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## Abstract

This thesis will be a study of whether there has been a significant shift with regards to how the mythical figure of the vampire is portrayed in literature. Starting with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, via *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice, to the contemporary vampire, illustrated by the *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer and Charlaine Harris' *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* this thesis seeks to investigate whether these books show a historical development of the figure of the vampire in literature. The thesis takes a theory set forth by Jules Zanger in his essay 'Metaphor into Metonymy: The Vampire Next Door' (1997), as its starting point. Zanger states that the modern vampire has been demythologized, thus, the basic nature of the vampire has evolved so that it has become less metaphorical and more metonymical. Because of this demythologization, we are no longer talking about two separate semantic domains, 'human' and 'supernatural', but just one, 'human' and 'almost human'.

Chapter two offers an overview of the theoretical background for this thesis, such as myth and the vampire as myth. The former presents an overview of the concept of myth. The latter shows how the vampire is represented in myths and outlines what the typical characteristics and rules that apply to the mythical figure of the vampire. Next, there is a section that displays the metaphor/metonymy aspect both in general and as used in this thesis.

The results of the interpretation and discussion of the books used in this thesis showed that reading the contemporary vampire as more metonymical can be a valid interpretation. The reason why one can say this is because the vampire has definitely become more human over the years. This entire study comes down to the fact that the vampire as a mythical figure, as seen in *Dracula*, is so fundamentally different from humans that it becomes something awful and frightening. The contemporary vampire, on the other hand, has evolved into being representative of something that is so similar to humans that the prospect of becoming a vampire is not at all threatening anymore; it is actually the way to find your true self. If we view the change in the literary vampire as such, namely as being a way for humans to realize their potential, we see that it is not the figure of the vampire per se that changes and makes the vampire more metonymical. It is, in fact, what the figure of the vampire has to offer us that changes. Therefore, it is the vampire's ability to realize a human's potential that

makes reading the vampire as more metonymical and less metaphorical one way of understanding the literary vampire.

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# 1 Introduction

The vampire has been an icon in literature and film for almost two hundred years. However, with the immensely popular *Twilight* books and several television series, such as 'True Blood' and 'The Vampire Diaries', vampires are more in vogue now than they have ever been. There has not been done a lot of research on these later contributions to vampire fiction and that is why there is a need for a revisioning of this field of study. What is so fascinating with the contemporary, twenty-first century vampire is that it is portrayed very differently from earlier vampires, at least in comparison to the archetypal vampire figure of Count Dracula. It seems that the vampire is becoming more and more human, thus, it is interesting to ask how and why this change has occurred?

This thesis will be a study of whether there has been a significant shift with regards to how the mythical figure of the vampire is portrayed in literature. Starting with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, via *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice, to the contemporary vampire, illustrated by the *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer and Charlaine Harris' *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, this thesis seeks to investigate whether these texts show a historical development of the figure of the vampire in literature.

In his essay 'Metaphor into Metonymy: The Vampire Next Door' (1997), Jules Zanger states that the modern vampire has been demythologized, thus, the basic nature of the vampire has evolved so that it has become less metaphorical and more metonymical. Because of this demythologization, we are no longer talking about two separate semantic domains, 'human' and 'supernatural', but just one, 'human' and 'almost human'. Taking Zanger's claim as its starting point, this thesis aims to investigate whether the way we understand the contemporary vampire in literature has actually made the mythical figure of the vampire less metaphorical and more metonymical. Has the contemporary literary vampire become more human, that is more metonymical, and, if so, has there been any change in its function? If the answer to these questions is yes, another relevant question to ask is *what* is it that has made the vampire more human?

To achieve these aims, the study has to, first and foremost, investigate how each of the works used in this thesis present its vampire(s). Then, an interpretation of the function of the vampire(s) in each work has to be done in order to determine whether the figure of the vampire has a metaphorical or metonymical function, or both. One can say that the vampires in twenty-first century literature are not what they used to be, that is, they do not fit into our typical understanding of the vampire figure any longer. Thus, the thesis seeks to investigate what kind of historical and cultural developments that have changed the way we interpret the vampire in literature.

Since I am looking at a historical development of the literary vampire by a close-reading of selected works, it is important that the time span of this thesis is such that one gets a good understanding of the development of the vampire figure. As stated above, the literary works that will be the focus of this thesis are Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire* (1976) and the *Twilight* series (2005-2008) by Stephenie Meyer and Charlaine Harris' *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* (2001-). The reason for this choice of books is that whereas the first novel, *Dracula*, depicts the vampire as very supernatural and therefore more metaphorical, the vampires in the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, picture a very different and very human vampire. Lastly, the second novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, lies somewhere in between these two portrayals, thus, offers a good view of the transition from the supernatural vampire to the human vampire. By using these works to investigate whether or not the vampire as a mythical figure has become more metonymic, or more human, in the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* than it is in the two former books, this study will contribute to the field of scholarship by shedding light on the new way of portraying the vampire in literature.

Wayne Bartlett and Flavia Idriceanu (2005) state that the vampire myth grows in scope with every contribution to vampire literature, that is, works of literature that use the vampire as a character in the story. This is also a characteristic that can be related to myth in general, which is why a part of this thesis is an investigation into the vampire's mythic origin. An important quality of a myth is its ability to renew itself so that it becomes relevant to each time and culture. Nina Auerbach says in *Our Vampires. Ourselves* (1995) that, 'vampires are easy to stereotype, but it is their variety that makes them survivors' (Auerbach 1995: 1). There are many stereotypical rules or characteristics connected with vampires, for instance that they have fangs; they suck blood; they are allergic to sunlight, garlic and crucifixes. But vampires can

take many different forms in literature, and have done just that as each author chooses which rules and characteristics he/she wishes to attribute to his/her vampires.

Therefore, the adding and subtraction of characteristics of the vampire is also one of the reasons why the vampire is still such a popular figure today both in literature, on television and in movies.

Vampire literature is not a genre in itself, but belongs to other literary genres, such as gothic/romance fiction; sci-fi/fantasy; crime; chick-lit; children's or youth literature et cetera. As outlined above, the books chosen for this thesis each provides a different representation of the vampire as a mythical figure. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) was also chosen for its position as a literary classic and because for a long time it defined the manner in which the vampire was portrayed in literature as well as in film. Even though the second novel, *Interview with a Vampire* by Anne Rice (1976), is influenced by *Dracula*, Rice has made some twists and added new elements to suit her characters, story and time. These new characteristics of the vampire serve as a representation of the transition towards the more human vampire that we will see in the contemporary works, namely the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*. The former series, written by Stephenie Meyer, consists of four books, *Twilight* (2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007) and *Breaking Dawn* (2008). The latter series consists, up to now, of ten books. It is first and foremost the first book of each series, *Twilight* (2005) and *Dead Until Dark* (2001) that will be used in this thesis, but the other books in the two series will also be referenced to where relevant. Both these series are of the most recent contributions to vampire literature and their newness will contribute to making this study very up-to-date. As stated above they were chosen because the way Meyer and Harris portray the vampire is radically different from what has been done before. It is particularly these books that have posed the main question here, namely whether the vampire has become more human, and thus, more metonymical.

In addition to the four works mentioned above, the scope of the literary comparison in this thesis will also include some seminal books and stories. John Polidori's short story 'The Vampyre' (1819) is a significant literary source of the vampire as a mythical figure since it is the first time that the vampire occurs in modern literature. Sheridan Le Fanu's novella 'Carmilla' (1872) offers another perspective on the vampire because it is about a female vampire. Scholars, such as Auerbach, have shown that female vampires have the ability to realize a tender



eroticism with their preys that male vampires could not. Therefore, these texts will be included in the discussion of *Dracula*.

As this study looks at how the vampire has evolved historically and culturally, the investigation begins with the first references to vampire-like creatures in myth and folktales via the first appearance of a vampire in modern vampire literature, to contemporary vampire literature. The structure will be chronological with regards to the four main literary works, interspersed with other relevant texts in order to have a reference point for the main texts. The theory that is the basis for this thesis, that is, the theory on myths, the vampire as myth, and metaphor and metonymy, will be presented in chapter two so as to create a good starting point for the rest of the thesis. Other relevant theory will be referenced to when needed. The main part consists of three chapters, one that focuses on *Dracula*, one on *Interview with the Vampire* and one that deals with the modern vampire, represented by the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*. At the end of each of these chapters there will be a discussion of the status of the vampire in that particular time period. Then the conclusion will gather all the threads and address the historical development of the literary vampire.

## 2 Theoretical background

### 2.1 Myth

This thesis deals with the vampire as a mythical figure. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines *mythical* as something 'existing only in ancient myths'. In other words, the vampire is something we have heard about in relation to ancient myths as part of the mythology of different cultures. Thus, we need to look at what a *myth* is, and according to the same dictionary, it principally means 'a story from ancient times, especially one that was told to explain natural events or to describe the early history of a people'. In other words, myths were used to say something about humans and the history of humans. Laurence Coupe (2009) says that the word 'myth' is used rather loosely as a synonym for 'ideology' or 'fantasy', but that although they do overlap at times, they should not be used interchangeably. He suggests that there really is no adequate definition of what a myth is, but he refers to the ancient Greek word *mythos* or *muthos*, which means 'speech' – something that is spoken.

According to the Greeks, the opposite of *mythos* is *logos*, which means 'word' or 'reason', or as Coupe says, '[t]he former came to signify fantasy; the latter, rational argument' (Coupe 2009: 10). When we humans encounter something we have not seen or heard before, something fantastic, it is natural for us to seek an explanation for this unknown thing or event. We make sense of the world by the use of words, thus, one can say that myth, or mythos, is an explanation of something that is irrational or considered fantasy in ancient time. These were stories that were passed from one person or people to the other. In that way, ancient myths became an answer to that which they did not know or could not explain rationally. For example, to explain how humankind came to exist, a *creation myth* was used. Logos, on the other hand, is that which we already consider logical and rational, and logos therefore needs no myth to make sense of it. This was in pre-scientific times, but after the Enlightenment, myths were explained away through what is known as 'demythologization' (Coupe 2009) or an 'absence of myth' (Nancy 1991). What is meant by this is that now, after the Enlightenment, when so much emphasis is on the rational and scientific, we no longer need myths to explain that which we do not know. However, that is not to say that

myths and mythical thinking are extinct, but that myths have a different function in modern times. One of these functions is that myths are retold and extended through literature (Coupe 2009: 4), and a popular figure in literature that has its origins in myths is the vampire.

## 2.2 The vampire as myth

The first written evidence of a vampire-like creature was, according to Bartlett and Idriceanu (2005), on a seal of a cylinder in Babylon in the third millennium BC (Bartlett and Idriceanu 2005: 4). This female demon, *labartu*, fed on humans and animals, but she particularly preferred small children (5). Ever since the beginning of recorded history there have been vampires or vampire-like creatures, such as *labartu*, in mythology. They appear in almost every culture in the world. J. Gordon Melton's *The Vampire Book – The Encyclopedia of the Undead* (1999) lists no less than twenty-four different cultures or countries, all from ancient Babylon and Assyria to present day, that refer to specific vampires, or vampire-like creatures. Even though vampires are not depicted in the same way in all the different mythologies, they still inhabit some of the same characteristics, for instance, they drink blood and are nocturnal. In order to examine the vampire as a mythical figure, that is, a figure that resembles creatures mentioned in myths, we first need to look at how the vampire has functioned as myth.

According to Bartlett and Idriceanu, 'a vampire is usually the result of a transformation where the innocent become corrupted' (Bartlett and Idriceanu 2005: 3). Thus, people that, for instance, were the result of incest or an illegitimate relationship were likely to become vampires (*ibid.*). Melton (1999) states that one origin of the vampire was as an explanation of problematic childbirth. The Malaysian vampire *langsuyar* was a beautiful woman who gave birth to a stillborn child. After realizing that the child was dead she 'clapped her hands and flew away into the trees. Henceforth, she attacked children and sucked their blood' (Melton 1999: 505). Another vampiric creature that is found in early Hebrew folklore is Lilith. In the Talmud she is considered to be Adam's first wife who left and became a demon that walked around at night and killed newly born infants by sucking their blood and

strangling them (Melton 1999). According to the *New Bible Dictionary*, some scholars even regard Lilith as the origin of the English vampire and she was a very popular figure in Victorian literature because she represented the exact opposite of the typical, rigid and chaste Victorian woman. There is also Lamia, a vampire-like creature that originates in Greek mythology. She was said to be a Libyan queen who had caught the interest of Zeus. In a fit of jealousy, Hera, Zeus' wife, took all of Lamia's children away from her because they were fathered by Zeus. Lamia withdrew to live in a cave and since she was unable to take out her aggression on Hera, she killed the babies of random human mothers by sucking their blood (Melton 1999). The British poet John Keats wrote a poem called 'Lamia' (1819) about a serpent woman who transforms into a beautiful woman.

So, the way the vampire became a myth was when it became an explanation of inexplicable problems or evils. As seen above, in ancient times, it was believed that problems surrounding childbirth was the cause. This link between vampirism and childbirth is interesting because whereas vampirism was connected with pregnancy and childbirth in ancient times, in the typical myth of the vampire, as we know it today, a vampire is only created when a human is bitten by a vampire. This shows that the link between vampires and sexuality has been there for a very long time and may explain why it is so embedded in the typical image of the vampire as a mythical figure today. However, since the original vampires were female, the vampire is not only connected with sex, but also with the feminine and feminine emotions that can be difficult to cope with, such as, bearing and giving birth to a child. We shall see some explicit examples of this at a later point in this thesis. However, this link to women and motherhood is not the only explanation of the mythical origin of vampires.

In medieval times the reason for becoming a vampire was a religious matter. One of the main explanations for vampirism was that the dead one had crossed a moral and religious boundary. A person who committed suicide, for instance, or had engaged in any evil act in general, was not allowed to be buried in holy ground and was therefore believed to become a vampire after his/her death. Furthermore, the death of a loved one could lead to vampirism because the dead one still had emotional ties to its living significant other. There were also several superstitions connected with the manner in which someone died or were buried. Thus, if the death had been violent or if the burial rites were insufficient, the dead might become a vampire. Of course, one could also become a vampire by the means of an already existing vampire and

that is the common belief of the cause of vampirism today. Nigel Suckling writes in his book *Vampires* (2006) that some common causes of becoming a vampire are those of inheriting the condition from a parent, being bitten by a vampire (if you survive) and drinking the blood of a vampire (Suckling 2006: 9). According to myth, both a vampire's blood and their bite is venomous, and supposedly, it is this venom that transforms human into vampires (ibid.).

In vampirism there are certain identifying characteristics of the vampire as a mythical figure and rules that govern their existence (Melton 1999, Bartlett and Idriceanu 2005, Suckling 2006). The rules and characteristics listed here are the most common ones, and all mythical vampires need not embody all of these characteristics, but must at least be associated with some of them in order to fall under the category of 'vampire'. The most fundamental feature of the vampire is the fact that they in one way or another bite people, or animals, and suck or drink their blood. In order to do this, they usually have a set of fangs that they use to penetrate the skin. They are also recognizable by their pale skin that is cold to the touch and red eyes, and some vampires were said to have hair growing on the palms of their hands. In folklore, vampires are nocturnal creatures who sleep in coffins during the day because they have an aversion to, or may be severely weakened by, sunlight. A reason for this might be to limit the vampire's possibility of moving around. It can only be active when it is dark, thus, it adds to the tension that is related to night and darkness. A general rule is that they are not able to walk into a house unless we humans invite them in, and they have neither a reflection in a mirror, nor a shadow. This is interesting because it can play an important role in the relationship between vampires and humans.

Vampires also possess a string of features that are of the supernatural kind, such as great strength, hypnotic powers, the ability to fly and the ability to transform into, for instance, animals. The power of transformation is an interesting aspect of vampirism because it says something about the vampire's transgressive power. The word 'transgression' is in *The Oxford English Dictionary* defined as 'to go beyond the limit of what is morally or legally acceptable'. This definition can be transferred to this context to mean to go beyond some kind of boundary between the natural and the supernatural, or stepping over a threshold. This boundary, or threshold, represents areas of the vampire that makes it difficult to decide what this mythical figure really *is*. For instance, vampires are essentially not alive, but they are not dead either – they

are trapped in the realm between the living and the dead. Another aspect of this transgression is that a vampire's physical shape is like a human's, however, they are *not* human. They mostly live during the night, but they also, in a sense, live during the day provided that they do not necessarily move about outside. Perhaps this transgressive power of the vampire is the thing that enables it to become a metaphor for humans? Since the vampire is a figure that originates in myths and the function of myths is to tell us something about ourselves, this is a very relevant question. We will, however, get back to this at a later point in this thesis.

Even though these creatures seem very powerful and indestructible, myths tell us that there are ways in which to protect oneself against vampires. They are essentially allergic to garlic, sunlight, crucifixes, communion wafers, holy water and other sacred symbols. Also, some vampires need to sleep on their native earth. Vampires can also be killed in numerous manners. For example, by driving a stake or knife through their heart and preferably removing it from their body; by decapitation or throat cutting; by burning them; driving a nail through their head, neck or navel; burying them face downwards; piling stones high on top of the grave et cetera. In many instances, the best way in which to kill a vampire is to combine a couple of these methods and this is because when it comes to killing something that is essentially already dead, great measures must be taken.

All in all, there are vampires and then there are vampires, meaning no vampire neither in folklore nor literature are the same. There are degrees to how many of the typical vampire characteristics a vampire in literature embody, and it is up to the author to choose what will apply to his/her vampire. We will see throughout this thesis that the features that characterize them and the rules that apply to their existence and death, vary considerably. As stated above, we find examples of vampires in most ancient myths, but at that time they were referred to as *revenants*, that is, someone who returns from the dead (Bartlett and Idriceanu 2005). Its origin as a mythical figure in folklore is as an explanation of events in ancient times that could not be explained logically. Bartlett and Idriceanu (2005) also refer to cases where exhumations of the graves of alleged vampires resulted in the discovery of a body that had not decomposed as it should. These accounts were mainly recorded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which was the age of the so-called vampire epidemics when people believed they saw vampires everywhere.

The word 'vampire' originates in Eastern Europe, from the Magyar word 'vampir'. It did not enter the English language until 1743 when it occurred in a written account of a journey called *The Travels of Three English Gentlemen* written in the same year (Summers 1960). Although the figure of the vampire appeared in writing, it was not until 1819 that the vampire was introduced in modern fiction, as we shall see in chapter three.

As stated above, literature extends mythology. Myths are in a way 'recycled' by writers, meaning that they use myths as an element in what they write. Myths evolve through literature, and through this evolution, they form to the contemporary culture and therefore appeal to different things than they did to our ancestors. According to C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon in *A Handbook to Literature* (1992), 'the tendency today is to see *myths* as dramatic or narrative embodiments of a people's perception of the deepest truths' (Holman and Harmon 1992: 306). By the use of the phrase '*a people's perception*', we can see that the link between myth and literature is that writers can, by the use of myths, tell a story that can be understood and interpreted by all of mankind has because myths are a part of our collective mythology. They express general beliefs and a common ideology for all humans. Myths then, in turn, relate to metaphors in that they are both elements in literature that seek to express a truth that could not have been expressed otherwise or by other means. In order to investigate whether the vampire as a mythical figure has changed from being metaphorical to becoming metonymical, a proper definition of the terms *metaphor* and *metonymy* is needed.

### 2.3 Metaphor and metonymy

The word *metaphor* comes from the Greek 'metaphora' which means 'a transfer' (*Online Etymology Dictionary*). According to the same dictionary, *metonymy* comes from the Greek word 'metonymia', meaning 'change of name'. In *The Rule of Metaphor* (2003), Paul Ricoeur defines a metaphor as 'a trope of resemblance' (Ricoeur 2003: 1). *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1993) defines metaphor as, 'a trope, or figurative expression, in which a word or phrase is shifted from its normal uses to a context where it evokes new meanings' (Preminger et

al. 1993: 760). In other words, a metaphor is an extension of meaning based on a relationship of resemblance between two things that are essentially different, the transfer of meaning from one thing to another. For instance, when trying to describe how beautiful a girl is without using the phrase 'she is very beautiful', one can for example say 'she is a rose' to imply that she is so beautiful that she resembles the beauty of a rose. Here, the girl is what called the *tenor* of a metaphor, that which is unfamiliar, and the rose is the *vehicle*, that which is familiar. Metonymy is a figure of speech in which the name of something closely related to a thing is used instead of its real name, based on contiguity between the two things. Contiguity is derived from the adjective *contiguous*, meaning 'touching, in actual contact, next in space; meeting at a common boundary, bordering, adjoining' (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Metonymical expressions are used for the purpose of making the language more economical, for example, using 'The White House' as a way of referring to the President of the United States and his staff.

J. Hillis Miller in *The Linguistic Moment – From Wordsworth to Stevens* (1985) states that '[p]oetry is a revelation in the visible and reasonable of that which as the base of reason cannot be faced or said directly' (Miller 1985: 7), and even though he refers specifically to poetry, this is a characteristic that can be transferred to the use of both metaphor and metonymy in epic writing. By referring to William Wordsworth's poems, Miller continues to say that 'in [poetry] nothing is what it is, but exists as the displaced version of something else' (48). With *displaced version* he means 'put out of place, put in an improper place, and turned into something else' (ibid.), and this is something that can also be transferred to epic writing. This concept is relevant for this thesis because the vampire is not a character in a story just because it is a vampire. It does not appear in literature to function merely as an element of horror. Neither is it just a supernatural creature that bite people and drink their blood. Of course, they usually do induce horror and they are supernatural and they drink blood, but this is not where their function in literature stops. When one encounters a particular kind of creature as a character in literature it points to something that lies beyond the text. Humankind's collective understanding of the vampire as a mythical figure tells the reader that this vampire is a displaced version of something else, and this is important to keep in mind when interpreting the function of the different vampires in this thesis.



