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"What's a Nice Mormon Girl Like You Doing Writing about Vampires?": Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight" Saga and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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**“What’s A Nice Mormon Girl Like You Doing Writing About Vampires?”
Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* Saga and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
day Saints**

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Houston, Texas

Skidmore College, 2005

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This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
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ABSTRACT PAGE

"What's a nice Mormon girl like you doing writing about vampires?" is the most common question Stephenie Meyer, Mormon author of the series *Twilight*, receives from fellow Mormons. Her four-novel series about a love story between a human girl and vampire boy has become wildly popular, yet many fans seem to be unaware of the religious overtones or undertones of the series. Meyer has given many interviews on her books where she explains that her Mormon faith is such a large part of her identity but was not consciously woven in her narrative. The books rarely discuss religion per se but instead are rife with religious themes such as free agency, eternal life, and conservative morality-- and these themes are also vital to Mormon theology. Many journalists and scholars discussing Meyer's work thus far only mention her faith in passing. In this thesis, I argue that a religious reading of the *Twilight* series is vital to understanding its popularity and highlighting these themes helps determine what cultural work these books are doing in America.

The purpose of my study is to examine the religious and moral elements of the series that have led to its extraordinary success. The history of the vampire in literature, its permanent connection to religion, and America's abstinence-only teen sex education programs supported by the Christian conservatives, form a substantial foundation for *Twilight*'s popularity. Many of its fans, including its base, female teenagers and their mothers, are nonetheless unaware of the decidedly Mormon ideology at the heart of the book. My approach to *Twilight* is through an emphasis on the Mormon author and the Mormon cosmology and theology present in these books. I recognize that this series is a significant departure from the Catholic-inflected cosmology evident in previous vampire literature. I will explore the Catholic cosmological background of previous vampire literature and show how *Twilight* reflects a pro-Mormon and somewhat anti-Catholic theology through its emphasis on Mormon cosmology. I then turn to LDS theological and cultural beliefs and behavior that permeate *Twilight* and consider how the books allegorically articulate a stance consistent with present-day Mormonism. My final section will delve into the familial, gendered and sexual themes predominant in the series and how they relate to fundamental Mormon ideas about eternal life through the family, or eternal progression (a distinctly Mormon doctrine). Finally, I examine how the larger landscape of conservative sexual mores in America draws on a much larger audience that seems oblivious to *Twilight*'s Mormon influence but are drawn nevertheless to Bella's wrestling with themes of teenage sexuality, eternity, and true love.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Jack and Linn Smyth, who have always encouraged me in everything I do. They have sacrificed so much to help me write my thesis and fulfill my dream of getting a Master's degree in American Studies. Simply put, this would not have been done without you. Thank you.

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INTRODUCTION

“What’s a nice Mormon girl like you doing writing about vampires?” is the most common question Stephenie Meyer, Mormon author of the series *Twilight*, receives from fellow Mormons.¹ Her four-novel series about a love story between a human girl and vampire boy has become wildly popular, yet many fans seem to be unaware of the religious overtones of the series. Meyer has given many interviews on her books where she explains that her Mormon faith is such a large part of her identity but was not consciously woven in her narrative. The books rarely discuss religion *per se* but instead are rife with religious themes such as free agency, eternal life, and conservative morality-- and these themes are also vital to Mormon theology. Many journalists and scholars discussing Meyer’s work thus far only mention her faith in passing. In this thesis, I argue that a religious reading of the *Twilight* series is vital to understanding its popularity and highlighting these themes helps determine what cultural work these books are doing in America.

The purpose of my study is to examine the religious and moral elements of the series that have led to its extraordinary success. The foundation of *Twilight*’s popularity is substantially comprised of the literary history of the vampire, its permanent connection to religion, and America’s abstinence-only teen sex education programs supported by Christian conservatives. Many of its fans, comprised mainly of females aged 11 to 40,² are nonetheless unaware of the decidedly Mormon ideology at the heart of the book. My approach to *Twilight*

is through an emphasis on the Mormon author and the Mormon cosmology and theology present in these books. I recognize that this series is a significant departure from the Catholic-inflected cosmology evident in previous vampire literature. I will explore the Catholic cosmological background of previous vampire literature and show how *Twilight* reflects a pro-Mormon and somewhat anti-Catholic theology through its emphasis on Mormon cosmology. I then turn to LDS theological and cultural beliefs and behavior that permeate *Twilight* and consider how the books allegorically articulate a stance consistent with present-day Mormonism. My next section will delve into the familial, gendered and sexual themes predominant in the series and how they relate to fundamental Mormon ideas about eternal life through the family, or eternal progression (a distinctly Mormon doctrine). Finally, I examine how the larger landscape of conservative sexual mores in America underlines the appeal to much larger audience that seems oblivious to *Twilight's* Mormon influence but is drawn nevertheless to Bella's wrestling with themes of teenage sexuality, eternity, and true love.

The series' popularity is clearly measured in the numbers: *Twilight*, the first book of the series, has sold more than eighty-seven million copies worldwide and has been translated into thirty-seven languages since its publication in 2005.³ The following book, *New Moon*, spent 47 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list⁴ and the third installment, *Eclipse*, sold more than 150,000 copies in the first 24 hours of its release.⁵ The final book in the series, *Breaking Dawn*, was published in 2008 and sold 1.3 million copies in the first 24 hours⁶ and

prompted Godiva to make a *Twilight*-themed chocolate bar.⁷ This is an extraordinarily large amount of books sold in such a short time. Movie versions of the first two books in the series have grossed over \$1 billion⁸ and the movie trailer for the third installment reached over 600,000 hits on YouTube within a week of it being released.⁹ There are more than 144,000 entries on *Twilight* on the seminal fan fiction website, fanfiction.net, on *Twilight* where the cult TV show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* used to hold the record at 38,000 entries.¹⁰ As these staggering numbers clearly demonstrate, the *Twilight* series is a full-scale phenomenon.

The location of *Twilight*'s main fan base among female pre-teens, teens, and adults suggests that *Twilight* resonates in popular culture because these women and girls can use the books to hold onto ideals of romance that may not be reflected in their reality. Meyer proudly asserts that she modeled her characters and true love-centric plot on classic, British romance novels such as Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and even Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Noted scholar Janice Radway, in her book on female fandom of romance novels in the 1970s and early 1980s, *Reading the Romance*, found that many women "turn to romances because they provide [women] with the opportunity to experience pleasure and happiness" and perform as a romantic escape from their daily lives.¹¹ On the hundreds of websites for older *Twilight* fans the use of *Twilight* as romantic escapism and pleasure reading is an oft-quoted reason non-adolescent women love *Twilight*. TwilightMOMS, a hugely popular website for women "thirty-something and older,

married or not,” is touted by the site’s founder (a Mormon mother, incidentally) as a “feel good place” where women, especially moms, can have “a break and a place to escape where they can be refueled” with *Twilight*-related posts and camaraderie.¹² This supports Radway’s claim that the act of romance reading is “compensatory...that it permits [women] to focus on themselves” rather than the demands of their role as a wife or mother, and “for them, romance reading addresses needs created in them but not met by patriarchal institutions and engendering practices.”¹³ In addition to the benefits and pleasure of escapist reading, these adult women, moms, and wives are creating entire online communities to support each other and their self-described obsession with all things *Twilight*.

