoker creating a double standard for the New Woman.

According to Carol A. Senf in "'Dracula': Stoker's Response to the New Woman", Stoker's personal life leads him to incorporate the New Woman and her ideologies in *Dracula*; Senf explains:

> Familiar with the feminist movement and apparently supportive of women's struggle for professional equality, he creates women characters who are the intellectual equals of the men in his novels; however he seems to have drawn the line at sexual equality, and he has his heroines choose the traditional roles of marriage and motherhood instead of careers. (38)

Stoker is supportive of the strength of the New Woman. Unfortunately, because of the sexual repression enforced onto him by his wife, Stoker also viewed the sexual nature of the New Woman with vexation. As a result, Stoker carried ambivalent notions of the New Woman. Stoker was also aware of the controversial status of the New Woman within Victorian society. We can conclude Stoker was aware of the attention the novel would attract, with the inclusion of the New Woman persona in *Dracula.*

With respect to Stoker's gender and the time period, he made certain his female protagonists did not achieve the liberation the New Woman sought for, by retrogressing them into true Victorian women. Victorian disapproval of the New Woman's ideologies consequently resulted in Stoker's decision in violently murdering Lucy for transforming into a vampire and denouncing Mina from heroine to housewife and mother. A woman who is overtly sexual would be considered unfit for society or any man. We can speculate that Stoker's own sexual frustration and his natural right as a Victorian man of authority would lead him to force a sexual woman into submission. Stoker illustrates this submission in his violent, gruesome, and unforgiving murder of Lucy, a sexual vampire who poses a threat to society. As a result, Stoker ensured that the New Woman persona in *Dracula* retrogressed into the perfect Victorian girl society expected of that time.

A polar opposite to the progressive Irish Catholic Stoker, the author of the *Twilight* series was an educated conservative Mormon housewife from Arizona. By regarding Meyer's gender and time period, we can gain an understanding of the influence the New Woman persona has on the *Twilight* series. Stephanie Meyer, a university educated woman, was born in 1973. Because of her Mormon upbringing and being a mother of three as well as housewife, we can speculate that Meyer felt confined by the responsibilities of the twenty-first century woman by taking on

various roles. In order to escape her mundane routine, Stephanie Meyer perhaps creates these fantastical characters, Edward and Bella, to live vicariously through and achieve a cathartic release. Meyer has been quoted before addressing that the *Twilight* series was written for her own personal enjoyment and not for others (Whitworth). Also, due to her writing, there was a conflict between her female responsibilities and her desire to lose herself in her writing. According to Damian Whitworth from *The Times*:

> [Meyer] felt compelled to keep writing, often with the youngest of her three sons, who was then a baby, clinging to her. Her husband became "kind of mad at [Meyer]. He said: 'You never sleep, you don't talk to me, I never get to use the computer. What are you doing?' I told him I was writing some stuff for fun." (Whitworth).

It is clear that Meyer is unconsciously seeking an outlet to express her repressed emotions, desires and needs. Meyer even goes as far as to say that her works are indeed vehicles of cathartic release, "When you think about vampire novels, there is a lot of gruesomeness, a lot of sexuality, a lot of darkness, blood obsession. When you read my books it is completely different. Really, the whole vampirism thing is a metaphor for feeling trapped in a certain role" (Whitworth). Meyer's statement of "feeling trapped in certain role" could be a metaphor for the roles she holds as a housewife and devout Mormon, that create the feeling of being suffocated and restrained. We can, therefore, speculate, why Meyer depicts her female protagonist to regress to Victorian standards. The need for the simplicity of Victorian life appealed to Meyer due to the voice she gives to Bella. We can speculate that Meyer must feel constricted by her responsibilities and wants to achieve a greater form of liberation through her character.

Stephanie Meyer is a woman of twenty-first century, who graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in English, a college associated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah (Whitworth). As an educated woman she meets the standards of the twenty-first century, though unfortunately she was unable to utilize her education since her main responsibilities became of being a mother and a housewife. Due to her possible frustration of the situation, Meyer utilizes her degree to create her double figure Bella, who could relive and achieve her inner desires. In an interview with *Time* magazine written by Lev Grossman, Meyer acknowledges her work as a form of escapism; "I really think that's the underlying metaphor of my vampires," she says. "It doesn't matter where you're stuck in life or what you think you have to do; you can always choose something else. There's always a different path" (Grossman). Critics question Meyer's dedication to female empowerment, due to the way she presents her female protagonist, Bella; one moment, we can see Bella is frustrated with the pressures of society and yearns for the simplicity of Victorian life in order to be with her Victorian suitor, and, in another, we see her character fight to maintain her status as a woman of the twenty-first century, who is liberated to do as she pleases. In the *The Times*, Meyer states, "that criticism of her as anti-feminist is 'a bunch of crap. If anything I am anti-human,' she cracks" (Whitworth).

As a female writer, who has probably felt the oppressions of the time, Meyer can relate to Bella's internal conflict. Essentially, Bella is the New Woman persona in the Twilight series; she struggles with the desire to comply to her Victorian suitor's wishes but at the same time yearns for an extra ounce of freewill. In order for Bella to achieve the ultimate form of freedom, she must transform into a vampire. Unlike her predecessors in *Dracula* who are forced into the roles of Victorian womanhood, Bella achieves the ultimate form of liberation, by becoming a vampire. Ultimately, Meyer chooses to allow her character to live happily ever after in the form of

vampire, the ultimate form of freedom. By allowing Bella to achieve freedom, Meyer essentially has allowed herself and many other readers the chance to achieve the unattainable through the bounds of the text.

The authorship and gender has an influence on how the characters and storyline are developed and received. Through the use of this knowledge, one is able to tap into the work and open a window to other interpretations of the text. Readership is considered the primary form of interpreting a text, though the authorship should not be ignored for both go hand in hand in achieving understanding.

In summation, the popularity of the Gothic works, *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series, is due to the familiarity the reader can draw from the texts; this being the underline struggle between social and gender roles versus the desire for female liberation. I call this internal conflict is called an elliptical cycle and suggest that it defines the New Woman persona. By displaying an interest for an uncanny figure, exuding overt sexual desire, and conveying heroic qualities illustrates the fundamental behaviors of the New Woman persona. These behaviors contribute to her need for self acceptance, consequently, creating a relation to the reader, who as well feels confused with their stance in society.

I argue that the New Woman persona is influential in neo gothic literature due to the connection she bestows unto the readers. The New Woman persona is often disguised as a damsel in distress who endures a series of internal struggles. Though the presence of an uncanny figure, an element of gothic literature, the New Woman persona begins to question and fight for the attainment of a position in a societal group. The vampire, monstrous outcast, and supernatural allow the female protagonists, New Women, to divulge into the unknown and

ultimately give way for a Victorian woman to break social rules, thus awakening their repressed desires. As a result, the text becomes a vehicle for the reader's inner desire to break social norms and live vicariously through the New Woman found within the work, in order to purge their feelings, emotions, needs, and wants through the text to achieve a cathartic release.

As previously mentioned, the female protagonists in *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series come from different time periods, from the Victorian period to the twenty-first century, and yet they are all repressed. I argue that society and its traditions have oppressed women for centuries, hence creating an internal struggle. While separated by a century of progress, the experiences of women in modern Western society have led to the rise of a Victorian relic, the New Woman persona. For the New Woman persona will always be in stasis; she never fully progresses or regresses, she is constantly in an ellipsis. I demonstrate that the New Woman can never achieve complete satisfaction, since these bounds have never been broken, but simply defined by man.

This begs to ask the question: Is the New Woman persona really "new"? The answer is no. As we have seen, the New Woman persona has emerged in the mid-to late- Victorian era and can still be found today, in the twenty-first century. Her transgression through time illustrates that she is essentially not "new." The New Woman persona essentially has always existed, as the consequence of every woman's struggle with society and her liberation. The representational name of the New Woman persona emerged from the Victorian, but what she represents has always been felt by generations. We can label women who clash with society as New Women or maybe even feminists, but she will always be "woman," since her struggles essentially have never been "new." The New Woman persona's existence is never ending, as long as women continue to be oppressed and subjected as her Victorian counterpart, she will flourish within the text. What was once thought as a Victorian relic of the past is still here; her name might have

changed in modern day, but her existence can be found in society, for unfortunately the New Woman persona's endeavors have been in vain and her struggle is never ending.

CHAPTER I

THE UNCANNY: FROM THE GOTHIC TO THE VAMPIRE

The mere mention of the word "Gothic" tends to call up thoughts of shadows, darkness, castles, cemeteries, mysterious figures, disillusioned characters, and chaos. Gothic is often referred to set literary and artistic periods from the 1770s to the mid nineteenth century based on certain conventions. Though, the genre is known for reviving itself with different conventions in the nineteenth and twentieth century, thus possessing multiple definitions, I define the Gothic as the uncanny. In viewing the genre as uncanny, these dark images are caused by the repressions of an individual or society. Through the use of gothic literature, one is able to express oneself through the text, allowing the manifestations of their subconscious to be heard. In *The Rise of The Gothic Novel*, Maggie Kilgour states that "the gothic reflects the return of the repressed, in which subconscious psychic energy bursts out from the restraints of the conscious ego" (3). These energy bursts lead to a rebellious nature, where one utilizes the gothic to create a "nightmare vision of the modern world" to confront past and present conflicts (Kilgour 12). Gothic and history are deeply interconnected, as these nightmarish images are often the repressions felt by an individual in accordance to the social and cultural events of their time period. In this chapter, I argue that the gothic's key component, known as the uncanny figure, is often utilized as the vehicle for true escapism and influences the characters' actions in the genre. I take the historical time periods and events of the Victorian era and the twenty-first century into

consideration, in order to further explain the role for the uncanny figure in the literary works of *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series.

Gothic literature articulates the repressions felt by contemporaries of a particular time period. For the Victorian era, the gothic is commonly associated with this period, due to its historical relevance to the repressions felt by society. In the nineteenth century, a movement of sexual oppression and female domesticity was felt. The need to express both sexes' perversions made its way onto the text of gothic literature. At the time, the Victorians were unaware that gothic literature was being utilized as a form of expression. In *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1825-1914*, Jarlath Killeen explains, "It was in the twentieth century that the Victorian 'era' was retrospectively homogenized and transformed into an age of sexual repression shadowed by perverse transgression, an age of hypocrisy and duality" (4). For the Victorians, their society was one of social and moral progress, allowing them to reject the past and move to a modern period. In actuality, the Victorian era was also one of barbarism, where moral turpitude and decorum went hand in hand and the past, female domesticity and male hegemony, came back to haunt them. The gothic dwells in both the past and present. Killeen points out "both the historical novel and Gothic fiction ask important questions concerning the relevance of history to the present" (28). It is evident to say that history tends to repeat itself, since the oppressions felt by the women in the Victorian era - who served as wives, caretakers, repressed lovers, and were not equal to man - can still be felt in the twenty-first century. Through the use of gothic literature, the past can be both demonized and idealized for human liberty. Killeen explains, "The fantastic is a means to examine questions in ways which are deemed inappropriate in more 'realistic' kinds of literature, because in fantasy the desire which haunts the forbidden can be

explored" (32). Gothic literature transcends time periods and is still utilized today as a medium for the expression of repressions.

An understanding of the characteristics of gothic literature is necessary in order to comprehend its importance to Victorian and modern repressed women. In this chapter, I utilize Anne William's definition of Gothic to draw parallels between *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series to the genre. In the *Art of Darkness,* Anne Williams attempts to exhibit how Gothic literature is based upon three principles: Gothic literature is poetic, Gothic and Romantic are one, and Gothic literature is categorized into two genres, male and female. Williams theorizes that the genres of Gothic and romance are not separate, but one; due to the various correlations in regards to the uncanny. Williams maintains that Gothic literature is most likely to be found written in prose fiction. Prose fiction is categorized as an un-realistic narrative known as a "non-Realistic prose fiction," which means informal speech or everyday dialogue (A. Williams 2-3). Due to un-realistic behaviors, situations, and lack of morals, it is necessary that one understands that the prose fiction begins to fall under the category of being feminine, thus resorting back into a romance – patriarchal family. The romance genre revolves around a central love story, with various subplots complementing or guiding the storyline to a resolution of achieving a happy ending scenario between lovers (The Romance). Williams also points out many of the most well-known gothic literary characters are composed of female characteristics, even though the characters themselves remain male. Such personage as Bram Stoker's Count Dracula in *Dracula* is believed to be composed of female symbols. For example, Count Dracula is viewed as a model of "female power and perversion" (A.Williams 123). It is these feminine, Gothic characteristics- "darkness, madness, blood"- that give way to Dracula becoming the "Other" (A.Williams 122-123). According to Williams, "all gothic trappings –ruins, graves, dark enclosures, madness, and

even the sublime –signify the presence of this 'Other,'" also known as the power of the "female" (A. Williams XI). Williams continues by asserting that the female Gothic plot is a journey through superstition, the uncanny and opening one's mind to other possibilities for gaining an insight of the world around them.

Today, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series are considered quintessential examples of popular vampire literature. *Dracula* embodies the genres of the male and female gothic, uncanny, and sublime, which constitutes it as a Gothic work; whereas, the *Twilight* series is seen as a romance, where two unusual teenagers plan to defeat all odds to preserve their supernatural love. As previously mentioned, Anne William states that Gothic and romance are one entity in a genre; thus, both texts fall under the genre of the Gothic. The relation demonstrated by both texts is the characters exploration of the supernatural through the vehicle of the vampire. It would be safe to say that vampire literature originated as a subtext of Gothic literature.

The uncanny in Gothic literature is often described as the bump in the night, the unfamiliar figure, the chill that runs down your spine and the terror of coming to terms with something unordinary. In Sigmund Freud's essay "The Uncanny," he defines the uncanny as something that is "not known and [yet] familiar" at the same time (Freud 418). He further argues that everything that is new or unfamiliar is not always frightening, it merely depends on the circumstance and what it surfaces, for "what is novel can easily become frightening and uncanny; some new things are frightening but not by any means all. Something has to be added to what is novel and familiar to make it uncanny" (Freud 418). The uncanny is the bridge that lends itself between reality and something unfamiliar in an individual. In the book *Gothic and Gender*, Donna Heiland conveys that the uncanny is based on the "psychology of fear," it

disrupts an individual's sense of identity which destabilizes them from civilization, thus leaving them estranged from their self and society (Heiland 78). Heiland further explains that Freud categorizes the uncanny in two classes where that unordinary "something" can "pertain to supposedly past stages of cultural development ('when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed'), or it pertains to past stages of individual psychological development ('when infantile complexes which have been repressed' are 'once more revived by some impression')" (78). Through Freud's observations of both experiences, he states that most will experience the uncanny when something repressed forces them to utilize and believe in the supernatural realm, in order to achieve a cathartic state (Heiland 78). Michelle A. Masse in "Psychoanalysis and the Gothic" argues that "Psychoanalysis and the gothic are cognate historical strands made up of the same human hopes and anxieties" (Masse 231). What Masse is trying to convey is that psychoanalysis and the gothic genre go hand-in-hand in influencing the reader and characters in exploring unsought oppressions. Heliand goes on to explain, though not focused on Masse's argument, that "uncanny experiences confront us with mirror-images of ourselves or our culture that terrify us because we do not understand them, and that threaten us insofar as they threaten to undermine the version of reality with which we love every day" (Heiland 79). The uncanny can be frightening, causing a feeling of familiarity in an otherwise alien situation. Consequently, the uncanny allows one to confront their deepest desires and fears through the use of mirror like images that are projected from the supernatural; these are known as double figures that at times take on the form of monstrous figures. The double figure, a source of the uncanny, allows one to experience life through another without the fear of consequences and destroying their ego. Both the uncanny and gothic deal with the unconscious, which establishes a strong relationship between the two. With this being said, the uncanny, in

gothic literature, is often the unconscious repressions of an individual's fears or desires, hence becoming the ghost that haunts their existence.

The uncanny is supernatural. It is the unfamiliarity and fantasticalness of the uncanny that allows it to fall into the canon of the paranormal. In gothic literature, monstrous figures grow from the uncanny nature of those whom encounter them and allows for one to explore avenues of unsought experiences. As a result, the presence of an uncanny figure, such as a vampire, will initiate a disturbance of social and gender roles, thus creating a vehicle of desire and fear.

The character of the blood sucking vampire first appeared in John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819). The attributes given by Polidori's fictional vampire, Lord Ruthven, became the model by which writers based their future vampiric characters upon. The nineteenth century saw the birth of other vampires, such as Lord Varney from James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampire* (1847), Carmilla / Countess Mircalla from Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), and Count Dracula from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). These literary vampires captivated and evolved the vampiric figure to what it is seen today.

