



## **Bakalářská práce**

# **A Comparative Analysis of Love Triangles in Selected Novels of the Twilight Saga and The Vampire Diaries Series**

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*Autor práce:*

**Kateřina Dohnalová**

*Vedoucí práce:*

Mgr. Zénó Vernyik, Ph.D.

Katedra anglického jazyka

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## Zadání bakalářské práce

# A Comparative Analysis of Love Triangles in Selected Novels of the Twilight Saga and The Vampire Diaries Series

<i>Jméno a příjmení:</i>	<b>Kateřina Dohnalová</b>
<i>Osobní číslo:</i>	P19000209
<i>Studijní program:</i>	B0114A300068 Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání
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V bakalářské práci budou popsány rozdíly v milostných trojúhelnících mezi vybranými díly populárních knižních sérií *Stmívání* a *Upíří deníky*, a to především z hlediska rolí hlavních postav. Dalším cílem bude zjištění důvodů nalezených odlišností.

Práce se bude opírat především o genderovou teorii, naratologickou analýzu a psychoanalytickou interpretaci. Nicméně, též neobejde bez zpracování již teď rozsáhlé sekundární literatury a ukotvení vybraných knih v jejich socio-kulturním a historickém kontextu. V rámci přípravy autorka bude svou práci pravidelně konzultovat se školitelem, aktivně vyhledávat další relevantní sekundární zdroje a provádět literárně kulturní analýzy v potřebném rozsahu a v dostatečné hloubce.

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Vedoucí práce:

Mgr. Zénó Vernyik, Ph.D.

Katedra anglického jazyka

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L.S.

prof. RNDr. Jan Pícek, CSc.  
děkan

Mgr. Zénó Vernyik, Ph.D.  
garant studijního programu

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## **Anotace**

Bakalářská práce *Komparativní analýza milostných trojúhelníků ve vybraných románech ságy Stmívání a série románů Upíří deníky* se zabývá nejdříve popularitou románů a jejich oblibou u mladého ženského publika. Dále je vyobrazeno historické a kulturní pozadí upírů. Prostřednictvím genderové teorie následuje zobrazení upířích mužů a žen, a to jak v historickém, tak v současném významu genderových rolí. V poslední kapitole je podrobně rozebrán popis milostných trojúhelníků pomocí modelu René Girarda a také rozdíly v trojúhelnících podle obou knižních předloh. Srovnávací analýza odhalila odlišné vzorce v zobrazení milostných trojúhelníků: *Twilight* sága představuje stabilní milostný trojúhelník posilující tradiční genderové role, zatímco *The Vampire Diaries* představuje nestabilní milostný trojúhelník, kde se ukazuje Elena v pozici ženy, která se dokáže rozhodnout sama a vést si svůj život, oproti Belle.

**Klíčová slova:** vampirismus, milostné trojúhelníky, upíří, posílení postavení žen, nadpřirozeno, Stephanie Meyer, Stmívání, L. J. Smith, Upíří deníky

## **Annotation**

The Bachelor thesis *A Comparative Analysis of Love Triangles in Selected Novels of the Twilight Saga and The Vampire Diaries Series* first describes the phenomenon of teenage vampire novels and their popularity among young female audiences. Furthermore, the historical and cultural background of vampires is depicted. Through gender theory, the depiction of male and female vampires follows, both in the historical and in the actual, i.e. contemporary, meaning of gender roles. In the last chapter, the description of love triangles using René Girard's model is analyzed in detail, as well as the differences in love triangles according to both book models. The comparative analysis revealed distinct patterns in the portrayal of love triangles: *The Twilight Saga* presents a stable love triangle reinforcing traditional gender roles, while *The Vampire Diaries* features an unstable triangle where female agency and empowerment are showcased.

**Key words:** vampirism, love triangles, vampires, empowering women, supernatural, Stephanie Meyer, Twilight, L.J. Smith, The Vampire Diaries

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## 1. Introduction

Vampires are a popular topic amongst primarily audiences of teenage females who are attracted especially by the romanticization of vampires and the love stories they can experience through novels. It is this popularity of these supernatural stories that also made me interested in researching this topic more deeply and focus primarily on love triangles.

After consideration, I selected *The Vampire Diaries* by L. J. Smith and *The Twilight Saga* by Stephanie Meyer as my chosen stories to focus on. The novels used in this thesis will be the first two books of both series, which are *The Awakening* and *The Struggle* by L. J. Smith, along with *Twilight* and *New Moon* by Stephanie Meyer.

These two stories serve primarily as reading for teenage female audience, as already mentioned, but I demonstrate how problematic they can be when perceived by female readers, especially as it concerns Bella Swan and her behaviour.

I explore such aspects as which types of females Bella Swan and Elena Gilbert, the two main characters of these stories are, and how they deal with vampire love entanglements along with those dangerous situations which are indispensable elements of the supernatural worlds of their vampire companions. Vampire males will also be discussed, especially their historical development and how their characteristic traits and portrayals are changing throughout time periods and how are they viewed currently, through the lens of these two sets of stories.

These aspects are analyzed in order to prepare the grounds for the main focus of the thesis, love triangles. The specific triangles in the two story worlds are discussed and compared using René Girard's model. The specific role these lovers play, and how their roles change, or, on the contrary, remain stable throughout the stories, is classified, and it is then discussed what specific role or roles these configurations play in those stories.

The thesis compares love triangles in *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Twilight Saga*. It finds that *The Twilight Saga* presents a stable love triangle where Bella Swan is consistently passive, Edward Cullen is active, and Jacob Black mediates. This perpetuates traditional gender roles and may be harmful to young female readers. In contrast, *The Vampire Diaries* features an unstable love triangle where

roles change. Elena initially is desired by both Salvatore brothers, but later takes agency and shifts affection from Damon to Stefan. This shows a more empowering narrative where women can take initiative and change their situation.

## 2. A Brief Introduction of Storylines

### 2.1 A Brief Introduction to *The Vampire Diaries*

*The Vampire Diaries* is a series of books with elements of the genres of romance, supernatural fiction and, to a lesser extent horror. In its main story, Elena Gilbert is one of the main characters and the narrator of the story together with Stefan Salvatore as him being a narrator and one of the main characters too. The story is also sometimes written in the form of diary entries by Stefan and Elena. The third main character of this story is Damon Salvatore, Stefan's older brother. As the story progresses, we see Elena Gilbert fall in love with both Stefan and Damon Salvatore, thus forming the love triangle that I discuss the most in this bachelor thesis. The brothers are both vampires and as the story line continues, it is progressively revealed why and how they became them.

Elena Gilbert is the main female protagonist. She grew up in a city called Fell's Church. Her life has changed when her parents died, so her aunt Judith took care of her and Elena's younger sister, Margaret. Elena is pictured in the first book as a teenage school-girl, who is conventionally pretty, has blonde hair and blue eyes. Students admire her and, of course, young men at the school want to date her. As for her personality, she appears charming, but entitled, fearless, but also selfish at times.

Stefan Salvatore is a vampire, whose past haunts him, mainly because of his troubled relationship with his older brother Damon. He was born in Italy, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He was turned into a vampire when he was seventeen years old. Stefan is withdrawn and protects those he loves, he is also a charismatic and kind gentleman. He is afraid of hurting people, because of his vampirism. Because of this, he thus is cautious around everyone, and especially around Elena.

Damon Salvatore is also a vampire, as mentioned earlier. He is the older brother of Stefan Salvatore. In contrast to Stefan, Damon is irresponsible, dangerous, reckless and violent. In addition, he has a troubled past and deep down he thinks that he can-not be forgiven. He has vulnerabilities, but he tries to hide them. It is only later in the story that we are introduced to his hidden other side. Damon also wants to date Elena, because she reminds him of his old love towards Elena's doppelganger, Katherine von Swartzschild. He does not, however, consider his brother's feelings while seeking Elena's attraction, which damages the relationship of the three of them. Katherine was likewise loved by both Salvatores, and was the one who turned

them into vampires. She was manipulative and strategic, but also elegant and fearless.