Most teenage girls enjoy *Twilight* in a similar way, as a story about teens who, regardless of their superpowers or immortality, grapple with the same issues of love and peer relations in high school. In her piece on *Twilight* fandom and the complexities of female adolescent desire in *The Atlantic*, Caitlin Flanagan claims, “for women, puberty is the most physiologically complex and emotionally alive experience of their lives” and she believes the *Twilight* series both encapsulates and intensifies this experience. Flanagan insists the *Twilight* story

Centers on a boy who loves a girl so much that he refuses to defile her, and on a girl who loves him so dearly that she is desperate for him to do just that, even if the wages of the act are expulsion from her family and from everything she has ever known.¹⁴

This kind of melodramatic and emotional ultimatum heightens the importance of the love story between the two main characters and contributes mightily to its

popularity. Additionally it carries the tradition of previous vampire literature where the male vampire's allure is irresistible to the women whose blood he longs to drink. The attraction of the vampire's eroticism has often proved too tempting for popular culture to resist.

SECTION ONE

The Vampire in Literature

Vampires in literature have been used as a mirror to reflect societal fears, from the threat of modernity to social cohesion to the issue of women's value in relation to their sexuality. The characteristics of the vampire in each story embody whatever is plaguing the cultural subconscious at the time the story was written. The vampire in literature has remained a common literary subject since its most popular embodiment as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The literary vampire, however, drastically changed form between the late 1800s to 2010, from monster to savior.

Bram Stoker created the most prevalent image of the vampire as a suave, foreign, malicious man with his Count Dracula in 1897. Dracula, a Transylvanian count, is the master of all vampires and has been feeding on the blood of humans for centuries. He has extraordinary strength, can change form, and prefers to drink the blood of virtuous women. By biting women on the neck and gaining vitality through their lifeblood, Dracula allegorically rapes these women while he drains their lives. His method of gaining sustenance thus intensely sexualizes his character.¹⁵ Dracula's ultimate goal is to move to cosmopolitan London and set himself up as a feudal lord and master of an army of evil vampires. In the story, his greatest perverted act is his befoulment of the pious and virtuous human Mina Harker by drinking her blood and forcing her to drink his, an act which will eventually turn her into a vampire. This unthinkable act convinces her fiancé to enlist the help of Van Helsing, a Catholic doctor familiar

with slaying vampires, to rid the Earth of this evil scourge. Van Helsing uses Catholic iconography as weapons, including holy water and crosses, to bring about the vampire's demise. The slayer believes himself to be one of God's warriors and his self-righteousness and use of Catholic strategies and ideology convince the audience that religion can defeat evil and that order can be restored by the religiously good.

Dracula is based on Stoker's research of vampire folklore from Eastern Europe, thus underscoring the crucial role of religion in shaping the myth and, in turn, the literature. Vampire scholar James B. Twitchell posits that Catholic priests used the vampire story as a "tool in territorial expansion and domination," when gaining converts in southeastern Europe in the 1600s.¹⁶ In that region many believed that vampires were undead monsters who, once humans, had lost their souls and as a result had to be destroyed. Most importantly, Twitchell notes that "the institution that was providing the monster also provid[ed] the protection" from these creatures. A religious believer could therefore harm evil vampires with Catholic paraphernalia such as crosses, holy water, the Bible, rosaries, and even the spoken names of God or Jesus.¹⁷ The Catholic Church believed that vampires existed and were agents of the Devil, thus any good religious person would seek to destroy these creatures who are the antithesis of life and creation.¹⁸ In this cosmology, Satan is God's opposite and opponent; by defeating his vampiric agents, men are succeeding in God's war with the Devil. *Dracula* is the best example of this cosmology in vampire literature. Van Helsing is figured prominently as a religious Catholic priest-figure and therefore an agent

of God. Only with Van Helsing's knowledge, piety and assistance can the men in Stoker's story kill Dracula and save the virtuous and devout Mina from a fate worse than death.¹⁹ Stoker insinuates that Dracula's plan to turn Mina into a vampire like himself is worse than rape because it entailed the theft of her soul.

To understand *Dracula* and the world in which Stoker's characters lived, we must understand the book's cosmology. The vampire, Dracula, is a deliberate creature of evil and his success and immortality is attributed to his pact with the Devil.²⁰ Because he is defined as a creature of the Devil, those who oppose him have to be in league with good, God, and, as Stoker wrote it, with the Catholic Church.²¹ Catholic cosmology teaches that the purpose of life on earth is, "to manifest the glory of the Creator."²² Man's welfare is the secondary purpose of life, as their free will to choose the path of salvation results in "a means of rising to perfect happiness in the possession of God."²³ Catholics believe there is a natural hierarchy with God as the creator of all life at the top. Next are humans who have intellect and free will and who can use these God-given tools to worship God. Non-intelligent life (animals) and inorganic matter are below humans in this hierarchy.²⁴ This hierarchy serves to support the idea that humanity can choose the path of righteousness and salvation laid out by the Catholic Church. Those who choose to follow Satan and his path of destruction will spend an eternity of torment in hell after their bodies die. These binary locations, heaven and hell, are the primary sites of the afterlife, and only those who possess a soul can enter heaven or hell. Stoker also writes that all his vampiric characters, when killed by Van Helsing, have their souls restored to

heaven.²⁵ Because they are no longer agents of evil they are finally at peace; Stoker conveys this by describing the serene looks on their dead faces.²⁶

The original Dracula story has been warped and changed upon many retellings and reworkings, especially in popular Hollywood movies. Dracula has enjoyed success on television, in song, and even has his own breakfast cereal. His image has been de-sexualized to the point where he is a lovable character on a popular children's show. The vampire's biggest transformation, however, and one that reinstated the sexual aspect of its mythology was created in 1976 when Anne Rice wrote *Interview with a Vampire*.

Vampire Rock Stars: Anne Rice's Vampiric Legacy

Anne Rice's first novel in *The Vampire Chronicles* series, *Interview with a Vampire*, differs in many ways from *Dracula*, most notably in that the story is told from the vampire's point of view. The audience sympathizes with a vampire who desperately does not want to kill humans but must in order to survive. Louis, the vampire telling his story to a human reporter, strives mightily in his immortal life to "attribute meaning to his existence."²⁷ He suffers great pain and difficulty deviating from his vampiric nature that treats humans as prey as does his unscrupulous creator, the vampire Lestat.²⁸ This desire to understand the order of the universe, or cosmos, demonstrates that Rice's vampires fit within the previously stated Catholic cosmology of *Dracula*. Vampire scholar Mary Y. Hallab, in her book *Vampire God: The Allure of the Undead in Western Culture*, argues that Rice's vampires are cursed by a "Faustian desire to know—if there is

a God [and] a reason for faith.”²⁹ Within the *Vampire Chronicles* series Louis and Lestat are driven to comprehend the idea of God and the purpose of their existence and through this Rice asserts “the grandeur of God’s creation...and the immortality of the soul.”³⁰ Hallab explains that later in Rice’s series, “God designed the universe to evolve itself infinitely in some direction that He has apparently planned...He is a God of Heaven, glorying in the praise and adoration of His angels.”³¹ These Catholic ideals where angels and men glorify God as part of his divine purpose are what Rice emphasizes when she reiterates that God has a plan and vampires are part of it. Rice herself was raised Catholic but broke with the religion for a number of years until strongly identifying as a Roman Catholic later in her life.³² She was a self-professed atheist morning the death of her 5 year old daughter, her only child, when she wrote *The Vampire Chronicles*. In the author’s note for her 2005 novel on Jesus Christ’s early life, *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*, she writes, “I wrote many novels that without my being aware of it reflected my quest for meaning in a world without God.”³³ In her novels Rice recreates the dualism of a heaven with God and a hell with the devil, and like Catholic doctrine and Stoker’s *Dracula* asserts, her vampires can reside in neither one as they are without souls.