The description of the vampire has evolved in the centuries since the character was introduced to gothic literature. In the nineteenth century, the vampire was conveyed as a threatening member of the aristocracy who was often described as a hideous being with a creature like appearance. These characteristics gave way for the figure's terrifying appeal to society. The disturbing physical appearance of the vampire and its magnitude of influence to society is a frightening element; as a result, the vampire is seen as an animal that can bare a position of power in a human governed society. Writers began altering the physical features of the vampire in subsequent novels, such as Carmilla, who is described as "a beautiful creature" as

opposed to just a creature. These shifts in appearance create a slightly attractive vampire, who can intertwine itself into the fabric of society. In Bram Stoker's *Dracula,* the creature is described as strong and masculine, a member of Eastern European gentry, yet having the pointed ears, long nails and hairy extremities of a beast. Dracula's appearance rejuvenates as the novel progresses. Unlike his predecessors, society is more tolerant of Dracula's appearance. The vampire will evolve from a creature possessing beast like qualities, separating him from society, to that of an attractive man that allows him to blend and become widely accepted. According to Carol A. Senf in *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature,* the twentieth-century vampire has evolved into a beautiful, rebellious, erotic, and blood lusting figure as opposed to his frightening, grotesque and gentrified predecessors (*The Vampire* 9). The figures are still blood thirsty and aristocratic, but now they are attractive and appealing, thus allowing acceptance into society. In Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series, novels based in the twenty-first century, she depicts her vampire, Edward Cullen, as a physically attractive, wealthy seventeen year-old, who is mysterious and wanted by every girl in his high school. His brooding good looks allow him to mesh within the students without any suspicion of being a monstrous figure. This begs to ask the question: What makes the vampire so appealing? The answer is simple. The social appeal of the vampire directly relates to the power these creatures hold within society. The vampire is able to escape the norms established by society while at the same time manipulate them to serve his needs. The literary characters as well as readership wish to possess the same power and social status enjoyed by the vampire; the vampire is not controlled by society nor expected to surrender his rights. This, in turn, leads to the appeal and success of the vampire.

Dracula and the *Twilight* series are exemplary models of utilizing an uncanny figure within the conventions of gothic literature. The uncanny element sets the mood of the story,

therefore creating a terrifying, exciting, and adventurous plot. By incorporating an uncanny figure, such as the vampire, into the plot of a gothic work, the protagonists' behavior becomes influenced by its presence and their social structure becomes disrupted, hence creating an interesting storyline. Coincidently, the success of *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series can be accredited to the attendance of the vampire.

The mere mention of his name brings goose bumps, terror, and excitement to people everywhere. He is often described as an aristocratic man with pale skin, beady red eyes, bears two piercing white fangs, blood dripping lips, and is adorned in all black attire. He is known to many as Count Dracula. Bram Stoker's vampire, Count Dracula, is considered as the epitome figure of gothic horror. His name is synonymous with the vampires we know and recognize today. In Stephanie Demetrakopoulos essay "Feminism, Sex Role Exchanges, and Other Subliminal Fantasies in Bram Stoker's 'Dracula,'" she argues that "the continuing popularity of *Dracula* may be ascribed to our wish to allow our most deeply repressed psychic and societal desires to surface in fantasy form" (111). The vampire serves as a metaphor for real life social threats. His true power is found with the female protagonists, who are greatly influenced by the Count (Senf, *The Vampire* 59-60). Only through the Count are the characters and readers allowed to live in a world where social order, temporarily, can no longer define or control them.

In *Dracula*, the presence of a vampire creates a disruption in the social structure of a Victorian community. Dracula is first introduced as a wealthy aristocratic Count, who is in search of acquiring land in London. Jonathan Harker, a business man and fiancé to Mina, is sent to help the Count select an appropriate estate; "and with him I went into plans and deeds and figures of all sorts" (Stoker 27). Throughout his stay, Jonathan observes the Count's unusual and un-Englishman like behavior. John Allen Stevenson explains in his essay "A Vampire in the

Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula" that Dracula exhibits atypical customs for an aristocrat; "we learn early that Dracula lacks servants, that he is nocturnal, that he likes to eat alone, and that he despises mirrors, and only later do we watch him crawl down walls head first, feed small children to his women, and sleep in his coffin" (142). Stevenson further argues that Jonathan views the Count differently "because of what food he eats and how he obtains and prepares it, because of where and when he sleeps, because of his burial customs. To Harker as to so many, what is foreign is monstrous, even if it is only a matter of table manners" (142). Dracula is judged by the cultural standards of an Englishman; this is the reason why Dracula takes the form of a monstrous outcast to Jonathan Harker and the English/Western men, creating disorder in their social sphere. What also frightens the men is Dracula's display of animal -like behavior. For instance, Jonathan recaps Dracula descending from a wall outside of Dracula Castle:

> What I saw was the Count's head coming out from the window. I did not see the face, but I knew the man by the neck and the movement of his back and arms…But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror and when I saw the whole man slowly emerge from the window and being to crawl down the castle wall over that dreadful abyss, face down, with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings…I saw the fingers and toes grasp the corners of the stones, worn clear of the mortar by the stress of years, and by thus using every projection and inequality of move downwards with considerable speed, just as a lizard moves along a wall. What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the semblance of man? (Stoker 39-40)

To a Victorian, the words "animal" and "aristocrat" should not be synonymous to each other, with respects to an individual with power in society. Dracula's animal like behavior deviates

from the accepted manners of the Victorian upper class. A creature should not reign or hold a position of power in a human governed society; therefore, Dracula must be banished before he creates any disturbance. In addition, the men begin to question their masculinity when comparing themselves to the Count's ability to seduce and entrap their English women. They are presented with a foreigner who not only can penetrate a woman with his piercing rod, but his fangs as well. The men feel castrated and disadvantaged sexually since they are challenged by the well endowed triple phalli vampire. The Count resorts to this method to attain nourishment and satisfy his sexual need to procreate. His need to feed and procreate becomes a threat to the existence of the human race; Dracula proclaims, "My revenge is just begun! I spread it over centuries, and time is on my side. Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine – my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed. Bah!" (Stoker 325). The count practices exogamy, meaning marrying out, since he cannot procreate or feed off of other vampires, but he can accomplish his mission with the wives and daughters of a foreign race, otherwise, he would perish (Stevenson 144). Van Helsing and the men are now certain that this foreigner must be destroyed in order to restore balance. The presence of Dracula, an uncanny figure influences the actions and emotions of the male protagonists; this influence, coincidently, creates both internal and external conflicts that give way to an enticing gothic storyline.

Dracula's presence creates an opportunity to reverse gender roles for the female protagonists. The uncanny figure serves as a form of escapism from the norm, since the characters can withdraw themselves into the foreign yet familiar. Through Lucy and Mina's

encounters with Dracula, both protagonists utilize this uncanny figure as a vehicle of desire to release repressed emotions, by allowing them to explore their sexual and heroic properties. [1]

The presence of Dracula influences the actions of the characters found within the novel. The uncanny figure challenges and threatens the social structure and gender roles of a community, allowing the characters to revert to different roles that were not appointed to them before. Men are allowed to be frightened and resort to child like behavior, while the women become masculine and domineering of the men and their sexuality. Only when Dracula is destroyed, do the men and women revert back to their original roles. As Demetrakopoulos further explains, "No one changes from his or her exposure to Dracula; they all simply revert to previous purity and goodness, cleansed of the short overlay of evil" (111). Only through Dracula are the characters ever able to explore and break bounds; without the uncanny figure, the characters would not have been able to morph into other roles and the storyline would have been plain and dull.

The mere mention of his name makes teenagers and women alike squeal and faint. His dashing good looks are often described as god like, with a tall and lean build, with a brilliant smile, deep set black eyes that turn amber, and pale skin that radiates like glitter when exposed to the sun. These women speak of no living man, but only of the fictional vampire, Edward Cullen, from Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series. The uncanny figure, Edward, is utilized as a vehicle of desire for the novels readers. Julia Arensen from *The Advertiser* states that the success of *Twilight* "lies in the fact that it is driven by female desire" (28). This desire being the attainment of a unique, dangerous, chivalric, girlfriend obsessed, naïve, boyfriend, whose only pleasure is to please his one and true love, Bella. Aresen argues that "what works to [*Twilight's*] advantage is

[1] These arguments will be further explored and discussed in the following chapters.

its unfailingly old-fashioned romantic hero, Edward. He is pale, mysterious and brooding, a typical gothic leading man" (28). Through Edward's presence, the characters and readers able to live a fantasy filled world where social bounds are created and destroyed by the supernatural realm.

In the *Twilight* series, Meyer's vampires utilize their uncanny skills to manipulate society to create appropriate outcomes for themselves. The Cullens possess qualities uncommon or unbeknown to their human contemporaries. For one, the Cullens are vampires, whose bodies are cold as stone and tough as cement, can only sustain nourishment through the intake of warm fresh blood, travel at incredible speeds, and some have greater supernatural abilities than others. Stereotypically, vampires are classified as monstrous figures, which only come out from hiding in the middle of the night to wreck havoc, feed, and transform others into their monstrous cult. Edward and his vampiric family exude a contrasting peculiarity of the vampire figure by trying to weave themselves into the fabric of society. The Cullens are often found fighting to attain what originally made them human; Edward often illustrates his displeasure of his condition, "I don't *want* to be a monster.' His voice was very low." (Meyer, *Twilight* 189). Meyer's vampires take on positions that allow them to integrate and communicate with their human counterparts. For instance, the leader and father figure of the Cullen Clan, Carlisle Cullen, holds a position as a well respected doctor at the Forks Hospital, which allows the vampiric family to uphold themselves as wealthy high class individuals, as opposed to being perceived as middle or low class citizens on the verge of poverty. The vampires make use of their skills and knowledge to create an entrusting environment for themselves and one of comfort. The Cullens convey a desire to be accepted and perceived as members of society, with an element of privacy as well; Bella points out the Cullen family's luxurious cars:

> ‘[The Cullen family] took Rosalie’s car.’[Edward] shrugged as he parked next to a glossy red convertible with the top up. ‘Ostentatious, isn’t it?’ Um, wow,’ I breathed. ‘If she has *that*, why does she ride with you?’ ‘Like I said, it’s ostentatious. We *try* to blend in.’ ‘You don’t succeed.’ I laughed and shook my head as we got out of the car…’Why do you have cars like that at all?’ I wondered aloud. ‘If you’re looking for privacy?’ ‘An indulgence,’ he admitted with an impish smile. ‘We all like to drive fast.’ (Meyer, *Twilight* 199)

As much as the Cullens try to demonstrate a disconnection from their monstrous influence, allowing them to be perceived as human beings, they often utilize their supernatural abilities to attain their desires and wants. Edward often makes use of his ability to read minds to plan an outcome that would be most desirable to him. His most desired outcome is to constantly be by Bella’s side, especially in the comfort and privacy of her room. For instance, when snuck away in Bella’s room, Edward can tell whether or not Bella’s father, Charlie, is heading to her room, which allows him ample time to hide or leave, without any evasiveness; “‘Charlie’s getting up; I’d better leave,’ Edward said with resignation” (Meyer, *New Moon* 542). Edward employs his vampire like abilities to sneak and enter into Bella’s room without any provocations from Charlie. Though, Charlie, who is merely a human being, is not much of a threat to Edward; thus, his say is often disregarded. For example, Bella asks Edward about Charlie’s whereabouts, “‘Charlie?’ I asked. Edward frowned. ‘Sleeping. You should probably know that I’m breaking the rules right now. Well, not technically, since he said I was never to walk through his door again, and I came in the window…But, still, the intent was clear’” (Meyer, *New Moon* 503). As seen in this quote, Edward shows no regret for his actions, but merely makes witty comments about it.

In addition, Edward's un-biological vampire siblings also bear supernatural abilities, which allow them to foretell and influence the actions of others. Alice Cullen, his sister, has the skill to foretell the future through mental images, which gives her the capability to influence an outcome; Alice explains her talent to Bella, "Some things are more certain than others… like the weather. People are harder. I only see the course they're on while they're on it. Once they change their minds — make a new decision, no matter how small — the whole future shifts." (Meyer, *Twilight* 435). With this ability, Alice can change the outcome of the vision, by influencing and manipulating others and certain events, to something more appeasing for her. For example, Alice envisions Edward committing suicide in Italy; Alice states, "We may already be too late. I saw him going to the Volturi…and asking to die" (Meyer, *New Moon* 419). In order to prevent Edward's death, Alice encourages Bella to fly with her to Italy to stop him, thus interfering with the foreseen sequence of events and allowing her to keep her brother alive. Edward's brother, Jasper Hale, has the ability to sense and influence the emotions of others; Bella falls victim to his ability, "I hoped that by myself in the dark, I could give in to the terrible fears that hovered on the edge of my consciousness, unable to break through under Jasper's careful supervision" (Meyer, *Twilight* 411). Through the bidding of Edward, Alice and Jasper are often employed to use their supernatural skills to influence Bella Swan, who frequently feels the invasiveness of their talents; Bella explains, "My head is sort of… private. But it doesn't stop Jasper from being able to mess with my mood or Alice from seeing my future" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 596).

Unlike their vampiric predecessor Count Dracula, who threatens society directly with the extinction of the human race, the Cullens indirectly threaten society by manipulating and employing their human counterparts, than exterminating them. As opposed to resorting to basic human behavior to resolve conflicts, the Cullens often use their supernatural abilities to

manipulate those around them to produce an effective outcome that falls in their favor. Freewill is not often expressed in the judgment of the humans. For the humans are often told what to believe and how to go by living their lives. In the case of Bella, if the Cullens are not busy maneuvering and controlling her actions, they are busy distributing lies of her whereabouts to her father. Ultimately, the Cullens' desire to be accepted as humans is achieved, though the achievement of truly being human is never reached, for their monstrous influence is much greater, thus employing their supernatural abilities to manipulate their human counterparts to generate acceptable outcomes in their lifetimes.

Edward, an uncanny figure, influences Bella to convey regressive feminine behavior uncharacteristic of her contemporaries. Bella, a woman from the twenty-first century, reverts back to Victorian standards to attain a relationship with her vampiric Victorian boyfriend, Edward. Born in Chicago in 1901, during the end of the Victorian period and the nascent Edwardian period, it is safe to presume that Edward was raised and instilled with Victorian ideals from his Victorian parents, hence his strong convictions to Victorian ideologies that are illustrated in the series. Before the entry of the uncanny figure in Bella's life, she was the quintessential twenty-first century woman, who possessed the ability and liberty to achieve an education, create an individualistic identity, build a career, and explore avenues that were once regarded for men only. Meyer supports this claim by describing Bella as being very mature for her age, educated and well read, from Bronte to Shakespeare and Faulkner to Chaucer - Bella has read it all and expresses her contempt when examining the school reading list, "I'd already read everything. That was comforting…and boring" (Meyer, *Twilight* 15). Bella's gender reversal is not merely attributing to the attainment of masculine qualities but the lack of them, since she reverts to a primitive form of female domestication; this being the Victorian woman. Bella is

more than willing to surrender any bounds of freedom, given at the time, or relationships with family and friends, in order to be accepted and loved by Edward, the uncanny figure. Through her dismissal from the feminine gender role of the twenty-first century, Bella begins to illustrate Victorian behavior by acting naïve, weak, silent, and obedient; Bella explains, "I do have some trouble with incoherency when I'm around him" (Meyer, *Twilight* 204). Throughout the series, Bella often displays bursts of progressive behavior in the attempt to attain a position of power that will allow her to voice her opinions, a quality often exuded by the New Woman. For instance, in *Twilight*, Bella requests to leave formerly than abruptly from her father, Charlie, in order to not worry him, even though her life is in jeopardy:

> 'Does anyone want to hear my plan?' 'No,' Edward growled. Alice glared at him finally provoked.
>
> 'Listen,' I pleaded. 'You take me back.'…
>
> 'I *demand* that you take me home.' I tried to sound firm.
>
> Edward pressed his finger to his temples and squeezed his eyes shut.
>
> 'Please,' I said in a much smaller voice. He didn't look up. When he spoke, his voice sounded worn. 'You're leaving tonight, whether the tracker sees or not. You tell Charlie that you can't stand another minute in Forks. Tell him whatever story works. Pack the first things your hands touch, and then get in your truck. I don't care what he says to you. You have fifteen minutes. Do you hear me? Fifteen minutes from the time you cross the doorstep.' (Meyer, *Twilight* 384-385)

Bella's voice is quickly silenced with Edward's disapproval. It almost seems as if Edward gives in to Bella's request when she is given an opportunity to speak with Charlie; though, he manipulatively incorporates certain stipulations and a time frame in order to keep control of her.

