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Diploma thesis

Elements of Gothic Literature in the  
Works by Stephenie Mayer (Twilight  
Saga), Anne Rice (Vampire Chronicles)  
and Tim Burton

Diplomová práce

Prvky gotické literatury v díle  
Stephenie Mayerové (Twilight Saga),  
Anne Riceové (Vampire Chronicles) a  
Tima Burtona

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## Poděkování

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this diploma thesis is an analysis of selected texts of three popular American authors (Stephenie Mayer, Anne Rice, Tim Burton), who develop the tradition of Gothic literature in their prose writing and film making. This thesis attempts to show how the particular Gothic elements are used in selected works (ex.: the vampire or monster character, the theme of violence or death). In the introductory theoretical chapter the specific character of Anglo-American Gothic prose is explained, and in the following chapters the separate themes are analysed. In this context the literary influences, as well as the originality of the stories, are considered (Horace Walpole, Mary Shelley, Ch. R. Maturin, Bram Stoker), and the contribution of the analysed texts for the coming development of Gothic literature is assessed.

## **Anotace**

Náplní této diplomové práce je analýza vybraných textů tří populárních amerických autorů (Stephenie Mayer, Anne Rice, Tim Burton), kteří ve svém prozaickém i filmovém díle rozvíjejí tradici gotické literatury. Práce si klade za cíl ukázat, jak jsou v jednotlivých dílech využity konkrétní gotické prvky (např. postava upíra či obludy, téma násilí a smrti). V úvodní teoretické kapitole je přiblížen specifický charakter angloamerické gotické prózy a v následujících kapitolách se bude věnovat interpretaci zkoumaných témat. V této souvislosti jsou zvažovány i literární vlivy (Horace Walpole, Mary Shelley, Ch.R. Maturin, Bram Stoker), či originalita příběhů a je posuzován přínos analyzovaných textů pro další vývoj gotické literatury.

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# 1. Introduction

This diploma thesis analyses selected texts of three popular American authors (Stephenie Meyer, Anne Rice, Tim Burton), who develop the tradition of Gothic literature in their prose writing and film making. This thesis attempts to show how the particular Gothic elements are used in selected works. For the sake of intelligibility, first the Gothic literature in general is approached. Rather than attempting to define Anglo-American Gothic prose, particular common features and principles are explained. The function of religious beliefs, evil, concepts of identity and the transformative processes are explicated.

One chapter is devoted to each author to introduce their cultural backgrounds, their works, and the contribution of their respective texts to the future development of horror literature is assessed. The following chapters analyse the examined themes in the works of Meyer, Rice and Burton. The main areas cover religion, evil, transformation, and identity. In this context the literary influences, as well as the originality of the stories, are considered (Horace Walpole, Mary Shelley, Ch. R. Maturin, Bram Stoker).

As a pedagogical faculty student, I appreciate the opportunity to analyse some of the authors most popular with young adult readers. The awareness of the processes and motifs involved in their works enlightens the challenges elementary schools pupils face. Especially their approach to the adult world, their values and fears offer a great opportunity to understand them as a teacher. Literature presents a unique tool for compassion. Usually, as teachers grow older, they lose contact with the world of teenagers and this causes obstruction in their attempts to produce an effective high-quality teaching.

## 2. Gothic Literature

### 2.1. Defining Gothic literature

This chapter attempts to offer a brief account of the Gothic literature. As the variable Gothic writing has been constantly changing, the first chapter focuses on the development of this genre in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries are marked with the work of Stephenie Meyer, Anne Rice and Tim Burton, therefore this period is covered in the next chapters together with the analysis.

To define the genre of Gothic literature has proved difficult. Not only that there has been many changes to the genre itself, but also its tendency to permeate all possible other genres leaves little space for a full definition. Literary criticism is left with the notion of its features only.

It is not surprising that among these main features is encountering a spectre, a vampire, a variety of demons or situations like being trapped in an old castle or some isolated place in a dreary land. These characteristics are easy to point at as they are commonly understood as typical of the Gothic genre.

More erudite descriptions are accessed via several approaches, from which one has gained a privileged status. It was the arrival of psychoanalysis that shed a new light on the mechanisms of Gothic. As mentioned by Savoy, "*Freud has observed that the very point of the repressed is its eventual return*". (Savoy 2002, *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, p 171) This is crucial to understand before analysing anything in the Gothic. Psychoanalysis is broadly accepted as an analytical tool for literature as whole:



*The connection between literature and psychoanalysis is as old as psychoanalysis itself.*

*For the psychoanalytic critic, the elements, structures and themes that constitute the 'make-believe' world of the literary text speak to the desires and fears of both authors and readers. To be an adult is to know the distinction between fantasy and reality, passionate longings and pragmatic limitation. And yet, as adults we give up nothing of infantile wishes: we simply become more cautious, more crafty in shaping those early desires into forms that are acceptable to ourselves, and which may even be applauded by our societies. (Massé 2006, *A Companion to the Gothic*, p 244)*

First of all, the obvious about Freud's thesis is the process of repressing something, usually some very appalling experience. Such experience is then hidden in the layer of our sub-consciousness and eventually returns to the consciousness. To have something to repress requires to experience a very disturbing moment or moments which are unbearable for human consciousness. However, the suppression brings some unsettled feeling, the need to get rid of this problem settled in our sub-consciousness. So it activates the urge to deal with the suppressed experience. The urge is personified later and brings the horrific emotions again. The human mind is repelled by encountering these materialized terrors in the shape of monsters, zombies, demons and such creatures. This process thus causes the fear of facing the hidden evils and also the pleasure of a potential resolving of the trauma.

The personified horrors are set in the environment of our sub-consciousness. As it is haunted by the hideous creatures, the Gothic genre operates with gloomy places or buildings. These often possess some features of the past

because they emerge from the past. Ruins, old houses, castles, black towers, and similar objects offer a perfect analogy to the problem. For expressing of the “hidden, confused, lower” aspect, the sub-consciousness uses mazes and labyrinths too. These dark places evoke the environment of evil things (horrors), because the Christian culture understands the darkness as connected with the devil:

*"Darkness in both the Old Testament (Heb. hasak [J;v'j]) and New Testament (Gk.skotos [skovto"]) is an evocative word. If light symbolizes God, darkness connotes everything that is anti-God: the wicked ( Prov 2:13-14 ; 1 Thess 5:4-7 ), judgment ( Exod 10:21 ; Matt 25:30 ), and death ( Psalm 88:12 ). Salvation brings light to those in darkness ( Isa 9:2 ). Although darkness is opaque to man, it is transparent to God ( Psalm 139:12 ). Indeed, God can veil himself in darkness at moments of great revelation ( Deut 4:11 ; 5:23 ; Psalm 18:11 )."*

*(Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)*

It is also not by accident that a lot of the Gothic stories take place in distant, unreal or otherwise uncommon areas and the hero or heroine often travels a long way there. The displacement explained by Miles (56) allows to sustain the unbearable. The terror is eased by the distant setting.

Another feature of the Gothic fiction is based on similar mechanisms but it is extended to the whole society. These were the wars, rebellions and “dark” events that brought social changes and shattered the old order. It gave the impulse for a political overlap in the Gothic fiction writing.

The description above shows the conflict between the past and the present, repulsion and attraction, the reality and imagination. It also explains the Gothic tendency to secrets, shadows and dreamy images. Massé explains where the bridge between the dream and reality lies:

*The Gothic is such a genre, one that is important to psychoanalytic critical inquiry not solely for its ongoing popularity and easily recognisable motifs, but for the affinities between its central concerns and those of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis examines how and why our most strongly held beliefs and perceptions are sometimes at odds with empirical evidence. We work incessantly to maintain a simulacrum of congruence between fantasy and reality, but the boundaries blur in the most routine of everyday events, such as 'slips of the tongue', day-dreams or simply dissonance between what other people mean as opposed to what we want to hear. (Massé 2006, A Companion to the Gothic, p 245)*

The etymology of the Gothic has been described many times and thoroughly. In short, the word "Gothic" refers to the old (medieval and its imitations) Gothic architecture, which represents the typical setting of the Gothic literature. The first usage is dated in the year 1764, in the second edition of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto – a Gothic Story*. This book is generally regarded as the first Gothic literature. From its beginning in the late eighteenth century the Gothic fiction gained popularity in the nineteenth century and has contributed to the world literature fond for more than two hundred years today. Some of the famous authors of the Gothic are Ann Radcliffe (*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794), Matthew Gregory Lewis (*The Monk*, 1796), Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*, 1818), Edgar Allan Poe (*The Fall of the House of Usher*, 1839), Charlotte Brontë (*Jane Eyre*, 1847), Emily Brontë (*Wuthering Heights*, 1847), Charles Dickens (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, 1870), Robert Louis Stevenson (*Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 1886), Oscar Wilde (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1891), Bram Stoker (*Dracula*, 1897). In the twentieth century the Gothic appears in literature, computer games, films and other media.

## **2.2. Motifs of Gothic literature**

### **2.2.1. Unevenness**

One of the highly visible motifs of the Gothic stories is their unevenness. This unevenness can be explained by one of the Gothic features described in the chapter "Defining Gothic literature". Considering the fact of the Gothic being generated by the suppression of unbearable experience to enable the suffering mind to exist, the projection of this process works according to a specific system. The mind avoids something more powerful than it can stand. It avoids the natural consequences of these forces, e.g. madness or possible death. The defect in the natural order of consequences expresses itself in the Gothic stories in the consecutive events. It can affect the time flow, space measuring, power distribution, as well as the level of reaction to a stimulus.

#### **2.2.1.1. Power**

The uneven distribution of power is detected in many examples of the Gothic writing. Manfred from the *Castle of Otranto* can stand for one example. The more he becomes crazy and vicious the more he becomes threatening and acts from a superior position. The pattern of the villain and his victim repeats itself frequently in the Gothic stories and represents a typical manifestation of uneven distribution of power in them.