In the introduction to *Blood Read* (1997), Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger say that 'the figure of the vampire, as metaphor, can tell us about sexuality, of course, and about power; it can also inscribe more contemporary concerns, such as relations of power and alienation, attitudes toward illness, and the definition of evil at the end of an unprecedentedly secular century' (Gordon and Hollinger 1997: 3). In other words, the vampire as a metaphor can tell us something about ourselves. Since a trope is used when we cannot or do not want to say something directly, and also when we encounter something we recognize, but do not know the meaning of, we can see the vampire as a metaphor that reveals things about humans that we did not even know.

At this point it is time to introduce David Sapir's definitions of metaphor and metonymy from his essay 'The Anatomy of Metaphor' (1977). The reason why this is relevant is because he has come up with a definition of metaphor and metonymy that he links to what he calls *semantic domains*. This concept makes it easier to see the relationship between metaphor and metonymy because we see the two things or ideas that are either compared or seen in relation to each other as parts of separate semantic domains or as part of the same domain. Here, a definition of *semantic* and *domain* is needed. Semantics is the study of the meanings of words and a domain is an area that shares the same set of something, for instance, the same characteristics.

Both metaphor and metonymy are tropes, and tropes are always concerned with the relationship *between* two terms, or meanings, never with the terms themselves (Ricoeur 2003). More specifically, according to Sapir, metaphor is 'an equivalence between terms taken from *separate* semantic domains' (Sapir 1977: 4), while a metonymy 'replaces or juxtaposes contiguous terms that occupy a distinct or separate place within what is considered a *single* semantic or perceptual domain' (ibid.), (my italics). Sapir's definitions of metaphor and metonymy coincide with the one we saw in Ricoeur above, because Sapir is also talking about a transfer of meaning from what he calls the 'continuous term', or the tenor, to the 'discontinuous term', or the vehicle. Nevertheless, as previously stated, he makes a specific distinction between separate and single semantic domains when talking about metaphors and metonymies, respectively. In relation to metaphors, Sapir says, 'out of the features defining one term and those defining the other [term], there will be a number shared by both [terms]' (Sapir 1977: 6). It is this shared number of features, what Sapir calls 'intermediary features', that make the two terms resemble one another. If we use the example with the girl and the rose above, one can say that the

'intermediary features' of these two terms are, for instance beauty, attractiveness and elegance. When it comes to metonymy, though, the two terms do not share any intermediary features, but they are already a part of the same domain of features. Thus one can say that a metonymy is the 'logical inverse of a metaphor' (20).

Deciding what kind of trope an object in literature is, can be difficult. Therefore, it is interesting to ask why the vampire is not, for instance, a symbol? Both metaphor and symbol point to a figurative meaning of a word or an idea, but few talk about the vampire's symbolic function. According to *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, a symbol means, 'a joining or combination and, consequently, something once so joined or combined that stands for or represents, when seen alone, the entire complex' (Preminger et al. 1993: 1250). Umberto Eco has given an explanation to the difference between metaphor and symbol in his essay 'On Symbolism' (2002). He says, '[m]etaphor does not belong to the order of the symbolic. It can be open to multiple interpretations...' (Eco 2002: 143). By this, he means that the metaphor does not have just one meaning and if we use the example with the rose again, if one does not have the understanding image of a rose as something beautiful, one can perhaps interpret the phrase 'she is a rose' as meaning something completely different. For instance, if one associates a rose with the sharp thorns, one can interpret the phrase ironically, to mean that the girl, in fact, is as sharp as the thorns of a rose.

We can also see this when talking about the vampire. It cannot be a symbol, because there are so many different interpretations of what the vampire as a mythical figure in literature *really* means. A problematic issue with regards to these multiple interpretations is what is considered a valid interpretation? With the two different understandings of the rose as a metaphor, the intermediary features will be completely different, so how can one justify that one's interpretation is valid? Sapir says that '[a]n interpretation is valid if, at some level or another, it shows how the figurative material at hand (...) fits into the larger framework of basic cultural understandings...' (Sapir 1977: 5). Therefore, the best way would perhaps be to find an interpretation that fits in a cross-cultural perspective.

This thesis will use Sapir's theory on metaphor and metonymy as the basis for the investigation of the literary vampire. To sum up, the general idea of metaphor is that it is based on difference. In other words, it is a transfer of meaning between two things that are different in nature, for example, a girl is a human being and a rose is a flower. Metonymy, on the other hand, deals with similarity between two things, and

therefore, it is a relationship based on *contiguity*. Hopefully, the definition of metaphor and metonymy outlined above will be helpful in achieving valid interpretations in this thesis.

#### 2.4 Literature review

We live in a time when the mythical figure of the vampire is much in vogue and the vampire has long been a point of research for many scholars. One of the most analyzed and discussed example of vampire literature is, not surprisingly, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but Anne Rice's books have also been subject of much literary research. More contemporary works, such as the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, have not been analyzed to such an extent yet, but this thesis will enter the history of vampire literature research as a part of the interpretation of the modern vampire.

With regards to the theoretical background, the most important literature that was used for this thesis is David Sapir's essay 'The Anatomy of Metaphor' (1977) because it forms a large part of the basis of the metaphor vs. metonymy discussion in this thesis. However, also Philip Shaw's *The Sublime* (2006), Jean-Paul Sartre's 'Existentialism is a Humanism' (2003), and the theories of Sigmund Freud on 'The Uncanny' (2006) and 'The Ego and the Id' (1975) provide a good understanding of important theoretical points. *The Routledge Companion of Gothic* (2007) serves as a valuable basis for the many Gothic aspects of vampire literature.

Although the vampire has been a point of interest for many literary scholars, there are several different approaches to the field. Veronica Hollinger and Joan Gordon have, as editors of the book *Blood Read* (1997), compiled a number of essays that investigate the literary vampire as metaphor in contemporary culture. These essays look at how the image of the vampire has changed to fit in with different cultural understandings over the years, and offer a wide spectrum of interpretations, for instance, the vampire as a metaphor for the outsider, for the gay community, the metaphor-metonymy evolution et cetera. Essays that were used in this thesis are 'Metaphor into Metonymy: The Vampire Next Door' by Jules Zanger, 'Dieting and Damnation: Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*' by Sandra Tomc, 'My Vampire,

My Friend: The Intimacy Dracula Destroyed' by Nina Auerbach, Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger's essay 'Introduction: The Shape of Vampires', 'Sharper than a Serpent's Tooth: The Vampire in Search of Its Mother' by Joan Gordon and 'The Vampire as Alien in Contemporary Fiction' by Margaret L. Carter.

A similar take on the function of the vampire in literature and film is offered by Nina Auerbach in her book *Our Vampires. Ourselves* (1995). Starting with Polidori's 'The Vampyre', Auerbach shows that every age and every culture has its vampire and she sees different aspects of Anglo-American society through the vampire as a literary element. She sees the vampire as a metaphor for, for example, life, death, love, friendship, eroticism, homosexuality and aristocracy, and she offers a broad range of literary material, some of them being James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampire*, Coleridge's 'Christabel', Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Chelsea Quinn Yarboro's *Count Saint Germain* series and Anne Rice's novels. By using such a large amount of material, she shows that even though we are talking about the same mythical figure, vampires can take on so many different shapes, and have to do so in order to survive as the cultural icon it is.

There are some scholars who are more interested in the mythical figure of the vampire itself, and not what it might be representative of. Wayne Bartlett and Flavia Idriceanu are some of those who have taken a different approach in their book *Legends of Blood – The Vampire in History and Myth* (2005). They give an extensive description of how the vampire is portrayed in history all the way from its origin in ancient times via its development in medieval times, and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to present day. In addition they delve into the beliefs that surrounds the different mythical aspects of the vampire, for instance, the role of blood, magic in time and space, the pact between vampire and human and the power of the mind.

### 3 Dracula

The focus of this chapter is on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), a book that set the standard for the literary vampire and to which all other vampires are compared. The book was written at the end of the Victorian era in England, an age where Gothic fiction was still very popular. As Alexandra Warwick says in her essay 'Victorian Gothic' (2007), 'in the popular imagination the Victorian is in many ways *the* Gothic period, with its elaborate cult of death and mourning, its fascination with ghosts, spiritualism and the occult, and not least because of the powerful fictional figures of the late century' (Warwick 2007: 29). In this period there were especially a lot of novels written by women, for instance, those by the Brontë sisters, which reflected the changing role of women in society in the Victorian era. People wanted sensation stories and they wanted to read about haunted castles and heroes and villains. They also wanted to read about supernatural phenomena such as vampires. Thus, during the early nineteenth century there were written several poems and stories of creatures that bore a great similarity to the kind of vampiric creature that we see in ancient folklore, such as, 'Christabel' (1816) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and 'The Giaour' (1813) by Lord Byron. Nevertheless, the first literary vampire character appeared in John Polidori's story 'The Vampyre', written in 1819. After the publication of this story several other works in the vampire literature genre were produced. One of them, *Varney the Vampire* by James Malcolm Rymer started out as a series of pamphlets in 1845, but these were turned into a book in 1847. Then followed Sheridan Le Fanu's story 'Carmilla' (1872), which, along with 'The Vampyre', will be referenced to in this chapter.

#### 3.1 Dracula – the archetypal vampire

The story begins in Eastern Europe as Jonathan Harker, a solicitor's clerk, travels to Transylvania to meet with a client of the office where he works, who wishes to

relocate in England. This client turns out to be the vicious vampire, Count Dracula, and, after being held hostage for many weeks, Jonathan finally escapes. The next part of the book takes place in England, where Dracula, who has now moved to his new country, preys on people in Jonathan's circle of friends, as well as his fiancé Mina Murray and her friend Lucy Westenra. Another acquaintance, an owner of a mental institution, Dr. Seward, calls on his friend Dr. Van Helsing to help destroy Dracula, and together with Jonathan Harker, Lord Godalming and Quincey Morris, they hunt down the vampire and kill him.

In Polidori's story 'The Vampyre', the character of Lord Ruthven is a vampire, but he is also a nobleman who frequents the high society of London. He befriends the young gentleman Aubrey and invites him along as his travel companion. At first, Aubrey is in awe of Lord Ruthven, but he soon finds out what the Lord's real nature is. Lord Ruthven is a vampire who kills the woman Aubrey loves and who lures Aubrey into making an oath to never reveal the fact that the Lord is a vampire. Aubrey cannot escape the Lord's grip because of this oath of friendship, and after finding out that Lord Ruthven has charmed Aubrey's unsuspecting sister and that they are getting married soon, he suffers a mental breakdown.

Another story that has presented one of the most important literary vampires is 'Carmilla' by Sheridan Le Fanu. The story is set in the Styrian countryside, and Carmilla is a young girl who ends up living with another young girl, Laura. They become good friends, however, after a little while, Laura begins to suspect that there is something different about Carmilla. She has experiences of being bitten by something during the night, and she starts to grow weaker and weaker. One day, a visitor comes to the castle, a gentleman who has recently lost his daughter. He describes many of the same symptoms Laura has, and in the end they realize that Carmilla is the same as a Countess Mircalla Karnstein who died many years ago, and that she has returned from her grave as a vampire who feeds on young girls. These two stories are quite distinguishable from *Dracula*, as we shall see later in this chapter. First and foremost there is a need for a look at the character of Count Dracula.

The first time we meet the Count is when Jonathan Harker arrives at the castle. Jonathan's detailed description of the Count's physical appearance is immediately suggestive of the character,

...and holding out his hand, grasped mine with a strength which made me wince was not lessened by the fact that it seemed as cold as ice – more like the hand of a dead than a living man. (Stoker 1998: 15-16)

Already in this first meeting we are presented with the appearance of the Count as someone who is very strong and so cold that he seems more dead than alive. This image is strengthened when Jonathan continues to narrate,

His face was a strong – a very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. (Stoker 1998: 17)

Here, again, we get the sense that the Count might not be quite human. He has an 'aquiline' face, that is, a hooked face resembling an eagle's beak, and since the eagle is a bird of prey, one can contribute the same predatory factor to Dracula. Another important feature of his appearance is his hair. He does not have a lot of hair around his temples, but exuberantly elsewhere, and later we get to know that he has hair growing on the palm of his hands – one of the only places that hair does not grow on humans. He also has strange-looking nostrils and a mouth that is 'cruel-looking' that holds unusually sharp teeth; his ears are pointed, the irises of his eyes are red. A human can, of course, have an 'aquiline' face, teeth that are a little sharp and hair that grows strangely, but a human does not have red irises or hair growing on their palms. Jonathan also says that he has never seen the Count eat or drink and as food and drink is vital to a human, this also adds to the Count's unnaturalness.

At a later point in the novel, Jonathan spots the Count in London and realizes that he appears to look younger than he did in the beginning of the novel. By this time, he has fed substantially on the sailors who were aboard the ship to England, and since blood has always been associated with life, it suggests that he has stolen his victims' life force by drinking their blood. Some vampires, like Varney the Vampyre, renewed their lives with help from the moon (Auerbach 1995). Dracula, however, is not a lunar vampire, but needs blood in order to keep his youth. Jonathan notices a change in the Count when he discovers him in his coffin, saying:

There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half-renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby red underneath; the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck. (Stoker 1998: 51)

This implies that Dracula has recently fed and therefore his appearance has changed. One's hair colour changes with age; it goes from one's original hair colour to grey and then to white. Since the Count's hair has gone from white to grey, it suggests that he is growing younger. White skin is the colour of someone who is dead, so the fact that the Count's face now seems 'ruby red underneath' also implies that he is rejuvenating, or perhaps that he in a sense becomes alive.

Furthermore, he shows evidence of an abnormal strength for a human. When he discovers that Jonathan is seduced by the three vampire women he grabs a hold of one of the women with 'a giant's power' (Stoker 1998: 38), and Van Helsing also says 'the Count is as strong as twenty men' (237). At many points in the story, he climbs out of his window *down* the castle wall, head first (34). There are no accounts of Dracula being able to fly, as vampires in some myths were able to, but his ability to climb down walls suggests that he still has the capacity to defy gravity. Jonathan also comes to learn that the Count does not have a reflection in his mirror, and this, as we shall see later in this chapter, is interesting with regards to the vampire as metaphor. Thus, it is these characteristics that point to Dracula's other-worldliness, and his physical appearance is a metaphor in itself because the description of him gives an image of something that is so different from us humans. We see the same kind of ambiguity here as we do with the vampire as a mythical figure in general. In a way, the Count has the appearance of any old man. Still, one cannot with certainty determine what he is because he is, in fact, so many things. We see quite clearly the extent of the Count's many faces in all the different physical descriptions of him throughout the novel. He appears in many forms, both as animal, natural phenomenon and vampire. For instance, he appears as a wolf in order to leave the wrecked ship that arrives in Whitby and as mist when he enters Mina's room (259) and Renfield's cell (278). Also, throughout the novel Dracula is present in the form of a bat (93).

Transformation, or shape shifting, is not a new phenomenon in vampirism. According to J. Gordon Melton (1999) the ability to transform from human into animal form is a long-living tradition in vampirism, stemming from folklore in many of the countries that have a vampire myth (Melton 1999: 683). Other vampires in the



texts used in this thesis also have the ability to transform themselves, such as Carmilla who change into a cat (Le Fanu 1872: Ch. VI). Aside from transforming himself, Dracula also has the ability to command natural elements such as fog, storm and thunder. According to Melton (1999), this was not common among any of the vampires that appear in myths and legends. However, Stoker might have attributed this to Dracula in order to say something about Dracula himself.

This is supported by Marina Warner in *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* (2002) where she connects transformation, or metamorphosis, to the concept of truth telling. One of the types of metamorphoses is 'doubling', which is an important motif in Victorian and Gothic literature<sup>1</sup>. A 'double' is an alter ego, and Warner says that 'the double, while wholly dissimilar, unnervingly embodies a true self' (Warner 2002: 163). If we transfer this to Dracula and some of his transformations in the novel, for example, into a wolf and a bat, we can interpret these animals as saying something about the Count's true self. The bat is an animal that is especially associated with vampires because bats are nocturnal creatures. There is also a type of bat called 'vampire bat' that is mainly found in South-America, which is said to drink blood from its prey. Quincey Morris refers to this bat in the novel and says that a vampire bat attacked his horse and nearly drained it of blood (Stoker 1998: 151). The wolf is a predator that lives in packs and these packs are founded on a dominance hierarchy. What is more, throughout the Bible, for example in Ezekiel 22:27, there are comparisons to wolves that are depicted as evil, dangerous and destructive. If we consider transformations as a way of revealing a true self, we definitely see these qualities in Dracula. He has a need to dominate, and he is evil and dangerous.

Another concept that Dracula embodies when he transforms into animals is what Jung called *animus*, the archetype of the masculine. Jung states that the *animus* is a psychic representation of the male sexual instinct and if we can associate this with the Count's sexual nature, we see that there might be a connection between animal transformation and sexuality. We see this when he engages in sexual relations with Lucy and Mina by biting them, by penetrating their skin. Thus, Dracula's ability to transform is another example of the vampire's transgressive power because he is able

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<sup>1</sup> cf. for instance, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

to cross a boundary, to change shapes. In addition to this, the transgression of the vampire is also seen in Dracula's power of necromancy, which he explains as 'the divination of the dead, and all the dead that he can come nigh to are for him at command' (Stoker 1998: 237). This power goes together with the ambivalent dead- or undeadness of the vampire. All in all, he is an enigma, and this we will also see later in this thesis in relation to other factors in the novel, such as the reliability of the narrators.

The descriptions of all the different appearances of the Count are interesting with regards to the type of novel *Dracula* is, and also in relation to the narrative method. The novel is a so-called epistolary novel and it is structured as a collection of many different text types, such as diaries, letters of correspondence, logs, memorandums and newspaper clippings. The epistolary novel was the forerunner of the later psychological novel, and in these types of novels it is not the action itself that is the main focus, but the thoughts and feelings of the characters. By using this narrative structure we get quite a few different narrators, for instance, Jonathan, Mina, Lucy, Dr. Seward, Van Helsing, the newspaper journalists, the Captain aboard the *Demeter* who wrote the log et cetera. Mina uses her typewriter, Dr. Seward his phonograph and the others write by hand. Thus, an effect of the structure of the novel is that one gets many different accounts of what happens and it serves as a sort of confessional for the characters narrating and gives us access to their deepest thoughts and feelings. Maud Ellmann says in the introduction to the 1998 edition of *Dracula*, that 'this enormous effort of collection that gathers every last scrap of documentation may be seen as a frantic defence mechanism (...) to build a fortification of knowledge against the threat of the Unknown' (xvii). Thus, it also implies that the Unknown is so deeply psychological that it is necessary to have all these different perspectives that we find in an epistolary novel in order to describe it.

It is interesting to note that after the men have interrupted Dracula's interaction with Mina, he runs down to Dr. Seward's study, and as Lord Godalming says,

He had been there, and though it could only have been for a few seconds, he made rare hay of the place. All the manuscript had been burned, and the blue flames were flickering amongst the white ashes; the cylinders of your phonograph too were thrown on the fire, and the wax had helped the flames. (Stoker 1998: 285)

A reason why Dracula burned the manuscript and the phonograph is because these are the very accounts of his existence. Thus, if these diaries do not exist, *he* does not exist. This goes along with the fact that he is hardly present in the novel himself, meaning that even though he *is* present on a general basis, he is not present as Count Dracula, the vampire. Instead, he appears in the form of a bat or a wolf or as mist, and neither the readers nor the other characters in the novel know that this is the Count. By destroying the only written proof of his existence the others have nothing that supports their stories. However, the accountability of this written 'proof' is somewhat debatable.

At this point it is important to discuss the reliability of the narrators. When the men break into Mina and Jonathan's room to find him sleeping and her drinking the Count's blood, Dr. Seward first describes this 'wild beast' as 'forcing her face down on his bosom' (Stoker 1998: 282). However, two pages later when Dr. Seward tells Jonathan what happened he narrates, 'I told him exactly what had happened (...) I told how the ruthless hands of the Count had held his wife in that terrible and horrid position, with her mouth to the open wound in his breast' (284). This corresponds with Seward's earlier account of the scene. However, the next sentence goes as follows, 'It interested me, even at that moment, to see that whilst the face of white set passion worked convulsively over the bowed head, and the hands tenderly and lovingly stroked the ruffled hair' (ibid.).

Since it is quite clear that this observation was not included into the description Dr. Seward gave to Jonathan, but is something he kept for himself, one might question Dr. Seward's reliability as a narrator. Especially since Mina's account of the experience coincides with Seward's first description, 'he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow...' (Stoker 1998: 288). However, this might also say something about the *character* of Dr. Seward. He is a doctor, a psychoanalyst, and therefore he is one of the characters with the most knowledge about psychology and in that sense also one of the most rational-thinking. It can, then, be suggested that the reason why he chooses to not disclose his thoughts on the scene with Dracula and Mina is because he does not wish to question the Count's evil nature openly with the rest of the characters. They are on a mission to kill Dracula, and if Dr. Seward, an enlightened and rational person, proposes that this monster actually acted affectionately towards Mina, they would have thought him

insane. Especially since Van Helsing, who is considered wiser than Dr. Seward, does not seem to be of the opinion that Dracula is anything other than pure evil that must be destroyed.