Bella utilizes the uncanny figure to attain the ultimate form of liberation, becoming an uncanny figure who does not follow societal norms and restrictions. A common misconception illustrated in the series is that Edward's refusal to transform Bella into a vampire is an act of love to save her soul from damnation; Edward states, "I cannot be without you, but I will not destroy your soul" (Meyer, *New Moon* 518). This refusal is not as chivalric as it is often perceived by readers, for Edward's true actions lie in his fear of attaining an equal partner. For the Victorian male, the woman was not often seen as an equal, for the man was the leader of the household and the woman was the supporter of the man and his endeavors. The vampire represents freedom, for the creature is never confined by the social structures of society. The ultimate achievement for liberation would be to transform into a vampire; Bella addresses Edward about her transformation date, "'I want to hurry,' I whispered, smiling weakly, trying to make a joke of it. 'I want to be a monster, too' (Meyer, *Eclipse* 25). Edward refuses her transformation in order to maintain an unequal status where Bella would need him to survive successfully in the supernatural realm. If Bella was to transform into a vampire, she would possess the abilities of strength, stealth, speed, and an appetite for human blood. As a newborn vampire, her abilities will be exceptionally stronger than Edward's. For one, her physical strength will be no match for Edward; Bella asks Edward, "How strong will *I* be?' He grinned. 'Stronger than I am'" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 317). With Bella becoming an uncanny figure as well, no longer will Edward be seen as the strong, masculine figure; he will be castrated from his position to a lower one, much like Bella is as a human. Secondly, Bella's appetite for blood, often served as a metaphor for semen, will be much stronger than Edward's. This is frightening for Edward, for Bella's sexual nature will be overpowering and not in control as before; Edward explains that newborn vampires are "Bloodthirsty, wild, out of control. The way we all were" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 26). Newborn

vampires are, as described by Jasper, “volatile, wild, and almost impossible to control” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 290).

By becoming a vampire, an uncanny figure, Bella will exhibit barbaric behavior, synonymous often reserved for the masculine sex than a woman. These are the reasons as to why Edward is so adamant of encouraging Bella to remain human, in order to avoid making Bella his masculine equal. Only through the presence of the uncanny figure does Bella ever consider to regress and conform to her Victorian predecessors’ standards, which were once reserved for the domesticated woman, in order to attain and preserve the love between them.

The presence of Edward, the uncanny figure, allows for the reversal of gender roles. As previously mentioned, Bella has reverted to Edward’s antiquated Victorian standards to maintain their relationship; hence, she illustrates qualities of a Victorian woman. As a Victorian woman, her position of power is often limited. Though, when her family or friends are threatened, Bella places herself as the hero, often rescuing her supernatural counterparts. In these situations, Edward becomes the feminine model, the damsel in distress, while Bella is the masculine figure, the hero. Bella utilizes the uncanny figure to reverse gender roles for her benefit. By taking on the position of the hero, often a role suited for a man, she is exuding masculine qualities. This leads to a role reversal between the two sexes. Her progressive behavior is not uncommon to the twenty-first century woman; though, for the Victorian woman, her behavior is unyielding powerful and familiar to the New Woman. Due to her retrogression, Bella now, unconsciously, exhibits behavior of the New Woman in order to achieve recognition and a stance of power within a selective group. Only by being the uncanny figure’s girlfriend, can Bella encounter the supernatural realm and allow her to explore the masculine role of a hero and save her supernatural family and friends.

Edward and the Cullen Clan influence and manipulate the actions of the humans who fall prey in their supernatural realm. As opposed to Stoker's Dracula who directly influences a society, Meyer's Cullen Clan, on the other hand, indirectly manipulate and influence their human counterparts. The Cullens' charm is undeniably unavoidable and persuasive, for their beauty, social status, and supernatural abilities only allow them to create and mold those who encounter them, in order to achieve a desirable outcome for themselves. In addition, the presence of a vampire continues to influence social and gender roles, which are often reversed and maneuvered. This allows for the characters, and readers, to escape into the world of the supernatural. As Melinda Bilbey, a fan of the series, expresses, "*Twilight* is the perfect fantasy vehicle" (Arensen 28). As a result, only through the encounter of a vampire are the humans influenced and disrupted from their sequenced routines and fall prey to a monstrous figure's desires.

The gothic allows one to explore unknown worlds and release the repressions felt of that time, thus allowing one to achieve a cathartic release. Through the use of the uncanny figure, the characters and readership are allowed to utilize the figure to break all bounds of society and lose themselves in the world of the supernatural. Heiland states that monsters serve as "uncanny doubles of our societies, reflecting back to us images of everything that we have cast out as undesirable or threatening to the status quo, and forcing us to face that which we would prefer to leave hidden" (100). As fulfilling it may be to live carelessly through a double figure, in retrospect, it can also inhibit progress. Heiland argues that the "uncanny keeps one from moving forward. It threats the hierarchal structure of patriarchy and the 'progress' associated with the rational world of enlightenment" (80). It is a compulsion for the uncanny to continuously allow the past to repeat itself, thus avoiding any real progress. This is the reason why the female

protagonists never fully achieve liberty. As New Women, they are enduring an internal struggle between social norms and their desire to achieve freedom from societal constraints. This struggle creates an elliptical cycle, where the female characters endure moments of progress to only be thrusted back into submission; in other words, they are constantly in states of progression and regression, never fully achieving a stance but constantly shifting in a never ending circle. Gothic literature opens a window into the life of oppressed women from the historical time periods of the nineteenth and the twenty-first century. As long as society and men bound women into submissive roles, monstrous figures will continue to be imagined, written about, and lived by carelessly through. For gothic's uncanny figure is a key element in the survival of the New Woman and her repressions, thus giving her a voice.

CHAPTER II

FEMALE SEXUALITY: THE UNLEASHMENT OF DESIRE

Sexuality is a common theme that is censored in Victorian middle to high class society; nevertheless, through the means of literature, it is able to be addressed and allowed to flourish. In contrast to the established gender ideals of Victorian sexuality, Gothic literature paints the biased perspective of Victorian sexual roles and its repressions. In this chapter, I argue how the presence of the New Woman persona in Gothic literature is essential in voicing the repressions of the Victorian woman. Focus is placed on the female protagonists in *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series, who challenge Victorian gender roles and explore their sexuality as New Women. For starters, the novel *Dracula* takes place during the Victorian era. The female protagonists, Lucy and Mina, are portrayed as ideal Victorian women enduring an internal struggle between societal norms and their repressed sexual desires. In Christopher Craft's essay, "Kiss Me with Those Red Lips: Gender and Inversion in Dracula," the novel *Dracula* "presents a characteristic, if hyperbolic of Victorian anxiety over the potential fluidity of gender roles" (112). Whereas the *Twilight* series takes place in the twenty-first century, where women are allowed to explore their sexual desires; however, the modern woman protagonist, Bella, falls in love with a Victorian vampire, Edward. In order for Bella to preserve her love with Edward, she must regress to his societal Victorian norms, which creates a conflict with her sexual needs and his desire for a Victorian woman. Overall, the female protagonists from both works display New Woman behavior and endure an internal conflict between their societal norms and sexual desires.

To Victorians, sexuality was to be constrained and limited to traditional standards of behaviors. Women in society were to remain restricted and pure and have no relation to sex. While an emotional and physical expression of love is seen as integral part of marriage in the modern mind set, to Victorians, sex was to be engaged for the sole means of procreation, in order to promote individual and social progress. For the Victorians, love was believed to be an emotional act; as a consequence, love should not be subjected to the physical. Both Victorian men and women shared very distinct and interrelated gender roles established within the society; the woman was to remain pure at home, while the man was free to sexually explore his inner desires. According to Kathleen Spencer, in "Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis," the ideal Victorian woman had many "guises of maiden, wife, and above all mother, Woman (with a capital) had been appointed the guardian of moral virtue" (205). The Victorian woman's primary role of the house is to provide salvation by providing cohesion to the family structure through the means of enforcing Victorian ideals. The Woman, positioned as the "Angel of the house," "was to save Man from his own baser instincts and lead him toward heaven" (Spencer 205). For some women, these expectations were difficult to meet, which created much discomfort in the home, thus, "more and more women insisted on leaving the house of which they had been appointed angel, the house that, if a refuge for men, became for many middle-class wives and daughters a more or less pleasant prison" (Spencer 206). In the eyes of men, a woman who denied her traditional role was essentially denying her womanhood. In *Plain Talk on Avoided Subjects* , written in1882, Henry Guernsey states that, "no women should ever marry without a full knowledge of her duties to her husband, particularly in the sexual respect, for without granting this privilege to her husband in full and accord, there cannot be maintained a happy married life" (94). Women who denied their womanhood in the

attempt to seek other avenues of self expression and identity, became fallen angels. Once fallen, these women became the predecessors of a new generation, known as the New Woman, who rebelled against the Victorian values that repressed women, thus creating a wave of potential change and evil that threatened society.

Victorians believed sexual inhibitions were directed as a powerful source that influenced our everyday activities. In "The Power of Desire and The Danger of Pleasure: Victorian Sexuality Reconsidered," Steven Seidman states that "sex was a natural instinct whose significance for the individual and society was far-reaching and powerful" (50). Seidman continues that sex was seen as a "principal source of misfortune and evil" that could deprive a person's destiny of purity and success (50). Sexuality was deemed powerful and needed to be contained, in order for man and civilization to function appropriately among one another. Seidman explains that sex is necessary to promote the health and reproduction of a species. Sex should not be valued for its sensual qualities; by doing so, one became engaged in the domino theory of sex (50 – 52). This theory is initiated when one falls prey to their inner sexual inhibitions that can become overwhelming and habitual, rather than procreative, hence losing "self control and social purpose" (Seidman 50, 52). In other words, if you are a woman and seek to satisfy your sexual desires, your destiny will lead you to a life of ruin and disgrace, because sex has become a tool of gratification than of procreation; "the victim sinks deeper and deeper in pollution, till he is overwhelmed at least in irretrievable ruin and disgrace" (Seidman 50). In *A Lecture to Young Men*, written in 1840, Sylvester Graham explains that sexual excess "impairs the intellectual and moral faculties, and debases the mind" (97-98). Not only does sex debase the mind but, according to Kathleen Spencer, sex is "paradoxically seen as both social and antisocial; it helps to define individual identity while at the same time threatening the collective"

(218). Gothic literature illustrates the stance of women belonging to society were often placed in positions that inhibited their sexual desires. While, some authors empowered these Victorian women in their novels, by giving the female characters qualities not common to their Victorian contemporaries; it nevertheless remains that "almost all readings presume a given sexuality that is repressed and displaced throughout the text" (Spencer 197). Nonetheless, the repressions of the Victorian woman did not go unchallenged and the evolution of sexual desire became provoked in Gothic literature with the help of the New Woman persona and the uncanny figure.

The presence of a vampire in Gothic literature becomes a sexualized threat to the male characters within the text by disrupting societal order of genders. The vampire, also identified as the Other, threatens to destroy societal norms and roles, by transforming the wives and women of brave men into masculine things. Once bitten and transformed into a vampire, women would gain supernatural abilities that would rival against the abilities of their human male counterparts; as a result, the vampire figure would allow a woman to take on a role of masculinity and power through the unknown, hence the title of masculine things. This competition for women can only lead to the stance where one race, vampire vs. human, will rise up and leave the other castrated in defeat. For instance, in the essay "The One-Sex Body in a Two – Sex World," Cyndy Hendershot argues that *Dracula* "thoroughly tropes the vampiric body as dangerous that even casual contact with it throws gender systems and sexual identities into flux [sic]" (381). This flux is due to the fact "the vampire, dead yet intensely sexual, defies both natural law and society's restrictions and therefore manages to escape many of the limitations that affect human beings" (Senf, "Dracula" 39). The vampire by definition brings forth change and challenges an established society, since this figure "has no true 'national' identity, no 'community' to belong to," essentially an outsider (Spencer 213). In addition, the presence of this undead figure,

paradoxically, brings to life and excites the inner repressed desires of those whom encounter him. Simon Williams, in "Theatre and Degeneration: Subversion and Sexuality," expresses that "sexual desire is exhibited as supernatural possession that causes the heroine to wander deliriously in caverns and shady places in search of her demon lover. But once she returns to consciousness, she is totally unaware of the dark forces that have briefly taken over her body" (246). Furthermore, the threat of loyalty is not only subjected to the vampire but the women as well; "the danger is not that she will be captured but that she will go willingly" (Stevenson 139).

Contrary to Victorian ideology, many Victorian women did enjoy engaging in sexual pleasure. In the 1875 contemporary work *The Function and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs*, William Acton states that "there are some few women who have sexual desires so strong that they surpass those of men"; even though Victorian opinion would say, a modest woman should never succumb to her sexual indulgences (234). The Mosher survey conducted in 1892-1913 by Clelia Mosher, later edited and published by Carl Degler in 1973, contradicted "the popular stereotype of the passionless, prudish Victorian" woman being desensitized to sex (Seidman 59). The women interviewed for the survey demonstrated how Victorian women "'relished sex, claimed high rates of orgasm…accepted themselves as full, expressive sexual beings', thus leaving 'little evidence here of Victorian prudery'" (Seidman 59). Victorian women did not only see sex as a means for physical pleasure and gratification, but also as "an expression of love and a key source of the marital bond" and "part of healthy living and frequently a joy" (Seidman 59-60). Furthermore, according to the Mosher survey, before the 1900s, women were a bit reluctant about sex, but nevertheless enjoyed sex; after the 1900s, women were more open to equality and spirituality in the bedroom. After the 1900s, women viewed sex as a necessity for both sexes, not only in regards to procreation, but as a reason to express love. This differential

social view on sex made way for a generational shift to create a relationship between love, sex, and marriage (Seidman 60-61). Consequently, the wave of female sexual freedom from Victorian social roles posed a greater threat to Victorian society, due to a woman's desire to take on role of power through sex. Victorian women who explored their sexuality fell unto the stereotype of the New Woman persona, who was "more frank and open than her predecessors. She felt free to initiate sexual relationships, to explore alternatives to marriage and motherhood, and to discuss sexual matters such as contraception and venereal disease" (Senf, "Dracula" 35). The New Woman's sexual ideologies and behavior was a threat to Victorian society. The belief was that with the bat of her eye and her sultry temptations could eventually bring down an empire.

In *Dracula*, Lucy Westenra is portrayed as the embodiment of the awakening of sexuality. Stoker presents Lucy's character as an ideal Victorian woman; she is beautiful, young, pure, genteel and aristocratic but is a marginal character nonetheless. Lucy is marginal due to her flawed inability to control her sexuality, which violates Victorian sexual roles. Whereas her counterpart, Mina Harker, is the archetype of a good Victorian woman; nonetheless, this stance will later be questioned in regards to her sexual behavior. The initial signs of Lucy's sexual awakening can be seen in a letter entry she submits to Mina explaining her problematic situation of receiving three proposals in a single day. Lucy is not ashamed of her predicament but is rather disappointed with her restrictions; "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many want her, and save all this trouble?" (Stoker 66). Lucy is also not bashful of her untraditional thoughts and sarcastically says, "don't tell any of the girls, or they would be getting all extravagant ideas and imagining themselves injured and slighted if in their very first day at home they did not get at least six. Some girls are so vain" (Stoker 63). Lucy's sexuality is threatening to her community, "sufficiently threatening that she becomes an appropriate surrogate victim – [and]

will not limit herself to one man" (Spencer 210). These thoughts can be interpreted as being repressive; the idea of being with more than just one man makes her un-monogamous, thus an unconventional Victorian woman, a New Woman.

In the *Twilight* series novel *Eclipse*, Bella also searches for her own sexual awakening. As Lucy Westenra, Bella has many suitors as well. Her suitors include: Edward Cullen, Jacob Black, and Mike Yorke. Bella claims her heart is devoted to only one man, Edward, who is a vampire; however, her intentions with Jacob seem more than just being friendly. Bella would find ways to sneak away from Edward to see Jacob, only to encourage his feelings for her. Once Jacob would return these feelings, Bella would shun, abuse, and insult him, in order to establish a boundary between them. The fact that Jacob was a werewolf, uncanny figure, drew her closer to him and allowed her to use him for his company, time, and protection:

> 'Sometimes I think you like me better as a wolf.'
>
> 'Sometimes I do. It probably has something to do with the way you *can't talk*.'
>
> 'No, I don't think that's it. I think it's much easier for you to be near me when I'm not human, because you don't have to pretend that you're not attracted to me (…) I make you nervous. But only when I'm human.
>
> When I am a wolf, you're more comfortable around me.' (Meyer, *Eclipse* 478)

In the text, Bella restates her love over and over again for Edward; nevertheless, her actions say otherwise. By regressing into the Victorian values Edward favors, her urges and desires become repressed, forcing her to find ways to release this repression. In order to have an understanding of her regression, one must keep in mind that Edward was born June 20, 1901, the year of the

Edwardian period and the end of the Victorian era, thus, coincidently resulting in his strong Victorian adherence; Edward's caretakers must have raised him with Victorian morals. Bella only becomes aware of her unconscious feelings for Jacob when, forcefully, kissed by Jacob; "Why wasn't I stopping this? Worse than that, why couldn't I find in myself even the desire to *want* to stop...I'd been lying to myself. Jacob was right…He'd been more than just a friend…I was in love with him. Too" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 528). Bella loves Edward and tries to meet his moral standards but, nonetheless, her behavior and thoughts are not of an ideal Victorian woman, but of a New Woman, since she is not as sexually reserved as the standard sets.