Accordingly, in Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire does not only possess physical powers unreachable for a human being, but also his calculating brains work brilliantly. Most importantly, he is able to dominate his will on people, causing them to be unable to resist. Ambrosio, the main character from Matthew Gregory Lewis's *Monk*, exploits his privileged position in the monastery. Only after his return Heathcliff (one of the central characters in Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*) is encountered as dangerous and strong. The dispositions needed for a transformation towards a monster can be gained via

suffering and are exerted on his enemies for the purposes of vengeance. Even if Frankenstein's creature is put on the list, hundreds more or less famous examples follow. As if it was not enough, Gothic villains tend to possess great wealth like Dracula, Heathcliff, and Polidori's Vampyre.

One essential uneven distribution of power in the Gothic has not been mentioned yet. The problematic gender status in the society gave inspiration to many plots in literature generally, including the Gothic fiction.

*From its beginnings in the late eighteenth century, the Gothic genre, as seen by critics, has enjoyed a complicated relationship with women. (Ferguson Ellis 2006, A Companion to the Gothic, p 272)*

The gender inequality problem in the society was voiced in the Gothic writing. This fact is commented in the chapter Transformation.

One more serious uneven distribution of power was initiated due to the processes of the colonization. The encountering with other races and the technical possibility to govern them gave roots to racism and the decades of terror and slavery for millions of people. The Gothic fiction responded to this disaster with strong emotional reaction, and the first zombies were described in the books from Haiti. An incompatible coexistence of Christian beliefs with the massacre of the Native Americans together with the natural need to survive made no space for an acceptable result. Only Darwin's theory gave an explanation to what happened, but it was contradictory to the Christian beliefs which were used as an excuse and reason for what was done.

Different races (and their cultures and religions) were depicted as unholy, black people and Native Americans as devils. The collective psyche of the colonists was, because of the slavery and genocide, struck by the impact of the vicious circle. Explaining and justifying extremely unchristian actions by

the Christian religion. The whole situation was escalated to the extreme and then repressed. The reactions were accordingly extreme. Social pathology is induced by extreme situations and topics like madness, violence, destruction of normality, and similar issues. These are frequent inspiration for the Gothic fiction, and of course an object of interest for psychoanalysts.

*For classic psychoanalysis, literary madness is an aberration to be exposed or therapeutically tamed, either by interpretative authority or the artist's conscious control. While the role of the reader attracts little scrutiny, Freud emphasises, through the concept of transference, that the interpreter is not securely outside the object he or she analyses. Psychoanalysis dwells in and repeats the symptoms and obsessions exhibited in the analytic encounter, leaving it perilously close to inhabiting the psychic conflicts it treats. (Brewster 2006, A Companion to the Gothic, p 297)*

Exaggeration and extremes generally are typical of the Gothic fiction. Young people want strong emotions, therefore they seek literature of terror and also fantastic characters, which enables them to match the extreme power as an expression of their own extreme emotions and ideas. They want to project their inner world to their surroundings, so that they would find their place in the world.

#### **2.2.1.2. Time**

Time is not flowing regularly for all actors in the Gothic. This works however differently than a plain stating that the monsters are faster than people. It would be more accurate to say that the time serves to evil creatures better. They can literally use time to their benefits. On the one hand, they can move unbelievably fast, and on the other, they can stand centuries of waiting without fatal consequences (Maturin's Melmoth). It was the double life of Dr.

Jekyll, which would be impossible for any man. Men need sleep, the monster could use the night time for its strolls. The absence of the need for sleep is not to be found in all Gothic stories, though we can see more than one example. To mention at least one more, consider also Dorian Gray, famous Oscar Wilde's character, who is untouched by aging or scars gained with time.

One could oppose with the view of time as rather restricting for the supernatural beings (especially vampires and creatures keeping themselves in secret). In this sense it is however the light (the good, the God) that restricts the night creatures not to be allowed into the realm of the living.

Similarly to Kafka's description of his understanding of the boundary dividing two worlds on the example of the coffin lid in *Dracula*, the sunrise and sunset open and close the door to the other world. Rather than the time limitation, the dusk and dawn stand for the gates allowing the night monsters in and out. Still some limitation is undoubtedly noted, though there are two points of view. Time, understood as a limitation in the day and night changes, still would not favour people or give them any control over it. The source of light comes from God and the power of light itself performances the power of God against Devil.

*God Is Light. If light represents goodness in antithesis to the evil associated with darkness, it is a natural step for the biblical authors to understand God, the ultimate good, as light. Light symbolizes the holy God. Light signifies God's presence and favor ( Psalm 27:1 ; Isa 9:2 ; 2 Cor 4:6 ) in contrast to God's judgment ( Amos 5:18 ). Throughout the Old Testament light is regularly associated with God and his word, with salvation, with goodness, with truth, with life. The New Testament resonates with these themes, so that the holiness of God is presented in such a way that it is said that God "lives in*

*unapproachable light" ( 1 Tim 6:16 ). God is light ( 1 John 1:5 ) and the Father of lights ( James 1:17 ) who dispels darkness.*

*(Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)*

The night and darkness create the environment for devil's servants. This theory identifies the fight between good and evil. Another explanation is provided by the fact that the night creatures are really in disadvantage during the day in comparison with people. Be it as it is, in any case the time flow in the Gothic fiction bears features of unevenness.

### **2.2.1.3. Space**

To get from one place to another usually requires some time, according to what type of move people choose. A walk, run or coach among the obsolete ones; a car, train or plane among the modern ones. The technology allowed us to diminish the distance. Without it, it would take a lot of toil and time to cover a considerable distance. Reducing the effort and time spent on travelling enables the subject to operate more effectively in more than one area (gathering information from more places, a prompt reaction to an impulse). Frankenstein's monster always succeeds in being faster than Frankenstein himself, in Polidori's *Vampyre* Lord Ruthven also proves a significant flexibility with space. Stoker's *Dracula* and other monsters suppress all other possible physical laws connected with space, they just vanish or materialize out of nothing where they intend to. It is not without interest that also the space itself adjusts to the characteristics of the identities in it. This subject is described by Kavka (2002) in his chapter "Monstrous space" in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. He describes the plasticity of space in Gothic films, though a lot of his observations apply to the Gothic writing as well.



The frequent usage of exaggerated or unbelievable descriptions of space is present in the Gothic fiction (Dracula's castle, the proportions of the helmet in *The Castle of Otranto*). Accordingly, in his article "Gothic Sublimity" Morris pays attention to the fact that that "*Exaggeration and repetition are the dominant figures of speech which shape Walpole's narrative.*" (Morris 1985, 302)

It allows the reader to sense the supernatural beings in their natural environment, another world. When the human is thrown into a different, unfamiliar world, he can find himself lost, unable to find the escape way or visible boundaries of the world. Simply said the premises of monsters are not fitting for human existence. The analogy of the environment and the violated mind is obvious.

### **2.2.2. Evil**

This chapter focuses on the motif of evil in the Gothic fiction. The process of suppression of unpleasant experience is described in the introductory chapter "Defining Gothic literature". It shows the significance of evil in the Gothic. At the beginning of the process, there is a moment, an event, which is hurting, painful and evil. This impulse leads to suppression and transformation of the experience in our sub-consciousness into a monster or pure evil (Satan). The moment of the creation of a monster mirrors the fact that evil comes from the outside into the mind and then is projected back into the outside and effects via its originator the outside world even more intensely. Evil is understood often in the terms of Christian beliefs, so it is the sin that means damnation and it is the sin that is so important motif of the Gothic literature.

*“The centrality of usurpation, intrigue, betrayal and murder to Gothic plots appeared to celebrate criminal behaviour, violent executions of selfish ambition and voracious passion and licentious enactments of carnal desire. Such terrors, emerging from the gloom of a castle or lurking in the dark features of the villain, were also the source of pleasure, stimulating excitements which blurred definitions of reason and morality and, critics feared, encouraging readers’ decline into depravity and corruption.”* (Botting 1999, 4)

What also functions as evil in the Gothic fiction is the threat to life and familiar order. Disease, immigration, feudalism, rebellion, war and many others pose danger to people and are understood as evil in the Gothic.

What is most peculiar about this feature of the Gothic fiction is the effect on the reader. Evil itself attracts the reader’s attention. Freud’s theory explains the mechanism of it. As the suppression of serious experience causes a mental disease, the temptation of the mind to heal it increases. It means that some of our biggest fears (representing the evil) are also the most tempting and attractive, because the mind hopes in relieve due to its exposure.

#### **2.2.2.1. Unsubstantial Evil**

In the Gothic tradition evil shapes into several forms. The first and most obvious is an evil creature. It starts with some rather uncertain, ghost-like spirits, like in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Washington Irving. In Irving’s short story the headless horseman may be just a superstition, a legend or imagination. This story gained its popularity not only because of the plot, but mainly thanks to the Gothic setting and the headless horseman. The existence of the horseman is uncertain and after the story ending in the eyes of the

reader rather improbable. Irving uses some Gothic motifs, but the strong parody accent of the story makes evil in this case quite harmless.

Similarly non-existent are the ghosts in Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, but they express themselves more dangerously, mysteriously and threateningly in comparison with Irving's story. Other evil spirits incarnate in the villains like Manfred in *The Castle of Otranto*, or Montoni in *Mysteries of Udolpho*. In Poe's books again evil does not materialize into a supernatural being but rather terrorize (the distinction between terror and horror made by Ann Radcliffe) the victim with blurred images, ideas, and indirect contacts. When evil embraces the victim, it flows throughout him or her. Two examples for many substitute *The Black Cat* or *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

#### **2.2.2.2. Substantial Evil**

Another form of evil in the Gothic literature are supernatural beings. Monsters and demons occur in many cases. They frequently differ in the level of evil. Sin is the measure for the scale. Vampires and soulless zombies murder other people so they place far on the scale, they are godless creatures. One extreme on this scale places without question, Satan. Satan is not frequently described in the Gothic books, but influences the plot or his presence is somehow manifested. Satan's influence results in a spread of sins, especially perverse actions. Devil is present and described in Lewis's *Monk*, which turns this book into quite a unique one. These evil creatures (monsters, demons, Satan) can usually be fought with Christian "weapons", like light, crosses or holy water, as showed in *Dracula*.