An important aspect of the reliability of the narrator is that there is a notion of secrecy throughout the whole novel. Jean Marigny's says in his article 'Secrecy as Strategy in *Dracula*' (2002), that 'Stoker's narrative strategy is based on secrecy, not only in the way the story is told, but in the plot itself, since the protagonists often keep secrets from each other' (Marigny 2002: 1). Marigny compares *Dracula* to the detective novel because they both leave out clues that the readers have to piece together themselves. In *Dracula*, we are well into the novel before we are told that the Count is a vampire (ibid.). This secrecy can be seen in the example with Dr. Seward above, but the act of keeping something secret is also said straight out by Lucy early in the novel in a letter to Mina, 'PS. I need not tell you that this is a secret' (Stoker 1998: 55).

Marigny points out Van Helsing as the most secretive character because of all the things he comes up with, such as the garlic in Lucy's bedroom and the fact that he does not tell anyone what Lucy's illness is before Arthur has killed her. What Marigny suggests is that Van Helsing keeps these things secret as a means of protection for the characters (Marigny 2002: 2). In other words, he knows what is happening to Lucy, but because he needs help with, first and foremost, saving her and then killing her, he cannot risk creating a state of fear and panic. However, after Mina experiences the Count entering her bedroom in the shape of mist, she says, 'I must be careful of such dreams, for they would unseat one's reason if there was too much of them. I would get Dr Van Helsing or Dr Seward to prescribe something for me which would make me sleep, only that I fear to alarm them' (Stoker 1998: 259). This indicates that she does not know whether she has dreamt it or not. Thus, it is also likely that this is another way to show that it is not clear what the characters actually have seen, and as mentioned above, this ambiguity regarding what is real and what is not, runs throughout the whole novel.

We see this ambiguity, for example, when Mina and Jonathan spot Dracula in London. Mina narrates,

[Jonathan] gazed at a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and a black moustache and pointed beard (...) His face was not a good face; it was hard, and cruel, and sensual, and his big white teeth, that looked all the whiter because his lips were so red, were pointed like an animal's. (Stoker 1998: 172)

Mina and Jonathan's description are very similar, and this without Mina knowing that this is, in fact, the vampire they all fear. The only difference is explained by Jonathan when he says, 'I believe it is the Count, but he has grown young' (ibid.) Mina's description is strange, though, because she says that Dracula's face is 'hard' and 'cruel' and that his lips are so red that it makes his 'big white teeth' look even more white. However, she also says that his face looks 'sensual' and it is here that we see this ambiguity, and we are sort of perplexed with regards to what she actually thinks of him. A reason for this is that even though Dracula is a horrible creature, vampires are inherently sexual beings, thus, they will always have an attraction in one way or another for humans. Therefore, Dracula's hard and cruel face is something that Mina obviously perceives as sexually attractive. The focus on the red lips and the big teeth has been related to sexual penetration by scholars such as Christopher Craft (1984). In that sense it supports a relation to feelings of sexual attraction. However, with regards to the different perceptions of Dracula by the various human characters in the novel and the effect he has on them, why is Jonathan fear-stricken while Mina sees something sensual in him? We might be able to find an answer to this if we consider the concepts of 'the sublime' and 'the uncanny'; two concepts that are similar, but have their origin in different historical epochs.

The sublime is a concept in aesthetics whose origin is attributed to the Greek critic Dionysius Longinus in the first century CE. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* defines 'sublime' as '(on) high, lofty, elevated'. Edmund Burke, the author of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1844), says about the sublime that, 'astonishment (...) is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence and respect' (Burke and Mills 1844: 72). According to Philip Shaw in *The Sublime* (2006), the concept has through time stood for,

the effect of grandeur in speech and poetry; for a sense of the divine; for the contrast between the limitations of human perception and the overwhelming majesty of nature; as proof of triumph of reason over nature and imagination; and, most recently as a signifier for that which exceeds the grasp of reason. (4)

In other words, 'the sublime' is something that is elevated, something that inspires awe, admiration and astonishment in the person who perceives it. It is a feeling one experiences if one encounters something that goes beyond the limits of what we humans can perceive, understand, and/or reason with, and explain. In this thesis the concept of the sublime will be connected with both the human characters and the vampires in *Dracula* and 'The Vampyre'.

Since the sublime is an aesthetic concept, it is much related to the visual, and it was a popular concept in Romantic and Gothic aesthetics. The purpose of the Romantic aesthetic of the late eighteenth century was to revolt against the Enlightenment's scientific rationalization of nature and instead attempt to invoke nature's sublimity through literature, paintings, music et cetera. It is important to note, however, that it was not only nature's beauty the Romantic poet wanted to portray, but also its horror, because, according to Shaw, the sublime is, in fact, so inconceivable that it is terrifying. Thus, the sublime is not equivalent to beauty. According to Burke and Shaw, there is actually a dichotomy between the sublime and the beautiful because 'the sublime is dark, profound, and overwhelming and implicitly masculine, whereas the beautiful is light, fleeting and charming and implicitly feminine' (Shaw 2006: 9).

This more narrow definition of the sublime can be related to *Dracula* and 'The Vampyre' because what the human characters in these stories encounter is in one way awe-inspiring and astonishing, but in the same time it brings about feelings of fear and horror. The narrator in 'The Vampyre' portrays Lord Ruthven as a nobleman, and says that people feel a 'sensation of awe' (Polidori 1819: 27) when they see him. It is the language in the story, the descriptions of Lord Ruthven that causes this feeling of the sublime. Thus, when the narrator says, '[h]is peculiarities caused him to be invited to every house; all wished to see him, and those (...) were pleased at having something in their presence capable of engaging their attention' (28), the author creates an enigmatic character that becomes an object of curiosity both for the characters and the reader. Aubrey is in fact so in awe and curious of Lord Ruthven that he asks if he can go along with the Lord as his travel companion, so it is as though Aubrey is completely hypnotized by this nobleman. At this point we have to look at why we are drawn to the sublime? Since the purpose of the sublime is to take our mind to the edge so that we can see something we cannot normally see, a reason for being drawn to this edge might be because we get a glimpse of the unknown. It is

intriguing, exciting and can at times also be terrifying, thus, it might be a kind of inherent need to see that which can be both awe-inspiring and horrible at the same time. Therefore, a reason for Aubrey's attraction to Lord Ruthven could be *because* of the fact that he is a dark and vicious character.

The background for these characteristics is that Lord Ruthven has become known as a Byronic hero. The creation of this character is attributed to Lord Byron for the main character in his work *Manfred* (1817). *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* describes the Byronic hero, as 'an alien, mysterious, and gloomy spirit, superior in his passions and powers to the common run of humanity, whom he regards with disdain' (Abrams and Greenblatt et al. 2006: 608). The Byronic hero is also typically bad tempered, unsympathetic, aristocratic, but despite all these negative aspects of the character, the Byronic hero also is immensely attractive for other characters. It is not difficult to find these characteristics in Lord Ruthven because he is indeed ruthless and unkind. He destroys the lives of young women and he tricks and ruins Aubrey. In spite of this, Aubrey is both drawn to Ruthven and repulsed by him, but as stated above, Byronic heroes has an incomprehensible attraction for other people. Aubrey is drawn to Ruthven because of his unsympathetic nature and it is a combination of this and the feeling of the sublime that puts him in a state of awe.

We see the same effect in *Dracula* because, according to Kathryn McGinley (1996), Dracula is also considered a Byronic hero. What makes him sublime is his function as a metaphor because the Count represents, as Shaw says above, the 'dark' and 'overwhelming' and 'masculine' (Shaw 2006: 9). Also here, it is the descriptions of Dracula and nature that we have looked at above that invoke these feelings of the sublime. For instance, the language Stoker uses when he describes Jonathan's perception Dracula, such as the 'aquiline' face (Stoker 1998: 17); the red eyes and him crawling down the wall head first (34) are aiding the characters and the reader in having a sensation of Dracula as sublime. We also see this in the description above of the first time Mina sees the Count when they are in London. She describes him as both cruel and sensual, thus, she is both repulsed by and attracted to him. Another example is that Jonathan thinks the Count resembles the man who drove him to the castle. He narrates, '[t]he strength of the handshake was so much akin to that which I had noticed in the driver, whose face I had not seen, that for a moment I doubted if it were not the same person to whom I was speaking' (16). Here again, we see this feeling of ambiguity as he encounters something he does not fully understand the

nature of. All the descriptions of Dracula comprise one long metaphor, and according to Shaw, anything that is sublime, is so by metaphor because it is the only way in which a person or creature can be perceived as sublime. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the Byronic hero is not always sublime, but the characteristics of the two concepts overlap in many instances.

Whereas the sublime has a long history, the concept of the uncanny was developed much later. Sigmund Freud wrote about the uncanny in his 1919 essay with the same name. He states that the uncanny, or 'unheimlich' which he calls it in his native German, is 'related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror' (Freud 2002: 130). This can be as simple as receiving a phone call from a friend whose number you were just about to dial. Furthermore, that which is 'unheimlich' is in turn opposite to the 'heimlich', which means something that is homely and familiar, so the 'unheimlich' must then mean something that is *unfamiliar*. Freud also suggests that the uncanny is something that should be kept secret, but has been revealed (135).

If we apply this to the narrative method in *Dracula* we see that the novel as an epistolary novel promise us the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth because of all the different accounts of what is happening. However, with this type of novel we are left with unreliable narrators, and we can also point to several places in the story where things are kept secret. Therefore, the effect we get is that this discrepancy in the plot produces feelings of the uncanny. For instance, when Dr. Seward first describes Dracula as an awful beast and then as sensually stroking Mina's hair, and that Mina sees him as both cruel and sensual at the same time, we sense that there is something uncanny about Dracula. Thus, if the uncanny relates to the 'unheimlich' it is easy to conclude that that which is uncanny is something that is new and unfamiliar. However, it is not that easy because, according to Freud, the meaning of 'heimlich' has been extended into the 'unheimlich'. He continues to say, that 'this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression' (Freud 2002: 145). Thus, something does not only become uncanny because it is new and unfamiliar, but also because it, in fact, is *familiar* and yet, unfamiliar at the same time.

If we apply this to *Dracula*, we might say that Stoker chose to use a vampire in his story to have an element of something that is new and unfamiliar, but also in a sense familiar to the human characters and us readers in order to show that the



vampire is a trope<sup>2</sup>. As stated in part 2.3 above, metaphors point to something beyond the text to say something about ourselves, and also, in a metaphor there is a transfer of meaning between two terms that are different in nature. Dracula represents aspects of ourselves that are both familiar and unfamiliar to us. These aspects are unfamiliar because they go against what we know is natural, but they are also familiar because there are some aspects that we recognize in ourselves. Thus, since both the sublime and the uncanny deal with something that is beyond the grasp of human reasoning, one is able to explain why the human characters in both *Dracula* and 'The Vampyre', who are otherwise rational creatures, are both drawn to and repulsed by these creatures.

### 3.2 The function of Dracula

The above section dealt with the physical descriptions and characteristics of Dracula. In this section we will look at what his function in the novel is. With the publication of *Dracula* there emerged a different type of literary vampire compared to, for instance, Lord Ruthven and Carmilla. Lord Ruthven and Carmilla were known as friend-seeking vampires, and in both stories there is an emphasis on the friendship between the two main characters Lord Ruthven and Aubrey, and Carmilla and Laura.

The issue of friendship between vampire and prey is interesting. If we look at that between Lord Ruthven and Aubrey, one can ask whether there is a codependency between the two, or is it just Ruthven who is dependent on Aubrey's friendship or vice versa? Aubrey is in awe of Lord Ruthven, and this is seen when the narrator says, 'he [Aubrey] soon formed this object [Ruthven] into the hero of a romance' (Polidori 1819: 31), meaning that he pictures him as one of the heroes of Romance novels. Aubrey is a man who has 'cultivated more his imagination than his judgment' (30) and who believes that 'the dreams of poets were the realities of life' (ibid.). In other words, he does not have a very realistic idea of the world, and he soon comes to realize this. Just as he is about to relinquish his romantic ideas of the world, he spots Lord

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<sup>2</sup> cf. J. Hillis Miller's concept that the metaphor is a displaced version of something else in part 2.1 above.

Ruthven, and decides that this is a man who might be his rescuer. He could be the one to realize Aubrey's dreams of travelling the world. In other words, without Ruthven, his Romantic hero, Aubrey has to start living in the real world. Lord Ruthven also needs Aubrey, but in quite another way. Lord Ruthven only preys on women, physically, but he needs Aubrey in order to have someone to prey on psychologically. Thus, the friendship between Aubrey and Ruthven is one of mutual dependency.

The relationship between Lord Ruthven and Aubrey is not of a romantic kind and Ruthven feeds solely on women, but drains his male companion psychologically. However, Carmilla feeds only on girls and Auerbach says that, 'Carmilla is one of the few self-accepting homosexuals in Victorian or any literature' (Auerbach 1995: 40). In Auerbach's view, Laura and Carmilla's relationship is of a romantic kind. Carmilla says to Laura 'I have been in love with no one, and never shall (...) unless it should be with you' (Le Fanu 1872: Ch. V). Laura, the motherless girl who has lived somewhat in isolation all her life, has finally found a friend whom she considers 'the most beautiful creature I have ever seen' (Ch. III). This can signify a romantic connection, but it does not need to be. Another function of Carmilla in this story might be as a substitute for the love of the mother Laura never knew. According to Joan Gordon, Laura and Carmilla recognize themselves in each other (Gordon 1997: 46) and they are both dependent on each other. Carmilla needs Laura to prey on her and Laura considers the love Carmilla provides as a replacement for the love of the mother she never knew.

Dracula is no friend-seeking vampire who wants a travel companion or someone to love, but as Auerbach says: 'Stoker austere expels from his tale of terror the "intimacy, or friendship" that had since Byron's time linked predator to prey' (Auerbach 1995: 67). Dracula does not befriend any of the human characters in the novel, and what also distinguishes the Count from his foregoing vampires his lack of sociability. In the beginning of the novel, the Count does not live among humans. He lives in the middle of nowhere in the vast landscape of Transylvania, a landscape known for its mystical and mythical connotations. This solitary existence makes him a stark contrast from Lord Ruthven and Carmilla.

As stated above, Aubrey is in awe of Lord Ruthven in the beginning of the story and Laura has finally found her first real friend or love interest, but Jonathan, on the other hand, is skeptical and afraid of Dracula from the moment he is outside the castle. He narrates: '...I felt doubts and fears crowding upon me. What sort of place

had I come to, and what kind of people?' (Stoker 1998: 15). His fear increases steadily throughout his time at the castle as he finds the Count more and more intimidating. As time passes, Jonathan starts to feel like a prisoner and realizes that the Count is, in fact, the horrible creature he suspected him to be. Jonathan writes, 'it would be madness to quarrel openly with the Count whilst I am so absolutely in his power' (40). This quote is interesting since it shows that not only is he in the Count's power *physically*, but also *psychologically*, because nothing escapes Dracula. He knows all, and this shows the deep psychological bond that exists between them. Thus, even though Dracula is not a friend in the sense that Lord Ruthven and Carmilla are friends with their prey, there is a strong personal connection that the characters may not even be aware of consciously. Dracula has to penetrate the deepest parts of the human mind, and this makes the relationship between him and Jonathan much stronger than, for example, the oath of friendship between Lord Ruthven and Aubrey because it is something that the human characters in Dracula are not in control of. They cannot escape Dracula unless they kill them, and even *then* they might not be free of him.

The relationship between Dracula and the human characters in the novel is interesting. As Melton (1999) says, '[Dracula] preys not on the ones *he* loved best, but upon the ones *we* loved best' (Melton 1999: 201), which suggests that he is only out to harm those who are dear to, among others, Jonathan Harker. Why is this? Dracula, is a man of noble heritage, is fixated with hierarchy, tradition and conventionality. The fact that he only turns the women in the novel into vampires could be interpreted in the sense that men, in the Count's opinion, are there as his employees or minions. They are not there to be engaged with in some erotic ritual. However, he claims Jonathan as his property when he discovers that the three vampire women are about to feed on him, saying: 'This man belongs to me!' (Stoker 1998:39). This is interesting because of Dracula's focus on people who are close to Jonathan, and because of the fact that the Count keeps him captive in his castle suggests an interest in this particular character. A reason for this can be that The Count actually has an erotic interest in Jonathan, but being a traditional man who conforms to what is considered conventional, he cannot engage in homoerotic behaviour. Thus, according to Craft (1984), the only way Dracula can get to the men is by going via the women. Craft refers to a passage in the novel where the Count says 'Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine' (Stoker 1998: 306), and concludes that because of the conventional gender roles of the time Dracula

adheres to, 'only through women may men touch' (Craft 1984: 111).

Starting with Lucy and then moving on to Mina, these women are innocent victims of Dracula's mesmerizing power. They are pieces in the Count's game and they did nothing to put themselves in the position of being vampire prey. Evidence of the fact that he does not merely want to kill these women, but transform them into vampires, is that he does not simply drain them of blood so that he kills them. He feeds on them little by little so that he weakens them and starts the inevitable transformation into a vampire. Although Lucy's fate ends with her becoming a vampire and her husband having to put a stake through her heart in order to kill her, Mina is not fed on that much. However, she experiences that after drinking Dracula's blood, she is able to sense where he is and what he is doing when put under hypnosis by Van Helsing, and this is suggestive of the relationship between vampire and human. The human characters in the novel are unaware of the grip Dracula has on their subconscious and they are unaware of it because of the mesmerizing power Dracula has. Moreover, since hypnosis deals with the subconscious aspects of the self, when Van Helsing hypnotizes Mina we witness the deep psychological bond that exists between Dracula and the human characters. Based on the various aspects of Dracula discussed thus far, it would not be too farfetched to claim that Dracula is a master manipulator, a conniving liar and an evil villain. He is, as stated above a typical example of a Byronic hero who, despite his evil and unsympathetic nature holds an immense attraction for other characters in the novel.

We see this evil when Jonathan even compares him to Judas saying, 'The last I saw of Count Dracula was his kissing his hands to me, with a red light of triumph in his eyes, and with a smile that Judas in hell might be proud of' (Stoker 1998: 50). Hollinger (1997) says that Dracula's function in the novel is not only as the epitome of evil, but also as an affirmation of good in the human characters. None of the human characters, apart from Lucy and Mina, who are victims of the Count's transforming power, change over the course of the novel. Thus, through Dracula's function as evil creature, we can be sure of the human characters always remaining on the side of the good.

As stated above, Dracula does not, in fact, appear much *physically* in the story; he is mostly referred to through the human narrators. The humans have the natural, rational and scientific aspects of existence on their side, represented by Dr. Seward and Dr. Van Helsing who are both psychoanalysts. The character of Van

Helsing becomes a sort of figure of the 'good father' who symbolizes the masculine; he is the logical and rational force who has the ability to see things objectively and not be overwrought with emotion like the women, and some of the men, in the novel. While the other characters are at times relatively clueless as to what has happened to Lucy and who did this to her, Van Helsing is the psychoanalyst whose rationality and knowledge about both medicine and vampires helps him to make the necessary connections and come up with the way in which to kill both Lucy and, in the end, Dracula. So, although Dracula might seem very powerful and unable to be killed, the fact that he meets someone who knows what he is, namely Van Helsing, makes him vulnerable.

However, it is interesting to note that if they need psychoanalysts in order to annihilate this monster, it also suggests that pure rationality is not enough and it also shows the range of Dracula's powers. In addition to rational thought and medical knowledge, they also need someone who has specific knowledge of vampires. Why does not rational thought work for them? It might be because they have thoughts of evil that are represented by Dracula. A reason for this feeling of fear is Dracula's function as a *metaphor* for evil. But if Dracula represents the evil villain in the novel, what is his function? If we turn back to the definition of metaphor in part 2.3, a metaphor is a trope, a figurative way of speaking, and we use tropes when we are trying to explain something that we recognize, but cannot really understand. In other words, the function of a metaphor is to say something about something, or someone, that cannot be said directly. There is something about Dracula that both the human characters in the book and human readers recognize, but however rational, Count that also instills fear in them.

Thus, if we see Dracula as a metaphor for evil that is supposed to instill *fear* in the readers of the novel, what is this a fear of? There are many theories as to what this fear is, or what kind of fear Stoker wanted to use the vampire to be a metaphor for. However, the type of vampire that Dracula is can be considered a monster. Etymologically the word *monster* comes from the Latin word 'monere', which means 'to warn', and if we use this meaning of the word, what does Stoker want to use the vampire as a warning against? Stoker wrote the novel in Victorian England, at the end of the nineteenth century, when the monster was a popular figure in literature. This was also a time when gender roles changed because of the coming of modernity.

There emerged a 'New Woman' who was an independent and modern woman who challenged, and even rebelled against, the rules of womanhood set by men. This modern woman represented female emancipation and a newfound female sexuality. Both Lucy and Mina are examples of this 'New Woman' in different ways. Lucy is the seductress who is proposed to by no more than three men. She writes to Mina, '[w]hy can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it' (Stoker 1998: 59). Mina, on the other hand, has only one suitor, namely Jonathan Harker, but she is an economically independent woman who also has knowledge of technology and uses a typewriter to write her diary. This difference is also seen in their different vampiric shapes. Lucy becomes similar to Dracula, a bloodsucking monster, a 'bloofer lady' who rises from her grave at night and walks around and bites the necks of little children (177). Mina's transformation, however, is different because she alone gains a psychic connection with Dracula. It is also interesting to see Lucy in connection with a very popular figure in the Victorian imagination, namely Lilith, see part 2.2 above. Thus, since Lucy is a very sexual vampire who feeds on small children in the novel and has a tendency to sleepwalk, she can be seen as an allusion to Lilith.