Both characters, Lucy and Bella, seek the comfort of many suitors in order to satisfy their sexual desire to be desired by many and break conventional Victorian norms; "some women developed an insatiable appetite for conquests and collected suitors as a form of power" (Demetrakopoulus 109).

In vampire literature, blood serves as a metaphor for food, reproduction, and life. In *Dracula,* Lucy has fallen ill due to succumbing to the seduction and bite from Dracula. In order to keep her alive, Dr. Seward, Van Helsing, and Arthur Holmwood must perform blood transfusions. Arthur feels a deep connection when exchanging blood, almost as if they were really married. Dr. Seward's sentiments were the same as he says, "It was with a feeling of personal pride that I could see a faint tinge of colour steal back into the pallid cheeks and lips. No man knows till he experiences it, what it is to feel his own life-blood drawn away into the veins of the woman he loves" (Stoker 141). In vampire literature, the exchange of blood serves as a metaphor for semen and bodily fluids which, coincidently, refers to sex. For instance, by receiving blood from more than one person, this symbolically represents as an unconventional orgy or adulterous relationship that may have occurred through the exchange of blood. In regards

to Lucy's blood transfusion, all three have engaged in sexual relations with Lucy and each other. A form of homoeroticism has arisen, through the veins of Lucy. Van Helsing immediately recognizes the sexual nature of the transfusions; "Ho, ho! Then this so sweet maid is a polyandrist… even I, who am faithful husband to this now-no-wife, am bigamist" (Stoker 190). It was quite important that the other men were not aware of her "operations," especially Arthur; "If our young lover should turn up unexpected, as before, no word to him. It would at once frighten him and enjealous him, too" (Stoker 142). The blood, symbolically semen, brings life to Lucy through the means of sexual desire, this being the desire to be with multiple suitors, a nontraditional custom of the monogamous Victorian woman. The sexual desire excites the body to orgasm, thus bringing life to her body. Lucy's awareness of these blood transfusions further supports her acceptance of sexual liberation, by recognizing her need for their blood / semen to bring her back to life.

Mina Harker also succumbs to the seduction of Dracula, which leads to an exchange of blood. At night, in the newlywed's bedroom, Van Helsing and the men enter the room and witness Dracula seducing Mina, as Jonathan Harker lays on the bed next to them, "his face flushed and breathing heavily as if in a stupor" (Craft 125). The scene of Dracula and Mina engaging in a sexual act, in the Harker bedroom, is described in Dr. Seward's diary as follows:

> Kneeling on the near edge of the bed facing outwards was the white-clad figure of his wife. By her side stood a tall, thin man, clad in black…With his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare breast which was shown by his torn-open dress. (Stoker 300)

In this scene, Mina is introduced into the vampiric world where gender roles are no longer stable. Dracula's blood takes on the symbolic form of semen and milk. By Dracula forcing her to drink his blood, he is forcefully encouraging Mina to engage in fellatio and nursing behavior; "the attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink" (Stoker 300). Mina is disgusted to hear of the act that Dracula forced her to do; moreover, with time, Mina regains her memory and describes the event to the other men: "When the blood began to squirt out, he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the – Oh my God! My God! What have I done?" (Stoker 306). Mina's recollection of the event supports the idea that she was fully aware of the act she was engaged in with Dracula; she never states that she tried to stop Dracula from forcing her to drink from him. Moreover, through her recollection, Mina becomes aware that the graphic details could get her into trouble with Jonathan and the men, so she quickly diverts from the memory with a response of remorse; "'What have I done?...God pity me! Look down on a poor soul in worse than mortal peril; and in mercy pity those to whom she is dear!' Then she began to rub her lips as though to cleanse them from pollution" (Stoker 306). Mina is aware that she engaged in a form of fellatio and indeed "spurted" and "swallowed" Dracula's semen. She knows good Victorian women are forbidden to engage in any lecherous activity, and those who do so, such as the New Woman, are to be punished for such behavior. In the end, whether conscious or unconscious, Mina engaged in a sexual act with Dracula, which only a New Woman would feel free enough to seek and engage in sexual relations with an unknown individual or figure.

In *Twilight*, a similar blood exchange can be observed when Bella is bitten by a vampire. Bella was kidnapped and attacked by Edward's enemy, James, as a means of revenge. Bella

becomes aware of her bite wound when awoken to familiar voices of the Cullen's and excruciating pain, after losing conscious during her struggle between James; "'my hand is burning!' I screamed….I writhed in the grip of the fiery torture" (Meyer, *Twilight* 454 -455). Carlisle, the leader of the Cullen clan, was horrified to hear that Bella was bitten by another vampire; "'Carlisle! Her hand! He bit her!' Carlisle's voice was no longer calm, it was appalled" (Meyer, *Twilight* 454). To Carlisle, Bella's blood is now tainted with the blood of a foreign vampire, insinuating an exchange of bodily fluids; thus, her human innocence has been taken away from her. The brutal and forceful attack Bella endured can be suggestive as a form of rape. In order to purify Bella, Carlisle encourages Edward to suck out the vampire venom from the wound; "See if you can suck the venom back out. The wound is fairly clean" (Meyer, *Twilight* 455). The vampire venom serves as a metaphor for semen. If Edward was to suck out the venom, it would be implied that he engaged in oral sex, hence creating a homoerotic relation. Moreover, Alice and Carlisle also suggest to Edward the possibility of transforming Bella into a vampire, than losing her in grips of death. However, Edward's Victorian morals, in regards to sex before marriage, create a conflict between saving Bella, sucking out the venom, and his morality, penetrating her with his vampire fangs; "'Carlisle, I…' Edward hesitated. 'I don't know if I can do that'… 'I could see his perfect face, staring back at me, twisted in to a mask of indecision and pain'" (Meyer, *Twilight* 455). Edward, ultimately, spares his morals and decides to save Bella's life and purity, by removing James's venom from her body; "I watched his eyes as the doubt was suddenly replaced with a blazing determination. His jaw tightened. I felt his cool, strong fingers on my burning hand, locking it in place. Then his head bent over it, and his cold lips pressed against my skin" (Meyer, *Twilight* 456). The removal of James's tainted bodily fluids from Bella's impure body did not go without a struggle; "at first the pain was worse. I screamed and

thrashed against the cool hands that held me back. I heard Alice's voice try to calm me. Something heavy held my leg to the floor, and Carlisle had my head locked in the vice of his stone arms. Then, slowly, my writhing calmed as my hand grew more and more numb" (Meyer, *Twilight* 456). The struggle illustrates how Bella's body unwillingly fought to preserve the newfound freedom it will acquire from the tainted blood she received from an unknown suitor. Bella is not as naïve as Edward believes, she is fully aware of the vampire transformation process; "clearly, he'd had no idea that [Alice] filled me in on the mechanics of vampire conversions. He was surprised and infuriated" (Meyer, *Twilight* 473).

The vampire transformation can be seen as a metaphor for sex. The fact that Bella knows and discusses these mechanics shows how curious, and possibly experienced, she is to the world of sex. Bella consciously wished for James's vampire venom to take over her body; at the hospital, she questions as to why Edward stopped the transformation; "*Why* you did it. Why didn't you just let the venom spread? By now I would be just like you" (Meyer, *Twilight* 473). Even though Bella was in danger, she consciously knew there was a possibility of being exposed to the element of vampire transformation / sex.

In addition, Bella teases Edward with her blood. While in the hospital recovering and away from danger, Bella asks Edward how her blood / bodily fluids tasted; "'How did you do it?'…'Don't I taste as good as I smell,' I smiled in response" (Meyer, *Twilight* 460). Edward answers with, "'It was impossible…to stop', he whispered. 'Impossible. But I did…I *must* love you'" (Meyer, *Twilight* 460). Bella's blood was so appetizing that he felt as if he could not stop, but he did. Edward stopped himself before getting too sexually excited, she tasted "even better – better than I'd imagined" (Meyer, *Twilight* 460), and feared of not having control of his sexual urges, "No, the very worst was feeling...knowing that I couldn't stop. Believing that I was going

to kill you myself" (Meyer, *Twilight* 472). Edward felt a deep connection with Bella when sucking the venom out, an intimate sexual connection, one that drew him to now believe that he truly is in love with her.

Moreover, another blood exchange instance with Bella is when, Bella is at a hospital recovering and asks Edward how bad her injuries are, he replies, "you have a broken leg, four broken ribs, some cracks in your skull, bruises covering every inch of your skin, and you've lost a lot of blood. They gave you a few transfusions. I didn't like it – it made you smell all wrong for a while" (Meyer, *Twilight* 460). Edward is displeased because a stranger's blood, even though it is saving her, has ruined her smell / purity. Like her predecessor Lucy, Bella has also engaged in an orgy through the means of blood. In regards to Bella's sexual encounters with James and Edward, as a New Woman would, Bella utilizes her knowledge of how tempting her blood / purity is to these vampires and tries to sexually exploit the situation to obtain the cathartic form, as a vampire.

The purity of Lucy, Mina, and Bella is challenged by the penetration of a vampire. Lucy's purity is forsaken by willingly relinquishing self control and allowing herself to be influenced by the vampire as she sleepwalks at night. Lucy is warned of her sleepwalking condition and how dangerous it could be to her health and reputation. According to Kathleen L. Spencer, sleepwalking is a "habit traditionally associated with sexual looseness…therefore doubly vulnerable to Dracula's approach" (210). Lucy's purity was taken by the penetration of vampire fangs when sleepwalking into the churchyard; hence, she was consumed and converted into the undead. In her disobedience, she becomes exposed to Dracula; moreover, Lucy's encounter with the count can be seen as an unconscious rebellion to society; "The reader witnesses a struggle between Lucy's conscious and conforming side – the side that feels guilty

for her liaison with the vampire – and her unconscious side – the part that desires the freedom from social constraints that the vampiric condition entails" (Senf, "Dracula" 43). Sleep-walking is an unconscious behavior influenced by one's repressed feelings, thus becoming a cathartic vessel for freedom; this freedom being the upheaval constraints society and men have placed upon women used to control and repress. Simon Williams believes that Van Helsing tries to justify Lucy's actions by explaining to the men that "she shielded to Dracula only during a trance – that is, when her conscious personality was not in command – so her unconscious personality alone has become vampiric" (246). By comforting the men that Lucy's rebellious actions are not deliberate, but a form of possession, allows the men to not feel threatened that this behavior may become a trend. Nevertheless, this was far from the truth. Whether it was conscious or unconscious, Lucy was searching for a cathartic outlet to release her inner desires; this outlet being Dracula the vampire.

Lucy's rebellious sexual nature brings concern to Mina in regards to her reputation, "I was filled with anxiety about Lucy, not only for her health…but for her reputation in case the story should get wind" (Stoker 103). A Victorian woman's status relied primarily on her reputation, without a decent reputation her livelihood to function among society would be limited. For example, a ruined woman becomes an outcast from society and resorts to prostitution, which in turn makes her vulnerable to venereal disease, consequently leading to her demise. Senf states that Lucy's physical transformation can also be referred to the dangers of venereal disease, commonly found in "the new imaginations of new woman writers" and was seen as taboo to the Victorians ("Dracula" 103). Lucy's sleepwalking tirades is an unconscious form for the search of freedom, as a result confirming her un-virtue to society as a New Woman.

Through the fang penetration from Dracula, Lucy becomes an un-dead vampire. When Mina discovers Lucy in the garden sleep walking, Lucy "put up her hand in her sleep and pulled up the collar of her nightdress close round her throat" (Stoker 102) and implored Mina "not to say a word to anyone, even her mother about her sleep walking adventure" (Stoker 104). Therefore, Lucy is consciously aware of the fang penetration and tries to hide the fact from the others, including Mina. Upon morning, Lucy even begins to acknowledge her throat wounds; "when I apologized and concerned about it, she laughed and petted me, and said she did not even feel it. Fortunately it cannot leave a scar, as it is so tiny" (Stoker 104). Lucy's acceptance of her wounds and condition illustrate her conscious efforts in transforming into a supernatural figure to escape the confines of society and explore her inner sexual desires.

Lucy's new un-dead figure is a threat to society, due to the confusing mix of traditional gender roles; "she makes a very beautiful corpse, sir. It's quite a privilege to attend on her. It's not too much to say that she will do credit to our establishment" (Stoker 177). As John Allen Stevenson states, "female vampires are not angels turned into whores but human women who have become something very strange, beings in whom traditional distinctions between male and female have been lost and traditional roles confusingly mixed" (146). As Stevenson argued, Lucy's sexuality has created a shift in gender role distinction; her vampiric figure not only frightens the men, but threatens gender differences through her monstrous / sexual appetite to convert and feed off of others (146). Lucy has transformed into a foreigner whose "sweetness was tuned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantoness…[and] eyes unclean and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew" (Stoker 226). Due to Lucy's new voluptuous vampiric figure, the men, who once admired her, view her as an un-pure, sexual deviant monster; "we could see that the lips were crimson with fresh blood, and that the

stream trickled over her chin and stained the purity of her lawn death-robe" (Stoker 226). As previously discussed, in vampire literature, blood is symbolically referred to as bodily fluids, such as semen. Therefore, the fresh blood that trickled down her chin would symbolically represent the bodily fluids she attained from an unknown suitor by engaging in an adulterous sexual act. Lucy's atrocious and unconventional sexual behavior pushes the men go as far as referring to her as "it," a thing, that bears her body; Arthur is baffled at Lucy's new un-dead figure, "Is this really Lucy's body, or only a demon in her shape? It is her body, and yet not it" (Stoker 229). The men are confused, because "there is no physical sign of difference between the aggressions of male and female vampires", which only creates anxiety, so they resort to gender neutral titles, thus referring to Lucy as "it." In addition, by establishing gender to a vampire, one would be lending the outsider a formal title; hence, power of gender. Cyndy Hendershot states that "several critics have read Lucy-as-thing as a comment on the inhuman quality of female sexuality" (380). If female sexuality was to destroy the gender norms of society, men would need to find a way to control women, such as objectifying them, in order to neutralize the situation.

Van Helsing and the other men decide to restore order by destroying Lucy, as a result, restoring her as a "holy, and not an unholy memory" and placing her with "the other Angels", in order to set her free (Stoker 230). According to Christopher Craft, Victorians believed that "a woman is better still than mobile, better dead than sexual" (122). In the following passage, Dr. Seward recounts the execution of Lucy:

> Arthur placed the point over the heart, and as I looked I could see its dint in the white flesh. Then he struck with all his might. The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body

> shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth clamped together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. (Stoker 231)

Lucy's violent death is a metaphor for the aggressive attitude society has for relinquishing the existence of the New Woman and her notions of sexual freedom; Senf explains when "Arthur plunges a stake into her breast and ends her vampiric existence forever. It is a vicious attack against a helpless woman, but it succeeds in destroying the New woman and in reestablishing male supremacy" ("Dracula" 45). Dr. Seward and the men are inspired by Arthur's brave initiative to murder his fiancé and annihilate New Woman behavior, in order to re establish gender roles and control for mankind; "the sight of it gave us courage, so that our voices seemed to ring through the little vault…had [Arthur] not been forced to his task by more than human considerations he could never have gone through with it" (Stoker 231). For women who embrace and explore their sexuality, they are lead to a life of ruin. As a fallen angel, Lucy has succumbed to the final stage of her ruin, death. The penetrating bite and transformation from Dracula only served as temporary cathartic outlet for Lucy, one that society would not allow to reign. Even through death, Lucy is contained, silenced and reduced back to Victorian standards; Lucy "is not a ginning devil now – not anymore a foul Thing for all eternity. No linger she is the devil's Un-Dead. She is God's true dead, whose soul is with Him!" (Stoker 232).