*"The other common appellation for Satan in the New Testament is "the devil" (diabolos [diavbolo"]), not found in the Old Testament, but thirty-four times here, meaning one who is traducer, a slanderer. The word often translates*

*satan [Sata'n] in the Septuagint (either as "the satan" or an "adversary"). In the New Testament the "devil" becomes "an evil principle/being standing against God."*

*(Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)*

In the pagan world preceding to the Christianity, stories about demons and vampires also occurred, because the psychic process of suppression worked too. However the crosses and other weapons to fight them were not mentioned of course. One example of a very old demon is Vetala from Hindu mythology, who possessed many vampire-like features.

### **2.2.2.3. The Sublime**

On the one hand, evil constitutes one of the essential motifs of the Gothic fiction. On the other hand, there must be an opposition to it. Evil is put in contrast with the good, and much has been written about it. There is not only a villain in the Gothic, there is also a victim. The black towers and haunted castles contrast with beautiful landscapes and nature. Consider the beauty of Dorian Gray and the ugliness of his portrait (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*), or Matilda's purity and Ambrasio's sins (*The Monk*). Devil and God. These two qualities are stretched into extreme. For both the concept of the sublime applies. The sublime overlaps human beings, their logic and mind. It is not understood, it is perceived. In the Gothic writing the biggest emphasis is on the sensual, aesthetic impact of the text on the reader, not on the morals, as explained by Botting:

*"The pleasure arose from the range of intense and uplifting emotions that mountainous scenery evoked in the viewer. Wonder, awe, horror and joy were the emotions believed to expand or elevate the soul and the imagination with a sense of power and infinity. Mountains were the foremost objects of the*

*natural sublime. No topic of aesthetic enquiry in the eighteenth century generated greater interest than the sublime.” (Botting 1999, 25)*

### **2.2.3. Transformation**

One driving force for the Gothic literature has turned to be indisputably the process of transformation. It can touch religious beliefs, science, knowledge, social order, political order, sexuality and gender issues, evolution, or economy.

#### **2.2.3.1. Religion and Science**

First of all, religious beliefs will be explained (for the purposes of this text only the Christian concept is considered). As religion intertwine with the explanation of existential questions, it is the most important issue to start with. The reason of our existence was traditionally explained by Christian theologians in the Euro-American world and the Church had the prerogative in this problematic (and was criticised in many of the Gothic texts, like in *The Monk* by Matthew Gregory Lewis). The Church did not only explain why and for what people live, but also conditioned the quality of human life. The set of religious laws thus determined features assessing what is good and wrong for human existence, formulating so the manual for rightful, purposeful life. The rules generated from religion stand for essential Gothic themes, and questioning them provided a wide range of motifs in the Gothic literature. It was science that challenged the religious beliefs in the first place.

*“But science did not just offer reassuring ways of categorising and ordering, of locating and fixing lines of difference; it was also a transgressive and disruptive force. From evolutionary theories to mental physiology, the study of the workings of the mind, science actually bore much of the responsibility for*

*challenging the stability and integrity of the human subject.”* (G. Byron 2006, *A Companion to the Gothic*, p 147)

These motifs in Gothic writing are registered most significantly in the nineteenth century. Perfect examples of all the major nineteenth century Gothic texts represent, for example, Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* or *Modern Prometheus* (1818), Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Wells's *Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896). The last named pronounced the horror of scientific evidence and theological misinterpretation the most.

Darwin's Theory of Evolution challenged the creationism. Wells described monsters, breeds showing signs of humans as well as animals. Such a thing was absolutely appalling for readers at the time. The disturbing thing about it was the revelation of animal ancestors (Darwin), who preceded the human race. This was in contradiction to religious dogmas. The reason for the feeling of horror, fear, or disgust is, in fact, the notion of otherness. An unknown creature which should not exist according to the theological interpretation, but can exist according to science anytime in the future, present or past. The old truth is challenged and the question stands what the truth is. An absolute incapability to answer essential questions (who we are, why are we here) causes fear of chaos, because together with the religious truths the rules are also at risk now. The nineteenth century is confused by the development of science.

The old world accepting magic and supernatural events as a norm declines and the world of science and rationalism dependent only on our senses and reality ensures its position in the society. The shift from burning the witches to not believing in the supernatural forces at all revives old actions justified by

religion and newly reassessed as mistakes and perhaps real sins. Contesting the religious beliefs and everything which was considered real brings the fear of losing our own certainty of what is going on in the world. Questioning our ability to identify the truth and reality causes the feel of being lost without a manual for life. It was a critical point for Anglo-American civilization and its bases. The gained knowledge showed how unsure our reasoning is. The society saw its own weaknesses and feared the possible signs of degeneration (feminism, later gay liberation, and in the 1960s African-American civil rights). (Bruhm, 260)

### **2.2.3.2. Gender**

One already mentioned motif is the gender inequality (in the chapter Unevenness). Kelly Hurley explains that the New Woman in the nineteenth century can behave like a man and also gives an example of Stoker's *Dracula*, where the female vampires start to behave monstrously like men instead of finding their own new position in the changing society. (Hurley 2002, *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, p 201) The social role of men and women was included in the Church recipe for a successful and happy life. In the time of the social transformation caused by the science advancement and political changes, all was threatened, the gender roles not excluded. Let us think more carefully about women in *Dracula*, as there are many different types. There are the vampire evil women. Even though they are subordinate to the count *Dracula*, they have their own wishes and cravings. Their obedience is forced from *Dracula*'s side, and they are pushed to submission rather than act that way voluntarily. They obviously do not behave submissively towards other men.

The rise of feminism caused new traumas in the society and it caused fear, which was expressively shown by Stoker. The traditional submissive Christian

type of woman, who does not aspire to her own career and whose life is devoted to her man, is imprinted in Stoker's novel as well. These are the good women, Mina and Lucy. The second is nearly condemned to hell, if not for the help of brave men. She is infected with the evil from Dracula. Lucy and Dracula meet usually in the night time, they seek privacy and abandoned places. These are typical "lover" signs and Lucy is really kind of seduced, under a strange curse of the devil. Mina shows more wisdom than Lucy and her death is averted. Nevertheless she uses her abilities for the purposes of fighting for God and supporting her husband (groom) only. She sacrifices her needs and life for her man, which is a very submissive act. At least she can read, think and actively play her role in the plot.

#### **2.2.3.3. Zombies**

Aside from the transformation of the social rules, more extreme changes occur in the Gothic literature. One very frequent phenomenon is to be explained, the zombification (a process in which a human being transforms into a zombie, usually a dead body returns without a soul from a grave). This process is thoroughly described by Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert (2002) in her chapter "Colonial and postcolonial Gothic: the Caribbean" in *"The Cambridge Companion to Gothic fiction"*. In this case the transformation of a man into a soulless creature is rooted in the horrors of colonization, slavery and rebellions.

The notion of the horrors which cannot be justified or undone or remedied is unbearable and the acts and images materialize in the form of a transformed man, a zombie. Especially now, Freud's psychoanalytical approach can be applied. All the dead bodies and broken men and annihilated nations tend to come back, transformed into soulless and extremely dangerous creatures.



#### **2.2.3.4. Feudalism**

Economy reflects and controls the society. It was a huge shift from the feudal organization towards the more liberal and democratic society, which appeared in many major works of Gothic.

*The rejection of feudal barbarity, superstition and tyranny was necessary to a culture defining itself in diametrically opposed terms: its progress, civilisation and maturity depended on the distance it established between the values of the present and the past. (Botting 2006, A Companion to the Gothic, p 13)*

When all the old structures are decreasing, the new structures are forming, threatening in their oddity and uncertain future structures. The old conditions are refused but strong, the new conditions are wanted, but new and weak. Stoker and others expressively reflect this social transformation. The new, unsettled order fights the old patriarchal society (Dracula). Dracula's predatory fangs and cruelty together with secret possessions, power and history represent the past, medieval times and aristocracy. As Dracula's description reveals signs of illness like pale skin, infectiousness, and disgusting odour, the whole old order is depicted as ill and poisonous.

*Evil spirits appear in the Gospels as causing dumbness ( Matt 9:32 ), deafness ( Mark 9:25 ), blindness ( Matt 12:22 ), spinal malformation ( Luke 13:11 ), epilepsy ( Mark 1:26 ; 9:26 ), madness (schizophrenia? Mark 5:1-13 ). Often called "unclean" spirits (perhaps because of their association with Satan, degradation, and decay) the demons were recognized as powerful opponents of the divine will, in sharp contrast with the Holy Spirit, and everywhere the proximate cause of all humankind's misery and evil.*

*(Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)*

Therefore such a decaying old society pattern is unwanted and lost. The formerly shiny world of aristocracy (Enlightenment) has transformed into something evil and useless. In Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* the approach of romanticism applies. The villains Manfred and Montoni betray the chivalrous values and therefore the chivalry is rather understood as positive in these early Gothic writings. The Gothic literature thus reflects the change between the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.

In the process of social and political transformation the Gothic fiction reacts flexibly and instantly. These transformative processes are visible in the changing of what is attractive, what is monstrous and what is taboo. The examples above show that these are our sins that transform into our monsters, the social changes that transform into fear and uncertainty, the historical trauma that changes into zombie et cetera.

#### **2.2.4. Identity**

The identity (meaning cultural and personal) constitutes one of the fundamental elements in the Gothic texts. Identities disintegrate, blend easily one into each another and the texts also show more complicated, deep-rooted reasons for it.

##### **2.2.4.1. Mind**

One fairly obvious reason for a split personality may be deduced from the process of suppression described in the chapter "Defining Gothic Literature". One emotion or experience was displaced into unconsciousness. Then this piece of the mind personifies itself into a form of a monster. The identity of one person is decomposed into two. Such a process can repeat more than once, and also there are creatures in the Gothic literature, who were

assembled from more pieces coming from one or more sources. There are two interesting examples of it, Frankenstein and Melmoth. In Shelly's *Frankenstein*, the monster is literally assembled from many pieces and then he comes to life and a new soul and mind is born. Maturin's Melmoth exchanges his soul for years of life. During this existence Melmoth searches for other souls and it is the Devil, who collects the souls. Melmoth and Frankenstein's monster function on different principles. Similarly to Melmoth, the zombies originated from Haiti lose their souls and are transformed into working tools (bodies) without any cultural or personal identity, without passions and family bonds. The identity is decomposed on the core level.