## **2.2 A Brief Introduction to *The Twilight Saga***

*The Twilight Saga* has elements of the same genres as *The Vampire Diaries*: horror, romantic literature and supernatural fiction, with its main audience being mostly young adult women. The main female character is Bella Swan, who grew up in Phoenix. She moved to a small city named Forks with her father Charlie, who is the local Chief of Police. The story begins with Bella arriving in Forks. On her first day of school, she meets the mysterious Edward and his siblings (Rosalie, Alice, Jasper, and Emmett).

Edward was born in Chicago in 1901 and was turned into a vampire when he was 17 years old. When Edward was dying of the Spanish influenza, Carlisle saved him and turned him into a vampire in 1918. Since then, Edward has joined him in a father-son relationship. Carlisle later also turned Rosalie, Esme and Emmett. Jasper and Alice also joined the “family of vampires“ but not through Carlisle’s intervention. While Alice also has vampire powers, they are different from Edward’s. She sees the future and what may happen. The only downside to her soothsaying skill is that her predictions are not always accurate.

Edward is distant from Bella at the very beginning, because his urge for her blood is, at the early point, enormous. At the same time, his vampire ability, which is mind reading, can-not be used on Bella, because she is immune to it. Bella is portrayed as clumsy but intelligent, and she also does not find interest in any typical “women’s hobby“, such as shopping and gossiping. Their relationship is complicated by Edward’s dangerous, vampiric nature, which is mainly embodied in his uncontrollable lust for her blood.

In the first book, which is called *Twilight*, the main focus is on Bella, Edward, and their romance, as well as Edward’s efforts to protect Bella from other dangerous vampire men, such as James, who tried to kill her. At first, Bella struggles to understand Edward’s world and Edward has his own struggles which is to control his urge for Bella’s blood. Their love is complicated, but Bella decides she wants to risk her life to stay with Edward.

The second book *New Moon* begins with a birthday party for Bella with the Cullen family, where Bella gets injured and Jasper almost lost himself to his urge for



blood, because Bella cut herself accidentally. This shows Edward her vulnerability and fragility. Edward begins to worry that his vampiric nature and the environment in which he put her can cause Bella harm and can be dangerous for her, so he decides to leave Forks. He goes to Italy, because he does not want to live his life without Bella. He tries to get killed by Volturi, which is an association of the oldest and strongest vampires. Bella does not know why Edward left her, nor for that reason he also wants to get killed. She is left heart-broken by the sudden breakup in their relationship and falls into a depression and she no longer has a “purpose“ in life .

Bella tries to forget about Edward by distracting herself, so she starts to spend her spare time with Jacob Black, who helps her cope with the loss of Edward. Jacob becomes her close friend and an important figure in her life. While he also begins to have romantic feelings for Bella, Bella does not return them. Bella decides to risk her life just to hear Edward' s voice, but Jacob eventually saves her. The desire to return to Edward gives her the courage and determination to go to Italy with Alice to prevent Edward from committing suicide, which is eventually suggested to him by one of the oldest vampires, Volturi.

The *New Moon* focuses more on werewolves than vampires and gives a major plot line to Jacob Black, as he reveals Bella the secret of his tribe, and that he is a werewolf. The history of the enmity between vampires and werewolves is expanded further in the story. More werewolf characters (Sam Uley, Paul and Quil) are also introduced. Jacob Black and Bella become close and Bella feels safe with him. He gently forces her not to think about Edward and his abandonment. This is why Jacob becomes her best friend. The only downside to the friendship is Jacob's feelings, which have grown even stronger towards Bella who is not ready to be in a love-relationship with him. When they almost get together, Alice appears in town to inform Bella of Edward's choice to get killed by the Volturi. The reason for doing so is Alice's vision of the future, in which Bella dies. Bella and Alice quickly fly to Italy to save Edward's life. They rescue him as the book ends.

### 3. Vampires as a Cultural Phenomenon

Vampire stories are extremely popular at present, as the success of such franchises as the ones analyzed in this thesis (*Twilight*, *The Vampire Diaries*) and several others (e.g. *True Blood* or *Underworld*) illustrate. Yet, this is far from a recent phenomenon. The literary portrayal of vampires is often claimed to hail back to the Victorian period, and is most commonly associated with Bram Stoker's name, through his novel *Dracula* (1897), albeit Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1872) and John Polidori's "The Vampyre" (1819) both appeared much earlier in the same century. Poetical descriptions in German, however, reach back to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, specifically to Heinrich August Ossenfelder's "The Vampire" (1748).

In folklore, belief in vampire-like blood-drinking creatures is demonstrated already in ancient times, both in Europe and in other areas. As an example of such earlier, vampires-like creatures, one can list a demon from ancient times appearing in Assyrian cuneiform incantation about seven spirits, first translated to English by R. Campbell Thompson. (McFadden 2021, 8). Thus, it is easy to recognize that vampires are neither a passing fad of contemporary times, nor a marginal cultural phenomenon.

In his book, *Semitic Magic: Its Origins and Development*, Thompson's translation is given as follows:

"Knowing no mercy, they rage against mankind, They spill their blood like rain, Devouring their flesh...sucking their veins" (Thompson 1908, 48-49).

Much later, the European "vampire fever" in the early eighteenth-century. Was due to an alleged emergence of such creatures. First, this emergence was recorded on the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with the alleged outbreak later conceived to have spread to other countries. In England, the vampire then fast became a literary character of significant influence. This is presumably because this model of a monster which has much to do with the human being, proved to be an amazing "tool" and "material" for literary creativity to comment on the human condition (Vučković, Dujović 2016, 3).

Yet, "in order to survive as a significant literary hero in the twenty-first century, as one who still has something to say to contemporary readers, the vampire himself had to go through many transformations" (Vučković, Dujović 2016, 2). In fact, the portrayal of vampires is hardly static throughout the ages.

Fiction books in general arguably reflect the specific needs and circumstances of their audiences, including the spirit of their times, their everyday needs and preferences. (Vučković, Dujović 2016, 1-4). Mercer writes in her book *Vampires, Desire, Girls and God: Twilight and the Spiritualities of Adolescent Girls* about young teenage girls and the impression of Edward Cullen as the main vampire character. Their portrayals are suited to what a modern vampire represents. One specific teenage girl has a conversation with her, saying why she likes Edward:

“Because he’s a vampire. He’s like the perfect guy.”

“Do you like vampires in horror movies too?” I inquire. “No. I don’t like scary stories. At first I wasn’t even going to read *Twilight* because I thought it was a horror story with a vampire in it.” (Mercer 2010, 265).

This indicates and supports the claim that modern portrayals of these creatures has changed from monsters, who were only in horror stories, to romantic lovers. This is further supported by the fact that the “*Twilight* series has sold over 160 million copies worldwide between the 4 main novels and the 2 major additional books and spent 235 weeks on the NY Times bestseller list” (McLoughlin 2022). Given the genre’s adaptability and ability to reflect social and cultural changes, it is thus both possible and logical to investigate these narratives in terms of their portrayal of, and possibly commentary on, specific contemporary cultural phenomena, such as love triangles.

#### **4. The Depiction of Gender in The Vampire Narrative**

Gender may be defined as patterns of behaviour and conventional roles, which are expected from members of a particular society. (Underwood, Bamman, and Lee, 2018, 1-2)

Gender is further defined by physiological, legal gender, social and other factors. Gender roles may change over time, can in some cases be fluid, and are always understood in their social context. (Reisner et al., 2015, 34-57).

The term gender also has a correlation with the term sex, i.e. the biological factors influencing social behavior. However, in this thesis, focus is on gender, not for ideological reasons, but simply because it is an analysis of representations, which are, by definition cultural, and thus social. Aspects of sex, such as hormones, reproductive organs, and genetics, provide an important basis of identity (Frohard-Dourlent et al., 2017, 24), but these aspects are not accessible for analysis in films, series or novels.

Gender in the Vampire Narrative, like gender in general, is socially and historically conditioned. In earlier vampire novels, male vampires were portrayed as sexual hypermasculine predators, which became popular in contemporary literature and filmography. (Hobson 2016, 1-2). Likewise, hypersexualization also played a role in the depiction of female vampires. Vampire women were typically portrayed as beautiful creatures, who were also dangerous and capable of killing. Furthermore, there was a stronger focus on the biological aspect of the female vampiric body, than on the biological aspect of the male vampiric body (Hobson 2016, 2)

The description, however, has since shifted to more romantic interpretations of vampires. Gender in the contemporary Vampire Narrative also opens up a conversation about contemporary sexual objectification and gender roles of women, especially in popular culture. Vampires can thus be interrogated in search of an understanding of the conceptualization of gender and identity, which highlights particular issues of equality and social interactions. (Hobson 2016, 3). Examples of this are mainly seen in Edward and Stefan's behaviour. They are caring and take into consideration Bella and Elena's feelings, instead of using them for their blood and sexual pleasure.