Mina, in contrast to Lucy, takes longer to succumb to Dracula's seduction. Spencer illustrates, "while Lucy satisfies her own unconscious desires in yielding to Dracula, Mina's vulnerability results as much from the failures of others as her own weakness" (216). As a

newlywed couple, sexual tension between Mina and Jonathan is never displayed. Dr. Seward notes that "after lunch Harker and his wife went back to their own room, and as I passed a while ago I heard the click of the typewriter. They are hard at it" (Stoker 241). Rather than engaging in sexual relations, the newlyweds resort to improving the evidence journals. The relationship between the two seems awkward and unconventional, due to the fact that the Victorian woman was to tame the sexual impulses of her husband. If anything, Mina is constantly nursing Jonathan, from his traumatic experiences with the count and his brides, than a sexual counterpart. Mina has little experience with sexual desire but is exposed to the sexual description of Jonathan with three female vampires. She now has a window to Jonathan's sexual fantasies. The scene lends itself as form of pornographic literature that would stimulate an erotic arousal, leaving her sexually frustrated. Mina's lack of sexual experience with her husband makes her vulnerable to the seduction of another (Spencer 216-117). When Dracula enters the bedroom, Mina is disturbed and frightened, but does not resist him; "I was bewildered, and, strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is a part of the horrible curse that is, when his touch is on his victim" (Stoker 305). Mina's sexual frustrations and desires allow her to succumb to Dracula's penetrating fangs. By Victorian standards, the act itself is not as horrifying to the men, than the woman's desire to participate; Spencer argues that "it is the sexual desire rather than sexual activity that is the true source of danger; and as Mina herself makes clear, she experiences desire under Dracula's attentions" (217). As a result, Mina displays New Woman behavior by succumbing to her inner sexual desires. She searches for an uncanny figure, Dracula, to justify her reason for straying from her husband and society. Once again, Mina blames the uncanny figure, Dracula, for possessing her and forcing her to desire and engage in such an atrocious sexual act.

In the *Twilight* series, Bella seeks to rid herself of her human purity by giving into her sexual desires. Edward, the vampire, insists for Bella to stay a human as long as she can and, in return, he proposes marriage; "if you compare the level of commitment between a marital union as opposed to bartering your soul in exchange for an eternity as a vampire" (Meyer, *New Moon* 541). Bella is unconsciously searching for a new found form of freedom in becoming a vampire; these vampiric conditions give way to expressing and achieving certain desires, for example, the ability to be beautiful and immortal. However, the transformation will not be done by Edward, since he wants to keep her as pure and innocent as possible. As a result, Bella's desire to become a vampire leads her to the arms of another Cullen, in order to help with the transformation; "'If you think that's the end, then you don't know me very well,' I warned him. 'You're not the only vampire I know'" (Meyer, *Twilight* 476). Bella's desire to be transformed by Edward would be the pinnacle of her sexuality, from being pure to sexual. Bella wants to be transformed by Edward and no one else, unfortunately, Edward refuses to convert Bella into a vampire, but she continues to insist in becoming one. Bella's persistence leads her to the arms of Carlisle Cullen, who agrees to take her old life away (innocence); "Fine. I'll have Carlisle do it when I graduate" (Meyer, *New Moon* 541). The exchange is no longer symbolically love, but a lust and desire to be a vampire. Bella no longer has the sexual patience of a Victorian woman, a woman that Edward idealistically prefers. Bella seeks for another way to become one with Edward, if not through penetrating touch of his fangs, than through the literal means of sexual intercourse. Bella's sexual persistence becomes unfavorable in the eyes of Edward, since she is displaying eccentric behavior for a Victorian woman. Edward's Victorian beliefs take hold of the situation, he then proposes intimacy at a level that should be conducted only after marriage; "'I am not saying no', he reassured me. 'I'm saying not tonight'" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 450). Though, Bella

makes it quite known that she does not have patience for such morals; “So you can ask for any stupid, ridiculous thing you want – like getting married …because right now, physically, there’s nothing I want more than you” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 445, 446). Bella even reduces herself to begging in order to achieve her sexual desires; “If it doesn’t work out right well, then that’s that. Just let us *try*…only try. And I’ll give you what you want…I’ll marry you…just…*please*” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 448). This contradicts Bella’s beliefs, since, in actuality, she does not want to marry Edward; her view of marriage was distorted due to her parent’s divorce. Her pleading attempt to Edward, and actually giving in to what he wants, shows her diligence in achieving her goal, while at the same time, giving into his request as a Victorian woman would do. Bella wants to please Edward by following the Victorian values he was raised with; although, her repressed desire to be rebellious and physically close to a vampire, who represents a definitive form of independence, gets the best of her, resulting in an elliptical turn from gaining independence to regressing back to his antiquated standards.

In the *Twilight* novel *Breaking Dawn*, Bella weds Edward, giving her the opportunity to engage in sexual relations with him. Through marriage, Bella has achieved the ability to become one with a vampire, without enduring fang penetration. The couple decides to consummate their marriage in a secluded island called Isle of Esme. Bella, as a modest Victorian woman should, is nervous and unaware of how to engage in relations; “I wasn’t freaking out because I thought we were making a mistake. Not at all. I was freaking out because I had no idea how to do this, and I was afraid to walk out of this room and face the unknown” (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 83). Edward as well displays reserved and nervous behavior on the night of their honeymoon. In the following passage, Bella recalls Edward’s reserved behavior:

> I half smiled, then raised my free hand – it didn't tremble now and placed it over his heart. White on white; we matched for once. He shuddered the tiniest bit at my warm touch. His breath came rougher now. 'I promised we could *try*,' he whispered, suddenly tense. 'If…if I do something wrong, if I hurt you, you must tell me at once.' (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 85)

The reader's first response and interpretation of this passage would probably be that Edward is afraid of physically hurting Bella due to his supernatural strength, but his moral background may shed light to this behavior; according to William Acton, a Victorian physician and author writing in 1875, "a young man has, or need have no sexual desire, at least to any troublesome degree, and consequently need neither take precautions, nor be warned against the danger of exciting his sexual feelings" (34). Given this understanding of Victorian beliefs, Edward's fear to partake in intercourse with Bella stems back to his Victorian morals to abstain from sex in order to remain pure. Through all his efforts in remaining pure, Edward gives into Bella's pleas and they consummate their marriage. After engaging in intercourse, Edward learns of the harm he bestowed on Bella, which she describes:

> Large purplish bruises were beginning to blossom across the pale skin of my arm. My eyes followed the trail they made up to my shoulder, and then down across my ribs. I pulled my hand free to poke at a discoloration on my left forearm, watching it fade where I touched and then reappear. It throbbed a little. So lightly that he was barely touching me, Edward placed his hand against the bruises on my arm, one at a time, matching his long fingers to the patterns. 'Oh,' I said. (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 89)

Edward overindulged in desire; his perversions manifested themselves all over her body. His physical strength serves as a metaphor for the strength of his sexual appetite. Edward can now see how damaging his desires truly are, the bruises serve as a physical cautionary sign of how sexual relations need to be controlled in the bedroom. In Victorian belief, sex was to be practiced for the sole means of procreation; whereas, Edward and Bella's sexual engagement was for the means of gratification. It is interesting to note that Edward, a supernatural vampiric figure, identifies himself as a monster when confronted with the physical markings of his sexual perversions; "He didn't open his eyes; it was like he didn't want to see me. 'Look at yourself, Bella. Then tell me I'm not a monster" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 88).

While Edward is fearful of engaging in sexual intercourse, Bella is more than curious to partake in this form of intimacy. Bella endures physical pain and bestows the markings of their sexually charged night. To Bella, the bruises serve as a physical validation of her sexual conquest. Bella finds ways of validating her markings; "I'd definitely had worse. There was a faint shadow across one of my cheekbones, and my lips were a little swollen, both other than that, my face was fine. The rest of me was decorated with patches of blues and purple. I concentrated on the bruises that would be the hardest to hide – my arms and my shoulders. They weren't so bad" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 95). As previously mentioned, a New Woman can obtain power through the means of sex. Unlike Bella's human peers, as a New Woman, she was able to explore the unknown by physically, emotionally, and spiritually having sex with a supernatural figure. This allows Bella to bestow a higher stance in the human and supernatural world by being one of the first humans to have relations with a supernatural figure. It is this recognition that validates Bella's position as an influential figure in both races, resulting in her memory and voice to resound in their history. Bella, momentarily, achieves a form of autonomy;

however, it is only till she achieves the vampiric form that she will have ultimately achieved freedom.

Bella achieves an ultimate form of freedom by transforming into a vampire. Through the strenuous and torturous delivery of her infant child, Renesmee, Bella endures broken bones, a large wound and a great loss of blood. Jacob recalls the painful event; "Another shattering crack inside her body, the loudest yet, so loud that we both froze in shock waiting for her answering shriek. Nothing. Her legs, which had been curled up in agony, now went limp, sprawling out in an unnatural way" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 351). Against his own wishes to keep Bella human, Edward injects his venom into her heart to save her from death; "Edward had a syringe in his hand – all silver, like it was made from steel…he shoved the needle straight into her heart" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 354). Rather than penetrating Bella with his fangs, he resorts to using an inanimate object, which eliminated an intimate moment between the two. Edward's fear of sexual intimacy is the result of his Victorian morals ordering him to refrain from sex. In *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth – Century England*, Steven Marcus explains that "the body was regarded as a productive system with only a limited amount of material at its disposal. And the model on which the notion of semen is formed is clearly that of money" (22). It is a man's semen or, as in this case, a vampire's venom that must be carefully spent. Man should not carelessly spread his seed for every sexual fantasy that may come upon but rather use it wisely. This may be a reason as to why Edward is determined in retaining his venom. Though, upon viewing Bella's transformation, Edward allows himself to release his inner sexual desires. In the following passage, Jacob recounts Edward's attempts of transforming Bella:

> It was like he was kissing her, brushing his lips at her throat, at her wrists, into the crease at the inside of her arm. But I could hear the lush tearing of her skin as his teeth bit through, again and again, forcing venom into her system at as many points possible. I saw his pale tongue sweep along the bleeding gashes, but before this could make me either sick or angry, I realized what he was doing. Where his tongue washed the venom over her skin, it sealed shut. Holding the poison and the blood inside her body [sic]. (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 354-355)

This oral fixation to bite, lick, and suck is commonly expressed in Victorian literature. It serves as a substitute for intercourse, hence allowing one to experience a mild form of sexual desire. In this passage, Edward loses control of his Victorian morals and resorts to licking and biting at Bella's body. Even though Edward is trying to save Bella from death, he is also overwhelmed with sexual desire. The transformation allows Edward to ravage Bella's body by continuously penetrating and licking every part possible, under the guise that he is facilitating the process. Moreover, as previously mentioned, Edward's initial desire is to keep Bella human and retain her purity as a Victorian woman. Once Bella succumbs to the vampire form, Edward will lose the ability to have power over her. It is the uncanny figure, the supernatural, that eludes and entices female protagonists in Gothic literature to search for outlets to release their oppressions. If the female protagonist succumbs to the form of the uncanny figure, she loses all interest, admiration, or desire for the figure, since she now wields the power she initially sought out. Edward will lose his superiority over Bella and be forced to recognize her as peer of equal stance and power.

Through the transformation process, Bella's body turns limp and lifeless; this false death serves as the demise of her past life and the awakening of a new life. Bella's transformation to a vampire was one with pain and struggle. After her strenuous labor, Bella descends into

unconsciousness and describes being surrounded in darkness; “I kept pushing against the black, though, almost a reflex. I wasn’t trying to lift it. I was just resisting. Not allowing it to crush me completely” (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 374). The darkness described in the novel symbolically represents death; hence, her body is fighting to stay in human form by leading her to the darkness so she does not succumb to the venom of the vampire. Death essentially is believed to release one’s soul from sin, thus regaining purity. For instance, Lucy, Bella’s counterpart, achieved purity and forgiveness for her atrocious sexual behavior as a vampire only through death, almost as if nothing had ever happened. Furthermore, Bella is able to fight off the darkness and begins to feel the first stages of her transformation; “The warmth beside my heart got more and more real, warmer and warmer. Hotter. The heat was so real it was hard to believe that I was imagining it” (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 375). As the transformation continued, her body and mind begin to plead for a merciful stop; “To wish that I’d embraced the blackness while I’d still had the chance. I wanted to raise my arms and claw my chest open and rip the heart from it – anything to get rid of this torture” (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 375-376). After countless pleas for death and agonizing pain, Bella hears her heart slowly come to a stop, “My heart stuttered twice, and then thudded quietly again just once more. There was no sound. No breathing. Not even mine”, and finally opens her eyes to a new world (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 385).

Bella views the world differently as a vampire. Upon her rebirth as a vampire, Bella is able to clearly and insightfully see the world around her; “EVERYTHING WAS SO *CLEAR*. Sharp. Defined” (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 387). No longer does Bella feel enclosed to the world; she now embodies a form that exudes sexuality and power. Her new form is so fascinating that previous memories, as a human being, began to fade out of existence; “the memory seemed dim, like I was watching through a thick, dark veil – because my human eyes had been half blind.

Everything had been so blurred" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 391). For instance, only after a few minutes in her new form, Bella becomes wary and distant of her human form that she even has difficulty trying to recall the image of her daughter; "I tried to remember her face – I knew that she had been beautiful – but it was irritating to try to see through the human memories" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 391). Bella's forgetfulness is the result of her desire to disconnect from her human form and submerse herself in her new form where endless possibilities await. Furthermore, Bella is aware that she is finally sexually compatible with Edward, thus allowing her to engage in new and unrestricted sexual realms. In the following passage, Bella indulges and loses herself in a vast sea of sexual possibilities:

> A very, very small part of my head considered the interesting conundrum presented in this situation. I was never going to get tired, and neither was he. We didn't have to catch our breath or rest or eat or even use the bathroom; we had no more mundane human needs. He had the most beautiful, perfect body in the world and I had him all to myself, and it didn't feel like I was ever going to find a point where I would think, *Now I've had enough for one day*. I was always going to want more. And the day was never going to end. So, in such a situation, how did we ever *stop*? It didn't bother me at all that I had no answer. (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 482-483)

We can see that Bella has accepted her new role as a vampire / New Woman, who explores her sexuality by rebelling against restricted Victorian sexual ideals. As previously mentioned, the vampire figure radiates sexuality. The vampire attains power through the means of their sexual influence. Therefore, Bella now has the ability to attain the power of equality due to her sexual influence on Edward; "He was all new, a different person as our bodies tangled gracefully into

one on the sand-pale floor. No caution, no restraint. No fear – especially not that. We could love together – both active participants now. Finally equals" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 482). Though, unlike her counterpart Lucy, Bella is not executed for attaining the form of the outsider / vampire. Oddly enough, at the end of the *Twilight* series, Bella remains a vampire and lives happily, ever after with her newfound freedom. This poses the question as to why Lucy needed to be sacrificed but not Bella?

It is an innate nature for societies to be dualistic and mark boundaries through the means of good (inside) and bad (outside). In regards to the vampire, the uncanny figure is recognized as a threat due to the idea that "evil is a foreign danger introduced by foreign agents in disguise…[and] must be identified and expelled for allowing the outside evil to infiltrate" (Spencer 207). Through fang penetration, the female protagonists become foreign agents of evil. Their sexuality has been released the wrong way by a foreigner, creating "aggressive or demanding women", thus initiating a "fear or superior sexual potency in the competition" (Stevenson 146). John Allen Stevenson argues that "Women should not be 'wanton' or 'voluptuous'; they should be 'pure' and 'spiritual'" in accordance to the Victorian standards of a good woman (Stevenson 145). However, the female protagonists in *Dracula* and *Twilight* series, though good women, succumb to their repressed inner sexual desires through the uncanny figure of the vampire. Through the vampire, these characters are able to explore their sexuality and practice New Woman behavior. Through their sexual experiences, it was easy for Lucy, Mina, and Bella to become impure, but it is doubly difficult to become pure and naive after being penetrated by a vampire.

The "Angel of the House" has fallen into the passionate and deadly grips of sexual desire. The element of sexuality in Gothic literature allows the characters to achieve a cathartic state

through a sexual release, thus allowing one to express their inner desires. In addition to sexuality, the uncanny figure of Gothic literature becomes a vessel for the character's inner desires, hence lending itself as a form of escapism. It allows the characters to justify their unconventional actions by blaming the figure for possessing their body and mind. As a consequence, the figure can take the blame since its foreign elements are unbeknown to society. Lucy, Mina, and Bella seem consciously aware of their ghastly sexual actions, but they still blame the uncanny figure, the vampire, in order to rationalize their behavior to society. Women who displayed unconventional Victorian behavior and fought for control over their body and mind were often referred to as New Women. Lucy, Mina, and Bella display New Woman behavior by reigning control over their body through the means of the uncanny figure. The New Woman was often referred to as a monster; hence the reasoning why sexualized women were often believed to be demonic possessions. The demon in a sexually liberated woman needs to be contained and destroyed. Only through the physical or metaphorical death of the demonic female, can order in a society function, and the female may become an angel once again. As a result, the sole responsibility of a society is to exercise control over foreign intruders such as the vampire, uncanny figure, to avoid turmoil; nevertheless, sexualized women are a greater threat that may ripple a change in society, no matter the time period. The female protagonists in *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series endure an internal struggle between their repressed sexual needs and the antiquated Victorian morals of their men. Overall, it is the presence of un-dead vampire that allows the characters' repressed sexual desires to flourish; desires that take on their own demonic form.