If we look at the vampire as a monster that is supposed to function as a warning against something, and if we interpret Lucy and Mina as representations of the 'New Woman', this potential warning might be against this strong, independent and sexual woman. These transformations can also be a metaphor for the other changes that are happening in the novel; the change that modernity brings along. Stoker's choice of monster is also very important in this context because the vampire is a different kind of monster than for example the zombie. Marina Warner (2002) defines the zombie as 'a living body without a soul' (Warner 2002: 122), in other words, it is a living body that is unable to think for itself and make decisions – it is controlled by primal needs. The vampire, then, is the exact opposite of the zombie, namely a kind of dead body *with* a soul, which enables it to both think and make decisions, hence, it is a much bigger threat than the zombie. Dracula shows evidence of being an intelligent creature; he schemes and tricks and lures, and instead of being controlled by others, he is the one who controls. In that sense, Dracula is not only a warning against the 'New Woman', but the text also acts, on a metaphorical level, as representative for this new type of independent, self-thinking woman who instead of being controlled by men wants to be in control herself and make her own decisions.

As such, Dracula says something about humanity that perhaps could not, according to Stoker, be said directly or told differently.

This metaphorical power is seen in various aspects of Dracula and his origin in vampire myth. He is unable to enter someone's house without being invited, he has no reflection in the mirror, and he never comes out in the daylight, but stays in a coffin that has to be on top of a pile of earth from his home castle. A general rule that we see in many vampire stories is that if we allow a vampire to enter our home it is because we have invited it in. Therefore, a vampire will only enter our lives if we want it to. The title of, and story in, John Ajvide Lindqvist's novel about a young boy and a vampire girl, *Let the Right One In* (2004), suggests that one cannot just let any vampire into one's life. It rather says that it has to be a certain vampire, namely the 'right' one. Only the vampire that has something in common with oneself and that one can identify with can be let in. Thus, if we say that there is a vampire that is the 'right one' for each of us, this vampire has to be one that can say something about ourselves. According to Auerbach (1995), 'the discrepancy between [Lucy and Mina's] transformations hits at the range of a vampire's possible selves' (Auerbach 1995: 87). Since the vampire is a mythical figure that functions as a metaphor and since myths were used to explain the origin of humans, is it possible that the vampire actually is a projection of ourselves?

This is quite possible because if we consider another interesting point is that the vampire only comes out at night, which is the time that we are asleep and dreaming. Dreams are supposedly related to our subconscious thinking in that they say something that cannot be said directly. In *Dracula*, several of the characters have difficulties distinguishing reality from dreams. If we go back to the discussion of 'the uncanny', we saw that this is a concept that deals with that which is both familiar and unfamiliar to us, or, that is, things that we recognize in ourselves, but that we perhaps do not want to acknowledge. Thus, if we accept that Dracula, as a metaphor, is able to say something about ourselves that we do not want to admit to, then the vampire is representative of those sides of ourselves that are, for instance, so perverse that we want to keep them hidden.

Another characteristic of vampires is that they have neither a reflection nor a shadow, and popular belief is that the reason for this is because they have no soul. However, it is more likely that the reason is related to us humans. If we look into a mirror we see only ourselves, so the fact that Jonathan is not able to see the Count's

reflection in the mirror, is because he does not want certain things about himself to be revealed. John Allen Stevenson supports this in his essay 'A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula' (1988), when he says that Dracula is, in fact, also a mirror. Thus, he says, '[w]hen we say that the vampire is absent from the mirror, perhaps what we are saying is that we are afraid to see a reflection – however uneasy and strange – of ourselves' (Stevenson 1988: 147). In the preface to the 2003 version of *Dracula*, Christopher Frayling says, that 'Stoker's list of vampire characteristics at this early stage of drafting includes: (...) "Painters cannot paint him. His likeness always like someone else"' (viii). This puts into question the entire existence of both Dracula and vampires in general. Do they exist as a physical entity, or are they only projections of ourselves upon something that can form and shape itself into our needs? In other words, is it their subconscious selves that Jonathan, Lucy and Mina see in Dracula?

If we look at it this way, Dracula represents that which is possible, or familiar, but also that which is impossible, or unfamiliar, and this difference is what makes him so metaphorical. He is a sublime and uncanny figure, but he is not just that. He is also plain frightening, and he shows that what one becomes as a vampire is so fundamentally different from what it is to be human that one can hardly think it without being disgusted. Nonetheless, although this horrific being that is Dracula stands as the archetypal image of the mythical figure of the vampire, we shall see that it is not the only one.



## 4 Interview with the Vampire

After *Dracula* was published in 1897, there were many novels and stories written within the vampire literature genre. However, according to Leonard Wolf (1997), only a handful of them were considered what he calls 'of literary merit' (Wolf 1997: 1). Some of these books were George Sylvester Viereck's *The House of the Vampire* (1907), *I am Legend* (1954) by Richard Matheson, Stephen King's *Salem's Lot* (1975), Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire* (1976), *Hotel Transylvania* (1977) by Chelsea Quinn Yarboro and Suzy McKee Charna's *The Vampire Tapestry* (1980). Moreover, as mentioned before, the beginning of the twentieth century also spawned several films based on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* beginning with *Nosferatu* in 1922 via *Dracula* (1931) with Bela Lugosi, to the *Dracula* movies by the Hammer Studio in the sixties and seventies starring Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing.

Even though the figure of Count Dracula inspired so many films in this century, it was also the time for a new way of portraying the vampire in literature. The figure of the vampire changed from the evil and menacing figure of Dracula to a kinder and more sympathetic vampire, a vampire who questions his/her vampiric and predatory nature. One of these vampires is Louis de Pointe du Lac, who we meet in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). This book have by many been considered to be the most important contributions to vampire literature in the twentieth century because of its innovative depiction of this new and more modern vampire, and that is why this book will be the topic of discussion in this chapter. It was not necessarily the first book to portray the sympathetic vampire, but it is definitely the most popular and significant. As with *Dracula*, I will describe how the vampires in this novel are portrayed, and discuss their function and whether they can be considered to be metaphorical or metonymical.

#### 4.1 Interview with the [sympathetic] vampire

Anne Rice's *Interview with a vampire* was published in 1976 and tells the story of mainly three vampires, Louis, Lestat and Claudia, in eighteenth century New Orleans. The frame of the story is, however, set in San Francisco in the 1970's when Louis has decided to tell his life story to a young reporter. He tells about being grief-stricken by a feeling of guilt because of his brother's death. He becomes suicidal, and when he is attacked and fed upon by the vampire Lestat, he becomes a vampire himself.

Afterwards, however, when he realizes what he has become, Louis is filled with remorse and anguish over the ethical implications of vampirism. Louis and Lestat, the latter who has now become Louis' master, also transform a little girl, Claudia, and she and Louis form a special bond. Fed up with Lestat as authoritarian head of the family, Claudia decides to kill Lestat, and she and Louis flee to Europe in search of others of their kind to find the 'truth' behind vampires. First the only ones they encounter are barbaric vampires, partly similar to Dracula, but in Paris they meet a group of underground vampires led by Armand, the oldest vampire in the world. Nevertheless, Louis finds no answers, and with the underground vampires murdering Claudia and the sudden return of Lestat from the 'dead', Louis and Armand escape to the United States. However, he is still unable to come to terms with his vampire nature.

As stated above, the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* are quite different from the type of vampire that Dracula is. The vampires in *Dracula* are static characters, meaning they are mainly one-sided and they do not change during the story. The vampires in *Interview with the Vampire*, however, are dynamic characters who, if not necessarily change during the course of the novel, at least *want* to change. With this novel, Anne Rice transformed the mythical figure of the vampire to fit into the society of contemporary culture. The vampire as metaphor will therefore be able to say something about 1970's culture just as *Dracula* portrayed the culture at the end of the nineteenth century. Whereas Dracula, for instance, is allergic to garlic and crucifixes, has no reflection in the mirror, and has the power of transformation, the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* have little of those attributes. There are, however, some rules that apply to their vampiric existence, for instance, they can move at the speed of light (Rice 1998: 27), their senses are heightened (23), they will burn to death if they are exposed to sunlight and they sleep in coffins during the day (26). Electric light, on the other hand, is harmless (8), as is crucifixes and stakes

through the heart as we see in the following dialogue between Louis and the boy reporter,

'Oh, the rumor about crosses!' the vampire laughed. 'You refer to our being afraid of crosses?'

'Unable to look on them, I thought,' said the boy.

'Nonsense, my friend, sheer nonsense. I can look on anything I like. And I rather like looking on crucifixes in particular.'

'And what about the rumor about keyholes? That you can...become steam and go through them.'

'I wished I could,' laughed the vampire. 'How positively delightful. I should like to pass through all manner of different keyholes and feel the tickle of their peculiar shapes. No.' He shook his head. 'That is, how would you say today...bullshit?'

The boy laughed despite himself. Then his face grew serious.

'You mustn't be shy with me,' the vampire said. 'What is it?'

'The story about stakes through the heart,' said the boy, his cheeks coloring slightly.

'The same,' said the vampire. 'Bull-shit,' he said carefully articulating both syllables, so that the boy smiled. 'No magical power whatsoever....' (25)

Here we see that the human boy have a preconceived notion of what a vampire is, knowledge that most likely comes from the way vampires are presented in myths, or from the image of vampires we have from Dracula. The vampire, though, ridicules these old beliefs and calls them 'nonsense' and 'bullshit', and he says that there really is no hocus-pocus when it comes to vampires.

One last point when it comes to what vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* can or cannot do is that they absolutely cannot drink blood from a dead person (Rice 1998: 31). This is the way that Claudia manages to kill Lestat when she drugs and kills two boys with absinthe and laudanum, the latter being a substance that will keep the blood of a dead person warm for a while. Lestat, who in good faith believes the boys are alive, drinks their blood and immediately starts convulsing and gasping for air (124). This way of dying for a vampire is new to the myth because, as we see in chapter 2.2, none of the works on vampires and vampire myth consulted for this thesis mentions it. Thus, Rice not only reinvents the vampire as a mythical figure, but also invents new rules that will apply specifically to her vampires. However, even if they

are not evil and single-minded bloodsuckers, but rather sympathetic and self-reflective creatures, they still evoke a feeling of fear and awe in both us readers and the human characters in the book. This sense of looking upon something that is perceived as both beautiful and terrifying at the same time relates to the concept we dealt with in the previous chapter, namely 'the sublime'. But before we discuss where we can find elements of the sublime in *Interview with the Vampire*, we have to look at a genre of fiction that is closely related with the sublime and with this novel, namely the Gothic.

According to M.H Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2005), 'the word Gothic originally referred to the Goths' (Abrams 2005: 117). The Goths were a Germanic tribe who fought against the Roman Empire around the fourth century. Later, the meaning of the word shifted to denote 'medieval' (ibid.). During the Renaissance, the Greco-Roman culture, such as the architecture, was rediscovered and named 'Gothic Revival' architecture. Gothic literature developed from this type of architecture in the late eighteenth century and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is considered the first Gothic novel of its type. Other, perhaps more familiar, novels are Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), but also *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë and most of Edgar Allen Poe's writing belong to the genre of Gothic literature.

Recurring elements in Gothic fiction are for instance death and decay, madness, the double and supernatural creatures such as ghosts, vampires and other monsters. In novels of this kind we often find the lonely and isolated Gothic hero who is tempted and lured, and thus falls from grace because of another typical character, namely the evil villain. We see this type of plot in *Interview with the Vampire* because Louis is tempted and lured into becoming a vampire by Lestat, the evil villain, and is left in a state of moral peril. What is also interesting when we connect the Gothic novel with *Interview with the Vampire* is that the focus of the Gothic novel has shifted. The first examples, such as *The Castle of Otranto*, were on the evil and terrifying monsters in the novel, but later works such as *Frankenstein* and *Wuthering Heights* brought a new image of evil. These novels turned evil into a metaphor for who we humans really are, and *Interview with the Vampire*, while being a part of the narrative tradition of Gothic literature, definitely belongs to this new function of the Gothic.

The Gothic deals with the macabre, fantastic, mysterious and terrifying, and the novels and stories are typically set in vast landscapes, in a decrepit and haunted castle or mansion with hidden passageways. This setting plays one of the biggest parts in Gothic literature because it evokes the darkness, decay and horror that is the focus of these types of stories. However, even though *Interview with the Vampire* is considered a Gothic novel, we do not really see the typical Gothic setting in the novel. Martin J. Wood says in his essay 'New life for an old tradition: Anne Rice and vampire literature' (1999), that Rice has modernized and changed the code of the vampire myth and the Gothic novel. He says, 'instead of locations emphasizing death and decay, she has set her stories in vital urban landscapes' (Wood 1999: 61). The first part of the novel is set in New Orleans and despite a little detour through the countryside of Romania, Louis and Claudia spend the major part of the end of the novel in Paris. Therefore, we see that, in this novel, the dark and desolate landscapes are missing. Robert Mighall, in his essay 'Gothic cities' (2007), calls this type of setting 'urban Gothic' and focuses a big part of his essay on New Orleans (Mighall 2007: 54). He states that New Orleans is the quintessential urban Gothic location because of its status as a representative of the Old World. It was, and still is, a melting pot of cultures, and the popular use of voodoo magic and the surrounding swamps and bayous adds to the city's mystical nature. There is a particular passage from the novel that illustrates the Gothic feel of New Orleans,

This was New Orleans, a magical and magnificent place to live. In which a vampire, richly dressed and gracefully walking through the pools of light of one gas lamp after another might attract no more notice in the evening than hundreds of other exotic creatures (Rice 1998: 40)

In this description by Louis, New Orleans becomes almost supernatural in the way that it evokes an image of a world full of exotic creatures.

As stated above, Gothic literature stems from the Gothic Revival architectural style, which, as the name says, is a revival of the medieval gothic architecture. Gothic architecture emphasizes height, arches and ornamentation, for instance, high ceilings, arches, thin pillars and decorative symbolic figures and carvings. In other words, Gothic buildings are perceived as very lofty and majestic, and can therefore come across as astonishing and sublime. As we saw in chapter 3.1, the sublime is an aesthetic concept and it is therefore much related to the visual. Gothic architecture is mainly seen in castles and churches, thus, it is not difficult to see the sublime in

Gothic novels as their setting is mainly in enormous and horrifying castles and wild landscapes, and because it deals with terror and the supernatural. Also, as outlined above, the plots in Gothic literature can be seen as metaphorical for human life. Therefore, Gothic novel has the ability to evoke feelings in us readers that we in one sense recognize, but that are still foreign and terrifying.

Another concept related to that which is foreign and terrifying is 'the uncanny', which we also dealt with in chapter 3.1. As we saw in that chapter, the uncanny, or the 'unheimlich' as Freud called it, can be used to describe something that is both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. In other words, it is a feeling we might get when we encounter something that is both know and unknown to us, and since we are unable to fully make sense of it, it might therefore arouse a sense of fear and anxiety in us. We might experience a feeling of the uncanny for instance when we think we know what we know, but then realize that we do not know it at all. The way this is similar to the sublime is that we in both cases are trying to make sense of something we cannot comprehend, and both concepts are able to bring about a feeling of, for instance, fear, terror and awe. We can find examples of the experience of the uncanny in *Interview with the Vampire* when the interviewer sees Louis for the first time,

...the boy, staring up at the vampire, could not repress a gasp. His fingers danced backwards on the table to grasp the edge. 'Dear God!' he whispered, and then he gazed, speechless, at the vampire (Rice 1998: 8)

He cannot really believe what he sees standing in front of him because, as stated above, he has a preconceived notion of what a vampire is. He believes, for instance, that they do not like sunlight and crucifixes, so he *thinks* he knows what a vampire is, but he reacts with fear and incredulity because he cannot connect what he sees with what he knows.

However, even though he *is* scared of Louis, he is, nonetheless, comforted by the vampire's gentle nature which can be seen when Louis says, 'Don't be afraid. Just start the tape' and 'Believe me, I won't hurt you' (Rice 1998: 8). Thus, the interviewer might not only have a feeling of the uncanny, but possibly also get a feeling of something sublime in the description of Louis. We see this in that he is not necessarily just *frightened* by the appearance of the vampire, but maybe also *intrigued*. The narrator says,

The vampire was utterly white and smooth, as if he were sculpted from bleached bone, and his face was as seemingly inanimate as a statue, except for two brilliant green eyes that looked down at the boy intently like flames in a skull. (...) he stared at the vampire's full black hair, the waves that were combed back over the tips of the ears, the curls that barely touched the edge of the white collar (ibid)

This is not a description of a nasty and awful creature because instead of the strong and aquiline face of Count Dracula, Louis's face is smooth. And even though his eyes look upon the boy 'like flames in a skull', they are of a 'brilliant green' colour and not the ruby red colour of Dracula's eyes. Also, his hair is not white and does not grow in a strange way, it is 'black' and 'full' and neatly combed. Stephanie R. Branson says in her essay 'The Curse of Immortality' (1994) that Anne Rice's vampires are terribly anthropomorphic, and this is very much the case because Louis does look human, the thing is that he almost looks too human. So, what we see here is that the boy recognizes something human in Louis, but he also sees qualities in him that are unfamiliar and almost too amazing or frightening to make sense of. Furthermore, the boy is not the only one who gazes upon the vampires in the novel with awe and disbelief. Louis describes his first real sight of Lestat, the vampire who changed him, in much the same way,

a tall fair-skinned man with a mass of blond hair and a graceful almost feline quality to his movements (...) I saw that he was no ordinary man at all. His gray eyes burned with an incandescence, and the long white hands which hung by his sides were not those of a human being (Rice 1998: 16)

In this quote we see that even Louis cannot make sense of what he sees. He thinks he knows what he sees standing before him, namely a man, but then he concludes that this very graceful and quite exceptional being cannot possibly be human. In other words, he sees something that is almost beyond perception, but he is still able to make sense of it in a different way than the boy. He continues, 'I forgot myself totally (...) From then on I experienced only increasing wonder' (17). Thus, even though Louis is less scared of the Lestat than the boy is of Louis, they still experience the same feeling of the sublime and the uncanny. We also see that these two concepts are of a very different nature than that in *Dracula* because there is more that is similar to us when it comes to the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire*.

Another point that is significantly different from *Dracula* is the narrative structure of the novel. The story of Louis' life is told retrospectively in the form of

flashbacks where Louis is the first person narrator. In the frame of the story that is set in contemporary America, there is a third person narrator, and it is through this narrator's eyes that we meet Louis for the first time. It should be noted that this third person narrator is limited, so we know nothing of what goes on inside Louis' head except from what he says himself and from his own narration. This type of narrative is different from what we have seen in earlier examples of vampire literature because before we have only seen the vampire through the protagonist's first person narrative or a limited or omniscient third person narrator. In *Dracula*, there were several first person narratives, but they were by the human characters in the book. Dracula himself is not even physically present in the majority of the novel. Also in 'Carmilla' we find a human first person narrator, namely Laura, and in 'The Vampyre' there is a third person omniscient narrator.

In addition to not being a first person narrator, the vampire has almost always functioned as the antagonist in vampire literature before *Interview with the Vampire*, the enemy against whom the heroic human characters must fight and annihilate. By making Louis the protagonist in *Interview with the Vampire* and a first person narrator, Rice brings us readers much closer to the vampire. As Wood (1999) says, 'Rice has tampered with the code of the narration itself, bringing the vampire closer to readers both spatially and psychologically' (Wood 1999: 61). When writing a story about a vampire being interviewed about his life as a vampire, the proximity between narrator and writer must be as close as it is in *Interview with the Vampire*. Had Rice chosen to just use the third person narrator we meet in the frame story of the novel, we would not have gotten such a deep psychological insight into Louis. We would not have been able to get into his head and witnessed his way of thinking and sympathizing, and his moral anguish with being a vampire.

This aspect of the novel is very interesting because it is, as stated above, a whole new way of portraying the vampire. This, along with the type of narrative used in the novel, brings along issues of morality and ethics. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'morality' as, 'principles concerning right and wrong or good and bad behaviour' and 'ethics' as, 'moral principles that control or influence a person's behaviour'. Everyone has, in one way or another, a notion of what is good or bad or what is right or wrong, and therefore, there arise problems when one is put in a situation where one might have to go against one's moral principles. Louis finds himself in this kind of situation when he is made a vampire because he carries with



him the morality he had as a human. He has a preconceived notion of what killing a human being entails, namely that it is wrong and should not be taken lightly. This struggle between being thirsty and not wanting to kill humans is seen in the novel when Louis narrates,

My thirst rose in me like a fever (...) My desire to die was constant, like a pure thought in the mind, devoid of emotion. Yet I needed to feed. I've indicated to you I would not then kill people. I moved along the rooftop in search of rats (Rice 1998: 67)

Furthermore, he says that in the beginning he believed that he killed animals only for aesthetic reasons, because he wanted to know all the stages of death and wanted to save the best, the death of a human, for last. However, in retrospect, he sees that he did not want to deal with the moral question of whether or not he was damned (68), in other words, he knows that killing a human is wrong and that is why he is in such despair. He continues, 'I had hedged against this question as a vampire and now it completely overwhelmed me, and in that state I had no desire to live' (68). This indicates that to Louis, this moral anguish is killing him. He wants to die because he has such problems with going against his moral principles. He narrates,

Am I damned? Am I from the devil? Is my very nature that of a devil? I was asking myself over and over (...) What have I become in becoming a vampire? Where am I to go? And all the while, as the death wish caused me to neglect my thirst, my thirst grew hotter; my veins were veritable threads of pain in my flesh; my temples throbbed; and finally I could stand it no longer (69)

This shows that, knowing that he cannot die, he has to feed sooner or later because he cannot escape his primal needs forever. He encounters a potential victim, a girl who is crying over her dead mother and he says to the reporter, 'You must understand that by now I was burning with physical need to drink. I could not have made it through another day without feeding' (69). He is so thirsty that he is almost psychotic and he bites into the neck of the young girl and says, 'For four years I had not savored a human; for four years I hadn't really known' (70). Of course, he could continue to drink the blood of animals. He even says that he hears a dog howling not far from where he is, therefore, he has the possibility to choose. However, animal blood will only satisfy his thirst to some extent, it will not satisfy that inherent need, that physical experience of biting into a human's neck and drinking their blood that tastes so indescribably good. It will not give him a fulfilled life as a vampire; he will only

exist as if he is running on empty. However, we shall see later in this thesis that it is possible for vampires to live solely on animal blood. The consequence of the choice Louis makes leaves him in even more despair, and he leaves the girl bleeding to death. Then, Lestat comes along and fixes Louis's mess and makes the girl, Claudia, into a vampire.