However there are other levels of disintegration. The Gothic literature occupies itself with sexuality and gender issues, as described in the chapter "Gender Inequality". However, the identifying roles of men and women in the society were questioned in the literature of the nineteenth century and with time this problematic even deepened. The taboos of homosexuality, bisexuality or transsexuality started to provoke the social consciousness. Some of the Gothic characters bears the signs of, for example, homosexuality (Dr. Jekyll) bisexuality (Dorian Gray) or necrophilia (Poe's Berenice).

#### **2.2.4.2. Family**

Family and blood provide everlasting Gothic motif. Blood is naturally connected with family. Stoker's *Dracula* is an infectious monster and his disease is blood-borne one. His disease signalizes the decay of his kin. He also represents the aristocracy and the old feudal order. These were really ruined due to incestuous marriages for the money profit instead of for love from a free will. The children of the aristocrats were mentally tortured because of the separation from their loved ones, they had no chance to involve in a real love and much more. So the family (sins and history) frequently occurs in the

Gothic stories as one of the central motifs. This problematic is profoundly explained by Botting:

*“The extravagant effects of Gothic and Romantic elements tended, in nineteenth century fiction, to be refracted through the domestic world central to realism. As the privileged site of Victorian culture, home and family were seen as the last refuge from the sense of loss and the forces threatening social relations. The home, however, could be a prison as well as a refuge. In two novels of the period, novels that engage very differently with Gothic themes, the home is the site of both internal and external pressures, uncanny and terrifying at the same time.”* (Botting 1999, 84)

A perfect example of the Gothic understanding of family is offered by Edgar Allan Poe in his short story *The Fall of the House of Usher*, published in 1839. The story is narrated by an anonymous character. The main character is anxious, hypochondriac Roderick Usher. Roderick invites his friend, the narrator, in his house. The narrator finds only Roderick and his twin sister Madeline. The house is situated in the abandoned land and the surrounding nature kind of animates the house. It is not clear whether Madeline is only a hallucination or an object of Roderick’s love. The narrator eventually flee the house after scary events, like hearing strange sounds, and Madeline’s deathlike condition. When the narrator looks back at the house, he sees it being ripped apart. The destruction pictures the fall of the family and a split personality. Madeline was buried in the cellar for her incest with Roderick (like many suppressed sins disappearing in the layer of sub-consciousness) or she could be his alter ego (hallucination). In any case, *The Fall of the House of Usher* is an excellent representation of a family identity in ruins.

#### **2.2.4.3. Culture**

The following identity issue is connected with the society, respectively with culture. The contact of cultures brought fear in the Western Europe. Dracula, again, with his Eastern origins posed threat to the Western culture. Any change could unleash chaos and violence, as the Western society had experienced many times before (ex.: French revolution). Together with the colonization and mixing with other races, the West-European world felt anxiety of losing its integrity and identity. The formerly settled and uniform society transforms into a new one and adopts exotic cultures. Unknown new worlds are discovered and people in these worlds shatter with the Western-Europe cultural and religious integrity and identity.

Together with the individuals crossing the boundaries between the different civilizations (*Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad), the gates open more and more widely to the colonization, and the process is irreversible. The discoveries made thanks to colonization and encounters with the new cultures caused different self-reflection in the West-Europe society. Darwin's theory caused an absolute questioning of what the real identity of human kind is. The mixing with other races caused multicultural society and thus also the destruction of the old one. It spread fear in Europe. Moreover, the displacement of settings in the Gothic texts to the distant lands caused easier acceptance for the West-European readers and theatre audience. It is easier for the mind to imagine the horrors in a distant land than in the homeland, it eases the feeling of fear. Another cause of fear emerged from the transformation from the feudal society towards the one where the roles are not predetermined (class fluidity). This also induces anxiety about identity, as a common folk could gain a high position on the social ladder.

### 3. Anne Rice

Anne Rice has entered into awareness of reader audience mainly thanks to her *Vampire Chronicles*. The first novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) was not an immediate success but gained immense popularity in the eighties. The bestseller was followed by *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), *The Queen of the Damned* (1988), *The Tale of the Body Thief* (1992), *Memnoch the Devil* (1995), *The Vampire Armand* (1998), *Merrick* (2000), *Blood and Gold* (2001), *Blackwood Farm* (2002), *Blood Canticle* (2003), *Prince Lestat* (2014), *Prince Lestat and the Realms of Atlantis* (2016).

Rice's life is well documented, but some of the facts mentioned in this chapter have a more significant meaning for her writing career. She is an American author born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She was raised Catholic, but became an agnostic and after 2000 returned to Christianity (novels *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* and *Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana*), and now states to be a humanist, distancing herself from the Church. When in San Francisco, she witnessed the hippie movement first-hand but distanced herself from it. In 1966 Rice gave birth to her daughter, who died of cancer at the age of 5. In 1972 Rice graduated with an M.A. in Creative Writing.

*Interview with the Vampire* is narrated from the perspective of Louis. He tells his story of life to a reporter, Daniel Molloy. None of the books, *Interview with a Vampire* included, from *The Vampire Chronicles* works on a simple plot. There are stories intertwining with each other, so that they resemble real life more. Louis tells the story of his desperation during mortal life, his transformation into a vampire, and then describes a complicated cohabitation with Lestat. Lestat created Claudia, a child vampire, who mentally grows but

physically stay unchanged. At the end, Lestat and Louis break out in the wrong and Claudia is murdered.

*The Vampire Lestat* is narrated by Lestat and begins at the end of the eighteenth century. He constituted the most central character of *The Vampire Chronicles*. The most peculiar feature is his openly described homosexual relationship evolving during his mortal life. Later he transforms his dying mother into a vampire as well, but later he separates from her, and Lestat wants most of all to find Marius, who is supposed to know more about the nature of vampires and their origins. When he finally meets Marius, Lestat encounters the first vampires, Akasha and Enkil, who are turned into stones. Lestat's music awakens Akasha and Enkil, but the consequences take place in the next book.

*The Queen of the Damned* story is bound to the actions of awakened Akasha. She wants to rule the world. Jesse, formerly a human girl, falls in love with Lestat. He plays in a rock band and has become a rock star. Lestat spends some time with Akasha and is repulsed by her actions and at the same time attracted to her by her power and beauty. Akasha's evil is explained in a long Maharet's (Jesse's relative) story. The final part describes the fight between Akasha and the rest of the vampires.

In *The Tale of the Body Thief* Lestat fights his extreme loneliness and vampire nature based on hunting humans. Having some love affairs with both men and women, Lestat ends up in the same state of depression and loneliness despite of all of his efforts to change it. In the next book, *Memnoch the Devil*, Lestat really encounters the Devil, who takes Lestat to see Heaven and Hell and offers him to join. At the end a trickery of Memnoch is revealed. A substantial proportion of the book is devoted to theology, and the author reflects on the

nature of relationship between God and the Devil. The next book *Armand* abounds in different kinds of human sexuality, from Lolita to bisexuality. *Merrick* focuses again on the nature of vampirism and human supernatural powers, especially witchcraft. Witches and spirits are marked as the source of the first vampires and in *Merrick* they take up a notable amount of the text. The next book *Blood and Gold* develops the stories of many vampire characters via the life of Marius. *Blackwood Farm* only brings a new companion for Lestat, and meanwhile more magical rituals are performed. The last three novels present new adventures for already formed vampires and occasionally unite them to collaborate.

Anne Rice has indisputably influenced the work of Stephenie Meyer. Many of her ideas were repeated in *Twilight*. She has encouraged many writers to develop the genre of paranormal romance, Gothic romance, and trivial literature. She has contributed to the popularity of vampire stories in the world's literature.



## 4. Stephenie Meyer

The twenty-first century has begun with a great success of Stephenie Meyer, the author of the *Twilight* series. In the years 2008 and 2009 over 55 million copies were sold, and up to now more than 100 million copies in 50 countries worldwide. The content of the following analytical chapters should offer the comparison with the old Gothic fiction writing and the insight into the mechanisms of Meyer's success. *Twilight* gained the greatest popularity among young adults.

Meyer was born in Hartford, Connecticut, U.S. in 1973. She was raised Mormon. The *Twilight* series consisting of *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse*, and *Breaking Dawn* were her debut and brought her an instant fame. The first book was published in 2005 and other works followed. In 2008 Meyer published a sci-fi novel *The Host* and in 2016 an adult action thriller titled *The Chemist*. Some short stories and novella were published meanwhile as well.

*Twilight* can be best labelled as a romantic fantasy story with elements of Gothic fiction writing. The plot starts with the main heroine Bella Swan moving from Phoenix, Arizona, to her father's place in a small town in Washington. She falls in love with a vampire named Edward Cullen. Most of the story is told by Bella, part is narrated by Jacob Black, a werewolf who falls in love with Bella. The first book, *Twilight*, describes Bella's first love with handsome Edward. Mysterious atmosphere is underlined by the magical nature in Washington, full of fog, rain and deep forests. James, another Vampire from a different coven, tries to kill Bella, but with the effort of all Edward's vampire family, she is rescued.

The next book, *New Moon*, unexpectedly leaves Bella without Edward, because he leaves her for the sake of her own safety. He is afraid of hurting

her more. She gets crazy and attempts to commit a suicide even though she develops a friendship with werewolf Jacob Black. When Edward thinks Bella is dead, he wants to kill himself as well, not unlike Romeo and Juliet. Bella arrives to save him in Italy, where he seeks help with his killing from a powerful family of Volturi. The happy-end is a sweet reunion, and Bella decides to become one of the vampires, against Edward's will, who is afraid of losing her soul.