CHAPTER III

FEMALE HEROISM: THE DEMISE OF THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

The general assumption that *Dracula's* Van Helsing and the *Twilight* series' Edward Cullen are the heroic figures of these Gothic works is a common misconception. In this chapter, I argue how the female protagonists, Mina Harker from *Dracula* and Bella Swan from the *Twilight* series, take on the role of a heroine. I demonstrate that in these vampiric novels, the gender roles have reversed, as a result of exhibiting a New Woman persona's characteristic, the female heroine. An exploration of the characteristics of a heroine will further support the importance of the New Woman persona in these texts.

To begin with, the heroine generally takes an unconventional route than the hero to achieve a heroic stance. A heroine must utilize her intelligence and maternal behavior, than her male counterpart's brawn, strength, and political power, in order to gain acceptance into a societal group as the heroine. Conventional female characteristics that some believed would hinder the New Woman, though, in actuality, allowed the women to manipulate their way to a position of power. Most would think that the conventional Victorian housewife, the "Angel of the House," did not have much of an authoritarian role; when, in fact, she is responsible for influencing and molding future generations, including the men in her life. In order to attain a stance of power in a group, the heroine would need to utilize characteristics unbeknown of power; those of the housewife and mother.

What is a hero? According to Lee R. Edwards, the classical hero is universally associated with the actions and attributes of "unusual physical strength, military prowess, or even social or political power" (39). Edwards defines a hero as "an honored figure, the hero is also an ambiguous one, acting on behalf of impulses society must recognize but would prefer to ignore, society's agent but also its hostage" (33). This figure allows the immediate and surrounding characters to experience a journey of self awakening and awareness to their society's ideologies. It is this unconscious relationship, between society and an outcast, which creates the need for the existence of the heroic figure. Furthermore, Lee R. Edwards explains that a hero exudes a certain characteristic list of qualities, such as:

> Parents who are absent, hostile; strained or combative relations between the heroic figure and the parents or their surrogates; a sense of specialness, of uniqueness, and also often of isolation developing within the hero in response to these particular circumstances of birth and early life; the undertaking of a journey-literal or symbolic…(Edwards 34)

Thus, a hero exists for the sole reason to solve a particular society's social maladies. The hero is defined by those matrices, which leaves little or no room to develop a separate identity. As seen, the dynamic hero unconsciously, unaware of his heroic behavior, needs to resolve a society's social deconstruction in order to resolve his own internal conflicts. It is only through a physical or metaphorical journey that the hero finds a purpose for his existence.

While the Victorian male hero saved societies and journeyed to find a purposeful meaning for his existence, the upper to middle class Victorian women, from the nineteenth century, were expected to be delicate, formal, maternal, caring, lack intelligence and sexual

prowess. This stereotype restrained women from exploring and expressing other avenues of their personality such as sarcasm, sense of humor, opinion, and disagreement. Victorian women were often established as the "Angel of the House." This phrase first originated from Coventry Patmore's poem titled "Angel of the House." The poem was written as a dedication to Patmore's wife, Emily, who he upheld as an ideal model of a Victorian woman. After the publication of this poem in 1854, the characteristics mentioned were set as standards for Victorian women (Melani). According to Jeanne M. Peterson, the Victorian iconic "Angel of the House" figure is defined, as follows:

> The angel's stereotypical social role varied, of course, according to her age and status. As a young, single woman she carried on the duties of the daughter of the house and was educated to the accomplishments-needlework, a smattering of French, a bit of painting, and piano. She made morning calls with mama and did occasional charitable work. Her single life provided training for her role as angel-wife. As a wife and mother she obeyed her husband, adored him, and promoted his spiritual and physical well-being. She supervised the servants' activities under the watchful eye of her husband and became the devoted and loving mother of a large Victorian family. She was an acquiescent, passive, unintellectual creature, whose life revolved entirely around social engagements, domestic management, and religion. (Peterson 678)

As mentioned, the "Angel of the House" can be identified in two respects, as an iconic figure of Victorian ideology and stability or horror of an oppressed voice. Victorian women were looking for an escape from their paradoxical prison as the "Angel of the House." According to Susan Siefert in *The Dilemma of the Talented Heroine: A Study in Nineteenth Century Fiction*, the

condition of being female is “somehow associated with a degree of incompetence, inadequacy, and ineffectuality” (1). In “Victorian Women in Life and in Fiction”, Lousie E. Rorabacher illustrates how the feminine stereotypes of a Victorian woman are characterized as follows:

> The nineteenth century expected women to possess a delicacy of form and feature with an accompanying deficiency in physical prowess. A lack of intellectual ability was viewed as the natural and becoming corollary to physical delicacy. The virtues required of the middle-class young lady were chiefly gentleness, tenderness, and consideration for others, while the imperfections permitted her included impulsiveness, flightiness, and absorption in the trivial, and an incapacity for friendship with other women. (Rorabacher 11-31)

Upper and middle class Victorian women wanted to break free from the static character that the nineteenth century bestowed upon them. When conveying Victorian women as characters, we are trying to illustrate how they were forced to meet certain characteristics that seemed almost unrealistic that it would have to be placed as a character. The qualities of being aggressive, sexual, spontaneous, curious and irrational were not accepted by Victorian society; however, ironically, these are qualities that essentially comprise of what a human is by nature (Senf, *The Vampire* 95). Victorian women wanted to break grounds to achieve a form of growth and take on a role of a dynamic character, such as the heroine. Victorian women wanted to be the hero of not only their family, but themselves as well.

The heroine exudes similar qualities of a hero, even though she breaks some common perceptions of what makes a hero. The classical hero is defined by his physical strength, political and social power in the society, thus denying women the ability of heroism (Edwards 39). These

classical respects of what entails to be a hero is essentially what is needed for the New Woman to endure a discovery of self identity / realization. A heroine is able to achieve a position / role of higher importance and class that allows her to obtain a voice in a societal group. The heroine figure allows the Victorian female characters in Gothic works to validate their temporary stance of power.

The uncanny figure allows the characters to explore their identity and role in society. According to Carol A. Senf in "'Dracula': Stoker's Response to the New Woman," Dracula is often described as an isolated figure who can take on many forms and positions. To Lucy Westenra, he is an embodiment of death and suitor, while Jonathan Harker views him as a physical threat to himself and society by overtaking civilization (47). Moreover, Senf makes note that the key component of Dracula is his individualism (Senf, "Dracula" 47). It is the uncanny figure's individualism that often leads to its entitlement of being a foreigner and destroyer of empires. Whatever form the uncanny figure takes, it nonetheless instigates for the characters to question both the uncanny figure's and their role in society. Mina and Bella utilize the uncanny figure's presence as a vehicle to undergo a journey of self fulfillment by deconstructing the roles within a societal group, which would have not been approved of under normal circumstances. The women are able to temporarily create a role reversal where the men become the damsel of distress, while the women are a heroic figure. As a result, the uncanny figure / vampire, in the Gothic works *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series, creates a disruption of social order, thus allowing new roles to form.

Mina takes the lead as the heroine protagonist in *Dracula*. She exudes qualities similar to a hero, even though Mina breaks some common classical perceptions of what makes a hero. For starters, as previously mentioned, a classical hero is universally associated with the actions and

attributes of “unusual physical strength, military prowess, or even social or political power” which often limits women in these areas, thus denying them the ability of heroism (Edwards 39). However, Van Helsings description of Mina suggests otherwise; “Ah, that wonderful Madam Mina! She has a man’s brain – a brain that a man should have were he much gifted – and woman’s heart” (Stoker 251). Mina’s intelligence serves as a vital contribution to the success of destroying Dracula. In *Dracula*, Stoker presents Mina as being an individual who is, to some extent, educated and self reliant in respects to economic independence, before marrying Jonathan Harker (Senf, “Dracula” 48).

The heroine role will allow Mina to endure a heroic journey of self realization by utilizing her intelligence. The Victorian New Woman sought to gain independence by pursuing a greater education and to utilize her knowledge to benefit and uphold herself in stature to the men in society; whereas, Senf points out, upper and middle class Victorian women from the nineteenth century were to endure practical trainings of fine arts, English education, domestic skills, and inferiority in order to attract a male suitor (*The Vampire* 98). Mina shows great independence in the beginning of the novel. Her letters reveal a woman who solely cares and maintains for herself; there is never word of a father figure or family that supports her. One can infer that Mina lives alone and works as a school mistress teaching etiquette, thus presenting an intelligent, productive, and independent modern woman. Stoker uses Mina as the representation of what a good Victorian woman should be, though, dualistically, she also represents the New Woman who endures an internal conflict between her desires and social conventions. Mina illustrates New Woman behavior by being educated and volunteering to transcribe the journals of the men in order to put her typing skills into practice; Mina recounts asking permission to organize and type the journals; “My mind was made up that the diary of a doctor who attended

Lucy might have something to add to the sum of our knowledge of that terrible Being, and I said boldly: - 'Then, Dr. Seward, you had better let me copy it out for you on my typewriter' (Stoker 236). While transcribing the journals, Mina places herself at an advantageous position that allows her to further observe and analyze Dracula's behavior, in order to identify the creature's weaknesses:

> I borrowed the file of the *Westminister Gazette* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* and took them to my room. I remember how much the *Dailygraph* and the *Whitby Gazette*, of which I had made cuttings, helped us to understand the terrible events at Whitby when Count Dracula landed, so I shall look through the evening papers since then, and perhaps I shall get some new light. I am not sleepy, and the work will help to keep me quiet. (Stoker 240)

Senf further notes that, in *Dracula*, Stoker presents Mina as the individual of the group who is superior in intelligence than her male companions, due to her deductive reasoning ("Dracula" 48).

Mina relinquishes the New Woman stature of being single and independent by marrying Jonathan Harker. Mina resorts to being Jonathan's constant figure of Victorian assurance. In a letter to Lucy, Mina mentions of her interest in Jonathan's work and educating herself:

> I have been working very hard lately, because I want to keep up with Jonathan's studies, and I have been practicing shorthand very assiduously. When we are married I shall be able to be useful to Jonathan, and if I take down what he wants to say in this way and write it out for him on the typewriter, at which also I am practicing very hard. (Stoker 61)

Mina demonstrates her desire to achieve a higher stance in society by utilizing her shorthand skills and education to create a place for her in society. In addition, Mina tediously practices her shorthand skills to benefit herself and the group; "I am rusty in my shorthand – see what unexpected prosperity does for us – so it may be as well to freshen it up again with an exercise anyhow…" (Stoker 185). Even though Mina adopts her traditional role as a Victorian wife, she still resembles the New Woman by learning how to write in short hand and understand train schedules to assist her husband at work.

After Mina's sexual encounter with Dracula, she is instantly isolated from the group. Van Helsing and the men are terrified and disgusted by the sight of Mina's sexual encounter with Dracula. The blood stained lips, sheets, and the punctures on her neck force the men, including Jonathan, to seek to isolate her. Van Helsing tries to assure Mina that she will be safe being alone, while the men try to concoct a strategy: "'Do not fear, my dear. We are here; and whilst this [crucifix] is close to you no foul thing can approach. You are safe for tonight; and we must be calm and take counsel together.' She shuddered and was silent, holding down her head on her husband's breast" (Stoker 302). Mina is aware that the men want to isolate her from the group and now view her as a potential liability. Lee R. Edwards illustrates that an individual who is isolated from society has the potential to develop into a heroic figure in order to assimilate into the society that expelled him or her. Mina struggles with the conflict of escaping in sexual desire with Dracula versus the recognition of one's self in a societal group. In respects to the New Woman persona, Mina digresses from achieving an avenue of sexual freedom to the quintessential Victorian woman who is at the disposal of her societal family. Mina endures a metaphorical death due to the thought of being secluded from her Victorian family. Rather than facing isolation and dividing herself from the group as an individual, Mina's heroic figure rises

when she resorts to assisting the group. Mina self sacrifices her sexual desires by aiding the men to Dracula through the connection that the creature bestowed unto her. Mina recounts, "'Then he spoke to me mockingly,' 'And so you, like the others, would play your brains against mine. You would help these men to hunt me and frustrate me in my designs! You know now, and they know in part already, and will know in full before long…now you shall come to my call. When my brain says 'Come!' to you, you shall cross land or sea to do my bidding…'" (Stoker 306). As a New Woman, independence is key to achieving freedom; though, in Mina's situation, if she wants to be accepted by the group, she must sacrifice her independence. Though, Mina's acceptance into the crew light / group will allow her to explore another avenue of freedom by taking on the stance of the heroine.

Mina utilizes her intelligence to describe and analyze Dracula's whereabouts and behavior. With the connection that Mina has with Dracula, she volunteers to be hypnotized; Mina says, "I want you to hypnotize me…do it before the dawn, for I feel that then I can speak, and speak freely" (Stoker 330). Under hypnosis, Mina, unconsciously, describes and traces the paths and trails that Dracula encountered in order to reach his sanctuary. Senf points out that Mina "meticulously duplicat[es] the rational process by which she discovers the route that Dracula will take" ("Dracula" 48). Hence, it is Mina's intelligence that helps her carry Jonathan and the others through this strenuous ordeal, thus deeming her the hero of the group. Only through Mina's guidance and analytical skills were Van Helsing and the men able to capture and destroy Dracula, thus bringing reform back to society.

Bella is the hero in the *Twilight* series. Because the *Twilight* series is categorized as romantic teenage novel, one might assume that Edward, the vampire, would be the hero of the novels, and yet it is the Bella who takes on this role.

Bella utilizes her intelligence to mange a position in a societal group. As a woman of the twenty- first, Bella has no difficulty attaining greater knowledge in the academic realm; on the contrary to the twenty-first century woman, a Victorian woman was not permitted to be informed or educated in equal stature as a man, but only in the realms of domestic care. As a woman of privilege, Bella does not seem interested in the educational avenues that are presented to her, since she believes she has attained all there is to know; she illustrates her dissatisfaction at school: "I kept my eyes down on the reading list the teacher had give me. It was fairly basic: Bronte, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Faulkner. I'd already read everything. That was comforting…and boring" (Meyer, *Twilight* 15). It is difficult to believe that a figure as clumsy and absentminded as Bella would have read all that there is to read. Though, Meyer may have set up her character in such a light to open up other avenues for knowledge attainment. Hence, with her ability to attain information and knowledge in the academia, political, and social spheres, Bella disregards these avenues for a higher form of knowledge, that of the supernatural.