At the end of *Interview With the Vampire*, the human reporter ignores Louis’s warnings about his lifestyle and begs Louis to make him a vampire, thereby immortal but soulless. Rice’s popularity is attributed to the similar feelings her audience felt after being introduced to these wonderfully fragile, magnificent creatures who, for all their immortality and power, still suffer from

human problems and anxieties. Margaret Carter, in her book, *Different Blood: The Vampire As Alien*, asserts that in the *Vampire Chronicles*, "viewers and readers alike perceive [the vampires] as human...the audience doesn't experience the absence of human victims because the vampires *are* the human victims."³⁴ We see these beings not as murderers but as tortured souls longing for redemption in a cosmos that suggests they are damned, but eventually reveals they are part of God's plan. Rice continues the Catholic-centric cosmology of previous vampire works to give her vampires a purpose and identity.

The Feminist Slayer: Buffy the Vampire Slayer

The biggest vampire fandom since Anne Rice and arguably the genesis of the current vampire craze is Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* movie and then television series. This series ran from 1997 to 2003 and centered on a blonde, human teenager named Buffy who was the latest in a long line of fierce, female vampire killers. Buffy, conveniently, lived above a "Hell mouth" where all kinds of evil creatures but predominantly demons and vampires entered the world. In each episode Buffy beat up the bad guys and spouted ironic cultural references that reflect the humor and pathos of the series. In fact, media scholar Lynn Schofield Clark believes the show was "so ironic it [couldn't] take its own apocalypse seriously" and that is part of the show's charm and appeal to teens who are "accustomed to questioning everything and turning it all to irony."³⁵ The show became, and remains, a cult hit because of its ability to "tell stories of a

spiritual battle of good versus evil” that are ultimately “about the struggles of the teenage years” that “use the metaphor of vampires—and thus, inadvertently, religion’s dark side of demons and death fears—to express them.”³⁶ Whedon, a confessed atheist, has written into the show a “sort of relativism towards religious institutions” but has inundated his writing with ethical dilemmas.³⁷ His characters fight against evil creatures from the Hell mouth because Whedon believes “being good and doing good are in themselves a noble purpose” outside of religion.³⁸

Buffy is a feminist protagonist who is able to defeat the bad guys, look pretty, and crack a witty joke at the same time. Her capability and strength are the opposite of conservative, traditional, and melodramatic Bella in *Twilight* but they do share themes of grand love and romance. Buffy’s centering the show on these themes set the stage for the vampires’ new iteration in *Twilight*. In *Buffy*, however, her star-crossed love is with Angel, a vampire who possesses a soul when he “subdue[s] the evil within him in order to maintain his humanity” and, most importantly, resists sexual temptation (mostly involving Buffy herself) that causes him to lose his soul and become evil.³⁹ Buffy herself risks not only her legacy as a vampire slayer but her power, life and soul by coupling with Angel, making their union doubly fraught with risk. The danger inherent in Angel’s and Buffy’s sexual congress closely mirrors the fear in Bella and Edward’s world, only the terror lies primarily in Bella losing her soul if Edward loses control and accidentally turns her into a vampire during moments of sexual intimacy. Edward’s danger from Bella is his giving into the temptation of Bella’s desire for sex, which does not devalue his power, only his virtue. The difference between

Edward's loss of virtue versus Bella's loss of life and possibly her mortal soul is striking when the gender of each character is matched to the possible outcomes of their sexual congress. The similarities between *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* help explain *Twilight's* appeal to teenagers yet the disparities highlight the distinct and gendered set of morals and values for *Twilight's* characters.

Vampires have come a long way since Stoker's *Dracula*, going from evil monsters to sympathetic romantic leads. Nina Auerbach writes that the vampire became a "romantic redeemer" in the 1970s and '80s as they embodied the idea that "in a world without romance, it's better to be dead."⁴⁰ She concludes "that at the end of the twentieth century, vampirism is wearing down and vampires need a long, restorative sleep."⁴¹ Who could imagine that just a few years into the twenty-first century vampires would reawake with religion and reinvent themselves as Mormons?

SECTION TWO

Latter-Day Vampires? Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* Series and The Mormons

Written by practicing Mormon author, Stephenie Meyer, *Twilight* chronicles the story of the chaste, star-crossed romance between a seventeen-year-old girl, Bella Swan, and a forever-seventeen vampire boy, Edward Cullen.⁴² Meyer found inspiration for the books from a dream:

In my dream, two people were having an intense conversation in a meadow in the woods. One of these people was just your average girl. The other person was fantastically beautiful...and a vampire. They were discussing the difficulties inherent in the facts that A) they were falling in love with each other while B) the vampire was particularly attracted to the scent of her blood, and was having a difficult time restraining himself from killing her immediately. For what is essentially a transcript of my dream, please see Chapter 13 ("Confessions") of the book...I was so intrigued by the nameless couple's story that I hated the idea of forgetting it... (Also, the vampire was just so darned good-looking, that I didn't want to lose the mental image.)⁴³

This scene neatly encapsulates the *Twilight* saga and Bella and Edward's Romeo and Juliet-esque love story that involves grand themes of innocent love and torturous circumstances. At the start of the novels Bella moves to Forks, Washington to live with her divorced father. She feels like an outcast at her new school and is drawn to another classmate who is also an outcast. This classmate is the extraordinarily beautiful Edward Cullen, a boy she assumes to be like any other seventeen-year-old but who turns out to be part of a family of compassionate vampires. She is drawn to him and quickly falls deeply in love with him. Edward is drawn to her at first for an intense hunger for her blood beyond any he's felt for any other human, yet this later manifests as true love with a passion only a teenager can

demonstrate. "You are my life now" he explains to her midway through the first book and Bella feels the same way.⁴⁴ Edward's family, the Cullens, feed on the blood of animals rather than humans because they wish to be normal: "I don't *want* to be a monster!" Edward exclaims when Bella asks why they refuse human blood.⁴⁵ This choice of diet is a foundational difference between the Cullens and other literary vampires, whose thirst is so great they have no choice. The Cullens' refusal to drink the blood of humans is the only way Bella and Edward can be friends, much less date, but the twist that Meyer mentions in her dream is that Edward is drawn to Bella's blood so intensely that his desire for her blood threatens his own and his family's unique code of virtue. The books chronicle Edward and Bella's desire to live happily ever after and the conflicts, not the least his desire to consume her blood, which keep them apart. Bella has no qualms with begging him to grant her immortality so they can live happily ever after, yet Edward resists turning her into a vampire.

Meyer claims she does not specifically write books with LDS theology in mind but explains on her website⁴⁶

I am...a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (or Mormons...) and that has a huge influence on who I am and my perspective on the world, and therefore what I write (though I have been asked more than once, "What's a nice Mormon girl like you doing writing about vampires?").⁴⁷

The books are not overt works of proselytization but because of the LDS influence on her life and therefore her work the series is inundated with LDS theology and doctrine. Meyer has admitted, "Unconsciously, I put a lot of my

basic beliefs into the story. Free agency is a big theme.”⁴⁸ Like the theological concept of free agency, there are many distinct LDS practices, beliefs and experiences that appear in the *Twilight* saga. In this section I will argue that the vampire myth has shifted form in literature and culture from its Catholic-centric roots to a Mormon discourse. I will also highlight how *Twilight*'s vampire family in, the Cullens, represent an idealized Mormon family through their adherence to Mormon theological and cultural practices and beliefs.