*Eclipse* depicts a battle between the Cullens family and a new-born vampire army. The army was created by Victoria, a vampire who wants to kill Bella. In the end Bella agrees to marry Edward, although Jacob fights for her love.

The last book, *Breaking Dawn*, starts with wedding preparations and ceremony, honeymoon and the complication of Bella's being pregnant by a vampire. The next part is narrated by Jacob Black and describes the short pregnancy. Bella wakes up as a vampire finally, and happily lives her family life until they are attacked by Volturi. Thanks to Cullen's powerful gifts (special vampire powers) and mainly the one of Bella, the conflict does not break into a real battle and is closed diplomatically. Everything finishes in the mood of a fairy tale.

Meyer has been inspired, among many others, by Rice, Brönte, and Shakespeare. She develops the tradition of paranormal romance, vampire stories and trivial literature. Her immense success allowed the spread of similar analogous books and possibly the trend will not diminish in the next few coming years.

*Twilight* bears some of the features of Gothic, although there are significant differences from the traditional texts as well. She uses the characters of vampire and werewolf, the pattern of a victim and villain, the contrast

between light and darkness. The analytical chapters of this diploma thesis deal more specifically with the issue. Botting (2008) argues that Gothic elements can transform flexibly into the postmodern romantic writing, appearing as new, but evolving from the old.

## 5. Tim Burton

Timothy Walter Burton works in more than one creative field. He produces films, writes, he is a director, animator and artist. He profiles especially as a Gothic artist. The most famous of his films attained a great popularity and reputation. Not all of his fans may know that he also writes poetry or paints. After consulting with scholars in the field of the New Gothic fiction, it would be better to omit this author rather than to compare his work with Rice's and Meyer's for the purposes of this thesis. The reasons for leaving it out, as Basil-Morrozow noted, comprises the fact of Burton's categorically different style of work. He uses different archetypes, inspires himself in unique aspects of the Old Gothic fiction and authentically creates New Gothic fiction works. The comparison of Rice and Meyer is possible thanks to the similarities of their audience and work. Burton is everything but similar to the works of Rice and Meyer. Still he stands as a significant New Gothic fiction author and the analysis may bring an interesting insight into a wider audience of the current Gothic fiction culture.

*Beetlejuice, Edward Scissorhands, The Nightmare Before Christmas, Sleepy Hollow, Corpse Bride, Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street, Dark Shadows, Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter, Frankenweenie, Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* are all Gothic fiction works, to name at least some of his well-known films. As the analysis just of these few pieces would be enough for a small library, only some aspects chosen to compare with Rice, Meyer and old Gothic authors are included in the analysis chapters.

Burton does not conceal the inspiration in the Old Gothic fiction. There have been direct references to Charles Dickens, Bram Stoker, Washington Irving,

Mary Shelley and others. There would be no point in retelling the plots of the films, but a few remarks on the general principles of his works follow.

First, Burton finds inspiration in the Old Gothic fiction, but he authentically and creatively works with the themes. His vampires behave according to the generally acknowledged characteristics of vampire nature (Polidori, Stoker). However, their personalities differ. Secondly, Burton changes the circumstances of the old stories and lets the effect work on it. Last but not least, he adds very modern aspects to the old characters, his richly developed personalities offer unexpected twists. And finally, Burton flavours the impact of his works with innocence, purity and other extremely catchy motives.

Burton's creative and original world has inspired many, but in truth, it is not possible to copy it. There might be other authors in the coming years, who will inspire themselves in the specific mixture of humour and morbidity, the good monster character, or the zombie society club. Depp (2006) describes Burton as another "outcast", who differs from the rest of the society full of consumption. He apparently implements autobiographic features into his work as well. Burton's distinctive work will perhaps inspire new generations of the Gothic fiction authors.

## 6. Religion

The following paragraphs deal with religion in the works of Rice, Meyer, and Burton. The three authors give distinctly different pictures of belief. The most distinct shift is marked at the turn of the millennium, after September 2001, and therefore enough space has been left for it in this chapter. Religion in the Old Gothic fiction is discussed in the chapter “Religion and Science”, which is a subchapter to “Transformation”.

After the terrorist attacks in September 2001, safety issues became a priority in the Western world. The echoes of this change mirror in the literature, which thought supports Spooner (2017). The New Gothic fiction analysis uncovers this and more evidence of the current comprehension of the need of self-preservation of the society. The culture, beliefs and manners are key features in this field, as shown below.

First of all, Rice’s books written around the 1980s displayed quite an open approach toward different kinds of religion. There are numerous cases where the reader observes various manifestations of spiritual concepts. Distant temples and the progress over time account for the transformation after transformation of the religious beliefs and spiritual concepts without any serious criticism. The emphasis lies on the correlation of general knowledge and the ability to formulate new effective grasp of spiritual and physical world:

*“People who cease to believe in God or goodness altogether still believe in the devil. I don’t know why. No I do indeed know why Evil is always possible. And goodness is eternally difficult. (Rice, 1976)*

From this point of view Rice's books in the 1970s and 1980s presented the reader with a rather innovative idea of the spiritual concept and its immense popularity proved the appeal to the public.

These features described in the previous paragraph are not to be found in the books by Meyer. On the one hand religious beliefs are discussed in *Twilight* more than once:

*"Well, where did you come from? Evolution? Creation? Couldn't we have evolved in the same way as other species, predator and prey? Or, if you don't believe that all this world could have just happened on its own, which is hard to accept myself, is it so hard to believe that the same force that created the delicate angelfish with the shark, the baby seal and the killer whale, could create both our kinds together?"* (Meyer, 2005)

On the other hand the reasons for the religious identification hugely differ. The late twentieth century Gothic Fiction allows to search the answers as to how to formulate new effective spiritual concepts. The twenty-first century brings rather a definition of culture based on the religious identification. The religion itself does not affect the reader, but it formulates the manners and culture which are endangered and need preservation. As a result the characters in the New Gothic fiction imitate old Christian manners and conventions. Bella in the fourth book of *Twilight* series says: *"I don't know yet, Jake. But I just... feel ... that this is all going somewhere good, hard to see as it is now. I guess you could call it faith."* (Meyer, 2008) She often tries to sacrifice herself for the others and repetitively finds herself in lethal danger, during which she suffers exceptionally. Fortunately, Edward always rescues her and takes care of her. The faith, sacrifice, suffering and other Christian values stand for features defining the cultural conception in Meyer's books.

Moreover, it is not just the direct reference to Christianity. The hierarchy of the society and the gender roles definitely show an extremely traditional approach to life. Pure love, no sex before marriage, long proposing and then traditional wedding, housewife taking care of the man, the man as a source of safety and financial resources, these values characterize the Christian society, which started to disappear in the twentieth century, but in the twenty-first century recovers as a cultural feature. Bella and Edward consequently behave as if raised a few hundred years ago. The next paragraph illustrates this:

*“So I requested that I be assigned kitchen detail for the duration of my stay. He was willing enough to hand over the keys to the banquet hall. I also found out that he had no food in the house. So I had my shopping list and the cash from the jar in the cupboard labelled FOOD MONEY, and I was on my way to the Thriftway.”* (Meyer, 2005)

Bella tirelessly cooks, tidies the house, does the laundry and again goes shopping for cooking. She never goes out to have real fun. She is shy, cute enough and tamed, obedient and on top of it she most enjoys her friendship with her mother. Such a behaviour would really fit with a young lady from past centuries, but appears as surprising in the current world. The Christian culture sets the roles of men and women in the society as well and the reader of *Twilight* experiences the life of Bella, who gladly accepts all her duties without a question. Shapiro (2010) points out the importance of the reformed innocence in *Twilight*.

In contrast to Bella’s behaviour, the vampire characters in Rice’s books of the late twentieth century shine with religious and gender freedom. Not only is there Akasha, *the Queen of the Damned* (vampires), beautiful, strong and responsible for herself, who can fight for her own goals and set the things in



motion due to decisive actions, but she rules others with all her skill, her feminine beauty and superior power. Her husband has been used as an excuse for her brutal domination. Imbalance between men and women was used for chaos creation and slaughter of many. Probyn (1995) finds interesting the connection of sexuality in literature and feminism which is depicted in Rice's books as well, and Rice's Akasha fulfils this feminist concept.

Other characters, like old witch Maharet, keep healthier and less hostile relation to men. It is not without interest that there are homosexual and bisexual relations described as well, and there is no hostility towards them.

If Akasha's and Bella's situations are put in contrast, there are things similar and contradictory at the same time. Akasha wants to conquer the world and men, she wants to fight them. Bella wants to obey her Edward and plays the role of a weak victim. She often describes herself as weak, vulnerable and submissive. Her being weak and controlled is pronounced in the real descriptions of relationships, but also in the nature states:

*"Thick fog was all I could see out my window in the morning, and I could feel the claustrophobia creeping up on me. You could never see the sky here; it was like a cage."* (Meyer, 2005)

Though Edward definitely is a master type, he is not a tyrant. There has been a big transformation of the victim-villain pattern, which was typical of the Old Gothic fiction. In the *Twilight* series other characters play the role of intruders, villains and demons. There are men who want to rape Bella in Port Angeles and Edward saves her. Vicious groups of vampires repeatedly attack Bella or her family. The main couple (Edward and Bella) stand for rather a romantic love image. The reason for this difference is that gender inequality, once so pronounced in the Old Gothic literature, has been reduced into a

marginal problem and then returned just as a reminder of the old traditional world. Not that the twentieth century was not the right time for a public talk about gender equality, but in the late twentieth century many rights have been gained in this area, and it was mainly the balance between men and women in their relationships which was discussed. The inspiration came from different cultures and religions. The West was looking for new patterns of family. The Western society has returned to more traditional and patriarchal system.

The twenty-first century has started with a shock of being endangered by the different cultures which were supposed to inspire, not threaten. Thus the old traditions, which formerly identified the culture, gained their place again. The Western society started to isolate itself from the rest of the world again, and highlighted its own integrity with old traditions, image and attributes which used to be connected with it. In the *Twilight* series there are different cultures described as well (Indians), but their mythology or culture is quite poorly described and most of the people from the different cultures just accept the American way of life. Nothing like criticism of their situation is accepted/acceptable. The main focus is on the heroine Bella and her lover, Edward, and her ability to conceive a baby at all cost. The rest of the world plays the role of a scenery. The mythology and legends are mentioned, but the stories are very poorly presented and cannot match the rich Indian culture.