#### 4.1 The Portrayal of Vampire Men

The traditional depiction of vampiric men, as already mentioned above, is often in the form of a monster with an uncontrollable thirst for blood. They are strong killers with no feelings, as seen e.g. in the prototypical vampire-novel, Bram Stoker's - *Dracula* (Durocher 2016, 45). This image of the brutal and animalistic predator has certainly not disappeared completely. Such contemporary representations as Lestat, in Anne Rice's novel *Interview with the vampire* (1976) still conform to this image: Lestat "killed humans every night" and regularly tortured and killed human women (Rice 1976, 61), just as brutal and cold-hearted, if not more so, as Stoker's *Dracula*.

Those creatures of earlier vampire narratives, just as the more contemporary ones, however, do serve as a reflection of social fears and offer a space to reveal cultural preoccupations with gender and sex (Durocher 2016, 45). Likewise, contemporary vampires are still based on Eastern European vampire myths, and even though their portrayal has changed to more sophisticated abilities, those are still based on the original portrayal of vampires (Vučković, Dujović 2016, 2-3)

In the two series analyzed in this thesis, *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Twilight Saga*, the main vampire men characters are portrayed as physically young teenage boys, who are heterosexual, attractive, seductive and romantic as they try to protect their female companions. (Durocher 2016, 45)

There is also a certain misunderstanding and exclusion from the collective of other vampires, as they favor humans: Edward, for example, tries to keep Bella human and enjoy a normal life. Despite this fact, she herself would prefer to become a vampire girl to stay by Edward's side forever (Meyer 2005, 433).<sup>1</sup>

Despite this particular change of physical appearance of vampire men, they remain a consistent theme. (Durocher 2016, 45)

Hence, as mentioned earlier, similarly to other contemporary male vampires in literature, vampire males in both *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Twilight Saga* have masculine power with the conventional attractiveness. The masculinity is shown for instance in *Twilight*, when Edward shows Bella how fast he is, when he streaks from the dark, like a bullet, or a ghost, with no sound, when his feet touch the

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<sup>1</sup> However not every main vampire character has a favor of humans. Damon Salvatore is much more of a different belief, which will be discussed more in the next chapter.

ground. (Meyer 2005, 245). There is a similar example shown in *The Vampire Diaries* as Stefan informs Elena about his fast reflexes, resilience, quickness and how much stronger he is than a human being. (Smith 1991a, 212).

Both Edward and Stefan are old vampires (Edward is ninety years old, and Stefan is a one-hundred-and-sixty-five-year-old vampire) in teenage-boy bodies. This is an important aspect of the view of vampires in the love triangles, since women, and especially teenage girls, tend to romanticize these old vampire souls with young boys appearance. They perceive them as gentlemen who do not act like the teenage boys of their own generation, but rather as chivalric men who court them. Mercer in her book *Vampires, Desire, Girls and God: Twilight and the Spiritualities of Adolescent Girls* states that vampires “As creatures related to humanity and eternity, as well as to sensuality and death, the figure of the vampire long has functioned as a metaphor for such yearnings.” (Mercer 2010, 269). She interviewed one teenage girl on why is she drawn to Edward, the girl saying: “He’s super strong, he is such a gentleman and knows how to treat women unlike the typical seventh grade boy I know, and he cares about her so, so much — what could be better than that in a guy?” (Mercer 2010, 268). This, however, leads to ignoring the potential danger of these creatures.

The physical descriptions of these male vampires contrast sharply with the original description of vampires. While Dracula has “hairs in the centre of the palm,” (Stoker 1897, 9) and that his hands are adorned with long nails “cut to a sharp point” (Stoker 1897, 9). He also has pointy ears, extreme “pallor,” (Stoker 1897, 9) and his “rather cruel looking” (Stoker 1897, 9) mouth is full of “sharp white teeth” (Stoker 1897, 9).

However, appearance is not the only aspect of dissimilarity from the typical portrayal of traditional vampires and Dracula. The environment in which they live, also differs. Dracula lives in a castle and is on the fringes of society. In contrast, the Cullens live in a modern luxury home, drive expensive cars, and are a respectable family overall, representing the capitalist world. (Zimmerman 2013, 81).

Another difference when portraying contemporary vampires is that Stefan and Edward do not enjoy torturing and killing humans and instead want to live a normal life, seemingly denying their desire for human blood.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Damon Salvatore presents a contrasting image of vampires, exhibiting violent behavior, aggression, and a tendency to harm everyone around him, including his brother Stefan. This example is close to the conventional portrayal of male vampires as monsters.

Yet, while both Stefan and Edward strive to distance themselves from the traditional vampire stereotype, they nevertheless still display signs of dominance over humans, particularly women, as we can see in the books. It can be seen in the relationship of Edward and Bella, who is the most “troubling” female character. She continuously debases herself to please Edward, takes responsibility for the actions of others, and sees herself as less attractive than other women. (Durocher 2016, 51-55).

The dangers of patriarchy for women, as invoked by these vampire males, are clearly visible in the disintegration of female autonomy within these narratives: “As each woman becomes dependent versions of their earlier selves, they face the consequences of the vampire male’s unchecked power in their lives. They often suffer from emotional and physical harm at the hands of their vampire wardens” (Durocher 2016, 55).

Both Bella and Elena were mostly independent and had value in themselves, however their identities are quickly subsumed in their relationships with Edward and Stefan. Their self-reliance becomes problematic. It puts these women or those they care about in danger and often serves as a plot device that requires their vampire lover to rescue them. For instance, when Stefan saved Elena from Tyler. Elena was alone, and Tyler was drunk, so he wanted to take advantage of her weakness. Elena was not strong enough to push Tyler away, but then Stefan appeared. He beat him up until it was too much and Elena had to stop Stefan from doing so, because Tyler was extensively injured (Smith 1991a, 110).

There is a different occurrence with Edward and Bella, when he saved her in a car accident. Since the road was icy, Tyler did not brake for the turn and almost crashed into Bella, if Edward hadn’t been around he probably would have killed her (Meyer 2005, 48). This particular example of Edward being a vampire hero and Bella a human teenage girl in danger, a damsel in distress, who is being saved by him depicts a typical situation of supernatural hero savior and a helpless woman in danger.

Yet, at the same time, these dominant men in their attractiveness also remind the reader of the danger of relying on appearances. The Ferrari that Damon Salvatore drives is not just luxurious, but also serves as a reminder to the reader that the most attractive creatures can be the most terrifying and dangerous ones at the same time. These vampire narratives offer viewers and readers a way to face the fears, and reject, a patriarchal, aggressive, and possessive version of masculinity (Durocher

2016, 52- 57).

There are, overall three types of vampire men identified by Benjamin H. Leblanc, describing the evolution of the character. The first one was the most popular until the end of eighteenth century and was based on “from superstition and religious faith” (Vučković and Dujović 2016, 4). As mentioned above, this type of vampire and the portrayal of him nevertheless never completely disappears and, at least in traces, and sometimes intact, persists till contemporary literature, such as various killing of humans without regrets.

The second type is the romantic vampire, which appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with vampires appearance as literary motifs.

The third type of vampire is the most modern one and was created in the twentieth century. He is also called a vampire interiorized by his victims. “The main literary process, which allows an internalization of ‘our’ vampire, opens up the inner world of vampires to the reader. Until Anne Rice’s vampires in her 1976 the *Interview with the Vampire*, the audience had no insight into the inner world of vampires” (Vučković and Dujović 2016, 4-5). The third type is described more with a human “face”, instead being portrayed as a monster. For instance, in *The Twilight Saga*, Edward is portrayed as a beautiful creature (Meyer 2007, 17), yet his unusual physical abilities and superpowers still persist.