Meyer makes a central theme in the books the Cullen's choice to be compassionate members of human society to which they no longer belong. Such participation without belonging is a central tenet in her Church's theology. The Cullens are anomalous outsiders in their vampire world, as they are in the human world, because they refuse to hunt humans and instead drink only the blood of animals, humorously calling themselves vegetarians. Their desire to band together as a family and resist their basic vampire nature sets them at odds with the other (bad) vampires in the story who feed on humans. They are virtuous vampires who focus their energies saving human lives so “they won't be monsters.”⁴⁹

By choosing to repress their thirst for human blood the Cullens exhibit the most basic Mormon theological lesson of resisting temptation. Resisting temptation on Earth through rigid self-discipline is a central element of the LDS path to salvation and crucial to one's eternal progression. The Cullens atone for being vampires and work to fit into human society even though their vampiric traits will always separate them. The Cullens' experience in their community

parallels experiences of Mormon families in that they do not quite fit in and are regarded with respect and wariness by the rest of society. Bella describes them as “outsiders, clearly not accepted.”⁵⁰ Edward explains that “those of us who live...differently tend to band together.”⁵¹ The patriarch of the Cullen family, Carlisle Cullen, is known in the vampire community for his humanistic way of life and has convinced a family of vampires living in nearby Alaska the virtues of a non-human diet. His vampire “daughter,” Alice Cullen, explains

We Cullens are unique in more ways than you know...it's *abnormal* for so many of us to live together in peace...Carlisle speculates that abstaining [from human blood] makes it easier for us to be civilized, to form bonds based on love rather than survival or convenience...Carlisle's family is the biggest [vampire family] in existence.⁵²

Meyers's treatment of almost all other “non-vegetarian” vampires in the story as monsters encourages the reader to assume that any vampire not following the Cullen's way of life is corrupt and a monster. Converting to Carlisle's lifestyle is portrayed as the only true path to salvation for vampires in this world. The Cullens' lives require great sacrifice but they are greatly compensated if they chose the moral path. Their reward is that they will make a positive difference in the lives of humans and will, as Mormons following the path of salvation, attain the highest level of heaven and complete their eternal progression. Carlisle explains that “never, in the nearly four hundred years now since I was born, have I ever seen anything to make me doubt whether God exists in some form or another” and he hopes that “there is still a point to this life.” He believes “by all accounts, [vampires] are damned regardless. But I hope...that we'll get some measure of credit for trying.”⁵³ Carlisle believes that living a righteous life will

gain him and his family God's salvation and eternal progression, a founding tenant that is unique to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Beginning of Mormonism

The United States' origins as a nation protecting religious freedom have fostered new religious traditions that are uniquely American in character. The LDS Church was founded on the dominant ideas and perceptions of the antebellum period including individualism and "a romantic world view." These influences appear in LDS theology's direct opposition to established Catholic theology.

Mormonism was born at a time when America was shedding "the last vestiges of an old order" and the antebellum market revolution raised the possibility of "the creation of the modern, capitalist American empire with its fundamental belief in religious, political, and economic pluralism."⁵⁴ Mormonism was the antidote to the Catholic ideals that church members had to rely on their priests, bishops, and the Pope to intervene with God on their behalf to promise salvation. For Saints, whether Puritan or Latter-day, salvation lay in the hands of the individual.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded by Joseph Smith in upstate New York in 1830. Mormons believe ministering angels in the form of resurrected apostles such as John the Baptist and Christ's head disciple Peter helped Mormon leader Smith restore the true church of Christ⁵⁵ and gave him the full authority that resides in the biblical Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. These priesthood "keys" represented a literal, God-given, patriarchal form of power first seen in the Hebrew Bible and gives its holders

divine authority to “administer in God’s name.”⁵⁶ Mormons believe their church is a reinstatement of both the Zion of the Israelites and the true Church of Christ. Their doctrines, from polygamy to the promise of eternal life, proclaim that their path in life reflects their desire to live as closely to Jesus’ teachings as possible.⁵⁷ Many of these rules are based on living an ascetic life, “obedience to gospel truths revealed or mediated” by the Mormon prophets, through “submission to priesthood leadership,” and following Jesus’ teachings on the path to salvation.⁵⁸ Mormons accept church-wide dietary restrictions that prohibit alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, and illegal drugs and they place great emphasis on living a life of charity, virtue, and piety.

Anti-Catholicism: An American and Mormon Issue

Noted American historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr., in 1942, wrote that anti-Catholicism is “the deepest bias in the history of the American people” and nowhere was this as prominent as in the antebellum era.⁵⁹ The many utopian religious communities created during that time set themselves up against what they saw as the failings and dangers of the old-world ideals of the Catholic Church, and this was epitomized within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Historically, Catholic-Mormon relations have been tense, because Mormons believed that the Catholic Church tried to reinstate the Church of Christ but failed, its Pope is a false prophet, and therefore the Catholic Church is corrupt and evil. Coke Newell, a media spokesman for Mormons in the 1990s, explains that while an anti-Catholic “stance has been aggressively promoted by

certain LDS church leaders in the past,” current Mormon belief is of “a more doctrinal view that we are to be about the business of increasing faith in Christ by building upon foundations already developed.”⁶⁰ Despite such claims it is difficult to wipe out the long-standing anti-Catholicism expressed by many previous Mormon Elders.⁶¹ Meyer shows how this bias is still thriving in LDS culture through her portrayal of the Volturi as evil Italian vampires.

In the *Twilight* series Meyer characterizes the Volturi, the “ruling class” and “royalty” of all vampires as human-blood-drinking, merciless creatures who reside in Italy. They have a large coven of follower vampires who slavishly listen to the orders of their leaders, a single, master vampire and his two powerful partners.⁶² Their “very old, very powerful family” is “the very essence of” vampire-kind that Edward’s sister, Alice, describes as “the substance of your nightmares, the dread behind your instincts.”⁶³ These ancient vampires enforce the single rule for all vampires: that no human be made aware of their existence. Any transgressor is immediately immolated, and this has served as the model of justice for *Twilight* vampires for millennia. The Volturi are symbolically linked to the Catholics as they are located in Italy, in their hierarchal and secret organization, and the way Meyer characterizes them as corrupt, power-and-blood-thirsty vampires bent on meting out ultimate justice as if they were gods. Members of the Volturi coven are joined for their love of *power* not love for *each other* like the Cullen family. They function as the (obviously Catholic) opponent to the (Mormon) Cullens and almost destroy the Cullens in a tense showdown at the end of the concluding novel, *Breaking Dawn*.

In this final confrontation, the Cullens are ready to fight for their lives against the Volturi who have come to destroy them in front of hundreds of vampire witnesses. The Cullens have assured many of their vampire peers that they are not asking them to fight on their side but to serve as “witnesses” to the altercation with the Volturi. These bystanders distinctly evoke the first few pages of the Book of Mormon where the affidavits signed by many “witnesses” claiming to have seen Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon from golden plates are still displayed to authenticate the work over a century later.⁶⁴ The Volturi’s opposition to the Cullens and their antagonistic show of force against them underscores the Volturi’s selfish and power-hungry nature in contrast to the Cullen’s perfect and earnest innocence. Through their unprovoked and brutal attacks and the Cullen’s successful defense, the Volturi are exposed as power-hungry tyrants in front of all these witnesses. Meyer promotes the idea that their Catholic model of vampire-life is rife with corruption as opposed to the righteous Mormon model of the Cullen family.