Bella exercises deductive reasoning and manipulative skills in order to attain greater knowledge of the two supernatural groups she associates herself with, the Cullens and the wolf pack. According Phil Johnason-Laird, deductive reasoning is explained as: "the mental process of making inferences that are logical. It is just one sort of reasoning. But, it is a central cognitive process and a major component of intelligence, and so tests of intelligence include problems in deductive reasoning accurate in making deductions" (8). Bella utilizes this skill to obtain knowledge of the Cullens. For instance, Bella observes the Cullen's behavior and appearance:

> They were all 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 tines. They also had dark shadows under those

> eyes –purplish, bruise-like shadows…I stared because their faces, so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanely beautiful…'Who are they?' I asked the girl from my Spanish class, whose name I'd forgotten. (Meyer, *Twilight* 18-19)

Bella makes detailed observations of the Cullens, from their appearance, mannerisms, to even their names; "strange, unpopular names, I thought. The kinds of names grandparents had" (Meyer, *Twilight* 20). In order to attain more information about the Cullens, Bella even manipulates Jacob in divulging information, by flirting with him:

> 'What was that he was saying about the doctor's family?' I asked innocently.
>
> 'The Cullens? Oh, they're not supposed to come onto the reservation.' He looked away, out toward James Island, as he confirmed what I'd thought I'd heard in Sam's voice.
>
> 'Why not?'
>
> He glanced back at me, biting his lip. 'Oops, I am not supposed to say anything about that.'
>
> 'Oh, I won't tell anyone, I'm just curious.' I tried to make my smile alluring, wondering if I was laying it on too thick. (Meyer, *Twilight* 123)

Bella also interrogates and studies Edward's responses to her inquires: Bella asks Edward: "How does it work – the mind-reading thing? Can you read anybody's mind, anywhere? How do you do it? Can the rest of your family…?' I felt silly, asking for clarification in make-believe" (Meyer, *Twilight* 180). Bella leaves no question left unanswered and encourages Edward to

answer every single one; Bella states, "'And then you didn't answer one of my first questions…' I stalled" (Meyer, *Twilight* 180). Bella studies and researches the information she collected in order to come to a logical conclusion. After reviewing the information, Bella comes up with a theory:

> I listed again in my head the things I'd observed myself: the impossible speed and strength, the eye color shifting from black to gold and back again, the inhuman beauty, the pale, frigid skin…they never seemed to eat, the disturbing grace with which they moved. And the way he sometimes spoke, with unfamiliar cadences and phrases that better fit the style of a turn-of-the-century novel than a twenty-first- century classroom…Whether it be Jacob's *cold ones* or my own superhero theory, Edward Cullen was not…human. He was something more. (Meyer, *Twilight* 138)

Upon identifying the possibility of the Cullens being un-human, Bella becomes enthralled to learn even more. Bella desires to be close to the Cullens, due to their mysterious nature. The unknown/uncanny is always something that is familiar, and yet unknown at the same time. Bella is curious about the unknown, since only through the unknown and supernatural can an individual create a new sphere of social roles. As a result, by obtaining information, Bella feels a connection to the group. A connection to a mysterious and unknown family awakens her desire to be a part of it. Bella's main goal throughout the series is to acquire as much information of both supernatural realms to secure a position within these groups. If an individual knows too much information about a supernatural group, the group would be compromised to extend an invitation in order to protect their secrecy. In *New Moon*, the Volturi threaten Bella's life for the knowledge she acquired of the vampire realm from the Cullens; Caius argues with Edward,

"'She knows too much. You have exposed our secrets...If she betrays our secrets, are you prepared to destroy her? I think not,' he scoffed… 'Nor, do you intend to make her one of us…Therefore, she is a vulnerability…Unless you intend to give her immortality?'" (Meyer, *New Moon* 478). In order to avoid the deathly clutches of the Volturi, Edward and Alice agree to transform Bella into a vampire, as long as she is allowed to leave Italy unharmed As a result, Bella's knowledge of the vampire world instills an opportunity to transform into a vampire as well. In addition, with the knowledge of the vampires, Bella feels complete, as if she found herself a long lost family; though, when Edward leaves Bella in *New Moon*, she feels as if her life is over; "It *was* like someone had died — like *I* had died. Because it had been more than just losing the truest of true loves, as if that were not enough to kill anyone. It was also losing a whole future, a whole family — the whole life that I'd chosen…" (Meyer, *New Moon* 398). Bella needs the connection in order to have access to not only Edward, but the entire clan. Overall, Bella utilizes her intelligence to create a role for herself in the realm of the vampires.

The knowledge that Bella obtains from Jacob, a member of the Quileutes and wolf pack, places her as one of the pack. Bella's constant need to have Jacob in her life, whether she cares for him or not, connects her to the supernatural realm of the werewolves. Bella knows that as long as Jacob loves and adores her, she will always have another door to the supernatural, hence the reason she is so reluctant of letting him go, when she already has a boyfriend; Bella states to Jacob, "It feels… complete when you're here, Jacob. Like all my family is together. I mean, I guess that's what it's like – I've never had a big family before now. It's nice. But it's just not whole unless you're here" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 298). The pack recognizes Jacob's desire to have her around, since the wolves have the ability to hear and feel each other's thoughts and emotions; Jacob replies to Bella: "But I'll never see anyone else, Bella. I only see you. Even

when I close my eyes and try to see something else. Ask Quil or Embry. It drives them all crazy" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 177). In order to keep Jacob happy, the pack allows Bella to attend their tribal meetings where they speak of their ancestors; the legend spirit warriors. In addition, Bella is the central figure that sparked a surge of dangerous vampires to appear near La Push, which initiated many of tribe members to transform into werewolves; her knowledge of both supernatural realms could be a benefit for the wolf pack in defeating the antagonistic vampires, thus establishing a place in the Quileutes tribe for her. Bella is aware that her knowledge of the supernatural can come with cons and pros; though, it never stops her from learning more; Bella states, "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. I knew all about that world — and I was in no small amount of trouble as a result" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 13). Bella utilizes her intelligence to create a social role among the Cullens and the wolf pack, through the means of deductive reasoning and manipulation, thus securing her a position in the realm of the supernatural.

Maternal behavior can be utilized as a heroic action to achieve a stance of power in society. The Victorian woman or "Angel of the house" was viewed as the foundation of the household. The preservation of Victorian social, gender, and class conventions relied solely on the wife and mother. Motherhood was believed to be second nature to the Victorian woman, not only is it an honor, but a privilege to raise and mold future generations. A Victorian woman who denies her motherhood should be ashamed for, as Ann L. Ardis points out in *The Woman Who Did*, "every good woman is by nature a mother, and finds best in maternity her social and moral salvation. She shall be saved in child – bearing" (92). The rejection of motherhood ultimately signifies a rebellion against Victorian conventions and her innate role in society. Women who

broke these conventions were often identified as New Women. The New Woman sought out avenues for sexual freedom. No longer did the New Woman want to identify sex as a means of procreation and maternal stature, but as a release from her sexual desires.

In *Dracula*, Stoker presents his vampiric female characters as un-maternal figures. Stephanie Demetrakopoulos addresses how the female vampires in *Dracula* "are interested only in sexual uses of men that will render the male helpless and they sacrifice children to their appetite …the vampire women are outlaws of society through their utter rejection of the conventional feminine role" (107). Lucy Westenra and the three female vampires in Dracula's castle are prime illustrations of how Stoker addresses the New Woman in regards to maternal functions. Upon Jonathan Harker's first encounter with the three vampiric women, Dracula's brides, he points out their overtly sexual behavior and non maternal behavior:

> …she pointed to the bag which he had thrown upon floor, and which moved as though there was some living thing within it. For answer he nodded his head. One of the women jumped forward and opened it. If my ears did not deceive me there was a gasp and low wail, as of a half smothered-child. The women closed round, whilst I was aghast with horror; but as I looked they disappeared with them the dreadful bag. (Stoker 45)

Rather than nurturing and comforting the child, the female vampires choose to feed from it. The brides' mistreatment of the child leads Harker to conclude that these women are indeed not true Victorian women; Jonathan claims, "I am alone in the castle with those awful women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. They are devils of the Pit!" (Stoker 59). To Jonathan, Mina is the epitome of Victorian womanhood in comparison to these rebellious

figures, and he seeks to return to the comfort of conventional social and gender roles. The three female vampires, Dracula's brides, function in the novel is to introduce the attitudes and beliefs of the New Woman and illustrate a model of what is to come through the Victorian characters of Lucy and Mina. Once Lucy transforms into a vampire, she feeds off young children; Dr. Seward recalls in his journal, "We could not see the face, for it was bent down over what we saw to be a fair-haired child. There was a pause and a sharp little cry, such as a child gives in sleep, or a dog as it lies before the fire and dreams…I could hear the gasp of Arthur, as we recognized the features of Lucy Westenra" (Stoker 226). Stoker metaphorically addresses the New Woman as a sexual and aggressive creature that cannot bare civil Victorian human children and yet devours the offspring of Victorian society.

Contrary to popular belief, the New Woman can indeed be maternal. As previously mentioned, Stoker is one of the first nineteenth century writers to correlate the vampire to the New Woman and her behavior. Stoker addresses that the New Woman, as the vampire, threatens social and natural order through their subversive sexual roles; thus, the overburdened Victorian woman would be disinterested in bearing children and resort to New Woman behavior. The New Woman's rebellious behavior against Victorian conventions labeled her as a "bad" woman; hence, her name could not be synonymous to the "good" Victorian. Senf illustrates that New Woman writers believed the New Woman could demonstrate the characteristic of maternal feelings: "New Woman writers are adamant about their heroines' love of children" and maintain a degree of independence ("Dracula" 41). Grant Allen, a New Woman advocate, points out that "every good woman is by nature a mother" (138). "Good" and "bad" are simply adjectives used to categorize and hinder the development of an individual's identity. The adjectives do not serve to determine an individual's abilities. The key word in this argument is the "ability" to be

maternal; the behavior does not have to be innate but illustrated when needed. As a result, if a New Woman or Victorian woman was labeled as a good or bad woman, the adjectives still do not determine or hinder their ability to be maternal. Women, whether they advocate Victorian values or not, possess the ability to be maternal.

The New Woman, often associated with the characteristic of un-maternal behavior, can indeed exhibit maternal behavior and utilize it to her advantage in acquiring a stance in society. The Victorian woman's position as a homemaker is commonly viewed as a domestic burden by women, yet as a guardian of the home, the role allows her to influence the family structure. As Constance D. Harsh points out in *Subversive Heroines: Feminist Resolutions of Social Crisis in the Condition-of-England Novel,* the "home gave [women] a set of responsibilities for the physical and moral well-being of those under her care," therefore, acquiring a position of power where "women are the logical candidates for the leadership role left vacant by the failure of conventional authorities" (19, 45). The heroine is not only the New Woman persona, but the Victorian woman as well; she embodies both characteristics of maternal behavior and desire to achieve freedom from Victorian conventions. These characteristics allow the heroine or New Woman to achieve a stance of power through the guise of the Victorian woman's maternal behavior. The heroine's strength is not measured by her physical strength, but rather the strength of her courage, determination and instinct to protect others from danger. Maternal behavior allows the female heroine to demonstrate extraordinary feats of bravery.

Mina takes on the role of the mother figure, for Jonathan, Van Helsing, and the men, by illustrating courageous and protective behavior. Demetrakopoulos states that Mina demonstrates caring and maternal behavior by nurturing the crew, such as when "Arthur cries on her shoulder, and she is forever supportive and valiant on the chase [for Dracula]…, [she] briefly humanizes

Reinfield…, and survives the ordeal, resisting Dracula and his three 'proto-sisters'" (110). As a result, Mina's heroic strength is measured by her maternal and caring behavior, which brings assurance to Van Helsing and the men. While comforting Lord Godalming, a former suitor of Lucy, on his grievance over Lucy's death, Mina becomes aware of her ability to be maternal:

> We women have something of the mother in us that makes us rise above smaller matters when the mother-spirit is invoked; I felt this big, sorrowing man's head resting on me, as though it were that of the baby that someday may lie on my bosom, and I stroked his hair as though he were my own child. I never thought at the time how strange it all was. (Stoker 246)

As illustrated in the previous passage, Mina identifies the transition of her behavior from a companion, who is easing her friend's grievances, to a mother, who is comforting a distressed child. The behavior was almost second nature to her, powerful, and yet shocking as well. Mina is able to see that her maternal behavior allows her to build a bond of trust with the men; Mr. Morris states, "I suppose there is something in a woman's nature that makes man free to break down before her and express his feelings on the tender or emotional side without feeling it derogatory to his manhood" (Stoker 245), thus "no one but a woman can help a man when he is in trouble of the heart" (Stoker 247). By creating an emotional bond with the men through maternal behavior, Mina will be able to gain acceptance into the group, consequently allowing her attain an active role in the quest to destroy Dracula; Mina attested to Dr. Seward, "I have not faltered in giving every thought of my own heart in this cause; but, of course, you do not know me – yet; and I must not expect you to trust me so far" (Stoker 237).

Mina brings comfort to her husband, Jonathan. While listening to Mr. Morris's conclusions of Dracula, Jonathan Harker becomes fearful of the quest the men must endure in order to defeat the creature and restore social order:

> Whist he was speaking Jonathan had taken my hand. I feared, oh so much, that the appalling nature of our danger was overcoming him when I saw his hand stretch out; but it was life to me to feel its touch – so strong, so reliant, so resolute. A brave man's hand can speak for itself; it does not even need a woman's love to hear its music. (Stoker 254)

Unconsciously, Harker seeks the comfort of a mother figure by innocently reaching for Mina's hand. As a brave Victorian man, Harker's duty is to protect his loved ones and society; so by reaching for Mina's hand, his behavior could be perceived as being protective and comforting to his wife, than reacting fearful. Mina, at first, recognizes his need for comfort; however, she quickly changes her perception of the gesture to justify his reasoning for being fearful and restore her social role, in order to avoid losing her connection to society. The heroine is often conflicted between social order and her desire for power, so it is not uncommon to see Mina demonstrate the behaviors of both the New Woman and Victorian woman, in order to illustrate her heroic stance.

Victorian women were expected to be faint of heart. Anything said or acted on that was considered dangerous, unconventional, and vulgar was to disrupt a Victorian woman's psyche. In *Dracula*, the men believe Mina will be unable to withstand the horrors that lay forward in the destruction of Dracula; Dr. Seward declares, "we are determined – nay, are we not pledged? – to destroy this monster; but it is no part for a woman. Even if she be not harmed, her heart may fail

her in so much and I so many horrors; and hereaferter she may suffer – both in waking, from her nerves, and in sleep, from her dreams" (Stoker 251). The men's reasoning to keep Mina in the dark is because, in their eyes, she represents Victorian womanhood and posterity. As mentioned, a Victorian woman is believed to be overly sensitive to unpleasant and dangerous situations that may hinder her helpless. However, throughout the novel, Mina willingly exposes herself to dangerous elements by transcribing and reading the encounters of the crew with Dracula. For instance, when Mina is typewriting the journals, she is able to read the horrible events that occurred with the death of Lucy; Mina states, "When the terrible story of Lucy's death, and – and all that followed, was done, I lay back in my chair powerless. Fortunately, I am not of a fainting disposition" (Stoker 239). The quote illustrates how Mina differs from the conventional overly sensitive Victorian woman. For one, Mina is not entirely disturbed by the content and descriptions that it would lead her to faint; "I am not of a fainting disposition" (Stoker 239). Also, when reading the terrible event, Mina reacts in an unconventional manner by hopelessly wishing she was able to save Lucy; "I lay back in my chair powerless" (Stoker 239). Mina displays heroic behavior by demonstrating her desire to endure the journey Van Helsing and his men have undergone, in order to make a difference in her society and attain her true identity. Only by placing herself in danger will Mina be able to create and achieve an identity separate from the good Victorian woman. Mina's courage is what sets her apart from the conventional Victorian woman, thus illustrating her as a heroine.

In *Dracula*, Van Helsing and the men often refer to Mina as brave. Mina willingly volunteers herself to be hypnotized and used to help the men locate Dracula's whereabouts, with the condition that she is allowed to partake on the journey; Mina states to Van Helsing and Jonathan, "You can tell [the other men] just as well. I must go with you on your journey…You

must take me with you. I am safer with you, and you shall be safer too...Besides, I may be of service, since you can hypnotize me and so learn that which even I myself do not know" (Stoker 346-347). Mina's bravery incites the men to gather courage to defend their mother, Mina, who represents Victorian womanhood: Jonathan Harker recalls, "[Mina] was so good and brave that we all felt that our hearts were strengthened to work and endure for her, and we began to discuss what we were to do" (Stoker 309). Mina's bold behavior not only rouses the men to demonstrate daring behavior, but exemplifies the influence a woman can have over men, by taking on the position of the heroine. Without the heroine's bravery, the men would not have the valor to confront the uncanny figure.

In the *Twilight* series, Bella, like her counterpart Mina, utilizes maternal behavior to create a heroic role in her societal group. Bella often displays classical traits that can categorize her as a damsel in distress, such as clumsiness. Bella affirms her weakness; "I'm absolutely ordinary – well, except for bad things like all the near-death experiences and being so clumsy that I'm almost disabled" (Meyer, *Twilight* 210). With the awareness of her weakness, Bella is able to utilize it to heighten the strength of her need for the Cullens and the wolf pack, hence allowing her to manipulate a strong connection between the two. The presence of these uncanny figures permits her to use them as vehicles for escapism. Since Bella comes off as weak and naive in the eyes of both supernatural groups, naturally, both willingly volunteer to preserve her existence; in return, she comforts and encourages them in their battles to save and protect her, as a mother figure would. Upon hearing the story of the third wife in the Quileutes tribe gathering, Bella felt an instant connection to the individual:

> My mind was a thousand years away. I was not thinking of Yaha Uta or the other wolves, or the beautiful Cold Woman – I could picture *her* only too easily. No, I

> was thinking of someone outside the magic altogether. I was trying to imagine the face of the unnamed woman who had saved the entire tribe, the third wife. Just a human woman, with no special gifts or powers. Physically weaker and slower than any of the monsters in the story. But she had been the key, the solution. She'd saved her husband, her young sons, her tribe. I wish they'd remembered her name…(Meyer, *Eclipse* 260)

Bella feels a connection with the third wife because she was a human being who was surrounded by the supernatural, werewolves. Only through the third wife's maternal and protective instincts for her husband, children, and tribe was she able to sacrifice herself for their safety. A simple human being was able to make a great impact in the lives of the paranormal; she was greater in strength than any of the other heroic monsters. Bella feels that she too can protect and guide her supernatural groups to any victory. Consequently, this leads to Bella's maternal and protective behavior for both the Cullens and the wolf pack; Bella worries, as a mother would, for both supernatural groups when they are preparing to fight the newborn vampires: "Bad enough-horrible – that the Cullens would fight for me…Not Jacob, too. Not his foolish, eager brothers – most of them even younger than I was. They were just oversized children…My nerves were frayed and exposed. I didn't know how much longer I could restrain the urge to scream out loud" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 384). Bella feels comfortable among the supernatural due to their dysfunctional nature. In the eyes of Bella, both groups act like rowdy children displaying sibling rivalry amongst each other for their mother's attention; Jacob states, "[Sam] thought you were the one person in the world with as much reason to hate the Cullens as he does. Sam feels sort of…betrayed that you would just let them back into your life like they never hurt you" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 109). Bella utilizes her role as the maternal figure to encourage the groups to put their

differences aside and make amends, in order to work together to protect her well being. By instilling maternal behavior, she is able to manipulate herself into these supernatural realms.