Shape shifting is an interesting ability of vampires, which is also an additive to their portrayal. a power that has been associated with vampires since the beginning of their mythological creation. In older novels, Dracula is depicted as being capable of transforming into a mist, bat, or wolf with ease. Shape shifting is a challenging ability that only elder and powerful vampires who feed on human blood can perform. Although not featured in *Interview with the Vampire*, it was reintroduced in *The Vampire Diaries* when Damon, one of the vampire brothers, gained the ability to transform into a crow and a wolf. In contemporary vampire tales, shape shifting may not be a prevalent trait, however, abilities such as night vision, heightened hearing, and superhuman speed remain a constant in these stories. These traits are often associated with predatory animals that hunt their prey, much like vampires are portrayed to do. (Adamová 2012, 159-160).



#### 4.2 The Portrayal of Male Vampires in the *Twilight Saga* and *The Vampire Diaries*

Edward was born in 1901 in Chicago. He became a member of the Cullen family when he turned 18 and was sent to the army during World War I. Early on, the Spanish flu began, first his father died, and when his mother was next, she begged Dr. Carlisle Cullen to do everything to save Edward. Then, Carlisle changed Edward into a vampire to save his life, even though it meant that he lost the ability to be human. His belief, which is not traditional from the perspective of a “normal” vampire, is not to drink human blood, but to drink animal blood, which makes him a vampire equivalent of a vegetarian human (Meyer 2005, 164). In the books, he is described as kind, polite, protective, smart, determined and is portrayed as an attractive young man with brown hair with green eyes, or, as Bella herself describes him: “the last was lanky, less bulky, with untidy, bronze-colored hair” (Meyer 2005, 16).

Stefan Salvatore is one of the main protagonists of *The Vampire Diaries* novels and a main love interest for Elena Gilbert. He was born in the fifteenth century, in Florence, Italy.

In the books, he is portrayed as a man of average height, dark hair and green eyes. (Smith 1991a, 16). When it comes to personality traits, he is polite, has control over himself and is galant (Smith 1991a, 115). Furthermore he is loyal, has good morals, is caring and in his relationships, he is romantic and behaves like a gentleman. He also keeps his promises (Smith 1991c, 166). These traits prove magnetic in the eyes of young females, including Elena. Stefan, at first, tries to keep his distance from Elena, because she reminds him of Katherine, whom Stefan and Damon both loved in the fifteenth century. However, later in the first book, *Awakening*, he grows fond of her.

Stefan, as a vampire, has a strong conviction that he does not want to feed off of human blood, but rather wants to feed on animals, although drinking human blood is more beneficial for a vampire, due the strength that can be obtained.

Damon Salvatore is introduced later in the first book, *Awakening*, as Stefan’s brother and also a villain. He was born also in the fifteenth century, in Florence, Italy.

Damon is described in the books as a black-haired young man with dark eyes. He is Stefan Salvatore’s older brother. Despite the fact that Stefan is his younger

brother, he is nevertheless resentful of him, because when their mother gave birth to Stefan, she became very weak and died soon after. Their relationship gets even worse, when they fight over their earlier love, Katherine. Damon's relationship with his father was far from ideal. He was sometimes abusive of Damon and was getting into fights with him. Damon also attended a university, however after some time, decided it was not for him so he returned to his family, which his father may have seen as Damon's failure.

When it comes to his personality, he is reckless, careless, arrogant, selfish, but also charismatic, as is described in *the Awakening*: "Damon's dark beauty and grace and the sensuality that drew women to him like moths to a flame" (Smith 1991a, 35). Damon is not beyond blackmailing, or getting violent, in order to get what he wants. Because of his personality traits, he is much different from his brother, Stefan. His relationships with women are rather shallow and he can be characterized as a womanizer who does not care about their feelings.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are three different types of vampires.

Edward Cullen best approaches the description of the second type, which is the romantic one. Based on his classy sense of style and his polite manners towards Bella, as can be briefly seen when he uses phrases such as "ladies first" (Meyer 2005, 38). Sex only after marriage is also a principle, Edward wants to adhere to. A second example of this romantic type of portrayal might seem a little unusual, however it plays a role of how are vampires perceived. In *Twilight*, vampires sparkle in the sun, which is further romanticized by Bella, when she first sees Edward in daylight: "A perfect statue, carved in some unknown stone, smooth like marble, glittering like crystal" (Meyer 2005, 228). As a third romantic component of their portrayal one can consider the fact that Bella wants to be a vampire by Edward's side, even though she knows the disadvantages, such as not being a mortal human being anymore and being condemned to perish in hell, at least based on Edward's conviction.

Stefan Salvatore's description showcases elements of both the third, modern, type of vampire, but these elements are also combined with the second (romantic) type. The modern attribute of Edward is that he fits into the group of high school students easily and does not differ much from other peers. However, his modern appearance hides the soul of a romantic. This aspect is also based on his polite manners and his sense of dignity to keep his word. It can be also added here how he

wants to take revenge on everyone who hurts Elena when he thinks they are responsible for her death.

Damon Salvatore is quite a different type of vampire. He combines elements of the modern and the classic type. His modernness can be seen in his blending into society without being noticed and how well he can orient himself in the modern world. His witty personality can be the proof of how he keeps up with society. His style of clothing is also modern, as he wears a leather jacket, which is his signature look. He, however, fits into the first, classical, type of vampires, in how he thinks of humans, which differs from both Edward and Stefan. He sees humans as prey and that he relies more closely on his primal instincts while being a vampire.

### **4.3 The Portrayal of Vampire Women**

According to Hobson, the traditional portrayal of vampire women is often a hypersexualized one, described as a seductress. Yet, she also embodies seemingly contradictory ideals of femininity, such as strength and power. In other words they are not viewed as fragile, like in other, non-vampiric, types of traditional stories. They are also described as fearless and powerful, which is similarly untraditional. A more recent example of the ability to use sexuality actively and to their benefit can be seen, for example, in Julie Delpy's *The Countess* (2009) (Hobson 2016, 9).

It is important to realize that the portrayal of vampire women as sexual creatures, is also linked to the political power of women in any given period: "Their representations cash in on the economic rewards of the commodification of female bodies but also on the contemporary vampire craze within popular culture" (Hobson 2016, 9). Already in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), for example, there is arguably a liberation of female sexuality, and also a new view of women's thinking (Vučković and Dujović 2016, 4).

This portrayal of women appears in *The Vampire Diaries*. Katherine von Swartzschild is portrayed as a beautiful vampire woman with a charming personality, which adds to her ability to manipulate both Salvatore brothers. She appears in the third book *The Fury*, but she is also mentioned earlier on as a reason for the enmity of the Salvatore brothers, Stefan and Damon, in the fifteenth century (Smith 1991a, 218). Both Salvatore brothers love her deeply and she wants them to be her vampire companions. However, they refuse to accept such a choice, because they want Katherine only in a romantic relationship. She fakes her death, because

Stefan and Damon do not accept her decision of all three of them together. And when they find out about the death, they decide to kill one another, but with Katherine's blood in their system, so they become vampires. As the story progresses to contemporary age, Katherine is behind most evil intrigues in town, due to her jealousy of Elena and how the Salvatore brothers grow fond of her. Yet, her manipulations, and evil intentions are shown in combination with strength. She is stronger than both Stefan and Damon (Smith 1991c, 150). Her selfishness and strength can be shown when she says: "You have to be strong, and take the things you want. You have to think only of yourself. And I'm the strongest of all now" (Smith 1991c, 150). Then she admits that her strength comes from killing many human lives and that it makes her even happy (Smith 1991c, 150).

The motherhood of vampire women is also different from that of humans. They cannot biologically reproduce, and therefore cannot have children. Of the two stories analyzed in this thesis, this is a discussed topic in *The Twilight Saga*. Throughout the story, Bella hears many perspectives on how vampire women view their womanhood and their inability to have children. No vampire woman from the Cullen family had a choice but to become vampires. The only one who can choose is Bella. Because of this, Rosalie is envious, angry and resentful toward Bella (Firestone 2016, 61-66).

In the beginning of her relationship with Edward, Bella shares with him that she has always taken care of her parents. Bella is thus aware that she does not want biological children, and she does not consider her future of not having children as a loss: "Bella in the book jokes that she was born middle-aged and that she more often than not played parent to her mother Renée Dwyer, indicating that even at seventeen, she had her share of caretaking when she ought to have had a childhood" (Firestone 2016, 72). For instance, in the first *Twilight Saga* book, Bella takes care of Charlie, her father, mainly by cooking for him. (Meyer 2005, 30) Bella thus willingly pays the price of remaining childfree to be with Edward by becoming a vampire.