Mormon Cosmology and Theology

Despite Mormons’ sense that their religion was the antithesis of Catholicism, a striking similarity between these religions’ cosmologies is their hierarchy of the heavens. Congruent to the Catholic hierarchy of the cosmos, God is at the summit of the hierarchy that only humans can know, through obedience to commandments and by following the path of salvation outlined in church doctrine. Furthermore, this eternal potential is promised by “our Heavenly

Father.”⁶⁵ Yet Mormons believe the “whole mortal existence of man is neither more nor less than a preparatory state given to finite beings, a space wherein they may improve themselves for a higher state of being.”⁶⁶ Here they differ from Catholics in that Mormons believe they can become “like gods” either on earth or in the afterlife through the concept of *eternal progression* toward that goal. The “highest purpose of life” in Mormon cosmology is “the achievement of godhood or exultation—the power to create and people worlds” whereas for Catholics the highest purpose is God’s love and eternal salvation.⁶⁷

LDS theology states that our spirits exist in a pre-mortal world and our purpose on earth is to assume our God-given right of free will and undergo trials and temptations that try to lead us from the path of salvation. God’s commandments are rules stating we should not kill, steal, cheat, commit adultery, lie, lust, etc. and our faithful adherence to these commandments allows us to reap eternal life and rewards in Heaven.⁶⁸ If we stay virtuous, pure, and live according to the LDS doctrine and Jesus’ teachings we will be worthy to gain eternal life,⁶⁹ thus becoming gods with the ability to create spirit beings that populate the Earth in an eternal cycle.⁷⁰ In the Doctrine and Covenants⁷¹ Church founder Smith reiterates this by stating,

We will have the privilege of becoming like [God with] all the powers of godhood; thus a man and his wife when glorified will have spirit children who eventually will go on earth like this one we are on and pass through the same kind of experiences, being subject to moral conditions, and if faithful, then they will also receive the fullness of exaltation and partake of the same blessings. There is no end to this development; it will go on forever. We will become gods and have jurisdiction over worlds, and these worlds will be peopled by our own offspring. We will have endless eternity for this.⁷²

It is important to note that Mormon theology holds that we will carry our unique characteristics and gender into the afterlife and celebrate the glory of eternal life with our families from Earth (who were our families in the pre-mortal world). This idea of carrying your gender and family with you through all stages of being is unique to Mormonism and emphasized in *Twilight* through the Cullen's immortality and eternal formation as a family with gendered, heterosexual partners for each member.

LDS theology describes families as “ordained of God” and the “fundamental unit of society.”⁷³ This unit should ideally consist of a father who will “preside over [his] family in love and righteousness and [is] responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection” while mothers are “primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.”⁷⁴ The family is also the “unit of exaltation” and righteous families will together live eternally.⁷⁵ In Mormonism, families teach their children the importance of “obedience, submission and service” to the Church and the community as well as how to be model citizens and members of their “chosen band.”⁷⁶ What else are the Cullens if not model citizens in their local human community and their larger vampire society? The Cullens certainly lead virtuous lives in comparison not only to the other vampires in the story who kill humans for food but in relation to most humans. Carlisle's emphasis on the sanctity of human life and compassion for humanity has certainly taught the rest of his family about many of the virtues and attributes listed for Mormon families. Yet another reason why the Cullens differentiate from the other vampires in their world is their bonding together as a family, with

Carlisle as the father and Esme, his wife, as the mother. The rest of the Cullens are the children that learn these Mormon traits from their parents, especially compassion and leadership from Carlisle and tenderness and domesticity from Esme.

Mormons believe gender is an eternal characteristic and that we are gendered in our previous life as spirits or souls, in our life here on Earth, and also in the afterlife.⁷⁷ In the afterlife we are partnered with a member of the opposite sex to produce our own spirit children who then repeat the cycle.⁷⁸ Gender roles, consequently, are a highly defined and important part of Church theology, primarily for the emphasis on husbands and wives creating more spirit beings in the afterlife to populate Earth. This concept highlights a cornerstone of Mormon theology: the family is a "divine unit", with a mother, father, and children. This ideal comes from the utopian roots of the Mormon Church. Utopian scholar Lawrence Foster writes that for Mormons, "marriage and family ties" are the "basis for all social order and development" and Mormon concern for this "social order and control" is epitomized in their "efforts to revitalize the family" through gender roles.⁷⁹

All LDS men in good standing are members of the priesthood, which gives them the authority of God on earth. The role for men in Mormonism is to be the head of the household, primary decision-maker and "spokesman for their families."⁸⁰ These gender roles are echoed in *Twilight*, especially in Carlisle Cullen, the father of the Cullen family. As the head doctor of the local hospital, the only family member with a job. He is the protector, ultimate decision maker

and the literal creator of almost all of his vampire family. Carlisle refused to force his vampiric fate on any human unless they were near death and had no other choice for survival. He debated for centuries whether to create a companion for himself before changing the dying Edward⁸¹ and also changed three out of the five vampires in his family.⁸² Carlisle's importance and authority over the rest of his family echo the power of the priesthood in Mormonism. He has refused to ever submit to the compulsion to drink human blood which emphasizes his compassion for humans and his impact on the larger community in which he must live. He is a vampire with a "conscience" in regard to human life and is the most "humane" and "compassionate" of their kind.⁸³ By being their literal creator, spiritual leader and pioneering a new way of life for the vampires in his family, Carlisle's role parallels the stories told of Joseph Smith and the genesis of the LDS Church.

As Carlisle's middle "son," Edward has the most authority outside of Carlisle because of his central position in the story, and as a male he clearly commands. Like all the Cullens, Edward exists in two worlds simultaneously. His age, experience and vampire powers would give him an edge over any normal, human, seventeen-year-old. He adores Bella and places her at the center of his world but must continually exercise his authority over her in ways that echo that of the LDS priesthood position by making all decisions for her. He regularly commands her to eat, to sleep, and often decides who she can be friends with and her daily activities.⁸⁴ By deferring to him Bella reinforces her inferior position in the relationship and emphasizes the subordination of women

in the novels.

Additionally, part of Bella's appeal to Edward is the challenge she presents: Bella is the obstacle in his quest for perfection in resisting his animalistic tendencies to drink human blood. He is unusually drawn to Bella and must keep from drinking her blood through superhuman and intense self-control. Edward explains that, "until I made up my mind that I was strong enough [to resist drinking Bella's blood] there was no possibility" that he could get close to her without losing control.⁸⁵ Because he can overcome intense temptation like his father, Edward can be considered a redeemed individual on the path to salvation, again echoing the teachings of Mormonism. With control and order as the foundations of any utopian community-- especially LDS society-- Edward is the perfect example of an LDS man worthy of the priesthood's responsibilities. Since he is able to overcome temptation and confidently exerts authority over Bella, Edward augments the male gender roles within past and present LDS theology.

Edward's masculinity is vital to the story, as he is supposed to represent all that is desirable in a mate for Bella. Because Edward is really 108 years old, he has had ample time to become educated, cultured, and well-versed in music, one of his passions. Edward is never rash, always logical, and always right in arguments with Bella.⁸⁶ His experience and virtue often enable his patronization of Bella due to her lack of sophistication and knowledge. Additionally, with the power to read minds, he is always aware of everyone's thoughts but Bella's, one of the traits that draws him to her. His other vampiric features of great beauty,

immense strength, speed, and grace combine to make him a lethal and sexy package. By constantly focusing on Edward's beautiful appearance and his inexhaustible talents, Meyer is highlighting these traits as the very epitome of masculinity and what Bella, acting as the every-woman, finds most attractive in a mate. His skin is literally ice-cold and his body rock-hard but Bella still blissfully falls asleep on his uncomfortable shoulder every night. Even the way he patronizes and controls Bella is written by Meyer in a supportive light, as if that is what every woman wants and deserves from a man.