From this particular incident it is quite clear that Louis struggles with his morality and a reason for this might be because as he himself says, he has a respect for human life that other vampires do not seem to have. Milly Williamson, on the other hand, says in *The Lure of the Vampire* (2005) that the fact that Louis refuses to drink human blood is because he does not want to conform to rules set by others, that he is more or less a rebel. This is an interesting thought because another reason for being in such despair is that he did not choose to become a vampire. Or, that is, after having been drained of blood by Lestat, Louis does agree to drink Lestat's blood. It is more or less forced down his throat.

Because of Louis feelings of damnation, a central question is whether Louis really *decides* to become a vampire or forced to become one? Certain things point to the latter because as Louis says himself when he is lying there half dead and sees Lestat he claims, 'I completely forgot *myself*' (Rice 1998: 17). When the boy assumes he made a decision to become a vampire Louis says,

Decided. It doesn't seem the right word. Yet I cannot say it was inevitable from the moment that he stepped into that room. No, indeed it was not inevitable. Yet I can't say I decided. Let me say that when he finished speaking, no other decision was possible for me, and I pursued my course without a backward glance. (17)

Here we see that Louis feels that he was left without a choice because of what Lestat tells him about life as a vampire. Thus, it seems like he is persuaded by Lestat and actually makes a decision, but he is ambiguous with regards to actually calling it a *decision*. He does not really say explicitly what makes this decision inevitable. Therefore, we also have to take into account that Louis is a first-person narrator, and that this type of narrator is not necessarily *reliable*, so Louis chooses what he wants or does not want to reveal. He might be lying and refuse to say that he made a concrete *decision* in order to use as an excuse that he was put in a situation he did not choose. Nevertheless, this inevitability can also be a result of the thoughts he has after Lestat tells him about vampirism.

Thus, if we consider the fact that Louis was besides himself with grief over his brother's death and believes that he is the reason why his brother died (Rice 1998: 13), we must look at the reason why Louis feels guilty, namely what part he has in his brother's death. His brother, who is deeply religious, suddenly starts having visions of St. Dominic and the Virgin Mary telling him that Louis should sell the plantation they own and move to France to do God's work (11). Louis does not believe him and instead laughs at him, and the brother, upset because of Louis reaction, runs off and falls down a set of stairs and dies. Therefore, it could be possible that Louis chose to redeem himself for not believing in his brother's supernatural ability, that is, his visions, by becoming a supernatural being himself. It could be a way of making amends with his brother and show him that he *does* believe and therefore, this can cause the inevitability he feels when Lestat leaves him with the choice between dying or becoming a vampire. Nevertheless, this despair that Louis feels and the way he is torn between his vampire self and his old human self can be explained by psychological theories.

One of these theories was set forth by Sigmund Freud in his essay 'The Ego and the Id' (1975). In this essay, Freud presents a structural model of the psyche, which consists of three parts, the id, the ego and the superego. The id is part of the unconscious mind that controls a person's basic drives or impulses, such as food, water and sex. This is due to what Freud calls the 'pleasure-principle' (Freud 1975: 22), which states that people seek to avoid pain by satisfying their psychological and biological needs. The opposite of this principle is the 'reality principle' (25), which we connect with the ego. The ego is the conscious part of the mind that controls a person's rational, intellectual and perceptive thinking and that keeps us in contact with reality. The third aspect of Freud's model is the superego, or the 'ego ideal' (28), and it can also be referred to as a person's conscience. In other words, it is the critical part of the mind that strives for perfection and that holds one's morals that distinguishes between right and wrong, and good and bad. The superego can be seen as the counterpart to the id because it works with controlling the id's need for physical satisfaction.

If we transfer these concepts to the character of Louis we see that each of the three correspond with one side of him. The id is his vampiric nature, the side of him that controls his blood thirst and drives him to fulfill his satisfaction for blood. The ego is his old human self that he cannot let go of, and the superego is the morality

system that leaves him with feelings of guilt and that controls his perceptions of right and wrong, good and bad et cetera. Thus, the id wants Louis, the ego, to give in to his nature as a vampire and experience the psychological and physical pleasure of feeding on the blood of humans, whereas the superego wants the ego to see that this barbaric act of killing human beings is morally wrong and evil. In contrast to Louis, we can say that Dracula is mostly, or perhaps *only*, controlled by his id because there is little humanity in him and he has no moral qualms about being the predator that he is. The same is true for Lestat and if we look at Louis's dilemma from this perspective, it is not difficult to understand why he is so burdened with guilt and why there is such a conflict between him and Lestat. It can also explain why he feels so isolated and alone, and why he is so desperate to find *anyone* that is more like him.

At this point it is fitting to take a look at who Lestat is because in comparison to Louis, he is quite a different character. Margaret L. Carter says in her essay 'The Vampire as Alien in Contemporary Fiction' (1997) that Rice has made Lestat a 'rock star' (Carter 1997: 27). This is a suitable term for him because in many ways he can resemble the bohemian type of personage that many rock stars embody in that they do exactly what they want. Some rock stars have also been criticized for having the philosophy that because they are rich and famous they can go after whatever they like, however ruthless they are. This is exactly the way that Lestat goes after Louis' plantation, namely by transforming Louis into a vampire so that he is bound to be his slave. In short, Lestat cares about nothing but himself and he has no qualms when it comes to killing humans. He lures and tricks and steals, and he keeps Louis as his slave by making Louis believe that he would not survive without him. Stephanie R. Branson (1994) says that Lestat, 'particularly enjoys destroying the productive potential of privileged individuals in society' (Branson 1994: 40). In other words, Lestat, who seems to be the most confident vampire out there, actually feels threatened by Louis and his position in society as a plantation owner. It does not take long before Louis sees Lestat for what he really is, and what he sees makes Louis despise him.

Thus, there is a huge difference between Louis and Lestat, and this ongoing conflict between the two is, as stated above, a reason why Louis goes on a search for the true nature of vampirism. He cannot believe that it is *he* who is the outsider in the vampire world and not Lestat. Louis' quest can be seen as a way of finding what makes his life meaningful. In other words, he deals with an existentialist question.

Existentialism is a philosophical term that was coined by nineteenth-century philosophers Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, and which was used and further developed by writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Franz Kafka. According to Sartre, there are two types of existentialists, the Christian and the atheist. The former kind believes that every human being has an inherent concept of 'human nature' that is created and governed by God. Thus, a Christian existentialist believes that our meaning in life is already laid out for us. The latter group, in which Sartre puts himself, believes that there is no God and because of that, the basic idea is that '*existence* comes before *essence*' (Sartre 2003: 91). By this he means that each individual is responsible for finding meaning in his/her own life and live his/her life to the fullest despite feelings of despair, angst and isolation. Louis cannot find any sense of meaning in his life as a vampire in New Orleans, living under the slavery of Lestat. Thus, when Lestat conveniently dies, Louis is free to go to Europe in search of the truth, of what the meaning of vampirism is. What Louis finally realizes is that there is no meaning behind vampirism. He does not find anything in Paris that is different from what he already knows and he tells Armand,

We stand here, the two of us, immortal, ageless, rising nightly to feed that immortality on human blood (...) and you ask me how I could believe I would find a meaning in the supernatural! I tell you, after seeing what I have become, I could damn well believe anything! Couldn't you? And believing thus, being thus confounded, I can now accept the most fantastical truth of all: that there is no meaning to any of this! (Rice 1998: 217)

He realizes that he has hated Lestat for all the wrong reasons, he has hated him for being what a vampire really is. Dracula, on the other hand, has found his purpose in life, and therefore, he has no existentialist thoughts. Even though his essence lies in being a bloodthirsty killer, one cannot argue that he does live his life to the fullest.

#### 4.2 The function of the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire*

Above we have looked at how the vampires, first and foremost Louis, are presented in *Interview with the Vampire*, next we will discuss what could be the function of the way these vampires are portrayed, and what they can be metaphors for. As we saw in the previous chapter, Dracula was representative of the shadow sides of ourselves that

we do not want to acknowledge, and a metaphor for the fear of the 'New Woman' and other aspects of modernity that was relevant at the end of the nineteenth century. Although the nature of the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* has changed from what we saw in *Dracula*, they still have the same ability to say something about that which is fundamentally human. One difference between these two types of vampire is that they find themselves in two different cultures and therefore say something about society in the time these books were written and published.

There are many different theories set forth by various scholars about what the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* are a metaphor for. We can find one of these theories in Sandra Tomc's essay, 'Dieting and Damnation: Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*' (1997), where she suggests that,

[i]n order to separate her own vampires from those indigenous to the genre, Rice borrowed heavily from 1970s discourses of gender mutability and bodily transformation, finding in the twin paradigms of androgyny and weight loss an articulation appropriate to her generically radical aims. (Tomc 1997: 96)

In other words, since the novel was published in a time when the dieting pill was a quite popular weight loss tool, she sees the vampire as a metaphor for the dieting hysteria and the obsession with having an androgynous and boy-like body. She also bases her theory on the constant obsession with food and hunger among the vampires and the fact that the novel contains no significant female characters (97). Lastly, none of these vampires have any reproductive abilities, at least not genitally, and when the motherly and feminine Madeline is introduced in the end of the novel, it does not take long before she is destroyed. This, Tomc says, has to do with Rice's need to uphold the 'no women' strategy in the book to emphasize the dieting metaphor.

This theory is probable because it does exemplify the way extreme dieters feel about their bodies, namely that they either try to rid themselves of a womanly body or try to prevent themselves from getting one. It is also the case that, even though dieting and eating disorders have been around for many hundred years, it was not written about in newspapers and magazines until the 1970s. One might also say that there are no significant female characters in the book, or that is there are no significant *woman* characters, because Claudia is physically a girl throughout her vampire existence. The only problem there is with this theory is Tomc's statement that, 'Louis' refusal of food is not simply described as a reluctance to commit murder. It resembles a constant vigil to keep from gaining weight' (Tomc 1997: 103). Could it be that it is not that

complicated? It is possible that this simply has to do with Louis' moral problems with the nature of vampires and that his refusal to drink human blood is because he finds the killing of humans to be wrong. If we look at all the explicit examples of Louis' internal struggle with drinking the blood of humans, see part 4.1 above, we see that it becomes quite clear that this struggle is not because he thinks human blood, or 'real food', is repulsive such as an extreme dieter would. It is merely because he has moral issues with this act, or as he says himself, he has a respect for human life that Lestat does not have (Rice 1998: 44-45). Therefore, there are no exact indications that Louis' qualms with drinking human blood has to do with issues concerning food, but that they are more likely related to morality.

Tomc describes Louis' attack on Claudia as an indulgence in the same sense as an anorexic eating a whole chocolate cake would cross a boundary set by him- or herself (Tomc 1997: 103), but again, does the interpretation of this event necessarily have to be that limited? It is possible that Louis' anguish when it comes to choosing Claudia's human blood over the blood of rats and dogs, and that he feels damned when he does so, has to do with the fact that he realizes that vampires can only satisfy their hunger with animal blood to a small extent? This is a probable interpretation at least if you see it in relation to the primal instinct all vampires have that makes them automatically tempted by human blood. Thus, to be able to prevent this thirst that can never be fully quenched, he *has* to allow himself to drink human blood, at least occasionally, and he must succumb to those animal desires that are within him, whether he likes it or not. However, that is not to say that Tomc's theory is not valid, because the novel does deal with issues of seeking a sort of superhuman life. Nonetheless, it is a questionable one. If we go back to Sapir's definition of what constitutes as a 'valid' interpretation of a metaphor, namely that the interpretation has to fit in with 'a larger framework of basic cultural understandings' (Sapir 1977: 5), we can conclude that it might be problematic for Tomc's interpretation to fit into that framework.

Nevertheless, vampires can act as metaphors for another form of superhuman life, namely immortality and incomprehensible beauty. We humans have a limited lifespan, but even though there are people in some cultures that have lived to be over one hundred years old, we still seek new ways to live even longer, and in the meantime there are numerous surgeries one can have in order to look as young as possible. Virtually any lifestyle section of every newspaper or magazine has regular

articles on the new development in age-prolonging research and the latest in plastic surgery. While this is of interest for a large amount of the population, it can also prompt some of us to ask the question, do we really *want* to live forever? And do we really want to look like a thirty-year-old when we are twice that age? According to *The Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, plastic surgery has been around since 2000 BC, though not in the same way as it is today. It was not until the 1960s and 70s that plastic surgery became as popular as it is now. Therefore we can interpret the sublime beauty of the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire*, see 4.1 above, to be a metaphor for the unobtainable beauty we humans want and that someone tries to achieve through plastic surgery.

Also, with regards to a more drastic wish, if we look at Louis and his account of the life he has led for the past two hundred years, is immortality really something to be striving for? The character of Claudia should be reason enough for feeling adverse to the whole idea of immortality. The result of Claudia being transformed into a vampire at the age of five is that, *physically*, she will never be older than five, but she does mature *mentally*. Thus, while she is a killing machine on the same level as Lestat in the beginning of her vampire life, she starts to question the fact that she is not growing older physically when she has matured enough psychologically to think as an adult. This can lead us to speculate whether she is in just as much, if not more, despair than Louis when she sees women who are her own age, mentally, but who have grown bodies. And, it is after she has deduced that Lestat was the one who made her this way that she decides to kill him. It is in that sense that Claudia's fate should be a lesson to us readers so that we might realize that to have an appearance that resembles a little girl is not something to desire when you are past your retirement age. Of course, we humans do not have the need to kill other humans because we have to drink their blood to survive, but it is still very much possible to see Louis as a metaphor for the fact that humans can be willing to give up pretty much anything in order to have an unlimited life.

If we interpret Louis's intentions with telling the story of his life as a vampire as a warning against the illusion of vampirism, we can conclude that he has failed, at least when it comes to the boy interviewer. And it is here that we perhaps see the evidence of humankind's wish to live forever because we get a firsthand look into a human's wish for immortality. The boy is utterly fascinated with Louis's story and in the end of the novel he begs him, 'Give it to me! (...) Make me a vampire now!' (Rice



1998: 305). Louis on the other hand is in disbelief and says, '[t]his is what you want? (...) This...after all I've told you...is what you ask for?' (306). Thus, Louis has to admit that he has 'completely failed...' (ibid). He sees this as such a tragedy because he has not been able to convey the fact that vampirism and the eternal life it brings with it is not to be sought after. Louis even retells a conversation between him and Armand in the *Théâtre des Vampires* where Armand says,

How many vampires do you think have the stamina for immortality? (...) For in becoming immortal they want all the forms of their life to be fixed as they are and incorruptible (...) When, in fact, all things change except the vampire himself (...) One evening a vampire rises and realizes what he has feared perhaps for decades, that he simply wants no more of life at any cost. That whatever style or fashion or shape of existence made immortality attractive to him has been swept off the face of the earth (...) And that vampire goes out to die (255-56)

So, after everything he has confessed and everything he has revealed about his miserable life as a vampire, Louis has not been able to make the interviewer realize that vampirism is nothing but an illusion. He even drains the interviewer of blood so that he can see how awful it is, but neither this has any effect on his wishes. The interviewer then goes in search of Lestat so that, hopefully, *he* can make him a vampire. As Wood (1999) says, 'Louis has tried, and failed, to demonstrate to the boy that humanity itself is worth the price of mortality' (Wood 1999: 69). Thus, when the tale of a 200-year-old vampire is not enough to change humans' way of thinking, represented by the interviewer, then what does it take? It poses the same question as above, namely whether we are willing to do or give up anything as long as we can avoid death?

This illusion of vampirism was not an issue in *Dracula*. A reason for this is because of the type of vampire Dracula is. In other words, there is no attraction towards the monstrous and evil vampire Dracula represents. On the other hand, in both *Dracula* and *Interview with the Vampire* we find aspects of vampire sexuality. In chapter 3.2, we saw that a reason for Dracula's interest in Jonathan could have homoerotic undertones. We also saw that Dracula only engaged in what we can call 'sexual vampire relations' with women that were close to Jonathan since he could not engage in any sort of relations with Jonathan directly because homoeroticism was considered a taboo at the time the novel was written. In *Interview with the Vampire* we might see a similar homoerotic theme between Louis and Lestat, and between

Louis and Armand. True, Louis despises Lestat, but it is still Lestat who makes him a vampire, and when Claudia comes into the picture, they do seem like an absurd little family where Louis and Lestat are Claudia's fathers.

As shown above, Tomc's comments on the lack of women in the novel, but in no way does she imply it is because Rice wants to depict the life of homoerotic vampires. It is also true that the vampires in Rice's books have no ways of reproducing genitally; they can only create another vampire by drinking the victim's blood and then have the potential vampire drink their blood. However, we cannot interpret *Interview with the Vampire* in the same sense as we did with *Dracula* because we are no longer dealing with a book that was written in late Victorian England. As stated above, Rice has reinterpreted the mythical figure of the vampire and therefore, we have to see the book in relation to the time in which it was written. In the 1970s, there was a much more liberal attitude towards sexuality and eroticism which helps emphasize the type of sexuality we see in *Interview with the Vampire*. If we suggest that we have surpassed the whole notion of hidden homoeroticism in society, it is possible that in this age, gender does not really have the same restrictions as it had before? Is it possible that what this novel wants to say is that, in this day and age, the lines between male and female are not that important anymore?

The fact is that there *is* an inherent eroticism in the mythical figure of the vampire. Also, as discussed above, *Dracula* can be considered a metaphor for the erotic desires we humans might have, but dare not act upon. Therefore, it is interesting to consider what lies in the relationship between Louis and Armand. Is it love in the way we humans know it, meaning, is there a romantic connection between them, or do they have such a relationship simply because it is in the vampire's nature to be erotic? Louis explains it as follows,

The love I felt. Not physical love, you must understand. I don't speak of that at all, though Armand was beautiful and simple, and no intimacy with him would ever have been repellent. For vampires, physical love culminates and is satisfied in one thing, the kill. I speak of another kind of love which drew me to him completely as the teacher which Lestat had never been. (Rice 1998: 230)

This suggests that the supposed 'love' between Louis and Armand is not the same as the love between two mortal men, and it supports the theory that between vampires, gender does not matter because it is not *physical* love.

There is also a homoerotic quality to the relationship between Louis and Lestat. Because Lestat is his maker, Louis will always be closely connected with him, and the way that they live together as father and father to Claudia forms an image of a homosexual couple. However, the argument is the same here as before, can we call someone homosexual, or a relationship homoerotic, if we question the importance of distinct and separate genders? When Lestat decides to make Claudia into a vampire he says, 'I am like a mother...I want a child!' (Rice 1998: 83), and based on that we can agree with Wood when he says, that 'in a world were neither male nor female vampires have reproductive organs, gender is irrelevant' (Wood: 1999: 74).

At this point it is interesting to take a look at what defines 'gender'. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines gender as, 'the fact of being male or female', but we can also say that gender is defined from socially constructed ideas about the particular role a sex performs in society. In that sense, we can say that before 1970, a man's role was to work and provide for his family, and a woman's role was to take care of the home. However, in the 1960 and 70s, the American feminist movement grew, and the gender roles that were assigned to men and women were put into question. Neither Dracula, nor Louis or Armand, fit into the social roles society has created for them. Thus, it is possible to view *Interview with the Vampire* as a comment on these archaic gender roles and ask if gender really matters? It can be transferred to our human lives to suggest the same in the debate over same-sex relationships. Does it really matter who is with whom? Perhaps what Rice wants to say is that we should not be so caught up in the dichotomy of male and female that we forget that we are all still human.

#### 4.3 More metonymical?

Now that we have looked at how the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* can function as metaphors for humans we also have to address the possible metonymical aspect of the vampires. An interesting point in the novel is that Louis says, 'I discovered that I could see myself in a mirror' (Rice 1998: 37). This characteristic is in stark contrast to Dracula who had no reflection whatsoever. As suggested above, a reason for this could be the fact that Dracula represented the sides of ourselves that we did not want to acknowledge and therefore, Jonathan would see neither these

sides, nor Dracula, in the mirror. I also questioned whether Dracula was a physical entity in the novel or if he was invented by the human characters in the book as a way for them to project these unacknowledged sides of themselves. On the basis of these two suggestions, it might be possible to propose that a reason why the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* can see themselves in the mirror is because they no longer function as mere representations of our shadow sides. It is possible that the shift in the way we see the vampire has caused them to evolve into something more substantial, something more human?

As stated above, the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* have become more anthropomorphic, meaning that they have come to resemble humans much more than earlier vampires such as Dracula. Even though Louis and the vampires in this novel have to keep their existence relatively secret, and despite the fact the main story in the novel takes place in the vampire universe only, they still interact with humans. Early in the book, Babette sees Louis after he has been changed and she thinks he is from the Devil (Rice 1998: 62), and the interviewer does not become frightened of Louis until he sees him in real, electrical light. Louis says, 'by candlelight I always had a less supernatural appearance' (46), and this implies that, compared to Dracula, the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* have a less supernatural appearance so that you need to look at them in a very good light to see that they are not human. There is the notion of these vampires being a kind of 'superhuman', as discussed above. They are incomprehensibly beautiful; they have immortal life and does not age nor become overweight. Thus, they are what many human beings dream of and seek out to accomplish through surgery and special diets. However, it is debatable whether one can see 'vampire' and 'human' as two contiguous terms when it comes to the physical appearance of these vampires. This is because, despite the fact that they have become more anthropomorphic, they still have a physical appearance and features that make them too human.