The many Christian features presented in Meyer's books help to define the Western culture. Nevertheless, comparison of the Old Gothic and New Gothic fiction points at the contrast between old devilish demons causing fear to good people and secular society dwelling on continuum of its culture without any true belief. The fears of the society has moved from the Devil to

unknown. The old demons (like Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, Melmoth and others) originating in human sub-consciousness full of fears and horrors shaping into the Devil's beasts are not applicable in postmodern secular society, which does not obey the Church.

So the reader of Meyer's books absorbs a strange mixture of old Christian traditions and spiritually empty world. What is really unsettling is the fact that this culture, however empty in its core, is characterized by extremely military elements. In all of the four books of the *Twilight* saga, there is a fight or a battle. A pack of werewolves, Volturi army (powerful group of vampires), new-born vampires in Seattle, all of these groups work as military formations and so does Edward's family. They preventively create groups ready to fight. And they all like to gain advantage by any means and at all cost. The Cullens even cooperate with vampires used to killing people even though it is against their morals. Such military environment leaves space for muscular males, good fighters, and race for better information or technology. Not surprisingly, it is again the cultural integrity which is fought for in the end.

Rice's bloodthirsty warlike Akasha is contrariwise criticised and condemned by the rest of the characters, who seek peace and do not accept war and violence. There is no territory to protect against intruders, different groups are blended, connected, shattered. Rice's world reminds the mixture of cultures, Meyer's world reminds the crash of cultures.

One more thing should not be omitted from this analysis. Religion explains also the principles of life and death, together with the afterlife. Bella fears getting old, she is afraid of death as well. Immortality is a prize, not a burden, she creates her own paradise here and now with the means she has. She focuses on her own heart, hopes, and dreams.

As for Burton, the only thing which may be said about his work and religion, based on the analysis, is that he does not stick to any certain rules. The only rule is no rules. The characters can believe in a traditional Christian God, but never in the Church. The heroes could believe in whatever, but the purity of their belief would have to be obvious. Burton does not need cultural integrity, because his heroes do not fit into the Western society, or perhaps any society. The difference in belief exists only at the level of hypocrisy or verity. When Pastor Galswells, a priest, appears in *Corpse Bride*, nobody disputes that he is not a good man, or the servant of God. Pastor Galswells only represents the rotten hypocritical layer of society. His morals are low, and in Burton's films only true feelings count. From this point of view, Burton's religion might be called humanity. The source of the true inner world concerning individuals measures the honesty and the truth.

## 7. Evil

This chapter attempts to elucidate the character of evil in the New Gothic fiction in the twentieth and twenty-first century in the works of Meyer, Rice and Burton. The chapter "Evil" in the theoretical part of this thesis recapitulates the substance of evil in the Old Gothic literature, which was mainly the creation of suppressed horrors which dwelled somewhere in the human sub-consciousness and took the forms of monsters.

Unlike the previous chapter, the substance of evil bears similarities in the New Gothic fiction both at the end of the twentieth and the twenty-first century. Meyer and Rice both replaced the original dark monsters with emptiness:

"You have to suffer through this emptiness...and find what impels you to continue." (Rice, 1985)

These are no vampires that are the sources of despair and evil. The Western society has left religion and its grasp of Devil and evil. Instead of the old idea of evil with a form and shape, a new paradigm found its way into the New Gothic fiction works.

*"The pain was growing more and more intolerable by the second. I glared at the cliffs and the crashing waves. Well, why not? Why not quench it right now?"* (Meyer, 2006)

In the eighties there is the sweet possibility of something better, a more qualitative and longer life, with better senses, which is sought by protagonists of the New Gothic fiction. But then at the beginning of the twenty-first century the value of ordinary life decreases even more. Bella desperately

clings to Edward and the VIP life he represents. Occasionally she comments on her being without him: *“Love, life, meaning.... Over.”* (Meyer, 2006)

The eighteenth and nineteenth century told the Old Gothic stories of precious life and home, and these qualities have been endangered by the villains and demons (evil side). Rice’s characters enjoy their lives just a bit, but most of all want to change their experience of life. Their ordinary lives seem boring to them. Meyer’s Bella regrettably lives only for the opportunity of something different. She hates her life. The only reason for life is Edward and at the time of separation she avoids suicide just because of good manners towards her father and mother. She often describes her inner emptiness at the time of separation with her reason for life. Most alarmingly, the reader can understand that these are the real people who are wicked, wrong and evil, not good enough. Only perfect creatures can meet society’s expectations.

Burton surprisingly interchanges the good and the evil. These are the monsters, who are the main heroes. They represent the rare goodness in the society. They fight for the better good of the world and for their lives. They fight the emptiness around them. The protection and self-defence is needed when they are so outnumbered. So they take the most peculiar forms, various monster styles and zombie looks. Beauty never becomes a standard. Beauty lies in the uniqueness and inner values.

For Meyer’ protagonists, the loathsome qualities are ordinary life and body. They consider themselves empty and not good enough. Both Rice and Meyer mention popular stars of show business, magazine faces and similar icons in comparison with the people of the street. Of course, if young readers consume all of the photoshopped pictures and stories of fortunes and success and talents of the others, then they are left with hating their bodies and lives,

because they cannot compare. The ordinary life has changed in the eyes of ordinary people. The only comparison often consists of unreal images. What relationships used to be among people, today just more and more suffer by the artificial characters of the media and social networks. So this process enables the desperation to creep into the lives of young generation readers. They see their own existence as evil, human aspects as evil. The good and desired world is the artificial, perfect one. The discomfort is due to the ordinary reality:

*“Time passes. Even when it seems impossible. Even when each tick of the second hand aches like the pulse of blood behind a bruise.”* (Meyer, 2006)

Additionally, the idea of getting rid of the average life is intoxicating. The reader experiences living the life of someone else, of someone matching the standards of magazine faces. Even conscientious Bella could enjoy the standard of VIP culture: no school, no work, and no dumb boring existence. She would not have to care about anything but herself. This brings the analysis to two contradictory statements.

Firstly, Bella hates herself, because she is imperfect and she does not regard her life worthy. Secondly, she fights for her life, so that she would be a centre of everything. Not only once was she the reason of alarm of her whole family. They protect her, they care about her life and personality. Individuality gained its place among qualities in the twentieth and the twenty-first century. The New Gothic fiction tells the stories of individuals. Unfortunately these individuals would not pass successfully as ordinary human beings.

Not only that these depressed heroes and heroines of the New Gothic fiction books do not think much of themselves, but they generally isolate themselves from the others, as the others also do not meet the standards of being

perfect. Bella is a friend with her mother only and later with no one. Lestat, Louis and Jesse also do not create friendships successfully. Such isolation enables madness to take a great part in the plots of New Gothic fiction. In this case, the Old and New Gothic literature do not differ much. Lunatics, psychopaths, madness, obsessions, mental diseases and more still fill the pages of the stories. However, the evil of separation spread to general public in the New Gothic fiction instead of the few cases in the Old Gothic literature. Rice's characters remain in isolation because of their inability to establish friendship. Meyer's Bella is isolated because of the style of living in the West. Edward even separates her more and behaves as a psychopath in this way. If taken to the extreme, Edward can easily be just an imagination of Bella's mind. A dream which she daydreams, as she does not keep in touch with the rest of the world.

The evil in the New Gothic fiction consists in separation, isolation, emptiness, and loneliness. When there are some bonds created, they take the form of unhealthy obsession and addiction.

As the previous chapter consented on the postmodern Western society as secular, then the change of the substance and source of evil perhaps appears predictable. The human aspect of civilisation is detested and hence motivated hatred induces evil actions against humanity. Even the very natural condition of being pregnant for nine months disappears and is replaced by just a few weeks. The whole process of pregnancy and childbirth are accelerated in *Twilight* and the natural effects on the bodies are erased. Getting old is one of the most feared human attributes as the two examples show below:

*"No, this doesn't count. I stopped aging three days ago. I am eighteen forever."* (Meyer, 2008)



*“What? You’re going to stay but let me get all old anyway?”* (Meyer, 2006)

The horror of death and dying is explained by the uncertainty of the afterlife. Without a paradise, death is worth only under the circumstances of unsuccessful transfer to better being in present life (see the chapter “Transformation”). Horner and Zlosnik comment in their chapter “No Country for Old Women: Gender, Age and the Gothic”:

*“Old age, at least in the West, has recently become a pressing issue for several reasons. The ‘demographic time bomb’ ticks away inexorably, prompting new interest in the implications of an ageing population.”* (Horner, Zlosnik, 2016, 184)

Horner and Zlosnik later continue with the thought of the cruel picture of old women in the Old Gothic texts, and various stereotypes of old women in the Gothic texts. They also indicate the very antifeminist aspect of *Twilight* and its negative conception of age and femininity. Feminism which gleamed in the eighties in *The Vampire Chronicles* vanished in *Twilight*. Meyer’s work is infested/rife with anti-feminist values. Battle, protection, aggression, territory or competition, to name at least some. When the competition is mentioned, it resides in the modern women world too. Women compete in beauty, studies and success. Such a picture of a competitive world indicates rather a patriarchal society, as competition primarily belongs to men’s nature.

As described above, the process of aging and coming to the end of life strikes Bella with horror. It can be understood why the protagonists of the New Gothic fiction fear aging, but the qualities connected with aging decrease in their significance among the society accordingly. Jesse, Bella, Lestat, they are all fascinated by the youth and its qualities. Wisdom, peace, a sense of perspective, reconciliation, and other qualities gained with years seem

worthless. As Gilgamesh has understood, the things we give are returned, but we give more with age. The more we age, the more we give. The Old Gothic Fiction heroes fought for the better good for all people. The New Gothic Fiction heroes and heroines fight for themselves only, the motivation has changed.