It is interesting, however, that Jacob Black tries to use the inability of vampire women to bear children to his own advantage: he tries to offer a life with a family and children to Bella, because werewolves, unlike vampires, can have children of their own, together with preserving her human life and not becoming a vampire. Therefore, in his view, he can offer her a more meaningful life to Bella than Edward could. (Meyer 2007, 490-496)

In *The Vampire Diaries*, the theme of motherhood is rarely discussed in the books analyzed, even though it gains some attention in the television series. *The Vampire Diaries* get women in the picture through the alternative strategy of “interrogating cultural conceptions of ‘acceptable’ female gender performance via its female characters’ shifting subject positions, primarily from human to vampire” (Nicol 2016, 144). This is mostly achieved through the manipulative female vampire, named Katherine von Swartzschild, who was introduced earlier together with her behavior.

We can observe that Elena’s behavior gets more aggressive as she becomes a vampire in *The Struggle*. If she had not controlled herself, she would have become a killer as most of vampires are. What she would be like if she did not exercise strong self-control, can be seen during the scene when she tries to kill Stefan at the moment becoming a new vampire woman, and is for a while devoted to Damon (Smith 1991c, 3). She bites Stefan and drinks his blood, is also stronger than before and more beautiful than her human form: “And a look of sensual anticipation and hunger curled about her lips. She was more beautiful than she had been in life, but it was a frightening beauty” (Smith 1991c, 20).

#### **4.4 The Potrayal of Human Female Companions**

In both stories *The Vampire Diaries* and *Twilight*, there are quite interesting characteristics which are shared by both main female characters: Elena and Bella. The most problematic one is their excessive dependence on male vampires. It gets to a point where Bella even wants to take her own life when Edward breaks up with her. Yet, even beyond this specific act, she is stripped of her independence, because in Bella’s life, there is an uncommon emphasis placed on her relationship with Edward. It consumes her and all significance in her life is attached to Edward or their relationship (Mercer 2010, 273). There are several examples in the books, but the one that stands out the most is when Edward broke up with Bella (Meyer 2007, 63), and she was not doing anything beside feeling depressed for a couple of months.

It is similar to a fairy tale, where Bella has a prince to dream about, and she is captivated by Edward’s physical appearance, which is described as a picture in the magazine. Every vampire, whether a man or a woman is good looking. We can even see this as a backlash against feminism in the novel portraying Bella looking

average, and Bella herself considering herself a failure because of her inability to live up to standards of beauty, devaluing herself in her own eyes. Rather than finding value in herself, Bella seeks her connection with Edward and in that her purpose and identity. This reliance on Edward disempowers her and supports a wider social phenomenon of the disempowerment of women through reinforcing gender norms of feminine dependence in a world ruled by men (Rocha 2014, 268).

Such codependence is depicted, for instance, in the book *New Moon*, following Edward's departure (Meyer 2007, 63). She even calls her life pathetic: "Could I betray my absent heart to save my pathetic life?" (Meyer 2007, 331) Bella makes a conscious choice to be as daring and reckless as she can by riding a motorbike or seeking dangerous activities such as cliff-diving or any other danger available.

In addition, she discovers that as she indulges in these risky behaviors, she starts hearing Edward's voice cautioning her. When Bella tries to hurt herself by getting herself in these dangerous situations, just to see a glimpse of Edward, this act can be seen, as argued by Rocha, "The juxtaposition of 'real happiness' with the description of her drowning suggests that for Bella, 'real happiness' is masochism. Yet just as the Edward she sees here is not real, neither is her happiness; it is just a temporary relief from her emotional pain" (Rocha 2014, 271).

Mann provides an interesting point of view on this:

Other than her penchant for self-sacrifice and the capacity to attract the attention of boys, Bella isn't really anyone special. She has no identifiable interests or talents; she is incompetent in the face of almost every challenge. She is the locus of exaggerated stereotypically feminine incapacities and self-loathing. She has no sense of direction or balance. She is prone to get bruises and scrapes just in the process of moving from one place to another and doesn't even trust herself to explore a tide pool without falling in. When she needs something done, especially mechanical, she finds a boy to do it and watches him. (Rocha 2014, 268).

This is relevant in terms of examining Bella's behavior and how the reader can view her as clumsy and her incapability to take care of herself. (Meyer 2005, 184). For example, when Edward breaks up with Bella, she falls into a depressive state of mind and refuses to live her life without him. She neglects her friends and her family, because Edward was the most important aspect of her life (Meyer 2007, 62-90).

In the *New Moon*, there is another aspect of Bella's codependency, which is the fear of aging. Edward will never age, as a consequence of being a vampire. Bella seems to be aware of the fact that she will get old and Edward will date an old woman in the future. Especially on her birthday, her anxiety of her becoming an old woman with Edward never aging, becomes emphatic: "it was even worse than I'd feared it would be. I could feel it – I was older. Every day I got older, but this was different, worse, quantifiable. I was eighteen. And Edward never would be" (Meyer 2007, 6). Rocha further elaborates: "By being more focused on being with Edward, Bella is unable to focus on developing herself" (Rocha 2014, 268).

This mindset is much troubling for a young woman, especially since she is being surrounded by immortal vampires. It reflects her underlying anxieties that as she grows older, her worth will diminish and Edward's love and sexual desire for her may fade away. This rooted fear and pressure, however, is not unique to teenage girls in love with vampires: it is also common among the majority of women in today's society. (Rocha 2014, 272).

Elena's case is hardly much less extreme, since she also tries desperately to be with Stefan: "She'd have him even if it killed her. If it killed both of them, she'd have him." (Smith 1991a, 30). This toxic mindset is troubling for Elena and her relationship with Stefan. Yet, unlike in *The Vampire Diaries*, there is a major difference when it comes to being independent and being a fighter, as Stefan describes: "Elena, warm as sunlight, soft as morning, but with a core of steel that could not be broken. She was like fire burning in ice, like the keen edge of a silver dagger" (Smith 1991a, 138-139). Elena falls in love with Stefan, yet she does not build her whole identity around this particular relationship. Elena also does not want to be a vampire just in order to be with Stefan. She writes in her diary: "When I look over this diary, all I can see is that I was searching for something, for someplace to belong. But this isn't it. This new life isn't it. I'm afraid of what I'll become if I do start to belong here" (Smith 1991c, 78).

There is also a resemblance with Bella and neglecting her close circle of friends. Elena does not spend as much time with her friends, as she used to. However, she acknowledges it, takes the blame and apologizes to her female friends: "*I am sorry, I haven't been talking to you*" (Smith 1991b, 18). In contrast, Bella did not think about this, which demonstrates that her most meaningful companion is Edward and therefore, if he chooses to do so, he can much more easily

manipulate her.

Regardless of certain differences, however, both women are arguably ladies in distress, and already in the first books, *The Awakening* and *Twilight*, a situation arises where the two male vampires have to save them from danger. These parts of story arguably symbolize not only vampires' power, but also the concept of men protecting women, which puts men in charge of women's lives (Mercer 2010, 275).



## 5. The Portrayal of Jacob Black and His Role in the Love Triangle

In this chapter, I will describe Jacob Black's characteristics, personality and his story in *Twilight* and *New Moon*. Although Jacob is not a vampire, he is one of the characters with a significant role in the love triangle, so a discussion of his portrayal is necessary for the purposes of this thesis.

Jacob Black is a teenage boy from the Quileute tribe who lives in La Push. In *Twilight*, he is described as a fifteen-year-old male, with long, dark hair, dark eyes, russet-colored skin, a pretty face and a muscular body. (Meyer 2005, 103) His father is named Billy Black and they live together. Billy is disabled, and thus Jacob takes care of him. He is a very good friend to Charlie Swan, Bella's father, and it is through their friendship that their children get to know each other from a very young age "We've sort of known each other since I was born" (Meyer 2005, 104).

Jacob does not appear much in the first book, *Twilight*. He is mainly there to inform Bella about vampires and serves the role of a friend.