On the other hand, when it comes to their psyche, it has changed from what we have seen before, at least when talking about Louis. Lestat has too much of the old, predatory, larger-than-life view of the world and of his existence, but Louis is different. He is able to retain some of the humanity he had as a human, and therefore he has a conscience. He has moral and ethical qualms, something that applies more to a human way of thinking than a stereotypical vampiric way. In that sense, one can say that the type of vampire that Louis is a sort of extension of being a human. He talks

like a human, walks like a human and even though he does not exactly *look* human, he still possesses a human side that makes him float in the realm between supernatural and human. Thus, even though the vampires in this novel are still beings that are different from us, what they have to offer is something that is not so radically different from humans. The interviewer sees something in Louis that he finds attractive and obtainable, therefore, what Louis has to offer is not as frightening and repulsive as Dracula. In that sense, we can say that, Louis in particular, is moving away from the metaphorical and supernatural, towards the metonymical and human.

## 5 Twilight and The Southern Vampire Mysteries

In the previous chapter we saw that with *Interview with the Vampire*, Anne Rice changed the code for the mythical figure of the vampire. Since that novel, there has been a large amount of other stories that depict a different and more sympathetic kind of vampire. However, from the 1980s until present day, vampire literature has taken a different turn when it comes to its target audience. Whereas vampire literature before 1980 was mainly directed toward adults, later novels and stories are more directed towards children and teenagers. Examples of this type of literature is, for instance, *Fifth Grade Monsters* (1987-91) by Mel Gilden, the *Vampire Diaries* series (1991-92 and 2009-) by L.J. Smith, the *Vampire Kisses* series (2003-) by Ellen Schreiber and last but not least the *Twilight* series (2005-08) by Stephenie Meyer. In 2009, the *Vampire Diaries* books were turned into a TV-series that seeks to match the immensely popular show 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer', which premiered in 1997 and ended in 2003, and its less popular spin-off series 'Angel' (2003-04). In addition to these books and TV-series, a number of vampire films were made, for example, 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' (1992), on which the TV-series was based. Also, there have been a number of new *Dracula* adaptations such as Francis Ford Coppola's 'Dracula' (1992) and some lesser known versions especially directed towards teenagers, 'Dracula 2000' (2000) and 'Dracula II: Ascension' (2003). Then, in 2008, the first film based on the *Twilight* series was released and the television series 'True Blood', based on the *Southern Vampire Mysteries*, premiered on American television. Thus, as one can see, there is a huge interest in everything vampire related, and this interest has increased substantially in the last decade.

In addition to a shift in the target audience, a new way of portraying the vampire has emerged – one that differs from the type of vampire seen both in *Dracula* and in *Interview with the Vampire*. While Anne Rice created a more anthropomorphic type of vampire who had moral and ethical issues with its existence, these newer additions to the contemporary vampire fiction listed above, brings the vampire even closer to us humans. In *Interview with the Vampire* the vampires have a greater resemblance to humans than, for instance, *Dracula* has. They exist in a universe of

their own and the interaction with humans is minimal. But, in these newer novels, the vampires are even more human-like in appearance and an integral part of the human world. This is why I have chosen to use two series of books, *Twilight* (2005-8) and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* (2001-), in this chapter, namely because these books illustrate both this more humanlike vampire and also an interrelation between humans and vampires where the vampires live among humans without them knowing what they are.

As stated above, the *Twilight* series is written for a young audience. On the other hand, *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* are for a more mature audience. The *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* are similar in many respects, for instance, both series are about vampires living in contemporary society as a part of the human world. But, these books will also be used to illustrate the modern vampire because it is portrayed rather differently in the two series, as we shall see below. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate how the modern vampire is presented and what function it has in these series of books. As stated before, vampires have a particular ability to be a metaphor for something in the human world, and the reason why this mythical figure is as popular today as it was over a century ago, is because of its adaptability. Vampires have the ability to change and adapt to each culture and time it is a part of, and in that sense it never becomes outdated. Therefore, I will try to determine whether, or to what degree, the contemporary vampire represents a shift in how we understand the vampire. Has the modern vampire indeed become less metaphorical and more metonymical?

### 5.1 The contemporary vampire

The *Twilight* series consists of four books, *Twilight* (2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007) and *Breaking Dawn* (2008), and it tells the story of Bella Swan, a seventeen-year-old girl who moves to Forks, Washington to live with her dad. In the beginning she detests this little remote town, but then she meets Edward Cullen, a mysterious and unbelievably beautiful boy. At first he avoids her at all cost, to Bella's great disappointment, however, after a while, he starts to show interest in her. Bella cannot make sense of him, until she finds out that he and the rest of his family are

vampires. Despite this surprising discovery, she finds that she cannot picture a life without him. Edward feels the same about her, but is very much concerned about the implications his vampire life will have on her, for instance, that she is in constant danger both from him and other vampires. That is why, in the second book, *New Moon*, Edward decides to leave Bella, but they come to realize that they cannot live without each other and that they will deal with whatever danger they meet. However, Bella wishes to become a vampire herself so that this constant danger disappears, but for various reasons Edward is reluctant to make her immortal. Nonetheless, in the fourth and final book, when they are on their honeymoon, Bella discovers that she is pregnant and that this is no ordinary fetus. She carries a half human, half vampire baby that grows at a rapid speed. After almost being killed by the pregnancy, Bella delivers a beautiful and very special girl. The consequence this has for Bella is that Edward is forced to make Bella a vampire or she will die. The only problem is that the Volturi, the vampire legislators and 'Royal Family', are not too happy about a half vampire, half human child, thus the Cullen family have to gather all the strength they have to defend their existence.

In a nutshell, this is a story of difficult and forbidden love between vampire and human. In addition to Edward, there are several supporting vampire characters in the books, many of whom comprise Edward's family, his parents Esme and Carlisle, his brothers Emmett and Jasper and his sisters Rosalie and Alice. These, along with many other vampires in the books, are depicted according to a new interpretation of the vampire myth, however, some are of the more sinister kind that we find in both *Interview with the Vampire* and *Dracula*. This shows that vampires in present day literature are no longer just one thing, they are just as diverse as humans are, which gives them metonymical qualities. In the chapters three and four, it became clear that there are significant differences between *Dracula* and *Interview with the Vampire* when it comes to vampire rules and characteristics. The *Twilight* series then differ from these books because Meyer has created a vampire universe in which the vampires are quite dissimilar from, but also much alike those we saw in *Interview with the Vampire*. Thus, two interesting points to consider in this chapter are *why* they are similar and *why* they are different because then one will see if there is a significant shift in the depiction of the literary vampire in contemporary books.

One of the characteristics that we see in the *Twilight* series, as well as in *Interview with the Vampire* and *Dracula*, is that these vampires have very keen



senses. Their sense of smell, sight and hearing (Meyer 2005: 20, 228) are very enhanced, and they also possess supernatural strength and speed. There is one incident in the first book that illustrates this very clearly, namely when Bella is almost crushed by a car in the school parking lot but is saved by Edward. Bella narrates,

Two long, white hands shot out protectively in front of me, and the van shuddered to a stop a foot from my face, the large hands fitting providentially into a deep dent in the side of the van's body. Then his hands moved so fast they blurred (48)

This shows that Edward is abnormally strong and fast, and there are also several incidents in the book when Edward seems to appear out of thin air (69, 173). Another trait that is similar to the previous vampires discussed in this thesis is that they do not eat or sleep (119), however, they do not have to stay in coffins during the night. There is a passage in *Twilight* that is very alike one from *Interview with the Vampire*, quoted in chapter four, where Bella questions Edward about vampires,

“Don't laugh – but how can you come out during the daytime?”

He laughed anyway. “Myth.”

“Burned by the sun?”

“Myth.”

“Sleeping in coffins?”

“Myth.” He hesitated for a moment, and a peculiar tone entered his voice. “I can't sleep”

It took me a minute to absorb that. “At all?”

“Never,” he said. (161-2)

Here, as well as in the passage from *Interview with the Vampire*, we see that the humans in the novel have a preconceived notion of what a vampire is. They know about the myth and know what the stereotypical characteristics of a vampire are, and so do the vampires who react with laughter because of humans' naive belief in myth.

Despite the fact that the vampire has become demythologized over the years so that these old notions are laughed at, Meyer has included some of the characteristics that are typical of the mythical figure of the vampire. She has, as stated above, created her own vampire universe in which the vampires have become very human-like, but why is it that characteristics such as abnormal strength and speed and enhanced senses have survived and not, for instance, aversion to holy objects and

sunlight? The vampires in the *Twilight* series are not affected by crucifixes and Meyer has left out this part of the vampire myth because it is, for lack of a better word, outdated. Crucifixes do not have any effect on the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* either, and the reason for this is because the world has become more secular than it was around the time that *Dracula* was written. Thus, since the vampire is very adaptable to the time in which it was written and since it has gone through a process of demythologization, aversion to all things holy is not relevant for vampires anymore. This is because they have come a long way from being an explanation of unholy behaviour, cf. chapter 2.2. But, paradoxically, although vampires have become more secular, they have also become more superhuman, or perhaps *divine*, beings. So, even though holy objects have no effect on them, the vampires themselves have become quite God-like. We can use almost the same reason as above to explain the fact that they can be outside in daylight, namely that it is outdated. In order to use the communal setting she has for her vampires, Meyer cannot combine living 'the human way' and not being able to walk around in the daytime, thus, she had to come up with a new interpretation of the aversion to sunlight so that it fits the culture and time she has set her vampires in. But this we will get back to later in this chapter.

Meyer has decided to include some of the stereotypical vampire characteristics, such as enormous strength and speed and the heightened senses, because it is a consequence of making her vampires more human. She has to incorporate *some* traits that set them apart from humans because if she had not, there would not be any reason for including vampires as central characters. If Edward were human, the *Twilight* series would have been reduced to a love story you see in so many other books in the teenage literature genre. The reason for including *these* particular traits, as opposed to those in the previous paragraph, is because these are characteristics that show that these vampires are, in fact, superhuman. These characteristics are simply based on features that we humans already have. We are all, to a certain extent, strong and fast, and we all have five senses; it is just that when it comes to vampires they are more enhanced than they are in humans. In that sense, the vampire has evolved into an extension of a human; they are something *beyond* human.

So, Meyer has stuck to some of the old aspects of the mythical figure of the vampire. Although there are many characteristics of the myth to choose from when creating a character, some are repeated in practically all vampire stories, such as pale

and cold skin and very sharply defined facial features. These are, yet again, basic characteristics that have to be used in order to differentiate vampires from humans, whether they are anthropomorphic or not. The physical features of a vampire is especially important because it shows how their appearance always, in one way or another, is perceived as sublime. As outlined in the two previous chapters, we can get a sense of the sublime, according to Philip Shaw (2006), 'whenever experience slips out of conventional understanding, whenever the power of an object or event is such that words fail and points of comparison disappear' (Shaw 2006: 2). One must not equal the sublime with merely being very beautiful, though, because the concept of the sublime is, in a way, the opposite of that. The sublime is so powerful and overwhelming that it is astonishing and terrifying at the same time because one cannot make sense of what one sees. Both Dracula and the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* have that effect on the human characters in the novels, although in quite different ways. Dracula's appearance has an effect of the sublime because he looks very peculiar and scary, cf. chapter 3.1. Louis and the other vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* are also, in a sense, frightening, but they are perceived thus because there is something about them that is so otherworldly that humans cannot make sense of it. It is *this* that is the sublime and it is *this* feeling one gets from the vampires in the *Twilight* series. The first time Bella spots the Cullens she says,

Every one of them was chalky pale (...) They all had very dark eyes despite the range in hair tones. They also had dark shadows under those eyes – purplish bruise-like shadows.

(...)

But all this is not why I couldn't look away.

I stared because their faces, so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful. They were faces you never expected to see except perhaps on the airbrushed pages of a fashion magazine. Or painted by an old master as the face of an angel. (Meyer 2005: 16-17)

Especially the use of the words 'inhumanly beautiful' enhances just how overwhelming their appearance is. Bella cannot make herself look away and she cannot believe that what she sees is real. Meyer describes them as having a 'disturbing grace' (119) and about Edward she uses words such as 'beautiful to an excruciating degree' (199).

However, even though the vampires in both *Interview with the Vampire* and the *Twilight* series are incomprehensibly beautiful, the vampires in the former novel are still more terrifying than those in the latter books. As we saw in chapter two, Louis evoked a sense of fear in, for instance, Babette and the interviewer, but although Bella is very intrigued with the way the Cullens look, she is not frightened. After she has deduced that Edward must be a vampire, she says, 'after all, if we was something...sinister, he'd done nothing to hurt me so far' (Meyer 2005: 120) and she concludes that 'when I thought of him (...) I wanted nothing more than to be with him right now' (121). This may be because Bella is not so easily scared, but if we consider the vampires in *Twilight* in relation to the concept of 'the uncanny', it is a paradox that she does not seem to be scared at all. One would think that the Cullens would possess less of that uncanny factor than Louis and Dracula since they are so human-like. However, as we know, the uncanny is not something that is new and unfamiliar, but rather something that is *familiar*. It becomes frightening and uncanny because we realize that we actually do not know what we think we know, thus, the fact that the Cullens look so unlike any image of a vampire that Bella has, she should, theoretically, be more frightened after her realization than she is. In that sense, even though vampires are becoming more human, or metonymical, that does not make them less uncanny.

Nevertheless, in addition to his beauty and charm, Edward is portrayed as mysterious, anguished and at times he comes off as being slightly arrogant. For instance, before he gets to know Bella, he tends to laugh at her when she falls victim to her own clumsiness (Meyer 2005: 44). He is also described as erratic (185) and prone to having a bit of a temper (142). He is aware of this himself because he contemplates being 'the bad guy' (79) and he says, 'I'm dangerous, Bella' (166). Thus, by adding up these traits we again see evidence of a Byronic hero. As outlined in chapter 3.1, a Byronic hero is a type of character that originated in Lord Byron's work *Manfred*, and it is characterized as someone who is unsympathetic, vicious and who is aristocratic and disdainful of other people. He is also portrayed as having a bitter view of the world because of being thrown into a situation he did not choose and as struggling with an immense guilt for something. Nevertheless, one of the most important traits one finds in a Byronic hero is that despite the fact that he is unsympathetic and vicious, he is still an immensely attractive and charismatic character. He is the ultimate 'bad guy', but the women are still drawn to him like a

magnet. Bella knows Edward is dangerous, but she cannot stay away from him, and although Edward is not as an abundant Byronic hero as, for instance, Lord Ruthven in 'The Vampyre' or Dracula, he does to some extent fulfill the criteria of this literary character.

However, to characterize him as a Byronic hero is debatable. As Stephanie Mendoza says in her essay 'From Dawn to Twilight: The Byronic Hero' (2009), Edward is 'much softer and much less reckless than other confirmed Byronic heroes, and due to his abnormalities, it is unclear if his characterization as such would be fitting' (Mendoza 2009: 9). He *is* mysterious and has an unreliable mood. He feels guilty for falling in love with Bella since she is a human, and he is in anguish because of his vampiric nature. There are some direct references to other typical Byronic heroes in the *Twilight* books, for instance, Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. Edward finds Bella's copy of the novel and says, 'the more time I spend with you, the more human emotions seem comprehensible to me. I'm discovering that I can sympathize with Heathcliff in ways I didn't think possible before' (Meyer 2007: 235). Thus, the characterization of Edward as a Byronic hero is supported even more. Nonetheless, as stated above, he is not the *typical* Byronic hero because he is not as bad or as mad as, for instance, Lord Ruthven or Heathcliff. Mendoza's main argument against Edward as a Byronic hero is that, as opposed to Heathcliff, he receives salvation from Bella (Mendoza 2009: 19). The traditional Byronic hero is not very susceptible to change, but Edward is and he does change when he meets Bella. Therefore, even though Edward may not fit in with the traditional view of the Byronic hero, he represents a new and evolved type of this personage and it shows that the contemporary vampire is turning back to its roots, namely Lord Ruthven in 'The Vampyre'.

In *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* series by Charlaine Harris, the vampires are depicted in a similar way to those in *Twilight*. The books are about Sookie Stackhouse, a young woman who works as a waitress in Bon Temps, Louisiana. One day a vampire named Bill comes into the bar and after Sookie saves him from a couple of Drainers, that is, people who drain vampires of their blood, they get to know each other and fall in love. The books are in the form of a crime mystery related to vampires and other supernatural beings, and it is up to Sookie to solve these mysteries. Harris has done a thorough job in creating her own vampire universe, and the biggest difference between these books and, practically, all other vampire stories, is that the existence of these vampires is public knowledge and they have lived side

by side with humans for a couple of years. The vampires in these books decided it was safe to reveal their existence after Japanese scientists developed synthetic blood (Harris 2003: 4). This blood is bottled and can be bought anywhere that sells ordinary soft drinks for humans. In this universe there are vampires living in most countries in the world, but in some of them, vampires are not considered equal citizens. Other countries, such as the United States, have a more tolerant attitude, but there are still problematic points with vampire integration (5). Another significant point in Charlaine Harris' books is that there is a sort of vampire royalty, much in the same sense as the Volturi in the *Twilight* series. In *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, the United States is divided into kingdoms that each has a king or a queen who rules it. The kingdoms are in turn divided into areas that are lead by a sheriff. These are the vampire authorities who enforce vampire laws and regulations (37-38).

Also in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* some of the vampires are very beautiful, but they are also mysterious and possibly dangerous, and there are a lot more 'bad' vampires in these books than in the *Twilight* series. The first time Sookie meets Bill she is, as Bella, very intrigued. She narrates,

He was a little under six feet, I estimated. He had thick brown hair, combed straight back and brushing his collar, and his long sideburns seemed curiously old-fashioned. He was pale, of course (...) his lips were lovely, sharply sculpted, and he had arched dark brows. His nose swooped down right out of that arch, like a prince's in a Byzantine mosaic (...) his eyes were even darker than his hair, and the whites were incredibly white. (Harris 2001: 2)

Thus, Charlaine Harris follows the tradition of having a vampire that has an incredibly perfect and piercing physical appearance. As with the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* and those in the *Twilight* series, Bill is so beautiful that it is almost unreal. There is also an interesting parallel between Harris and Meyer's books in the way Bill and Edward's voices are described. Sookie describes it as 'cool and clear, like a stream over smooth stones' (3), and Bella describes Edwards voice as being 'musical' (Meyer 2005: 37). This is yet another means to add to the otherworldly appearance of both Edward and Bill and it explains why these two human girls are so mesmerized. Their beautiful and pleasing voices, as well as their appearance, draw them in.

There are other characteristics in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* that are similar to the other books in this thesis. Again we see that they are very strong (Harris 2001: 55) and fast (51), they have enhanced senses (176-77), they are allergic to

sunlight (7) and they can be killed by a stake through the heart. Also, they have the ability to 'glamor' humans, which is a way of hypnotizing their victims. Or, more specifically, Bill says that before 'we had to persuade people we were harmless...or assure them they hadn't seen us at all...or delude them into thinking they'd seen something else' (57). This 'glamoring' can be seen as equivalent to the 'dazzling' power that Edward has on Bella. There is nothing to suggest that Edward does it intentionally because Bella says, "[y]ou really should not do that to people" (...) He seemed confused. "Oh, come on, (...) you *have* to know the effect you have on people" (Meyer 2005: 145). Sookie, on the other hand, is immune to Bill and other vampire's glamoring (Harris 2001: 57). Nevertheless, what we see here is the kind of mesmerizing power that Dracula has, although it does not function in the same way. Dracula used his power to lure his victims, but the vampires in *Twilight* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* do not, although they can if they want to. The reason for this is that they have no need to hypnotize their human victims anymore. This is because now that vampires live as 'vegetarians' and survive on synthetic blood, there are very few human victims to speak of.

Although the vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* are similar to other vampires in this thesis, there are some characteristics and rules that apply just to the vampires in Harris' books. Some of these vampires have special powers, for instance, Bill has the ability to levitate (Harris 2001: 57). However, all vampires in these novels are allergic to silver (Harris 2002: 195), they cannot enter a house unless they are invited (235) and they have fangs that are usually retracted, but that come out whenever they are aroused or hungry (Harris 2001: 218). These are all typical traits we find in the traditional vampire myth, and this is interesting because we do not see these particular characteristics in either Dracula or the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* or the *Twilight* series. Thus, while Harris is reinventing the vampire myth in her own way by making the supernatural an integral part of the natural world, she still goes back to the traditional myth to a larger extent than Rice and Meyer. While the vampires in the two latter books ridicule many of the stereotypical vampire characteristics, the vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* do not. This is a way for Harris, as it is for Meyer, to not make her vampires *too* human. In other words, she has made her vampires a part of the human world; they hold human jobs and go out and enjoy themselves. Nonetheless, to actually make the distinction between human and vampire, she has to attribute them with some of the typical vampire

characteristics or else there would not be a point in making vampires a part of the main characters in the novels.

Although some of the vampires in Harris' books have special abilities, these vampires, like Rice's vampires, do not have the ability to, for instance, transform into an animal as Dracula has. There are, however, several powers of this kind in Meyer's vampire universe. Edward has the ability to hear what people are thinking (Meyer 2005: 152), his sister, Alice, has the ability to foresee the future (253) and his brother, Jasper, can control people's moods by, for instance, calming someone down when they are agitated (269). Such gifts are also present amongst the Volturi, and the lead Volturi vampire, Aro's, ability is almost similar to Edward's, but he needs to touch someone to hear their thoughts. Also, as opposed to Edward who can only hear what people are thinking there and then, Aro can hear every thought they have ever had (Meyer 2006: 413).