Contradictorily, Burton's heroes do not mind saving the world or moving the things to better good. They do not fear death, they welcome it. The only evil is personified in the uniform society. Burton protagonists do not suffer the same fears as those of Meyer or Rice. They fight for their existence in a world and society that represents the source of evil. The standards cause evil, because the heroes differ and separate themselves. Furthermore, they fight one more evil, which resides within them. *The Nightmare before Christmas* tells the story of a creature which nearly sins against his inner good. Burton also works regularly with the archetype of a child. The distinction between good and evil is plainly and undoubtedly lined, which associates with the archetypal child. The distinction then allows Burton to let his heroes fight against evil, because it is unequivocal. However, this distinction does not condemn those who make mistakes. A mistake is often a part of Burton's moral message in his work. Generally, Burton celebrates life, even if the hero should have, for example, scissors instead of hands. In comparison with Meyer's fear of imperfection this documents the complex dissimilarity of the two authors.

Not only does Bella stop aging, but also her child just grows into maturity and then stops. Eternity and never-ending youth awaits them all. Their young and lasting bodies enable them to wander in nature without any discomfort or pain. No restrictions are laid ahead of them. They enjoy effortless running, comfortable travelling over long distances, and safety of their indestructible bodies. The motivation behind their actions is purely individual, there are no

morals in it. They do not fight the devil, they fight with their own imperfections, boredom, and fate. Dangerously, Jesse, Bella and all heroines of the popular New Gothic literature rather look anorectic, they care about the surface beauty. They want to look like the magazine faces, they are overwhelmed by the beauty of the VIP world. There is one more point of view, though. It is the inner beauty which the heroine wants to show, which is a thought inspired by prof. David Punter. Young people want to project their feelings out, so that their strong emotions would be shared with others and appreciated by the others. This would allow them to reach the desired acceptance.

## 8. Transformation

As the previous chapter shows, the current state of human existence in the Western society is haunted by the frustration of not being enough. It is not surprising then that transformation is the need, the key to achieving the dreams. Again, transformation was a source of fear to readers in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, reminding of disease, uncertainty, and the devil. All these connotations have vanished and transformation has changed into an opportunity rather than condemnation. Chaplin (2017) argues that vampires in literary fiction have undergone a transformation from the embodiment of sacred violence to the reachable tool of consumption.

Modern times allow transformation to be the hope instead. In Rice's books, there are similarities of the transformation induced by drugs abuse. In the *Interview With the Vampire* Louis describes the feeling of the transformation into a vampire not unlike the descriptions generally connected to experience with drugs like LSD:

*"It was as if I had only just been able to see colors and for the first time. I was so enthralled with the buttons on Lestat's black coat that I looked at nothing else for a long time. Then Lestat began to laugh, and I heard his laughter as I had never heard anything before. (Rice, 1976)*

Louis feels no fear any more, he sees more clearly, everything is so beautiful and his senses are overwhelmed by the complexity and beauty of the world.

Whether it is the technology, or any other means like chemicals, the new vampires and monsters resemble rather superheroes, a new evolutionary step. These are perfected predatory and defence abilities that allow to exceed

humanity. Bella always describes Edward as a superhero or angel, shockingly beautiful. The new vampires take on characteristics similar to those of being drug addicted. They live by night, they do not sleep, nor do they suffer any pain except for thirst. Their thirst is like a desire (addiction). The addiction strongly governs the motivation of many of the characters. They experience empty lives and try to fill them with alternatives. They thus become addicted to others and to special experience. Being a vampire is like being drugged, they can feel unique finally, exceptional, they live secret night life, they feel immortal, strong, they are passionate and experience instant happiness. At the same time this transformed existence creates living deads (zombies – soulless, empty), as they conform to the social needs.

The social standards differ in the world presented in the media from those in reality. The idea of being successful, intelligent, rich, and beautiful can seem like a reality in the artificial world of social networks. Many users dream about fulfilling these goals. This creates the so called VIP culture. And Lestat excellently stands for an example of this with his popularity and music band. Edward moves more to the VIP world without popularity and lives like a true billionaire. There is the conflict between the need of being accepted as normal, and being special, which is a problem so typical of young adults.

So it is the transformation from human being to something else which is desirable in the New Gothic fiction. The same process which was causing fear in the stories of the Old Gothic fiction. Symbolically, the vampires kill people, so they kill humanity as well. They do not sleep or eat, they do not die or age. Humanity loses its value in the post-modern society.

The transformation brings a new sensation, as young women readers also experience it, they notice the change from being a child to being a woman,

they like the process of change, they welcome new things. Rice's Louis says about the transformation into a vampire:

*"But I can't tell you exactly, any more than I could tell you exactly what is the experience of sex if you have never had it."* (Rice, 1976)

New state brings new experience (such as the first love, first sex). In short, in the Old Gothic fiction the transformation was a bad thing, now it is good and desired.

The society is fascinated by the transformation, as the world is rapidly changing. Everything is changing and it prompting addiction to change, 'a need for change'. That is why we can part with the old, home and similar things. There are two sides to it:

*"The world changes, we do not, therein lies the irony that kills us."* (Rice, 1985)

The picture of an ideal woman has transformed as well. First from the submissive housewife of the Old Gothic fiction to the wild emancipated queen in the eighties and nineties. After the end of the twentieth century, the new woman ideal arose, the submissive but free entity. She is not bound by the law or society, but by her own choice only. She desires to succeed in the society and follows the behaviour considered as leading to such an outcome.

One other aspect has transformed as well. The motivation of heroes in the Old Gothic fiction was aimed at the greater good. Rice's heroes search for the answers for themselves and they want to live happy and fulfilled lives. Meyer's Bella, though, wants to individually fight for her own happiness. She quotes some of the religious and altruistic phrases, but all her motivation is purely individual. Her strength stretches only to accomplish her needs and dreams. She does not take any actions to help the others or the rest of the

world. The individualism therefore constitutes one of the main characteristics of the New Gothic fiction.

The transformation process brings a lot of pleasure to Burton's characters as well. There are monsters like in *Frankenweenie* or *Edward Scissorhands*, with the link to Frankenstein quite clear. The process of transformation nonetheless brings joy into his works. The new coming unique existence excites the audience. The weirder the better. The passage between life and death brought more the feeling of adventure, rather than the need or obsession.

## 9. Identity

This chapter should deal with issues of identity in the works of Rice, Meyer and Burton. First the cultural identity is approached and then the analysis goes through the family to individual identity.

The cultural identity pursuit is more than obvious in Meyer's books. As the previous chapters have shown, cultural integrity became a mark of the postmillennial age. The tendency to draw the line between "them" and "us" causes some amount of features generally acknowledged as belonging to "us" or "them." The division simile to the fears of colonial period, although there was rather the fear of encountering the foreign elements at home. In the current New Gothic fiction the cultures are already geographically mixed without any way back. Thus the need of possessing the specific marks which would declare to which culture the person belongs. The chapter "Religion" explains this more deeply together with the analysis of the motives for this feature into detail. The New Gothic fiction by Rice depicts more global

conception of cultural identity. Her heroes feel some pansophical picture of the "world" culture. Regarding Burton, his monsters cannot fit into the dark rotting world, because they are pure and good, so they create their own culture full of creepy things and ghostly places. His Bride Corpse enjoys life on the other side, with those who are dead. They share a common space and feelings. The outcasts of the society produce their own culture in Burton's works. They share as little as possible with the rest of the society. Considering the society as sinful, Burton's monsters also tend to possess characteristics disregarded by the rest of the society. These characteristics then can symbolize belonging to Burton's culture.

The family and bloodline have lost their importance in comparison with the old texts. Both Meyer and Rice put emphasis on the family as a source of help or advantage if the individual is lucky. Otherwise the family does not mean much to the characters and such families are easily forsaken. The role of the individual in the family differ, though. Bella wants to be part of a new, chosen family, and she values her maternity at all cost. She feels the acceptance (of the family, of her personality) in the world she has chosen and it helps her to construct a new identity. She finds her home and her old family easy to abandon. To sum up, the family establishes the source of advantages for the individual, otherwise it is devaluated. Lestat on the other hand interacts with his family more often and all of them bring some touch with reality and a reason for otherwise empty life. He tries to set up a family of his own, however untraditional, but without any success.

Burton's heroes and monsters appreciate the family not only once. Edward Scissorhands' relation to his creator is just the opposite of unimportance. The bloodline plays an important role in Burton's films. *Dark Shadows* represents one of the examples with a plot based on a strong family bonds. This time,



they last over centuries of separation. Sometimes, if the family in Burton's works is not functional, the heroes can set up their own new families, based, for example, on friendship.

As the individuals are becoming more and more important at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the current century, individual identity has become a number one issue in the texts of the New Gothic fiction. What the identity is, what it should be like, how many identities there can be and other questions arise in the modern texts.

A peculiar form of a dual life comes to existence; unlike the Old Gothic heroes the modern ones again freely choose to have such a parallel identity. As Bella lives two lives - one official full of duties, the boring ordinal empty life, and the second full of excitement, love and adventure; she copies the pattern of two identities of people addicted to the social networking sites. The artificial reality creates the flawless environment for the fulfilment of human dreams. To look like a picture becomes a standard wish:

*"I stared because their faces, so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful. They were faces you never expect to see except perhaps on the airbrushed pages of a fashion magazine."* (Meyer, 2005)

So there are two identities which Bella keeps. Her original identity, though, cannot succeed and she feels out of place:

*"Maybe, if I looked like a girl from Phoenix should, I could work this to my advantage. But physically, I'd never fit in anywhere. I should be tan, sporty, blond – a volleyball player, or a cheerleader, perhaps – all the things that go with living in the valley of the sun."* (Meyer, 2005)

Rice's heroes try to find at least some identity. They hesitate where they belong and what they are. Many of their adventures are rooted in the attempt to uncover their own identity. The society in the western world does not keep the roles ready for the young people to occupy. They have to create their position instead. From all the roles in the society which one can create, and there is no definite number, there are two main groups to assess. The first group represents the unwanted identity of a disadvantaged, poor, ordinal beings. This identity is a doom for the majority of the society. Then there are the successful and rich ones. This is the reason for the second identities. As it is unreachable for the young people, who are not exceptionally talented or who do not know how to change their position, they slip into a supplementary identity. The new identity fulfils a kind of an artificial perfection. We are presented with a picture which is unnatural, but publicly accepted. Humanity seems insufficient. People want to succeed in the evolution and want to have more than they have. The new, hard, durable, flawless bodies described in the New Gothic fiction resemble more machines than humanity. We want to sustain in the new environment, which is rapidly changing. The demands accelerate to exceptionality and present a very competitive world.