In the second book, *New Moon*, however, he is one of the main characters. After Edward breaks up with Bella (Meyer 2007, 63), Jacob becomes one of her closest friends, who takes Bella's mind off of Edward. She thus wants to spend as much time with him as possible. For example, as a direct result of her state of mind, Bella decides to save a motorbike from the scrapyard. (Meyer 2007, 118) Bella and Jacob try to renovate the motorbike together. Through this activity, and thanks to their time together, as time passes. Bella heals and starts to live a normal life.

Later in the second book Jacob discovers that he is one of an ancient line of Quileute werewolves (shape-shifters). The werewolves and vampires are enemies by nature, which also includes Edward's family, the Cullens. Werewolves are dangerous in their wolf form; they are violent and extremely strong creatures, and, just as importantly, they can stand up to vampires easily, so the Quileute tribe protects their area from vampires. They save Bella from a vampire named Laurent, who tries to kill her (Meyer 2007, 211-213). After this, Jacob confesses to Bella that he is a werewolf, and they renew their friendship (Meyer 2007, 256-259).

Because Bella still misses Edward, she jumps off a cliff since she claims there is no life without him for her (Meyer 2007, 318). Jacob, however, saves her from drowning. Later, when Jacob tries to kiss Bella, they are interrupted by a phone ringing, in which Edward wants to speak to Charlie. When Jacob tells that he is at a

friend's funeral, Edward thinks, that it is Bella's funeral and the vision in which she died has come true (Meyer 2007, 362-364). The outcome of this is that Edward seriously considers ending his vampire life. As a consequence, Bella has a choice of staying with Jacob or saving Edward's life, and she chooses Edward. In other words, ultimately, she chooses Edward over Jacob: Jacob says: "Don't go. Don't" (Meyer 2007, 372). But Bella has already decided and answers: "Bye, Jake" (372).

As already mentioned, Jacob is important for Bella, because of their friendship. However, their friendship has another aspect that Bella cannot have with anyone else, which is knowing of Edward's secret and his world, which they can discuss together. This can be useful for Bella as a sort of a vent.

When Bella suggests to spend more time with him, Jacob does not protest, because he likes her and wants to spend more time with her. Jacob's actions and intentions seem pure. Their relationship is friendly in the beginning, but as they spend more time together, their affection increases. Jacob feels that Bella is still in love with Edward, but still tries to make his moves. In my opinion, Bella gives mixed signals to Jacob, because she tries to get her mind off of Edward, which is not much successful. The question is, whether she uses him just as a sort of a replacement, or she has genuine feelings. When Jacob almost kisses Bella, her mind has not decided yet:

I hadn't made this decision yet. I didn't know if I could do this, and now I was out of time to think. But I would have been a fool if I thought rejecting him would have no consequences. I stared back at him. He was not my Jacob, but he could be. His face was familiar and beloved. In so many real ways, I did love him. He was my comfort, my safe harbor. Right now, I could choose to have him belong to me. (Meyer 2007, 362)

She has these thoughts due knowing, Edward is not coming back: "True love was forever lost. The prince was never coming back to kiss me awake from my enchanted sleep" (Meyer 2007, 362).

As mentioned earlier, Jacob just tries to make his move and hopes that Bella would ease up one day and get over Edward. This is not the case, however, because Edward comes again into Bella's life.

## 6. The Depiction of Differences in Love Triangles

### 6.1 The Definition of a Love Triangle

In everyday terms, a love triangle might be defined as a situation in which two individuals are romantically interested in the same person and this third person also has a romantic relationship with both of these individuals. In almost every occurrence, there are also attributes of jealousy and emotional conflicts, which may, at times, be severe. Since both *The Vampire Diaries* and the *Twilight* stories are focusing on the love triangles of the three central characters, in this chapter, I will compare and analyze these triangular love relationships.

René Girard describes in his book, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, a model of the mediator of desire. In traditional books of fiction, without a love triangle, there is only the subject and the object of desire, without a mediator. Even in such cases, however, when the object alone cannot fully explain the intensity of desire, one must explore the impassioned subject. This can involve examining their psychology or invoking their sense of freedom. At the same time, while such inquiries might be necessary, we should bear in mind that desire itself is always spontaneous. In Girardian notation, such desire can be represented by a straightforward line connecting the subject and the object (Girard 1965, 2-4).

Girard further emphasizes that the gap between the mediator and the desiring subject is not determined solely by physical space. While geographical separation may play a role, the distance between the two is primarily of a spiritual nature. In cases of triangular desire this distance is bridged in a specific way: the impulse directed towards the object is instead directed towards the mediator. In the case of internal mediation, this impulse is restrained by the mediator themselves, as they also desire, or perhaps already possess, the object. The subject, in turn, experiences conflicting emotions towards their model, ranging from utmost submissive reverence to intense malice. This complex emotional state, in Girard's view, is commonly referred to as hatred (Girard 1965, 5-10):

The person who hates first hates himself for the secret admiration concealed by his hatred. In an effort to hide this desperate admiration from others, and from himself, he no longer wants to see in his mediator anything but an obstacle. The secondary role of the mediator thus becomes primary, concealing his original function of a model

scrupulously imitated. (Girard 1965, 11).

Jealousy and envy are, in Girard's view, emotions similar to hatred, which involve three entities: the object, the subject, and a third person who becomes the target of jealousy or envy. These emotions inherently possess a triangular nature (Girard 1965, 12). However, there is often a failure in identifying the model within the person who elicits jealousy, as our perspective is influenced by the jealous individual's biased perception of the situation. Hence, the subject is less capable to pursue the unattainable object. It is solely on this object that the mediator grants their prestige, either through possession or a strong desire for it. The presence of a mediator becomes evident once desire arises, even within passionate characters. Thus, even in less impure and less complex heroes, we can discover the triangle of desire. (Girard 1965, 14-15).

This example of hatred we can observe mainly in the relationship between Damon Salvatore and Elena Gilbert. Their relationship begins when Damon is a threat to Elena's boyfriend, Stefan Salvatore and wants to hurt him.

To the envious person, objects other than the "mediated" object hold no value whatsoever, even if they are similar or identical. The understanding of this is shown only when one recognizes that the despised rival is, in fact, a mediator. Furthermore, the prestige of the mediator is transferred to the desired object, endowing it with an illusory value. Triangular desire is thus characterized by its transformative power over the object. Romantic literature fully acknowledges and celebrates this metamorphosis, yet it keeps the underlying mechanism hidden. This illusion is like a living entity, requiring both male and female elements for its conception. (Girard 1965, 16-21).

Girard in his work further elaborates that hatred does not only occur between the two people competing for the attention of the shared love object. Men competing for the attention of a lady tend to also hate themselves in most novels. This is also the case both in *The Vampire Diaries* (Damon Salvatore) and *The Twilight Saga* (Edward Cullen). Damon's hatred toward himself comes from switching his humanity off and due to his guilt because of the things he has done in the past. Edward's hatred is caused by putting Bella in danger.

In Girard's view, every individual believes that they alone are excluded from the divine inheritance and makes efforts to conceal this misfortune. In a religious universe, original sin is attributed to all humanity, but now it is seen as each

individual's private secret, a distinct possession of their subjectivity that radiates with a sense of absolute power and overwhelming superiority. Men who are unable to confront freedom directly find themselves confronted with anguish. They seek a symbol to focus their attention on. With the absence of God, king, or lord to connect them to the universal, they try to alleviate the sense of individuality by emulating the desires of others. They choose surrogate gods because they are unable to relinquish the yearning for infinity. (Girard 1965, 57-65).

Imitative desire is essentially a longing to become someone else. While there is a single metaphysical desire, the specific focus or forms in which this desire gets manifest are infinitely diverse. In the case of the hero in a novel, we can see that their desire is ever-changing. Even its intensity fluctuates, contingent upon the level of "metaphysical virtue" attributed to the object. This virtue, in turn, is influenced by the distance between the object and the mediator. The object holds a similar significance to the mediator as a relic does to a saint. Just as the rosary or vestments used by a saint are more highly prized than a mere medal that has been touched or blessed by them, the value of a relic is determined by its proximity to the saint. The object in metaphysical desire operates on the same principle.