Other special abilities that some of the vampires throughout all the four books have are the ability to inflict excruciating pain (Meyer 2006: 418), knowing when someone is lying (Meyer 2008: 565) and controlling the elements (566), one power that is strikingly similar to that of Dracula, cf. chapter 3.1. In addition to these active powers, the other members of the Cullen family are said to have certain traits that are particular to them, and Carlisle, Edward's father, says that this attribute is something that they bring with them from their mortal life, only that it is enhanced (Meyer 2005: 268). This coincides with the theory above that Meyer has kept those old characteristics such as strength, speed and heightened senses because they are an enhancement of those humans already have. Carlisle's explanation of the phenomenon makes sense for Bella because her gift as a vampire is shielding (Meyer 2008: 552), that is, she is immune to most powers other vampires have. In her human form, only Bella herself was immune to, among others, Edward's mind reading, but in her vampiric form she can project a shield of immunity to protect others as well. Although none of the vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* have these special kinds of powers, Sookie, in fact, has the exact same ability as Edward, namely mind reading (Harris 2001: 36). The interesting thing, though, is that the only thoughts Sookie *cannot* hear are those of vampires. Thus, her power practically functions in the exact opposite way of Edward's. Why is this, and why have both Meyer and Harris decided to provide one of their main characters with this ability?



Whereas Edward is very frustrated that he cannot read Bella's mind, Sookie does not mind Bill being 'silent'. The reason for Edward's annoyance is related to a phenomenon we find in the mythical figure of the vampire, namely penetration of the mind. As outlined in chapter 3.1, this is one of the early literary vampires, for instance Lord Ruthven and Carmilla's, primal instincts. They lure their victims by penetrating their minds and even though Edward has no need to lure Bella into anything, it is obviously still a huge part of his psyche. In *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, Sookie, the *human*, is the one who has the telepathic abilities so we cannot link this with vampire folklore, but it does have a purpose when it comes to the relationship between her and Bill. A vampire's mind is the only one she cannot hear so she is very glad that she has finally found a man whose mind she does not have access to. However, the main reason why it is interesting how the roles are swapped when it comes to Edward and Sookie is because it questions Sookie's humanity. Her ability also puts her in the realm of the supernatural so we have to see her in a different light than for instance Bella. It helps explain why she is so unaffected by vampires and other supernatural creatures, and why there is a mutual attraction between her and these beings. Nevertheless, while Meyer has stripped her vampires of almost all of the traditional vampire characteristics, she has attributed her vampires with supernatural powers in order to not collapse the border between vampire and human completely. In other words, she wants to show that although her vampires are very human-like, they do not exist in the same way as humans do.

A scholar who has addressed this point of the relationship between the existence of humans versus the existence of vampires, and has written about the ontology of the vampires in *Twilight*, is Philip Puszczalowski (2009). He suggests that the theory behind Edward's ability is that because all vampires are frozen in time, they 'do not exist in space and time in the same way that we [humans] do' (Puszczalowski 2009: 224). Therefore, by being able to read other people's minds, Edward collapses the space between his mind and the mind of the person he reads. Likewise, Alice manipulates the space between future and present to be able to see the future, and Aro collapses the space between past and present in order to see all the thoughts a person has ever had. Although the vampires in the *Twilight* series are special because of these powers, this is not the only characteristic that more or less differs from vampires in other books.

One of the most interesting characteristics of the vampires in the *Twilight* series is that their skin is as hard as the hardest substance there is, namely diamond. This particular trait is what enables them to walk around during the day. They can even walk around in the sun if they want to, but that would be problematic as the light reflects off their skin so that it looks like their whole bodies are encrusted with diamonds (Meyer 2005: 228). This is interesting because out of all the books read and/or consulted for this thesis, the *Twilight* series is the only example where vampires are not affected by sunlight in any fatal way. Also, these books are the only ones that show that its vampires cannot for example kill themselves by jumping off a cliff or putting a gun to their temple. In other books they can, for instance, be beheaded and burnt, or be killed by a stake through the heart, but the vampires in *Twilight* cannot because their skin is simply so hard that nothing will be able to damage them. This is also why a stake through the heart will not kill them as it would with the vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* who do not share this physical characteristic with the *Twilight* vampires.

Another feature of the Cullens that set them apart from other vampires is that instead of the red eyes that Dracula has or the green eyes of Louis, their eyes are of a bright amber colour. However, this is only when they have just fed; when they are hungry their eyes are much darker, almost black (Meyer 2005: 164). On the other hand, there are several vampires in the *Twilight* series that have red eyes and that is because they feed on human blood. Ergo, human blood makes their eyes red. The Cullen family is one of two vampire covens that do not feed on humans, but rather on animals, and the eye colour is a way of distinguishing the good vampires from the seemingly bad ones.

Because of this special lifestyle, the Cullens jokingly refer to themselves as *vegetarians* (Meyer 2005: 164) and in the following passage, Edward describes to Bella how it is to live solely on animal blood, 'I'd compare it to living on tofu and soy milk (...) It doesn't completely satiate the hunger – or rather thirst. But it keeps us strong enough to resist' (ibid.). It is the same with the synthetic, bottled blood in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*. They no longer have to feed on humans, but the synthetic blood, as in *Twilight*, '[keep] vampires up to par as far as nutrition, but [doesn't] really satisfy their hunger' (Harris 2001: 5). The reason why the Cullens have chosen to not take human lives to survive is similar to Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*. There are moral and ethical issues related to this decision, namely that

they find it wrong to kill humans for sustenance. They are perfectly able to actually live, and not just merely survive, on animal blood. This is, as seen in chapter four, not the case for Anne Rice's vampires. Louis can to some extent survive on animal blood, but it will severely weaken him. The fact that Louis' wish is not feasible is why he is in such despair, as opposed to the vampires in *Twilight* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* who are able to choose an ethical and morally just way of living.

Because of the vampire rules that govern the vampires in *Twilight*, Edward is able to have a different view on things than Louis. Edward does not want to be a monster and he says,

just because we've been dealt a certain hand...it doesn't mean that we can't choose to rise above – to conquer the boundaries of a destiny that none of us wanted. To try to retain whatever essential humanity we can  
(Meyer 2005: 268)

Here, we see another parallel to Louis because he, in a sense, did not either choose to become a vampire. However, the Cullen family, being a product of the contemporary vampire, has the opportunity to take control of their lives in a way that was impossible for Louis. Despite the fact that Edward has abstained from human blood for a very long time, it is still a struggle for him to be with Bella. He says himself that Bella is his like his exact brand of heroine (Meyer 2005: 35), meaning that even though other people's blood is enticing to Edward, Bella's blood has an attraction for him that is almost unbearable. This is also why he cannot stay away from her, no matter how hard he tries, and this is a real struggle for him. Edward expresses his anguish saying that Bella is 'some kind of demon, summoned straight from my own personal hell to ruin me' (236). Those are very strong words, but they illustrate so explicitly what kind of pain Edward is in and, also, how keen the vampires' sense of smell is and just how much this sense drives them. But the bottom line is that because Bella is human and he is a vampire, he is torn because of a constant internal dilemma (151). As he explains this dilemma himself, 'I have to mind my actions every moment that we're together so that I don't hurt you. I could kill you quite easily Bella, simply by accident' (271). Thus, even though the Cullens are vegetarians and abstain from human blood, it does not mean that their primal instincts of bloodlust are gone, just that they are able to suppress them because of more powerful desires, namely the desire to be a good vampire.

All they want is to live inconspicuously in the human world and as close to a normal human life as they can. To the outside world they are just another upper middle-class family and their cover story is that Edward and his brothers and sisters are Carlisle and Esme's foster children. However, they are considered to be a little strange and they cannot stay in any one place too long since people would find it very weird that they never grow older. Nevertheless, even though they 'try to blend in' (Meyer 2005: 174) they cannot ever reveal their true nature. There is a very strict rule in the vampire world which says that if a human ever comes to know what they are, that human has to be destroyed immediately. This rule is strictly upheld by the Volturi and if it had not been for the fact that Bella herself wants to become a vampire, they would have killed her (Meyer 2006: 420). As stated above, it is the complete opposite in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* because in these books the humans know that there are vampires living among them. However, this openness has brought with it some problems that the vampires in the *Twilight* series want to avoid.

The revelation of the existence of vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* have brought with it both positive and negative results. A large part of the world is fairly tolerant of vampires, but there are many who are not. A reason for this is because people are afraid of what they do not know, but they do not actually know what they think they know. They, along with all human characters in the various texts in this thesis have an image of what a vampire is, and that image is of an evil and bloodthirsty killer. Thus, the vampires in the *Twilight* series have to keep their existence a secret so as to avoid being treated as psychopaths and outcasts in the human world. They are content with their way of life and see no reason in risking the life they have in order to, for instance, settle down in one place and not have to fear that people are going to react to their never-ageing appearance.

One of the most interesting points where the *Twilight series* differ from most other vampire stories is that whilst the common notion of a vampire's reproductive possibilities in previous cases is solely through biting a human, in the *Twilight series*, Edward is able to make Bella pregnant. It is a fact in these books, as well as in all vampire literature, that vampire women cannot bear children, but Bella is still human when she becomes pregnant. Nevertheless, what we see here is that Meyer has gone back to the ancient roots of vampirism. As outlined in chapter 2.2, vampirism was originally related to problematic childbirths, that is, if women gave birth to a stillborn child, it was believed that this woman was a vampire. In Bella's case, the child is not

stillborn, but rather a human-vampire hybrid. Thus, while Meyer has shed most of the mythical aspects of vampires in her books, she has reinstated the connection between vampirism and the feminine.

Nonetheless, this type of procreation between Bella and Edward is never heard of before and it has severe consequences for Bella because the child she bears is practically killing her as it sucks the life out of her, growing at rapid speed. Nobody knows what the fetus is, exactly, but they are able to deduce that it is more vampire than human because it craves blood, not food, as nutrition (Meyer 2008: 220). Aside from the *Twilight* series, there have been very few cases of vampire-human breeding in vampire literature, but one other example is Jacqueline Lichtenberg's novel, *Those of My Blood* (1988). The vampire as a mythical figure is, as we have seen in this thesis, a very erotic being, however, production of offspring by sexual intercourse is not a vampire's main interest. It is, as Louis says in *Interview with the Vampire*, that 'physical love culminates and is satisfied in one thing, the kill' (Rice 1998: 230). Vampire eroticism is not about genital sex; it is about the bite. In other words, they want to succumb to their primal erotic needs and engage in their physical desires.

An interesting point about the *Twilight* series is that the abundant erotic nature of the vampire that is displayed in *Dracula* and *Interview with the Vampire* is not seen in these books. Although Bella and Edward's romantic relationship eventually turns into a sexual one, it is of the more innocent sort. This can be due to the fact that Meyer is a devout Mormon, thus she would, for religious reasons, not portray her vampires as very sexual beings. True, Bella and Edward does not engage in sexual relations until *after* they are married. However, neither Bella nor Edward are depicted as religious, and there are other indications as to why vampire eroticism is not much present in these books. One of them is that these novels deal with the *love* between a vampire and a human. As discussed above, this is not a story that sets out to depict the stereotypical vampire, but rather the idea that a relationship between a vampire and a human does not necessarily have to be erotic in the sense of explicit sexual relations.

A theory that supports this is set forth by Lev Grossman in his *Time Magazine* portrait of Stephenie Meyer. He says, '[w]hat makes Meyer's books so distinctive is that they're about the erotics of abstinence' (Grossman 2008). In other words, there is a clear eroticism between Edward and Bella only it is displayed through the tension that comes from what Grossman calls the 'superhuman acts of self-restraint' (ibid.). Therefore, Meyer has again chosen to put her own and unconventional twist to

vampire lore by redefining what vampire eroticism is all about. However, an interesting point is that even though the sexuality between Edward and Bella is very clean and innocent, the result is still the same. She becomes a vampire even though he does not bite her, but she is transformed as a result of her pregnancy, which in turn is a result of sexual intercourse. Thus, one can say that the bite as a metaphor for sex has evolved into actual sex in the *Twilight* series. The sexual intercourse between Edward and Bella is less threatening than the bite because it is something humans already know and engage in. The bite is connected with a kind of beastly sexuality that we are not familiar with, so it would have been a lot worse if Edward had actually bitten her. Nevertheless, the fact that the bite has evolved into sex is another metonymical factor in these contemporary vampires.

Although the *Twilight* series is devoid of open eroticism, that is not the case in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*. In these books vampire sexuality is present, openly and uncensored, and to have sex with a vampire is even considered to be one of the best sexual experiences one can have. However, the vampires in these books can neither make someone pregnant nor become pregnant themselves (Harris 2001: 82). There are several humans who have a reputation of being so-called 'fang-bangers' which translates as 'vampire groupies', that is, men and women who take sexual pleasure in being bitten by a vampire while having sex with them (24). These people can eventually turn into vampires since they are bitten to such an extent and also might enjoy drinking vampire blood. The aspect of drinking vampire blood is interesting because their blood is considered a high value commodity because of its effect on humans. The special properties of vampire blood is the reason why the drainers mentioned above trap vampires and take all their blood. Sookie narrates,

vampire blood was supposed to temporarily relieve symptoms of illness and increase sexual potency, kind of like prednisone and Viagra rolled into one, there was a huge black market for genuine, undiluted vampire blood. (6-7)

The symbolism that blood holds in these novels is very much in tune with what blood is in vampire lore. It represents life, power and youth<sup>3</sup>. Thus, Harris has constructed her vampire universe so that the properties of vampire blood that empowers vampires will be transferred to humans if they drink vampire blood. This is nothing new

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<sup>3</sup> cf. the appearance of Dracula in the coffin after he has fed, he is 'looking as if his youth had been half-renewed' (Stoker 1998: 51)

because the belief in the magical powers of blood stretches back to ancient times. According to Bartlett and Idriceanu (2005), the pharaohs of Egypt believed that bathing in blood would protect them from leprosy. Moreover, it has been a common belief in medicine that one could replace bad blood with good, new blood, and thus cure illnesses (Bartlett and Idriceanu 2005: 54).

Thus, in vampire lore, blood represents life, but also death because that is usually the fate of the victims of the vampire's thirst. Nonetheless, the main symbolic function is that it is the life force of vampires, meaning, they need blood for sustenance, but blood is also the substance that has the power to create vampires. As we saw in *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis cannot rid himself of Lestat no matter how much he wants to because Lestat is his creator. Louis had to drink some of Lestat's blood in order to complete the vampire transformation process and therefore Louis is eternally linked to him. This is a reminder of the strong bonds blood creates, not just between vampires, but also between members of a family. Therefore, not only is the properties of vampire blood transferred between vampire and human in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, but there is also an eternal connection between, for instance, Bill and Sookie, and this shows just how powerful the symbolic function of blood is in vampire literature.

So, even between these two contemporary series of vampire literature there are significant differences when it comes to their nature. Meyer and Harris have each chosen their way of portraying their vampires, and these depictions have, in turn, different functions. Because of this, they each have their own ways of saying something about humanity.

## 5.2 The function of the contemporary vampire

As seen in chapter 5.1 above, the vampires in the *Twilight* series live as vegetarians. They have made this decision because they have moral issues with taking human lives, much in the same way as Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*. This particular trait can serve as a metaphor for living a morally just life and for choosing to take control over one's destiny, or, one can interpret this vegetarianism as taking back their humanity, which is a metonymical quality. As seen above, Edward says that just

because they have been 'dealt a certain hand' (Meyer 2005: 268), it does not mean that they have to conform to the lifestyle of the more conventional vampires. None of the vampires in the *Twilight* series, save for Bella, have, as far as we know, deliberately chosen to become a vampire. Thus, this decision by some of these vampires can be seen as a rebellion against this supposed monstrous nature to which they are sentenced. They cannot settle with being placed in an existence that does not feel right to them.

If we go back to the discussion of Freud's theory of the id, ego and superego in chapter 4.1, we saw that Louis in *Interview with the Vampire* is mostly driven by his ego, but that he is torn between his id and his superego. Dracula, on the other hand, fully gives in to his primal, vampiric instincts. In other words, he is mostly driven by his id. The Cullens belong somewhere in the realm between the ego and the superego, meaning that whereas they are driven by their rational and intellectual side, they are more driven by their conscience than Louis is because they have taken the step to live as vegetarians. The id is practically non-existent in these vampires because they have managed to suppress their primal instincts to a minimum.

The Cullen's vegetarian lifestyle can be seen as metonymical because it is a parallel to humans. There are many human beings who choose to not eat meat and the most extreme do not even eat products that come from animals, such as dairy products and eggs. However, what they all more or less have in common is that they do not want animals to die because of their diet. We humans are born into a world where meat eating is very common and has been since the beginning of time, but it is up to each individual to choose whether he/she wants to conform to this practice or not. In that sense, the Cullens can be seen as the vampire equivalent of animal rights advocates, only in their world, *humans* are animals and animals are tofu. This is interesting because it supports the notion that some animal rights advocates consider animals as equals to humans in the same way we consider other humans as our equals. In other words, they do not believe in borders between specific species, and since they would not eat another human being, they would not eat an animal either.

What these animal rights advocates are trying to avoid is making humans superior to other species. This is known as *speciesism*, which *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines as, 'the belief that humans are more important than animals, which causes people to treat animals badly'. Of course, we cannot say that all animals have the same abilities of cognitive and rational thinking as humans, and some claim that



fishing is not cruel because fish have not nearly as many brain cells as, for example, a dog. Because of this they do not suffer as a dog would if it was thrown into a room with no oxygen. On the other hand, if we cannot say that animals are completely equivalent to human beings, we still should not trivialize their right to a life without suffering. That is why the Cullens' choice to not kill humans for food has to be a moral and ethical choice. As mentioned in chapter 4.2 above, one can look at the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* as a sort of superhuman being in that they have eternal life and they never grow old or gain weight. In other words, they seem to be what so many humans in these days strive for. The Cullens do have certain abilities that are beyond what we humans can do, and their senses are much more enhanced than ours. Nevertheless, they have chosen to not put themselves above humans, and that is why one can say that they are trying to avoid speciesism. They live in the human world and try to lead as normal a life as possible, and therefore, one can interpret the Cullen's choice of lifestyle as saying that despite their supernaturalness, they consider themselves equal to us humans, hence do not want to take human lives for their own pleasure.

This trait, to make a moral choice to not kill humans for food and rather see themselves as equal to humans, is present in many contemporary vampires. We see it in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* in that vampires across the world decided to come public after the invention of synthetic blood. Before this they had to keep their existence secret because of humans' general knowledge of vampires, namely that they are monstrous bloodsuckers. However, now that the vampires can prove that they do not have to live off of the blood of humans, or animals for that matter, they see a possibility of living peacefully side by side with humans. This, as we shall see later in this chapter, proves in some ways to be more difficult than they imagined, but the main point here is that also *these* vampires have the choice to not kill humans for food. There are of course vampires in Harris' universe, as in Meyer's, that do not want to make that choice, but they still have the opportunity. This is a choice that also Louis in *Interview with the Vampire* more or less makes, but since he is alone in making it he has more problems enforcing the decision he has made. He has no synthetic blood or mountain lions to feed off of, only rats, and if Edward says that the blood of a grizzly bear is like tofu, it is not difficult to imagine how it would be to live on a diet of rat blood.

When it comes to making choices, in the *Twilight* series, Bella probably makes the biggest and most difficult choice of them all as she chooses to become a vampire. Of course, Edward is forced to make an acute decision to transform her into a vampire so that she will survive the brutal birth of their child. Nonetheless, Bella makes the conscious decision to become a vampire long before this occurs, namely in the first book, *Twilight*, when she realizes that, 'You *are* my life. You're the only thing it would hurt me to lose' (Meyer 2005: 413). Edward and his sister Rosalie try to dissuade her as best they can because they know what it is to be a vampire and they did not have a say when it came to their own transformations. Bella's choice is the reason why the vampires in *Twilight* can be seen as metaphors for realizing one's potential. They are beautiful, graceful, strong and fast, and they never age or lose any of these physical characteristics, and this is exactly what Bella yearns for. It would be wrong to say that she is unhappy with her life, but she still does not feel comfortable in her own skin. She is clumsy and accident prone, she does not consider herself to be pretty and she is very self-sacrificing. She moves to Forks to live with her father, who she does not have the closest relationship with, but even though she is miserable, she does not have the heart to leave her father. The choice of the real-life town of Forks as setting for the novel cannot be coincidental since meeting a fork in the road implies having to make a choice in life. We will get back to this later in this chapter, but it seems that Bella, as well as Louis, has some existential issues to deal with. Even though we have made the Mormon connection in the book, atheist existentialism is another way of looking at her situation. If we look back at chapter 4.1, we see that in atheist existentialism the belief is that existence precedes essence. In other words, each individual has to find his/her own meaning in life because there is no one else who can do that, not even God.

One of the philosophers who have defined existentialism and the importance of finding meaning in life is Jean-Paul Sartre. In his essay 'Existentialism is a Humanism' (2003), he says that, 'Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss, or a fungus or a cauliflower' (91). Thus, even if Bella might feel as if she is just plain moss or a cauliflower, she does have a subjective life and she is *free*. Therefore, she actually has, according to Sartre, a *responsibility* to define herself in any possible way in order to avoid anguish and despair. Apparently, the only way she feels she can realize her true potential is by becoming a vampire. She envies Rosalie's beauty and Alice's grace, but the main

reason why Bella wishes to become a vampire is because that is the only way she can be with Edward for the rest of her life. She has a dream in the beginning of the second book, *New Moon*, where she sees herself as an old woman standing beside the ever young Edward, and this scares her because she knows that being human she will eventually grow old and die. Edward, on the other hand, will live on for eternity, and self-sacrificing as she is, Bella might also make the decision she makes because she does not want Edward to eventually lose her.