In contrast, Jacob, the teenage werewolf and Quileute Indian who competes for Bella's affection, is shown as a direct foil to Edward. Jacob is rash, hot-headed, and his rage is often the catalyst to his transformation into a great destructive beast, a werewolf. Edward never stops being a vampire nor does he have to be incited into any emotion to use his powers yet Jacob does. Bella describes Jacob as "kinda beautiful," which is a far cry from her detailing Edward's "scintillating arms" or "perfect face" every few pages.⁸⁷ Bella also treats them very differently: she is always in love and in awe of Edward, while she regards Jacob as a younger sibling and wishes desperately that their connection is one of actual blood relation rather than romantic love. Edward is grown-up and debonair while Jacob is immature and "brotherly."⁸⁸ Jacob is strong, attractive, and his skin (after he begins transforming into a werewolf) is always "burning hot."⁸⁹ He is awkward, happy-go-lucky, and loyal to a fault. He believes in doing what is morally right but can be sullen when doing it, whereas Edward is uncompromising, calm, and almost always in control. When Jacob

tries to force a kiss on Bella she retaliates by punching him in the face,⁹⁰ yet she passively allows Edward to use the same kind of force, sexual or physical, to manipulate her actions. Meyer offers these two primers on masculinity and, by Bella's choice of Edward over Jacob as a mate, rejects Jacob's type of masculinity and holds Edward as the masculine ideal. Jacob's efforts to change Bella's romantic inclinations are always in vain and her continually referring to him as a brother who she can never love in that way reinforces Meyer's insistence that what women really want is a man like Edward.⁹¹

Female gender roles in Mormonism are as rigidly proscribed as males. Mormon theology clearly defines women's roles as the "heart" of the household and the main caretaker of the children. Mormon doctrine states women's roles are "to support and take counsel" from the priesthood leaders and motherhood is equated to priesthood.⁹² LDS theology believes woman's "sacred duty" and primary role in the Church is to be a mother and give bodies to as many souls as possible. In *Twilight*, there are many examples of female characters embodying this ideal of womanhood, most specifically, Esme Cullen, the "mother" of the Cullen family and Carlisle's wife. Esme is described solely as "motherly," "tender," "kind," and "sweet."⁹³ She has the smallest role of all the Cullen vampires in the series and tends to stand in the background to comfort, support and reassure. Although she possesses the all vampiric traits such as super strength and speed, she plays a diminutive and subservient part in the story and is thus given less authority than Carlisle. Esme was converted by Carlisle after she nearly died jumping off a cliff. She wanted to die because she had recently

given birth to a baby that did not survive and she preferred death over living a life without her baby. Esme clearly embodies the Mormon "idealization of women's role as women and mothers."⁹⁴

Unlike Esme, Bella's mother Renee is shown as scatter-brained, unreliable and erratic.⁹⁵ For example, when Bella wakes in the hospital after a violent vampire attack at the end of *Twilight* and is gravely hurt and in pain Bella comforts her mother and wishes she could "run to her, calm her, promise that everything was fine" instead of the other way around.⁹⁶ Renee plays a small role in the books and her irresponsibility is in marked contrast to Esme's motherly care and perfection. In relation to her mother even Bella appears decisive and mature and she yearns for the experience of a traditional, responsible mother. In that same scene in the hospital in *Twilight* Bella notes that, "this was the first time" since Bella was a child that Renee "tried to sound like a parental authority."⁹⁷ In contrast, in that same scene, Edward is the one who never leaves Bella's hospital bed and is the first person she sees when she wakes, telling her that "everything's all right now" and that her "only job is to heal."⁹⁸ These words seem like they should come from a parent but because of Renee's childish helplessness Renee is instead parented by Bella, who in turn is parented by Edward. Dorice Williams Elliott's essay, "Let Women No Longer Keep Silent in Our Churches: Women's Voices in Mormonism," claims that when LDS men "give counsel" to other men they are "speak[ing] from a position of shared authority within the priesthood. Since women do not share that power, they are spoken to authoritatively."⁹⁹ Men have the power to assume how women "feel, think and

act: hence women are regularly told what they should think...want...and...feel."¹⁰⁰

Edward demonstrates this behavior by parenting Bella in the hospital better than her own mother can. Showing Bella's need for a parental figure is possibly a reason why Meyer characterized Edward in that role.

Rosalie, the oldest Cullen "daughter" reinforces LDS gender roles by her origin story. In the third book, *Eclipse*, Rosalie reveals to Bella that, when she was human, all she desired was a family and children to love.¹⁰¹ Her dreams were shattered when her fiancé brutally raped her and left her to die in the street. Carlisle found her and, realizing if he didn't act she would die, changed Rosalie into a vampire. Despite Carlisle saving her life, Rosalie has always been bitter that because of her vampiric status she will never have children.¹⁰² When Bella becomes pregnant with her half-human, half-vampire daughter in book four, all the Cullen women but especially Rosalie are violently opposed to aborting it, even though the baby's vampire strength is killing Bella from within the womb. Rosalie becomes Bella's main protector solely out of desire for the baby, not to help Bella. The Cullen women's desire for a baby and, in effect, to all become mothers is so strong that they are willing to put Bella's life in danger to achieve that end.¹⁰³

Bella Converts to ~~Vampirism~~ Mormonism

Bella's role is also one that easily parallels a role in Mormon culture: that of a convert. Bella comes from a small, divorced family and moves away from her "scatter-brained" immature mother to a father who is not "comfortable with

expressing his emotions out loud."¹⁰⁴ In contrast, the Cullen's large family is welcoming and eager to help Bella and Edward find a way to spend the rest of their lives together. As soon as Bella realizes Edward is a vampire she wishes for nothing else but to become one and live with him forever; she is literally converting to his religion, to push the metaphor. Bella begins as the weakest character literally and figuratively, as she is comically accident-prone whereas the vampires and werewolves are graceful and powerful. Bella has no hobbies or interests outside of the domestic sphere and her only obvious trait is stubbornness. She believes she is unattractive, boring, and that "it wasn't just physically that I'd never fit in [in Forks]. If I couldn't find a niche in a school [in Phoenix] with three thousand people, what are my chances here?"¹⁰⁵ Bella's only skills are domestic, female-centric pursuits, namely cooking for herself and her father and doing chores around the house. She is constantly in shock over her unworthiness of Edward's attraction and can't understand during their initial meeting why he's "fascinated" for "some reason [she] couldn't imagine" in her "dull life story."¹⁰⁶ She calls herself "cowardly,"¹⁰⁷ suffering from "crippling clumsiness" that casts her as a "damsel in distress."¹⁰⁸ Bella believes that while Edward is "interesting...brilliant... mysterious...perfect...and beautiful," she is, in contrast, completely uninteresting¹⁰⁹ with "obvious ordinariness."¹¹⁰ Her only concern during the first three books is her passionate (though sexually unfulfilled) love for Edward and her desire to be with him throughout eternity. Bella believes, "it did not matter if he did not want me. I would never want anything but him, no matter how long I lived."¹¹¹ She even goes so far as to say that "those first days

with Edward” were the “true beginning” of her life.¹¹²

Edward makes a deal with Bella that he will be the one to turn her into a vampire if she marries him and this deal is too good to pass up. Their marriage begins book four, *Breaking Dawn*, and Bella agrees to marry Edward on the condition that they have sex after they are married but while she is still human. Bella does this because Meyer explains a newborn vampire is a slave to their desire for blood and Bella does not want to postpone sexual intimacy with Edward any longer than necessary. After having sex only three times during their honeymoon, the fertile Bella, whose fecundity epitomizes LDS womanhood, is pregnant. Her pregnancy progresses at an inhuman and alarming rate and the monstrous fetus is killing Bella as it breaks her bones moving in her womb.¹¹³ Bella’s priorities change from being with Edward forever to protecting and delivering her baby despite its cost to her own body. This shift in focus echoes what is expected of Mormon women when they marry and the community anticipates their ascending focus from married couplehood to motherhood. Because none of the Cullen women can have children Bella is fawned over and praised for her fertility and for making a noble sacrifice (of her own body) for motherhood. She literally is the supermom and the only one able to make the Cullen family complete with a baby.