Bella isolates herself from society in order to endure a heroic journey of self recognition. It is Bella's uniqueness of being a human that allows her to obtain a stance of recognition within the supernatural groups. As the only human of the groups, Bella has an innate desire to be the central figure. As Lee R. Edwards states, it is the hero's uniqueness and individuality that stirs up a sense of specialness, thus paving a way for the rise of a heroic figure (34). Not only is Bella unique and different in the realm of the supernatural, but as well in the realm of realism; Bella describes herself as:

> Ivory-skinned, without even the excuse of blue eyes or red hair, despite the constant sunshine. I have always been slender, but soft somehow, obviously not an athlete…I looked at my face in the mirror as I brushed through my tangled, damp hair…Facing my pallid reflection in the mirror, I was forced to admit that I was lying to myself. It wasn't just physically that I'd never fit in. And if I couldn't find a niche in school with three thousand people, what were my chances [in Forks]? (Meyer, *Twilight* 10)

Bella creates a barrier between those around her, not only physically, but socially as well; Bella declares, "I didn't relate well to people my age. Maybe the truth was that I didn't relate well with people, period…Sometimes I wondered if I was seeing the same things through my eyes that the rest of the world was seeing through theirs. Maybe there was a glitch in my brain" (Meyer, *Twilight* 10-11). Bella creates a realm of isolation; she isolates herself from the world by pointing out differences in her appearance and disassociating herself socially from others. Bella's

isolation from society further supports Edwards definition of a hero, who is an individual often isolated from a community for being different. By being different, the individual could either continue life as a hermit or, when called upon, endure a heroic journey of self realization. Through a heroic journey, the hero can attain a role that he or she feels most suiting for them, therefore allowing them to reenter a social sphere (34). It almost seems as if Bella consciously set herself up to be isolated from the real world, hence allowing her to seek recognition in the supernatural. For instance, when the Cullens leave Forks, Bella finds herself attracted to another supernatural group; "[Alice] shook her head sharply from side to side. 'Leave it to you, Bella. Anyone else would be better off when the vampires left town. But you have to start hanging out with the first monsters you can find'" (Meyer, *New Moon* 387). By becoming a part of the supernatural, Bella gains an authority over both realms; she is different and unique in both, consequently, giving her the upper hand. Overall, through her individuality from the real world and the supernatural, Bella is able to become the authoritative and central figure of both supernatural groups.

Bella's mere determination and bravery make her the heroine of the *Twilight* series. For instance, in *Twilight*, Bella's mother, Renee, and the Cullens are placed in danger when James, a revenge seeking vampire, threatens to kill Renee if Bella does not meet him in Phoenix. The Cullen family and Edward forbid Bella in meeting him, since James is concocting a trap to harm her. In spite of the Cullens' warnings, Bella escapes from their safety in order to confront James and save the Cullens and her mother's life. Bella leaves a note behind, informing Edward of her whereabouts and mission to protect her family and friends:

> I am so sorry. He has my mom, and I have to try. I know it may not work…And please, please don't come after him. That's what he wants, I think. I can't bear it if anyone has to be hurt because of me, especially you. (Meyer, *Twilight* 432)

Bella's persistence to be at her mother's side and guard the Cullens forces her to disobey their wishes. Bella courageously volunteers to sacrifice her life for her family and friends; she knows she is at a disadvantage of defeating a vampire due to the fact she is merely a human being, hence entering a suicidal mission. Bella feels guilty for disobeying Edward; "I am so very, very sorry…I love you. Forgive me" (Meyer, *Twilight* 432); however, her maternal need to protect the Cullens and her mother are much greater, than to follow her role in society.

In *New Moon*, Bella leaves to Italy to rescue Edward. Edward plans to aggravate the Volturi to kill him, since he believes Bella is dead, he no longer wants to live; "I would go to Italy and do something to provoke the Volturi…You don't irritate them. Not unless you want to die" (Meyer *New Moon* 418). Bella does not hesitate to think about the consequences that may await her in Italy; the following dialogue, between Bella and Alice, illustrates her heroic bravery:

> 'Let's go!'
>
> 'Listen Bella! Whether we are in time or not, we will be in the heart of the Volturi city. I will be considered his accomplice if he is successful. You will be a human who not only knows too much, but also smells too good. There's a chance that they will eliminate us all – though in your case it won't be punishment so much as dinnertime.'
>
> 'This is what's keeping us here?' I asked in disbelief.

'I'll go alone if you're afraid.' (Meyer, *New Moon* 420)

Bella is not afraid of what may await her when she arrives in Italy. Bella's main goal is to save Edward's life; she is not concerned about her well being, but rather Edward's. When Edward is threatened by the Volturi, Bella places herself between Edward and the Volturi: "'Stop!' I shrieked, my voice echoing in the silence, jumping forward to put myself between them" (Meyer, *New Moon* 475). Bella's overt desire to protect Edward lies in the fact that he is often described as a tortured soul. Edward's troubled past allows Bella's maternal behavior to influence his actions. In *Eclipse*, Bella's dedication to Edward and the Cullens empowers her to request for Edward to sit out of a fight; Edward questions, "'You ask me to let [my family] fight without my help?' He said in a quiet voice. 'Yes.'… 'What are you going to say to Jasper?' I whispered. 'I'm going to discuss…me sitting out.' …I hated to make him do this. Not enough that I could fake a smile and tell him to go on ahead without me. Definitely not that much" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 421- 422). It is Bella's maternal behavior that invokes her courageous behavior and ability to influence those under her care.

In *Eclipse*, Bella volunteers to entice Victoria and the newborn vampires to the group's trap. Bella wants to contribute to the wolf pack and the Cullens in their war with the newborn vampires. Bella breaks the convention of the Victorian woman being silent and still, she persists in becoming an active role in the group; she makes it quite clear of her intentions; "'I want to help. I have to do something.' I insisted…'You can't keep me away,' I threatened. 'I'm not going to hide out in the forest while you all take risks for me'" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 414). Bella does not want any blood to be shed for her name; as a mother figure, she is willing to sacrifice herself in body or mind for the group; a quality similar to the "Angel of the House"/ mother figure. Bella's persistence pays off and the group allows her to lead the newborns to their doom. In

doing so, Bella leaves various trails to draw in Victoria, James' partner, and the young vampires, through the use of her scent, hair, and blood:

> I had an idea. 'Will this help?' I asked as I ran my fingers through my hair and caught a few loose strands. I draped them over the ferns…'Wait a second, I just got another idea.' …Without looking at the blood and breathing through my mouth, just in case my stomach might react, I pressed my hand against a rock within my reach…I started for the clearing again, pressing my palm against everything in my path. (Meyer, *Eclipse* 469-470)

Bella's dedication to the group leads her to physically sacrifice her body. As the maternal figure, she becomes protective of the group, hence allowing her to engage in the courageous role of the heroine. Through her bravery, Bella is able to undergo a heroic journey that will benefit, not only her but, the group as well. As a result, Bella, the mother figure, once again places herself in danger to assist the ones she loves through her heroic persistence and bravery.

The lack of parental figures allows the female protagonists to create a sphere for heroism. Edwards illustrates that, with his definition of a hero, if an individual's relationship with their parental, guardian, or surrogate figures "are absent, hostile; strained or combative", the individual has the potential to develop into a heroic figure (34). The female protagonists, Mina and Bella, endure a role reversal between their parental figures, thus allowing them to live independently away from the social norms their parents should have bestowed unto them.

In *Dracula*, Mina lacks parental figures. Throughout the novel, Mina's parents or guardians are never mentioned in any journal entries. The reader is set to speculate that Mina lives independently away from her family. A good Victorian woman often lived a sheltered life

under the guidance of her mother and protection of her father; whereas, Mina demonstrates a will of independence from these figures. Mina does not look unto a father figure to provide her with means of income, but rather, one can assume, maintains herself by working as a school mistress. The absence of both parental figures allowed Mina to undergo a heroic journey of self realization to identify or create a role in society, thus allowing her to achieve a degree of independence.

In the *Twilight* series, Bella endures a strenuous relationship with her parental figures. The relationship between Bella and her father, Charlie, is uncommunicative and habitual. Bella takes on the role of the mother and wife for Charlie; she tends to his clothes, shops for groceries, cooks, and cleans after meals. Routinely, Charlie waits rather impatiently for his meals after work, a common role a homemaker spouse would tend to; Bella addresses her duty to cook for Charlie, "…and that's what I was doing when Charlie came home. I'd lost track of the time, and I hurried downstairs to take the potatoes out and put the steak in to broil…I called him in when dinner was ready, and he sniffed appreciatively as he walked into the room" (Meyer, *Twilight* 35). Due to his dire experience with his ex wife and Bella's mother, Renee Dwyer, Charlie distances himself emotionally and physically from his daughter, who slightly resembles her mother; Bella declares, "my mom looks like me, except with short hair and laugh lines" (Meyer, *Twilight* 4). Physical contact with Bella becomes uncomfortable for him; "Charlie gave me an awkward, one armed hug when I stumbled my way off the plane" (Meyer *Twilight* 5). Unconsciously, Charlie closes himself off to Bella in an attempt of avoiding disputes and her departure from the family; Charlie answers, "'I don't mind. I want you to be happy here.' He was looking ahead at the road when he said this. Charlie wasn't comfortable with expressing his emotions out loud. I inherited that from him" (Meyer, *Twilight* 7). Bella's relationship with her father forces her into the role of the mother; her maternal and nurturing behavior allow her to

create a trusting relationship with her father that would not have been available, had she not taken on the role.

The absence of Bella's mother creates a different relationship between the two. Bella's mother, Renee Dwyer, exhibits un-maternal behavior towards her daughter, while Bella demonstrates both the maternal role for her mother. Bella worries and nurtures her mother; "I felt a spasm of panic as I stared at her wide, childlike eyes. How could I leave my loving, erratic, harebrained mother to fend for herself?" (Meyer, *Twilight* 4). However, Bella's role, as the maternal figure of her household, soon became disrupted upon the arrival of Renee's new boyfriend; Bella states, "Of course she had Phil now, so the bills would probably get paid, there would be food in the refrigerator, gas in her car, and someone to call when she got lost, but still…" (Meyer, *Twilight* 4). Bella feels useless to her mother, since Phil has taken on the responsibility of caring for her mother; Renee illustrates that she cares for Bella, but does not wish to take on a maternal role: "'I'll see you soon,' she insisted. 'You can come home whenever you want – I'll come right back as soon as you need me.' But I could see the sacrifice in her eyes behind the promise" (Meyer, *Twilight* 4). Bella loses her social role in the family dynamic, hence the reason she decides to move in with her disadvantaged father, in order to attain a new identity. By searching for a new identity in a new town, Bella is enduring a heroic journey in search for a role that will allow her utilize her potential, thus instilling her a position of power. Therefore, the absence of nurturing and involved parents, force Bella to endure a journey of self identity; she searches for the social role she can play in society that will allow her attain a form of recognition.

The characteristics of isolation, lack of parental figures, and individuality paved a way for the development of a hero. However, these attributes were not only restricted to the male, but

the female as well. The female protagonists in the Gothic novels *Dracula* and the *Twilight* series, Mina and Bella, illustrate these characteristics which permits them the ability to become heroic figures. Both Mina and Bella make use of their intelligence and maternal behavior in order to manipulate their way into a position of power. The women combine and exhibit the behavior of both the Victorian woman and the New Woman; in doing so, they are able to maneuver and influence their groups without being questioned for their behavior. If the behavior seems of the norm, then the woman would not be questioned or dismissed from the group. One main behavior both women illustrate the most, in order to influence and manipulate their stance in the group, is maternal behavior. As previously mentioned, maternal behavior was thought to be associated with only good Victorian women, however, the New Woman could employ them as well. For instance, Mina and Bella illustrate maternal behavior in the absence of their own offspring; both women do not need to have children in order to exhibit this behavior. Maternal behavior can be utilized to temporarily break social order to create a balance between the two sexes. Therefore, through the use of maternal behavior, the characteristic allowed for an extension of other heroic qualities such as, bravery and protective instincts. By placing herself in perilous situations for the sake of defending others and herself, the heroine is able to illustrate courageous behavior, thus allowing her to endure a heroic journey of self realization.

One can question the motives of Bella and Mina for trying to rescue the others in many occasions. Are their intentions heroic for the sake of achieving a stance of power in a societal group or is it mainly their conventional devotion to the group? In actuality, it is both; both women want to achieve a position of power and protect their groups from any danger, due to their devotion to them. It is not uncommon to see an internal struggle between the Victorian ideals to conform to society and the desire to break free from social conventions; this conflict is

called the elliptical cycle. The elliptical cycle illustrates that the New Woman persona is always enduring an internal conflict between these two ideals; thus, she is always in a constant mode of stasis. Both Mina and Bella are constantly in a state of stasis; both are constantly progressing and digressing. Both female protagonists endure a heroic journey of self realization, by utilizing their intelligence and maternal behavior in order to attain an identity; this being, the heroine.

EPILOGUE

DISCOVERING THE NEW WOMAN IN GENRE FICTION

The popularity of the monstrous vampire has gained momentum in the past couple of years. Since the publication of the *Twilight* series, the gothic genre has seen the addition of numerous works attributing the vampire in literature, television and cinema. The New Woman persona reemerged some one hundred years after Bram Stoker first utilized her in *Dracula* and is now evidently present in the *Twilight* series.

In addition to both *Twilight* and *Dracula*, the presence of the New Woman and her importance to Victorian and contemporary gothic literature can be explored by comparing different vampiric works. In order to illustrate the relationship between vampiric fiction and the New Woman, we must research deeper into literary pieces contemporaneous to Stoker's *Dracula.* Literary works include *Carmilla* by Sheridan le Fanu, a work that unlike *Dracula* combines the monstrous creature and the perfect beautiful aristocratic woman into one. Modern works on the vampire figure would include works published before the *Twilight Series*, such as *The Vampire Chronicles* by Anne Rice and the *Southern Vampire Mysteries* by Charlene Harris. Both of these works have been reproduced into cinematic works, similar to both *Dracula* and the novels in the *Twilight* series.

The expansion of this research into various modern and period works will seek to validate the undying existence of the New Woman persona. The New Woman persona is neither "new" nor antiquated, since this character continues to reemerge in gothic literature. It is the persona

that will continue to exist as long as women are subjected to endure the oppressions relegated to them by society. With as much freedoms and equality as women have attained throughout the last two centuries, women have not yet achieved complete freedom, and their frustrations continue to manifest themselves through the New Woman persona both in gothic literature and other popular mediums.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Silvia Elizabeth Herrera graduated from University of Texas - Pan American in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in English and a minor in Biology. She received her Master of Arts in English Literature and Cultural Studies in 2011 at the University of Texas-Pan American. Her major field of specialization is Gender Studies and Literary Theory. Silvia has been honored in presenting her works at various scholarly conferences emphasizing her academic research and areas of expertise. She is also a member of Sigma Tau Delta, Phi Kappa Phi, and the Golden Key International Honor Society. Her original field of study was Biology, but was swayed towards literature after being captivated in an introductory literature course in her undergraduate studies.

Silvia's work as a Humanities tutor at the University of Texas-Pan America's Writing Center and at South Texas College's Center of Learning Excellence (CLE), as well as a Supplemental Leader at the CLE, awakened her passion for the field of education by encouraging independent learning through her tutorial sessions and presentation workshops. Silvia plans to build upon her accomplishments by embarking in the field of education, where she hopes to affect the lives of numerous students.