There are some critics of Meyer's choice of depicting Bella as, what they basically call, a helpless girl who needs to be rescued by a (male) vampire to find meaning in life. Others say that Meyer glorifies vampirism as the way to a kind of superhuman perfection, and even though these statements mainly come from radical feminists, they do make a point, though. Continuing the discussion of immortality and beauty in the previous chapter, one can say that the lure of vampirism is actually the lure of eternal life and incredible beauty. Bella wants to become a vampire so that she will never lose Edward or have him live on for eternity without her. However, she *is* also envious of the vampires' beauty, grace and strength. Therefore, Bella is, technically, no better than the interviewer in *Interview with the Vampire* because as he, she cannot see the negative sides of vampirism that Edward tries to make her see. Edward feels that when he became a vampire, he lost his soul, and Rosalie can never get over the fact that she was deprived of ever bearing her own child. Alice even says, 'You don't get to be human again, Bella. This is a once-in-a-lifetime shot' (Meyer 2007: 276), but Bella feels that her love for Edward and mortality are mutually exclusive, and even though she knows that when she becomes a vampire she can, for instance, never see her parents or friends again, her determination does not falter.

An important question to ask is whether she is right in thinking as she does? More precisely, is she right in thinking that she will find meaning in life by becoming a vampire? She and Edward will probably have many fantastic years together, but what about when they are a thousand years old? Will it still be as amazing as it was in the beginning or will they become so bored with and sick of each other that they would rather kill themselves? If we look back to the quote by Armand in *Interview with the Vampire* in chapter 4.2, he asks '[h]ow many vampires do you think have the stamina for immortality?' (Rice 1998: 255) and he says that the vampires who do not have this endurance will die. This is an important quote to consider also in regards to the *Twilight* series because Bella wishes for immortality and beauty without really

taking into consideration that eternal life will eventually become a curse. Carlisle is over 300 years old and he does not seem to be weary of his life *yet*. This could be because of his dedication to his work, but who knows what is to come?

Of course, nobody knows what will happen to Edward and Bella. However, another point in Sartre's theory is that while everyone is responsible for themselves, they are also responsible for everyone else, meaning that one is responsible for the effects of the choices one makes on the whole of mankind. Therefore, another responsibility Bella has is to make sure that her decision does not have a negative effect on others. One can ask if she does take this responsibility into consideration? This is a difficult question to answer because who are these 'others'? Are they her mother and father, or are they Edward and her child? She knows that she will never be able to keep in contact with her mother and father after she is changed. She cannot even tell them why she cannot keep in contact with them because that will violate the secrecy of vampire existence and her parents will have to be transformed. If not, they will be killed by the Volturi. Therefore she does not take the responsibility of making her mother and father happy. On the other hand, one eventually comes to a point in life where one has to break away from one's 'old' family and focus on one's 'new' family. In that sense, one can argue that Bella first and foremost has a responsibility to Edward and her child and *not* her mother and father. She cannot possibly make both sides happy, so she has to choose who she feels she has to make a priority, even if it has unhappy consequences for some.

Either way, Bella feels like an outsider in the human world and finally finds her purpose in life in the vampire world. However, she is not the only outsider in these books because being the 'outsider' or the 'alien' is also something that the vampire is representative of. Moreover, one can say that the vampire functions as a metaphor for the outsider in human society. In *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the word 'outsider' is defined as 'a person who is not accepted as a member of a society, group etc.' and we have seen that this is the case in all the novels used in this thesis. Margaret L. Carter discusses this theme in her essay 'The Vampire as Alien in Contemporary Fiction' (1997) and says that writers of romantic or gothic fiction often embraced the outsider. In the description of Gothic literature in chapter three we see that the plot in this type of fiction usually includes the Gothic hero who is isolated from community. She also says that in contemporary vampire literature there is more of an identification with the vampire outsider instead of the seek-and-destroy

mentality of the vampire hunters that we see in *Dracula*. This is due to the fact that the vampire as literary figure has come closer both to us as readers and to the human world in the books (Carter 1997: 27-8). Therefore, we want to sympathize with the vampire rather than annihilate it.

*Dracula* is, as mentioned in chapter 3.1, not physically present in a large majority of the novel. He is literally an outsider, at least in the beginning of the novel, because he lives in the middle of nowhere in the Transylvanian countryside, and when he moves to London, he has as little contact with people as possible. Nonetheless, he is also an outsider in the metaphorical sense because he represents the type of person who does not fit into the human world. In *Interview with the Vampire* we also see how Louis and Lestat are no longer accepted as part of human society. Humans are frightened because they do not know what to make of them, and this fear is why we humans reject certain people that are different from us. Louis feels like an outsider in the vampire world because he does not feel as if he belongs there. A reason for this is that he keeps holding on to that last bit of humanity that he has left. His dilemma is that he cannot be a part of the human world either and this is what causes him such anguish that we saw in chapter four.

In the *Twilight* series, the Cullens live in the human world and interact with humans on a daily basis. Nobody, except Bella, knows that they are vampires, but they are still considered to be a slightly strange family. The first time Bella sees them in the school cafeteria she asks one of her classmates who they are. After the girl replies Bella notices that, 'her voice held all the shock and condemnation of the small town' (Meyer 2005: 18), and concludes that 'as beautiful as they were, they were outsiders, clearly not accepted' (19). She also concludes that they are isolated from the community at their own wish (28), which is true because they have to in order to keep their true nature a secret. Bella's father, who is also the chief of police, thinks Carlisle is a great man for the community, but admits that he was concerned 'with all those adopted teenagers' and thought that they would cause trouble (31). Nevertheless, Bella seems to be the only one who is truly intrigued by these amazing-looking beings and is determined to not treat them as outcasts. A reason for not rejecting them is, as she says herself, 'I felt a surge of (...) relief that I wasn't the only newcomer here' (19). Because she feels as if she is in the same situation as the Cullens, she is able to identify with them.

In *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* the vampires' existence is known to humans, but they are still not accepted as equal citizens in some parts of the world. In the following narration by Sookie, we see how the world reacted to their coming-out,

The vampires in the predominantly Islamic nations had fared the worst (...). Some nations – France, Italy and Germany were the most notable – refused to accept vampires as equal citizens. Many – like Bosnia, Argentina, and most of the African nations – denied any status to the vampires, and declared them fair game for any bounty hunter. But America, England, Mexico, Canada, Japan, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries adopted a more tolerant attitude (Harris 2003: 5)

This passage can first and foremost be seen as a parallel to and comment on certain nations' level of tolerance, or maybe *intolerance*, to new and different things, but it also suggests that the vampires in this universe are no longer simply outsiders. Since they have now become public knowledge, they can be seen more as a minority group in the world. If one is a part of a minority, one can still be seen as an outsider in the community, but the word 'minority' refers more to a small group in society that differs because of, for instance, race, language or religion. In other words, 'minority' does not necessarily imply 'outsider'. Nonetheless, one can say that the vampires in Charlaine Harris' universe are simply a different species, that is, they are not members of the human species, but rather the vampire species.

If we look at it from this point of view, there are many instances in these books where the vampires are actually exposed to a treatment that is comparable to a kind of segregation that give allusions to the racial segregation of blacks in America. One sentence that illustrates this perfectly is when Sookie and Bill are pulled over in a routine police control and she says, "Don't let them know you're a vampire, Bill" (...) Though most police forces loved having vampires join them on the job, there was a lot of prejudice against vampires on the street, especially as a part of a mixed couple' (Harris 2001: 127). Those two words, 'mixed couple', were the derogatory words that were used to connote a relationship between a white person and a black person in the 1950s and 60s in the United States. There are cases where the vampires, for instance, go to their own clubs and bars so that they will not be refused service, and for traveling they use an airline that specializes in vampire transport, such as coffin transport. Thus, the vampire cannot only be seen as a metaphor for an outsider in society, but also metaphor for a victim of segregation. Nevertheless, there are many aspects of the vampires in both the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire*

*Mysteries*, such as vegetarianism and coexisting with humans that point towards a more metonymical vampire.

### 5.3 Towards the actual human?

As we have seen, the vampires in these novels say something about human life in that their meaning is transferred to humans. They serve as metaphors for, for instance, the outsider, the suppressed minority and as the superhuman that many human beings aspire to be like. However, can we say that the vampires in the contemporary novels used in this chapter, as well as literary vampires in general, have become more human? And does this entail that the mythical figure of the vampire has, in fact, become more metonymical? Is it so that the vampires in the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* have become so much alike humans that we can speak of 'vampire' and 'human' as two contiguous terms, and therefore a metonymy?

To be able to answer this we must look back to chapter one where we saw that the vampire is a being that exists between the world of the natural and the world of the supernatural, meaning that they have a transgressive power that allows them to exist in between these two worlds. They have the physical shape of a human and they have human cognitive abilities, for example, they can think for themselves. Later vampires, such as Louis in *Interview with the Vampire* and the Cullens in *Twilight*, have shown that they have a conscience, meaning that they are aware of moral and ethical issues concerning vampirism. This makes them very alike humans, however, they have special powers that we humans do not have and they drink only blood for sustenance. Therefore, they are not really human and this is a fact that all the vampires investigated in this thesis are aware of. When it comes to the vampires in *this* chapter, Edward says, 'You don't care if I'm a monster? If I'm not *human*?' (Meyer 2005: 162) and Bill also wants Sookie to understand that even though he is reminded of his former human self, he does not possess much of that humanity anymore (Harris 2001: 14). Thus, both the Cullens and Bill know that they are not human, or, that is, they know that they are not human *anymore*; they are something beyond that.

This is an interesting point because on the basis of the vampires' transgressive power and the fact that they are not human anymore, they are not something *other* than human, they are something *more* than human. The reason why one can say this is

because all vampires have been human once, since, as we know, the only way for a vampire to be 'born' is if he/she is bitten by a vampire in his/her human form and transformed into a vampire. Therefore, vampires have always been human at one point, so an eventual development towards humanness again, such as is implied in this thesis, is a valid theory. As stated above, the Cullens live among humans and even though the majority of the population in Forks thinks they are strange, no one suspects them of being *vampires*. The reason for this is, first and foremost, because they actually do blend in very well, but also because there is something about them that is desirable for the human characters in the novel. They go to high school, Carlisle is a doctor at the hospital, they drive cars, listen to music, have mobile phones, use the Internet and go hiking. Of course, they do not technically go *just* hiking, they go to hunt animals to feed from, but also this, the humans do not suspect or know anything about. The Cullens are very good at disguising the fact that they are vampires, but vampires have evolved and adapted to the twenty-first century so successfully that they do not need to actively hide their vampire selves.

In *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* the logic is very similar. Although the vampires in these books have more supernatural qualities than the vampires in the *Twilight* series, they are able to be who they are. They do not have to disguise themselves as the Cullens have to, but they can live, to a certain extent, in peace with humans. As discussed above, these novels give us the idea that vampires are not humans, but they are, to a degree, so alike humans that they can be considered as being closely related to the human species. It is not a completely outrageous suggestion because in addition to the fact that the lifestyle of the contemporary vampire is almost exactly as any human's, their psyche is very similar too. Even though vampires have primal needs that we humans do not have, for instance, the need to drink blood to survive, the contemporary vampire is able to suppress his/her innate instincts. They have evolved, that is, they have found other ways to satisfy this need because their psyche has evolved. They are self-conscious and self-reflective beings that acknowledge that they are of a monstrous nature, and make the moral decision to live as vegetarians, which is a very human thing to do.

Nevertheless, it is a difficult task to conclude whether the contemporary vampire has become less metaphorical and more metonymical. As we have seen above, it definitely has a metaphorical function in *Twilight* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, because these vampires still have meaning that can be transferred to human



life. But modern vampires also have a metonymical function because they have become so similar to humans, and as we remember from chapter 2.3, metonymy is based on similarity between two terms. When it comes to the contemporary vampire, the border between the two semantic fields, supernatural and human, has become very blurred and it is difficult to see where one field ends and another begins. However, what the contemporary vampire has to offer us has changed radically with the two series discussed in this chapter. It is no longer a horrible and supernatural creature, but rather a regular high school student from a middle-class family or the owner of a clothing shop. The vampire now offers something that is not so far from what we know to be human, so to interpret this change in the sense that the vampire has become more metonymical is very possible.

## 6 Conclusion

This thesis has been a study of whether the mythical figure of the contemporary vampire in literature has become less metaphorical and more metonymical and how this change has happened. The aims of the study were first and foremost to investigate how the vampire is portrayed in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), the *Twilight* series (2005-2008) by Stephenie Meyer and Charlaine Harris' *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* (2001-). Secondly, it was important to find out what the function of these vampires is in order to see whether this has contributed to the vampire becoming less metaphorical and more metonymical, that is, more human. These findings and the discussion of this data have produced an answer to the research question, and the overall conclusion is that reading the contemporary vampire as more metonymical can be a valid interpretation.

The reason why one can say this is because the vampire has definitely become more human over the years. In other words, this entire study comes down to the fact that whilst the vampire as a mythical figure started out as fundamentally different from humans, the contemporary vampire has become more and more similar. The definitions that are used for metaphor and metonymy in this thesis are, as outlined in chapter 2.3, those that David Sapir uses. In that sense, the vampire has gone from belonging to a separate semantic field, the 'supernatural' field, to moving more and more into the semantic field of 'human'. Therefore, we can almost use 'vampire' and 'human' as two contiguous terms.

In chapter three we saw that *Dracula* is a very supernatural vampire. Both in his physical appearance and with regards to his powers and psyche, we see that he is definitely of another world than the human world. He has hair growing on his palms, fangs and red eyes; he has an aversion to holy objects and garlic, and he is able to transform into, for instance, a bat or mist. These characteristics are a part of the stereotypical, or archetypal, image of a vampire. It is those characteristics that one has heard about in myths and folktales. Furthermore, in the metaphorical sense, he relates to humans in that he is representative of the sides of ourselves that we wish to keep hidden. The fact that he only walks around at night, that he has to be invited into the homes of others, that he does not have a reflection in the mirror and that he does not

appear much physically as a vampire in the novel, all point to the idea that Dracula might just be a manifestation of our own fears. For the human characters in the novel it might be the fear of the New Woman, fear of homoeroticism or an abundant eroticism in general. In order to be representative of this fear, the type of vampire that Dracula is has to be as far removed from human nature as possible, and as a result of that he is principally metaphorical.

In chapter four we saw a vampire that is very different from Dracula. Anne Rice has created a sympathetic vampire, Louis, who has moral issues about what he is condemned to be, namely a bloodsucking killer. Regarding the physical appearance of the vampires in this novel, it is not as scary and strange as that of Dracula. They are still deathly pale, but instead of a beaky nose and strangely growing hair, they have a face that looks as if chiseled from marble, green eyes and long, dark hair. Louis' appearance is not as frightening to the interviewer as Dracula's appearance is to the human characters in *Dracula*, and this suggests that the 1970s vampire's physical features are closer to the way humans look. We also see the growing resemblance to humans on a psychological level, because as stated above, Louis experiences despair because of his vampiric nature. He cannot find his place in the vampire world because he still has so much of the humanity he had as a human in him, and this human way of thinking is what makes him more metonymical than Dracula. He tries to live off of the blood of animals, but this is not possible in Rice's universe, so he has to live with a constant struggle with his moral and ethical self.

Even though Louis has become more metonymical than earlier vampires, he still has a large metaphorical function. His function as a metaphor is different from that of Dracula because the hidden nature of humans that the vampire was for Stoker is no longer a taboo, and therefore, what the vampire represents in 1976 is far from what we see in *Dracula*. The vampire is still an erotic being, but rather than expressing a kind of sexuality that the Victorians saw as utterly perverse, Rice's novel embraces the idea of homoeroticism because gender should be irrelevant when it comes to human relations. In *Interview with the Vampire*, the literary vampire has also come to represent humankind's wish for being a superhuman. The vampire is an image of a beauty that never fades because they never grow old, hence they will also never die. Here, we see that which vampirism has to offer us has become much more appealing than it was in *Dracula*.

In chapter five, we saw that the vampires in the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* are very illustrative of the contemporary vampire, a vampire that exists in the human world. In the former series the true nature of the Cullen family has to be kept secret, but in the latter, the vampires have become public knowledge and an integral part of the human world. Also in these books the way the vampire is portrayed is a result of cultural changes, and they have forced new ways of understanding the vampire as a mythical figure. The vampires in these two series have become so similar to humans both physically and in their manner of living that it is difficult, or nearly impossible, for the human characters in the books to tell what they are. They are perceived as different, but not any more different than someone who is considered an outsider in the community. The vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* still have some of the typical characteristics, such as aversion to sunlight, being allergic to silver and having fangs. Nevertheless, this is a necessary choice by Charlaine Harris since she has made the vampires such an integral part of the human world. The vampires in the *Twilight* series also have some supernatural abilities such as great strength and speed and some of them even have special powers, such as mind reading or seeing the future. However, these are also traits that were necessary so as to distinguish these very anthropomorphic vampires from humans. The most essential difference that set the vampires in *Twilight* apart from earlier vampires, though, is that they can walk around at daytime without being physically harmed and, probably most important of all, they live as vegetarians. They live solely off the blood of animals because they have the same moral and ethical issues as Louis in *Interview with the Vampire* when it comes to killing humans for food. This alternative way of feeding is also seen in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* in that in this vampire universe, synthetic, bottled blood has been invented. Thus, these vampires do not either have to feed on humans.

This trait is important because it is one of the biggest contributing factors to making the vampires in *Twilight* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* so much more metonymical than earlier vampires. However, although these vampires are even more metonymical than Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*, they still have a metaphorical function. The figure of the vampire has always been a sort of outsider in society, but the contemporary vampire might be more representative than others. The reason for this is because they no longer live in their own vampire universe, but rather among humans, either as public knowledge or not. Furthermore, the vampires in *The*

*Southern Vampire Mysteries* can be seen as a metaphor for a type of segregation that is similar to that of African-Americans in the United States. So much so that the term 'mixed couple' has come to denote a relationship between a vampire and a human in Harris' books.

What we see in these two book series is that the contemporary vampire has the ability to offer us is a way to realize our own potential. Bella finally manages to find her meaning in life when she meets Edward, and she does so by becoming a vampire. Likewise, Sookie finally finds a man whose thoughts she cannot hear because he is a vampire. Thus, the vampire now represents something that is so similar to humans that the prospect of becoming a vampire is not at all threatening anymore; it is actually the way to find your true self. If we view the change in the literary vampire as such, namely as being a way for humans to realize their potential, we see that it is not the figure of the vampire per se that changes and makes the vampire more metonymical. It is, in fact, what the figure of the vampire has to offer us that changes.

The vampire's ability to realize a human's potential can make reading the vampire as more metonymical and less metaphorical a valid interpretation. The evolution in how the modern vampire is portrayed is so that one can say that whereas Dracula was important for what he does, the modern vampire is important for what it *is*. What Dracula has to offer us is so unthinkable, horrible and different from human nature as Dracula himself, but what Louis has to offer is not as frightening because the interviewer sees something in Louis and Louis' story that he desires. With the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, the figure of the vampire has the ability to realize the real potential in a human because there is something desirable about them, and that shows just how similar vampires and humans have become. The vampire has, in fact, become a potential boyfriend and son-in-law. If we try to realize the shift in what the vampire represents in a figure, it could look something like the following,

<i>Dracula</i>		<i>Interview with the Vampire</i>		<i>Twilight/TSVM</i> <sup>4</sup>
Inhuman	→	Too human	→	The real human

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<sup>4</sup> *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*

In other words, what Dracula represents is so unlike anything that we know is human that it becomes plain inhuman. Louis and the other vampires in *Interview with the Vampire*, on the other hand, have become so anthropomorphic that they are almost too human. They represent an image of the superhuman, someone who will never grow old or die. Lastly, Edward in the *Twilight* series and Bill in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, show that the vampire no longer represents something that is horrible or unobtainable, but rather something that can be obtained and that has the possibility of changing one's life in a positive direction. It is in that sense that the vampires in these books can be seen as the 'real human' or the 'actual human'. The figure is also illustrative of Sapir's theory on semantic domains. We see that Dracula belongs in the 'supernatural', or inhuman, domain and that there has been a progression towards the semantic domain of 'human', with *Interview with the Vampire* and *Twilight* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*.

This shows that Zanger's theory that the vampire has become less metaphorical and more metonymical is valid because what the figure of the vampire is today is not what it once was. While Dracula was so different and alien from us humans that he can mainly be considered metaphorical, the vampires in both the *Twilight* series and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* have become so human, or so metonymical, that to speak of vampire and human as two contiguous terms is not unthinkable. The contemporary vampire is in fact so similar to humans that it has become what Zanger suggests, namely the next-door neighbour. They now have the potential to be just another nuclear family as in *Twilight*, or a shop- or club owner as in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*. The vampire has evolved to fit the twenty-first century culture in which we live, and since evolution will never stop, it is interesting to see what has, or might have, happened to the literary vampire in twenty years.

Since the vampire has become so human-like, it is difficult to imagine it becoming even more human, but perhaps it will move in another direction. Nonetheless, this thesis produced some questions that are possible points of further study. Even though the focus of this thesis has been an investigation of how the figure of the *vampire* has changed, there were findings that indicate a shift in how the *humans* in vampire literature are portrayed. As outlined in chapter 5.2, both Bella and Sookie have powers that set them apart from the other humans in these books. Bella is immune to most of the vampires' powers, and Sookie is a telepath who can hear the thoughts of everyone except those of supernatural beings. Does this indicate is that as

vampires are becoming more human, humans are becoming more supernatural? An investigation of this possible development could be a topic for further research in this field, and the hope for this thesis is that it has provided a good basis for future studies of the literary vampire.

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