As Bella goes into labor, the baby’s struggles and the inability of Edward to help her during the birthing process (oddly, Carlisle, the doctor in the family, was out of town), Bella’s spine breaks and she almost dies giving birth. Desperate to save her, Edward plunges a syringe full of his venom into her heart

and begins her vampiric transformation. Bella's conversion process consists of three endless days of intense, burning pain, and after she is cleansed by the cleansing fire of vampirism (mirroring religious conversion) she is reborn anew as a vampire. She is, for the first time, "stronger than Edward" and "quite controlled" for a newborn vampire--more so than Carlisle, with all his years of experience around newborn vampires, expected.¹¹⁴ When Bella first looks in the mirror as a vampire, she regards with "unthinking pleasure" the "indisputably beautiful" "alien in the glass" who is "fluid even in stillness," has a "flawless face [as] pale as the moon against her dark, heavy hair" and whose limbs were "smooth and strong" with skin "luminous as a pearl."¹¹⁵ This is a huge contrast from her earlier assessment of her human self and the reader cannot help but see that Bella is a vastly improved version of herself after becoming a vampire/convert to Mormonism. Instead of being a ravenous newborn vampire Bella has remarkable self-restraint and control, confounding the Cullens who have never seen any new member of their species act as if they were "decades rather than days old."¹¹⁶ Bella is literally the best Bella she can be once her conversion has taken place. Bella's growth into a much better version of herself after becoming a vampire mirrors the conversion process in Mormonism and her old self is literally burned away as she transforms into a Mormon. By showcasing Bella as a strong, independent character only after she becomes a mother, a wife, and a vampire, Meyer reinforces Mormon gender roles for women and conversion to the religion.

Another foundational principle of Mormonism is that God has given us free

agency and the ability to choose between right and wrong on our path to salvation. The Book of Mormon states, “the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself”¹¹⁷ and be “free to choose liberty and eternal life”¹¹⁸ knowing “good from evil” so men can “act for themselves and not be acted upon, save” from the “commandments the Lord has given.”¹¹⁹ One must follow the righteous path outlined in the Book of Mormon to spend eternity in heaven with God, and to do so one must repent of sin. In *Twilight* the Cullens symbolize Mormons who follow commandments and live righteously so they are blessed with immortality and the knowledge that they will spend eternity as a family unit. The Volturi are showcased at the other end of the spectrum as immoral, evil, tyrannical creatures who ignore the path of salvation and are damned to spend an eternity in sin.

Mormons believe in three levels of heaven rather than the three Catholic locations of the afterlife, and eternal progression toward the apex of the spiritual cosmos. The highest level of heaven is the celestial kingdom where humans can achieve their divine potential to become gods only if they are Mormons in good standing and either “a man [or a] woman...sealed in the eternal marriage covenant in one of the church’s holy temple by someone” with priesthood authority, and who have “continued entirely faithful since.”¹²⁰ Those who are righteous Mormons but who have not accepted eternal marriage via the temple will spend eternity in the second level of heaven known as the telestial kingdom where they will be

Ministering servants...for those who are worthy of...an eternal weight of glory. For these angels did not abide by my law [of

eternal marriage]; therefore they...remain separate and single, without exhalation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever.¹²¹

The third level of heaven, the terrestrial kingdom, is most like the Catholic idea of purgatory and where all non-Mormons end up after death. It is for humans who are "not valiant in the testimony of Jesus" and those who could have accepted Jesus as their savior but refused or could not be bothered to do so.¹²² Following this model, each member of the Cullen family is partnered with each other so they can all attain the celestial heaven and continue their eternal progression. Edward, however, is the single exception to this, as for over a hundred years of his vampiric life he had not yet found his mate with whom to spend eternity creating new spirit-children. Thus his relationship with Bella not only converts her to this Mormon way of life but also provides Edward the means with which to enter celestial heaven and complete his eternal progression. Bella and Edward's relationship serves to save both their souls.

Race and Virtue

Mormons also believe that after Jesus was crucified and resurrected he traveled to the Americas and ministered to the Native Americans, who were then known as Lamanites. The Book of Mormon outlines the events that happened while Jesus spread his gospel in this region. In the Book of Mormon the sons of Abraham leave Jerusalem and are led by faith across the ocean to what is now North and South America.¹²³ Two of these tribes, the Nephites and Lamanites (descendants of Nephi and Laman, sons of Abraham) are thrust apart when the

Nephites accept the word of God and the Lamanites reject these ideas.¹²⁴ The “bloodthirsty and idolatrous” Lamanites exterminate the Nephites and because of their crime are cursed with black skin so all that see them know their heresy.¹²⁵ Upon conversion to the true Church, however, the curse will be lifted and the Lamanites’ skin will become white and pure.¹²⁶ Mormons believe that the Lamanites are the ancestors of Native Americans, whose dark skin is a result of this curse.¹²⁷ Because of this connection to their holy book, many Mormons believe they have a special bond with Native Americans and their history on this continent.

This correlating point of LDS culture and *Twilight* is the focus on the local Native American group, the Quileute Tribe. Their ancestral legend is that they are descended from wolves.¹²⁸ The fictional Quileutes believe that the Cullens pose a serious threat to humanity so they countered this threat by becoming the only strong predators of vampires. In Meyer’s version, they become werewolves. The importance of the Quileutes as more than the vampire’s natural enemy is evidenced in the figure of Jacob Black, a fifteen-year-old Quileute boy. Jacob is a typical, immature, teenage boy who is also Bella’s best friend and the third part of the love triangle between Bella and Edward. His greatest skill and hobby, putting together automobiles, is one that Bella thinks only someone “with a y chromosome could understand” or enjoy.¹²⁹ He is chatty, always smiling, and has an easygoing temperament and rapport with everyone, especially Bella. She describes him as a “perpetually happy person” who “carrie[s] that happiness with him like an aura”¹³⁰ and because of this she considers him her “personal sun.”¹³¹

His status as an economically depressed member of society due to his Indian heritage does not seem to bother him and he lives happily segregated on the reservation, content with life there and the frequent visits of Bella to his part of town.

In book two, *New Moon*, Edward decides to leave Bella because he believes Bella is in less danger from members of his world without him around—despite her protests to the contrary. Bella is so distraught by the absence of her reason to live that she becomes severely depressed and refuses to actively participate in her life. She remains this way until she decides to spend time with Jacob.¹³² His “presence kept [Bella] whole”¹³³ in Edward’s absence and while she admits she may be “replacing one addiction with another,”¹³⁴ she only wants the pain of Edward’s absence lessened. Even though Bella shows platonic affection only for Jacob, he and the many fans who proclaim themselves “Team Jacob” hope that Bella will choose him to spend eternity with. However, it’s clear throughout the series that Bella will choose Edward and will through this act symbolically choose Mormonism.