It is important to consider the other side of the novelistic triangle, which links the mediator to the object of desire. So far, our focus has been on the first side, which connects the mediator and the desiring subject. Fortunately, the two sides exhibit a similar pattern of variation. The triangle of desire is an isosceles triangle, meaning that desire intensifies as the mediator draws closer to the desiring subject. As the metaphysical aspect becomes more prominent in desire, the significance of the physical diminishes. With the mediator's proximity, passion intensifies, and the concrete value of the object becomes emptied of its concrete value (Girard 1965, 83-85). An example of this in *Twilight* may be that when Edward leaves the town and breaks up with Bella, Jacob takes the place of Bella's best friend, in which their desire intensifies.

Girard elaborates on why a greater triumph of the imagination can be good in this way:

If we are to believe the romantics and neoromantics, the results of an ever greater triumph of the imagination can only be good. But as reality diminishes, the rivalry which engenders desire is inevitably aggravated. This law, which holds good in every case, gives a perfect definition of the differences and

analogies between Stendhal's and Proust's universes. Stendhal's vaniteux and Proust's snobs seem to covet the same object – the Faubourg Saint-Germain. But Proust's Faubourg Saint-Germain is no longer the same as Stendhal's. During the nineteenth century the aristocracy lost the last of its concrete privileges. In Proust's day, keeping company with the old nobility carried with it no tangible advantage. If the strength of desire were in direct proportion to the concrete value of the object then Proustian snobbism would be less intense than Stendhalian vanity; but the truth is exactly the reverse [...] Thus the transition from one novelist to the other might well be defined as the advance of the metaphysical at the expense of the physical. Stendhal, of course, was aware of the inverse relationship between the strength of desire and the importance of the object (Girard 1965, 85-86).

In general understanding, this explains, in fact, that the less important the object of desire is, the stronger the desire will be, and vice versa. Which is useful in understanding how love triangles function.

Hence the interplay between the “physical” and “metaphysical” in desire is always in fluctuation, with each aspect impacting the other. This dynamic has numerous implications. It elucidates, for instance, the gradual fading of sexual pleasure in the advanced stages of existential decline. Even in the most ideal scenarios, the physical attributes of the object hold a secondary significance. They are incapable of arousing or sustaining metaphysical desire. Furthermore, as shown in the works of Stendhal and Proust, the absence of physical pleasure does not lead to disappointment when the protagonist finally attains the desired object. The disappointment is purely metaphysical in nature. The subject realizes that possessing the object has not altered their essence, and the anticipated transformation has not occurred. Interestingly, the greater the perceived “virtue” of the object, the more profound the disappointment becomes. Thus, as the mediator approaches the hero, the sense of disappointment intensifies. (Girard 1965, 87-88). We can observe this in both novels, in *The Vampire Diaries*, when Elena becomes a vampire, she distances herself from Stefan and is not interested in their relationship, she rather spends her time with Damon, who teaches her how to control her vampire powers. In the second story, *Twilight*, Bella spends time with Jacob, and she then does not sympathize with Edward and is distant.

The disillusionment serves as undeniable evidence of the futility of triangular

desire. The hero is confronted with the need to accept this truth. There is no longer anyone or anything separating him from his wretched and humiliated Self, which desire had previously concealed behind the mask of the future. Stripped of desire, the hero faces the risk of plunging into the abyss of the present, much like a well-digger whose rope has snapped. How can he escape this dreadful fate? He cannot deny the failure of his desire, but he can limit its consequences to the object he now possesses and perhaps to the mediator who guided him towards it. The disappointment does not invalidate all metaphysical desires, but only the particular desire that has led to disillusionment. The hero comes to the realization that he was mistaken. The object never possessed the transformative power he had attributed to it. However, he bestows this power elsewhere, upon a new object and a fresh desire. The hero traverses his existence, moving from desire to desire, similarly to leaping from one slippery stone to another while crossing a stream. (Girard 1965, 87-88).

Two options emerge. The first one is that the disillusioned hero can allow his previous mediator to guide him towards another object, or the second one is he can seek a new mediator altogether. The choice is not determined by “psychology” or “freedom,” but rather, like many other facets of metaphysical desire, it hinges on the distance that separates the hero from the mediator (Girard 1965, 88-89).

## **6.2 The Love Triangle among Bella Swan, Edward Cullen and Jacob Black**

Bella Swan was a lonely teenage girl, who did not fit in her regular teenage group, and therefore was distant. Edward Cullen was for her someone who understood her feelings. In return, Bella provided Edward a safe haven, somebody whom he can trust and to whom he can trust his secret (Vučković, Dujović 2016, 5). This set of conditions allows Bella not to see him as a monster, but rather as a romantic companion.

Their affection towards each other begins as Bella notices Edward in her new high school. He seems interesting enough to pique her curiosity. Edward, however, does not notice, or at least acknowledge, Bella right away. Their first interaction is in a biology class, because of them being lab partners. They have to work on a variety of projects such as identifying prophase and anaphase. During their classes, however, they only get to know each other superficially. A decisive moment of change comes at the time of the car crash when Edward saves Bella from getting injured. She has an

odd feeling that Edward is possibly not a regular human being. It is through her subsequent research on Edward that she meets her friend, Jacob Black, who informs her about the Cullens (Edward's family), and that there is an old story about them in which they are vampires. Bella does not have such as romantic feelings towards Jacob, as she does for Edward "It was so wrong to encourage Jacob. Pure selfishness. It didn't matter that I'd tried to make my position clear. If he felt any hope at all that this could turn into something other than friendship, then I hadn't been clear enough ... Yet I knew that I wouldn't send him away, regardless. I needed him too much, and I was selfish" (Meyer 2007, 190).

As mentioned above, Jacob, however, does not remain a mere friend and eventually plays the role of one of the two men vying for the attention of Bella, the other being, of course, Edward. Bella Swan has two different options, when it comes to how her life would turn out based on being human and the possibility of being immortal. Bella may subconsciously view her relationship with Edward as forbidden, therefore more thrilling: "This ending, however, does not constitute the ending of a quest sequence, but rather its opening, for both protagonists (and Jacob as well) perceive the declaration of love as a breach of an interdiction, the implicit ban on relations between humans and vampires" (Rosenberg 2019, 104).

The Girardian model outlined above, however, allows us to reveal some further details about what exact role each of them plays in this story:

Jacob Black is the mediator in the love triangle. Bella is the object of desire and Edward the subject. Bella and Edward are in a romantic relationship in the first book, *Twilight*, and after the breakup in *New Moon* (Meyer 2007, 63) Jacob is more engaged in Bella's life. Jacob begins to have romantic feelings towards Bella, which puts him in the position of the mediator in the love triangle. Bella is the object of desire, because she has both Edward and Jacob's affection. Edward is the subject, because Bella is primarily interested in him more than she is interested with being in love relationship with Jacob. Bella with the help of Jacob gets through her depressive state of mind, when is without Edward. Bella then, reunites with Edward and are again a couple. This is a stable pattern and does not change, thus these roles remain the same. The reason for this claim is that Bella is always more interested in Edward and her feelings prevail over Jacob's effort, which puts him in the role of the mediator in any situation. The object of desire's (Bella) position in the love triangle is, as said earlier, stable, because she is the centre of attention for both males.



This, however, does not put Bella in the typical role of the protagonist in *Twilight*, who is usually the subject in the love triangle. Arguably, Edward is actually the protagonist, because the story revolves around him and Bella is merely the narrator and the focalizer of the story.

### **6.3 The Love Triangle among Elena Gilbert, Stefan Salvatore and Damon Salvatore**

Damon and Stefan Salvatore are brothers, as was mentioned in earlier chapters and are a major part of the love triangle. These two members of the love triangle had had a history together even before they met Elena, and, besides their shared history, the two of them even have a family bond. Their relationship with Elena, in fact, results in forming a new relationship bond after many years of hatred towards each other.

Damon and Stefan's relationship was affected the most and irreversibly damaged in the fifteenth century, when they were still human men. The reason for this hatred was provided by a vampire female named Katherine, who made them fight for her love (Smith 1991a, 219). She wanted to be in a relationship with both of them at the same time, but this arrangement was not accepted by either of the two men, and rather fought for her love. They killed one another and because they both had Katherine's blood in their system, they both became vampires. Since then, their relationship has been deeply affected. They were not in contact for a very long time, but, when Stefan and Elena form a love relationship, Damon reappears in Stefan's life. Their relationship, however, is still affected by the incident with Katherine, therefore Damon wants to hurt Stefan by "stealing" Elena's attraction.