The modern young generation is addicted to the idea of really living their second life. Bella wants to experience living in the atmosphere she wishes:

*"You're very perceptive today," he added. "It's impressive." (Meyer, 2007)*

This and similar utterances by Edward serve to boost Bella's identity. She is then described both as beautiful and intelligent. More evidence is displayed on the matter of Bella's intelligence. Also she gets diamonds, expensive cars, and her new house is stocked with money. The second life resembles daydreaming sometimes:

*"I sat down automatically, watching him with caution. He was still smiling. It was hard to believe that someone so beautiful could be real. I was afraid that he might disappear in a sudden puff of smoke, and I would wake up."* (Meyer, 2005)

In fact, Edward could have been easily just a product of her imagination, her second identity. There might be millions of teenage girls who are now accompanied by their own Edwards. Edward as a creation of Bella's mind brings her an obsession. Her second identity world consumes more of her interest, so most of the text is a love talk.

Rice's heroes live their second lives rather more realistically. Or at least the difference is not so clearly lined. There are the drugs as stated above and they resemble the case of Mr Hyde instead. It seems like the hero could push some button and wait for the "next level" experience and identity.

The danger of hating our original identity and creating a new one is probably obvious. For the purposes of the analysis it is necessary to ponder over the side effects of it as well. The hatred directed inwards causes self-harming behaviour. Bella often does not eat at all. She has tendencies to anorexia as she feels the need to look like some ideal of the society.

As this trivial literature provides a considerable amount of information about the young generation readers of this time, we observe the transformation from a child to the adult and it in fact causes the intensified identity issue. Bella looks for more intimacy, she leaves her mother, her home. She is uncertain as to who she is, and seeks some reassurance of her being normal:

*"My mind doesn't work right? I'm a freak?"* (Meyer, 2005)

When she is finally transformed in the fourth book, she is obsessed with her new appearance:

*“My first reaction was an unthinking pleasure. The alien creature in the glass was indisputably beautiful as Alice or Esme. She was fluid even in stillness, and her flawless face was pale as the moon against the frame of her dark, heavy hair. Her limbs were smooth and strong, skin glistening subtly, luminous as a pearl.”* (Meyer, 2008)

The mirrors generally appear through the everyday routine described. The looks are highly thought of. Similar importance is given to money, beauty, and safety which go with her new identity. The identity of a VIP young girl who is protected by the whole powerful family and is loved by them. They have the manners, money, education, solutions for anything.

Burton works in exactly the opposite way. He celebrates the uniqueness of identity and individuality. There are no boundaries of what is good or bad. The only criterion which marks a character as dangerous would be his or her conformity and social averageness. Beauty in his work stands for uniqueness. That is why his characters have the identities they cherish in their hearts. They just do not fit into the rest of the world. One of his characters, Vincent, (a parallel to Poe’s poem *Raven*) suffered a split personality. Again it was but a joy of observing and experiencing a mind which bears the characteristics of a new genius or a special existence.

## 10. Conclusion

This diploma thesis deals with texts of three popular authors (Stephenie Meyer, Anne Rice, and Tim Burton) who develop the tradition of Gothic literature with their prose writing and film making. The first chapter summarizes the theory needed for the analysis. After a short introduction to the Gothic fiction genre, it explores the unevenness in the Old Gothic fiction literature. The unevenness means a kind of disharmony which brings conflicts. Chapters dealing with evil, transformation and identity follow. Some general information has been noted on the account of the three authors, including their works and contribution to the development of horror literature.

The following chapter analyses the particular Gothic elements in selected works: the usage of the vampire or monster character, the pattern of victim and villain, the theme of death and attitude to religion, and some more. In this context the literary influences are considered, together with the originality of the stories.

The New Gothic fiction works on the principles that resemble the Old Gothic fiction. The biggest difference lies in the motivation for the usage of these elements. For example, in the New Gothic fiction writing the character of vampire appears quite often. In Meyer's *Twilight* her vampire appears to represent a perfect, VIP world. He represents the new perfected artificial creation, because humanity has lost its value in this scheme. Rice's vampires are sometimes similar to gods. They enjoy a super sensitive perception of the world. Burton's vampire is an outcast of a rotten society. His vampire separates and differentiates from the culture which he does not accept. The doom of vampirism is cast on Burton's heroes as if by accident, and they have

to cope with this fate and disadvantage; or the purpose is their edification, and the moral message is included after a mistake made by the hero.

Two of the most remarkable themes have proved to be religion and the perception of humanity. Religion and its influence has been altered in comparison between the Old and New Gothic fiction. In the New Gothic fiction, religious beliefs transform into a set of religious traditions and costumes which identify the culture. The perception of humanity once valuable and precious has changed into an unwelcome aspect of human life.

All of the three authors seek inspiration in the Old Gothic stories and authors. Meyer has mentioned *Wuthering Heights* and *Romeo and Juliet* several times. Although she really uses some patterns of these books, she primarily creates her own stories. Only some of the elements are used and she creates her own plots. Rice acknowledges inspiration in Brönte sisters, Virginia Woolf, Charles Dickens, Shakespeare, and other older authors. Her stories do not copy the old ones. Burton always directly points at the source of inspiration. He can afford it, because he authentically works with the original texts.

All of the three authors contribute to the development of Gothic literature. Rice and Meyer inspire new paranormal romance books. Burton inspires in many ways. It may be his dark humour, his monsters, or the morals of his works.

The deeper analysis of the authors inspired by Meyer, who was in turn inspired by Rice, shall offer an interesting view of the young adult world.

## 11. Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá prací tří populárních autorů gotické fikce současné doby, Stephenie Meyerové, Anne Riceové a Tima Burtona. Úkolem bylo srovnat vybrané prvky jejich práce s díly starších autorů osmnáctého a devatenáctého století.

Bylo třeba nastudovat primární literaturu osmnáctého a devatenáctého století a najít vhodnou sekundární literaturu, která by podpořila obsahovou stránku teoretické části. Po shromáždění informací byla teoretická část rozdělena do kapitol, které nejprve přiblížily gotickou literaturu jako takovou, následně rozčlenily motivy gotické fikce do oblastí nazvaných nepoměr, zlo, transformace, identita. Kapitola nepoměr se zabývala nevyváženým působením síly, času a prostoru v gotické fikci. Kapitola věnující se zlu přiblížila povahu zla (hmotného i nehmotného), v tomto kontextu také jeho opaku, tedy dobra, a potažmo fenoménu „sublime“, který má významné postavení mezi prvky gotické fikce. Kapitola analyzující transformační procesy v gotické fikci se dotkla témat vědy a náboženství, genderových vztahů, zombie a feudalismu. Poslední v teoretické části je kapitola s názvem „Identita“. Ta rozebírá významné procesy související s identitou na úrovni jednotlivce, rodiny a celé společnosti.

Pro účely práce na srovnání jednotlivých prvků analytické části byla vyčleněna jedna samostatná kapitola pro každého ze tří vybraných autorů. V této části diplomová práce v krátkosti přibližuje kulturní pozadí autorů, poskytuje základní informace týkající se jejich osoby a především uvádí díla, která jsou zásadní pro analytickou část diplomové práce. Je zde zmíněn i odhadovaný přínos autorů pro tradici gotické a hororové literatury.

Následuje část čistě analytická, která již pracuje jak s díly vybraných autorů nové gotické fikce, tak s gotickou literaturou osmnáctého a devatenáctého století, ale i se sekundární literaturou, která se již zabývá zmíněnými autory, nebo se nějakým způsobem věnuje jevům, které jsou analyzovány.

Všechny kapitoly analytické části se vzájemně ovlivňují a dotýkají. Nakonec byla vyčleněna kapitoly zabývající se náboženstvím, zlem, transformací a identitou v dílech vybraných autorů nové gotické fikce.

Povaha sekulární společnosti v dílech Stephenie Meyerové odhalila, že její hrdinové se vrací k tradičním hodnotám a zvykům křesťanského světa, nicméně otázky víry nejsou skutečným obsahem knih. Jedná se spíše o kulturní vyčlenění na základě rysů křesťanského společenství, nežli o návrat k ortodoxnímu systému náboženské víry. Riceová vytváří svět založený na tolerantním přístupu k náboženství a hledání nových východisek pro chápání duchovního světa. Burton je mnohem méně vymezený k pojmu náboženství a spíše se zaměřuje na vnitřní motivace a lidskost spojenou s přístupem k duchovním hodnotám.

Kapitola „Zlo“ analyzuje posun dříve chápaných hodnot, které byly v rozporu s křesťanskou morálkou, nebo anomálií způsobených vnitřním traumatem. Zlo ve staré gotické fikci se promítalo ven a někdy se formovalo do podoby monstra. U Riceové a Meyerové jde spíše o prázdnotu a nenaplněnost osobního života, která způsobuje jejich hrdinům bolest. Burton pak vidí zlo hlavně v uniformované společnosti, která se staví proti jeho nevšedním hrdinům.



Transformační procesy byly ve staré gotické literatuře chápány jako ohrožení vlastního života, hodnot a integrity. V nové gotické fikci jsou jimi autoři naopak inspirováni.

Kapitola „Identita“ uvádí, jak je identita chápána vybranými autory na úrovni společenské, rodinné a osobní. Riceová představuje postavy, které se snaží svou identitu najít. Hlavní hrdinka Meyerové žije dvojitou identitou a Burtonova monstra svou identitu mají, zásadně se však vyčleňují proti zbytku společnosti.

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