At the beginning of the first book, Elena falls for Stefan immediately when she first sees him, mainly due to his looks. Stefan at first does not try to build a relationship with Elena, because she reminds him of Katherine, because they do look almost identical, but then they fall in love and Stefan's resistance disappears. In fact, Stefan's initial resistance to Elena, only ensures Elena's even stronger determination to have Stefan. Thus their relationship evolves into love soon after they met, and they get engaged, which as teenagers, is as early on as in the *Twilight Saga*.

The love triangle is mostly seen in the third book, when Elena wakes up as a vampire after her drowning. Then she confesses to Damon that she loves him, which is seemingly the beginning of the love triangle. However, there are indices which are

recognizable much earlier on. While in the first book, *The Awakening*, there are indeed virtually no such signs, in the second book, *The Struggle*, there are several moments in their interactions which may indicate affection on Elena's side. The first example: "And this time she knew that it was no Power that he was using, but simply the wildfire attraction between them. It was useless to deny it; her body responded to his" (Smith 1991b, 157). The second example: "His face was only inches away from hers, and Elena never knew what might have happened if at that moment a voice hadn't broken in on them" (Smith 1991b, 212).

Damon, on his side, is somewhat more ambiguous, although he also wants to make Elena his "Queen of Shadows" (Smith 1991b, 152), which could be seen as a major expression of affection. However, Damon arguably still sees Elena as a prize to win, and a means to overcome Stefan, as said earlier on.

An interesting point of view on Damon is that his name can be associated with the Greek word "daimon", which is a lesser deity or spirit. In Plato's *The Symposium*, Diotima is discussing love with Socrates and she states that love is a "daimon" as a some kind of spirit, which connects people to gods through love:

Deity and humanity are completely separate, but through the mediation of spirits all converse and communication from gods to humans, waking and sleeping, is made possible. The man who is wise in these matters is a man of the spirit, whereas the man who is wise in a skill or a manual craft, which is a different sort of expertise, is materialistic. These spirits are many and of many kinds, and one of them is Love. (Plato 2008, 39)

It is thus arguable that just like Diotima's "daimon" connects people to gods, Damon Salvatore connects humans to superhuman beings (vampires) through love. Plato's scenario is thus quite similar to our love triangle in the novels in terms of how Damon connects the two main characters and narrators, Stefan and Elena.

There are some major differences from *Twilight* since the roles people play in the love triangle change throughout the story. Thus, a further analysis of their love triangle and each character's role in it is provided below. For clarification, from a narratological perspective, Elena and Stefan are alternating narrators-focalizers throughout *The Vampire Diaries*, and are thus also likely candidates for the position of the protagonist.

The first possible interpretation of the love triangle is that Elena is the object of desire, Stefan is the mediator and Damon is the subject. Elena is desired by both

Salvatore brothers. When she is in a relationship with Stefan, Damon, meanwhile, tries to show his affection towards her. An example can be shown in a dialogue between Elena and Damon, when Damon wants to make Elena his “Queen of Shadows” (152). She refuses and answers with: “You and I are enemies, Damon. We can never be anything else” (Smith 1991b, 152).

In a second perception, however, Elena’s affection towards Damon is increasing for quite some time, because she forgets Stefan when she becomes a vampire. The love triangle should be in this moment, that Elena is still the object of desire, Stefan is the subject and Damon is the mediator. Stefan is the subject since his love-interest in Elena still persists. She describes her affection towards Damon as follows:

he’d been decent to her when she’d been confused and irrational. He’d taken her to shelter; he’d kept her safe. And he hadn’t kissed her while she’d been in that horrifyingly vulnerable state. He’d been... kind to her.  
(Smith 1991c, 42)

In this situation, however, Elena differentiates her feelings toward Stefan and Damon: “Just a few minutes ago she’d been clinging to Stefan, frantic to get rid of any Powers she had, to change herself back. And now, she wished she were stronger. Damon always had an odd effect on her” (Smith 1991c, 44). Another example is shown further in the story, when Elena’s memory returned:

She was wearing the ring Stefan had given her; she and Stefan belonged together. But then she remembered something else, just a flash: looking up at Damon’s face in the woods and feeling such — such excitement, such affinity with him. As if he understood the flame that burned inside her as nobody else ever could. As if together they could do anything they liked, conquer the world or destroy it; as if they were better than anyone else who had ever lived. (Smith 1991c, 51)

This shows how Elena herself is not decided which of the brothers is more suitable for her.

When Elena regains her memory, she and Stefan fight with Katherine and Elena reflects: “She screamed, seeing him poised to jump into the fight again. If he died, she would die, too. And if she had to die, she wanted it to be with him.” (Smith 1991c, 138). Which ends with the final disposition of the love triangle. Elena is the subject, Damon is the mediator, and Stefan is the object of desire.

## 7. Conclusion

This Bachelor thesis discussed first how the portrayal of vampires has changed throughout the ages how most vampires in *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Twilight Saga* are portrayed in a way unlike what could be considered the typical portrayal of vampires. The distinction may be perceived in how current vampires, including the ones in these two sagas, are portrayed as romantic companions of teenage females, which is radically different from the earlier description of vampires as monstrous creatures. Yet, as it was also shown, some attributes still persist.

The difference between women and men in terms of their gender roles in the vampire narrative is also a part of this thesis, alongside the related issue of the portrayal of both male and female vampires. While most women in these books are shown as rather traditional women (even if not necessarily always traditional vampires), the third book of *The Vampire Diaries*, *The Fury* portrays a vampire female, Katherine von Swartzschild, who differs from the mainstream image of women in that she is manipulative, strong and violent.

As mentioned in the *Introduction* part of this thesis, these books, or more specifically especially the books in *The Twilight Saga*, can be problematic, when given to young female audience. There are examples arguably are not suitable for a teenage audience of women, as a result of the specific characteristics of Bella Swan's relationship with Edward Cullen. This is because of her almost boundless dependence on him, and her willingness to go through every obstacle, including taking her own life because of her relationship with him, which can be damaging and problematic.

In this bachelor's thesis, the main aim, however, was especially to try and discover the differences in the love triangles which appear in *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Twilight Saga*. The changes, which were successfully found in the process, were that in *The Twilight Saga*, the love triangle does not change throughout the story, and is therefore stable. In this stable love triangle, Bella Swan is always the passive object of desire, while Edward Cullen is consistently the active subject and Jacob Black is the mediator.

However, in *The Vampire Diaries*, the love triangle is unstable and the roles of the lovers play in the love triangle change. At first, Elena Gilbert is the object of

desire, Stefan Salvatore is the mediator and Damon Salvatore is the subject, because Elena is desired by both Salvatore brothers. In the next configuration of the love triangle, the roles change to Elena remaining the object of desire, but Stefan becoming the subject and Damon the mediator. Finally, in the third set up, which appears in the third book by L. J. Smith, *The Fury*, we can observe that the affection on Elena's side shifts back from Damon to Stefan, yet, in a radically reversed order, since she does not remain the passive object of desire, but becomes the actively desiring subject, with Damon remaining in the position of the mediator, and Stefan ultimately becoming the object of desire.

What this means is that *The Twilight Saga* demonstrably perpetrates a rather traditional narrative of the woman being the desired object throughout the story. What is more, this is coupled with Bella's total and boundless devotion to Edward's wishes and changing fancy, completely surrendering herself and her fate to his. In fact, this goes so far that, based on a Girardian analysis of love triangles, regardless of Bella's role as focalizer, it might even be argued that she is not even the protagonist of the story. In other words, taking this passive, and at the same time toxic role that Bella takes, the stories might be considered at the very least perpetrating a very conservative and limiting role model for women, and possibly being positively harmful for the teenage reader.

In contrast, *The Vampire Diaries*, while they start out with a love triangle that is structurally identical to the one portrayed in *The Twilight Saga*, this configuration only serves as something to destabilize, and then ultimately rework into an empowering configuration that shows that even in such problematic and unstable configurations as a love triangle, women can take initiative and change the situation in a way that favors and respects their wishes. That is to say, using the plot material of a love triangle, this set of stories tells a radically different, and much more empowering story.

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