Another way Meyer demonstrates the superiority of the Nephites/Mormons/Cullens over the Lamanites/Quileutes/werewolves is through the way she portrays family in the series. The Cullens are a tight-knit *family* in contrast to the werewolves’ *pack*. In the pack, all the Quileutes in wolf form have no thoughts hidden from each other and have to think like a pack rather than act on their own desires. Members of the group must obey any order of their leader, or alpha wolf, and Meyer does not characterize the Quileute werewolves as

possessing unique personalities. This is a far cry from the Cullen's democratic and loving family system where each member is a distinct individual and has *chosen* to be a part of the family. The primary difference is the Cullen's agency as opposed to the Quileutes lack of free will.

SECTION THREE

Sex, Blood, and Virtue: The Sexual Evolution of the Vampire

The vampire story is ultimately one of good versus evil, but it plays out on a battlefield of sexuality. Since Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, vampire stories have focused around the sexual metaphor of a male vampire drinking the blood of virginal human women. The act of drinking blood by biting a woman's neck is intensely erotic and was a titillating and shocking analogy for sexual relations when introduced to popular culture by Stoker in the Victorian period. In *Vampire Legends in Contemporary American Culture: What Becomes a Legend Most*, William Patrick Day explains that the vampire story has remained appealing and culturally relevant because of its "lurid, extravagant, exotic sensationalism" and the chance it gives us to "walk on the night side, indulge in the perverse, the forbidden, the dangerous, the supernatural."¹³⁵ The myths and legends of the vampire have transformed from the "romantic Byronic figure...as an image of Victorian moralism" of the nineteenth century into the contemporary "sexual sensationalism" of "the bite that is the kiss, pain that is pleasure, death that is love."¹³⁶ The vampire "is a figure of freedom and the gratification of all desire" in an "era of disenchantment in which all forms of value, belief, and truth are subject to ceaseless interrogation."¹³⁷ Our fascination with vampires has always been tied to a fascination with sex. How that fascination plays out, however, depends on the story.

The *Twilight* series' significance and popularity lies in the fact that it characterizes sexual ascetism as the difficult but virtuous choice to make under

any conditions. Both Edward and Bella believe in waiting to have sex until marriage, mainly because with the way Bella's blood smells to Edward it is likely that if they do more than kiss he will lose control and kill her. Edward's love for Bella, or more literally his wanting to devour her, allows Meyer to talk about sex and abstinence without explicitly naming sex. Bella relies on Edward's superhuman self-control to keep him from killing her when they kiss, and because of that temptation, Edward insists they stay chaste and careful. Meyer takes a page from Stoker's *Dracula* by using Edward's drinking Bella's blood as an analogy for sex, which was true in Victorian England. Meyer also uses this idea to heighten the sexual tension but downplay the killing/murdering aspect of the vampire. By downplaying how they kill and feed on blood and by exhibiting vampires who have enough compassion for humanity to fall in love with a human, Meyer makes her vampires more palatable to the general audience.

Melissa Rosenberg, the screenwriter for the film adaptation of *Twilight*, believes "Vampires are metaphors for sexuality, but one of the reasons they're so popular in the *Twilight* universe is that they're safe... but tantalizing in their sexuality. Edward protects Bella from her own raging hormones."¹³⁸ There is a deliberate focus on the risk factor involved with Bella and Edward's relationship that highlights Edward's vampiric desire for Bella's blood. The subversive part of *Twilight* is the acceptance of Bella's sexuality, especially as seen in Edward's acquiescence to have sex with a human and therefore fragile Bella. He could easily kill her in the throes of passion. Throughout all four novels in the series it is always Bella who instigates discussion of sexual feelings and activity and her

sexuality and sexual desire are shown as normal. This subverts traditional and conservative ideals of feminine purity and sexuality because women have long been considered the less sexual of the two sexes and the enforcer of sexual purity against man's baser nature.¹³⁹ It is because Edward is superhuman that he has sexual control, though as their relationship progresses he is more in control of his desire to drink her blood (due to his love for her) and less in control of his arousal in response to her sexuality and advances. This is allowable under Christian standards because the closer they get physically the closer they get to marriage, and they finally consummate their sexual relationship in their marriage. These books let teens engage in a fantasy that their abstinence-only sex education teacher could approve of, while at the same time they are subversive because Bella is allowed to express her sexuality and desire.

Reinforcing LDS-sanctioned gender norms, the books capitalize on their appeal with their teenage audience. Many teenagers going through puberty are confused with their role in society and their burgeoning sexuality, so the distinct gender roles put forth in *Twilight* can help ease some of that confusion. Meyer puts a Mormon twist on vampire teenage fiction which often, as vampire scholar Margaret L. Carter explains, "foreground[s] the plight of traditionally marginalized groups and call[s] into question definitions of 'human' and 'monstrous.'"¹⁴⁰ Carter also believes teen fiction "additionally use[s] vampirism to explore adolescent concerns about identity, the maturation process, and separation from parents."¹⁴¹ In doing so, *Twilight* reinforces conservative, traditional cultural norms in terms of identity and reinforces a maturation process and separation from parents that

mimics the ideals set forth by the Mormon Church. This points to the popularity of the books for teenage girls who can place themselves in the story and fall in love with Edward-- an adoring, perfect boyfriend who won't compromise their virtue. The fact that he's a vampire becomes desirable rather than repulsive because he chooses Bella despite having the choice of any human--or vampire--in the world.

Twilight offers a way to navigate both the Christian Right's and the American mainstream's political views on sexuality by promoting traditional Mormon values, but the Mormon roots are obscured by the simple presentation using vampire literature which allows Mormons to masquerade as vampires.¹⁴² The series promotes liberal sexuality by offering a subversive view of female sexual desire and by showcasing Bella's sex drive as healthy and normal.

SECTION FOUR

The Fans and The Phenomenon

Twilight's popularity has much to do with its male hero: Edward is commanding but always thoughtful of Bella, putting her needs above his, even when he is constantly taking charge. He is gorgeous, rich, and has everything he could ever want—and all he wants is Bella. Edward's appeal and romantic nature are greatly influenced by Victorian literature: Meyer admits that Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* influenced her writing. Bella and Edward's attraction to each other lasts through many dangers: a love triangle with a persistent werewolf, a newborn vampire army bent on Bella's destruction, inter-species marriage, and a nearly fatal pregnancy. Meyer set out to make their relationship as star-crossed and eternal as Romeo and Juliet, Heathcliff and Cathy, and Elizabeth Bennett and Edward Darcy. Meyer's use of these books has not been subtle, as she has Bella read these books over and over and Meyer often quotes them on the page in relation to Bella and Edward's relationship. Edward asks Bella why she re-reads *Wuthering Heights* because he believes "the characters are ghastly people who ruin each others' lives. I don't know how Heathcliff and Cathy ended up being ranked with couples like Romeo and Juliet or Elizabeth Bennett or Mr. Darcy," she responds, "I think it's something about the inevitability. How nothing can keep them apart—not [Cathy's] selfishness, or [Heathcliff's] evil, or even death, in the end."¹⁴³ It's this inevitability that Meyer wishes to highlight and the sexual tension due to her main character's chaste romance is what keeps readers interested. Meyer admits this

by saying she has been pressured to put more graphic love scenes in *Twilight* but feels “you can go anywhere for graphic sex. It’s harder to find a romance where they dwell on the hand-holding.”¹⁴⁴ Lev Grossman, writing for *Time Magazine*, describes this as the “erotics of abstinence” and the titillation of their chaste romance is a huge draw for the books.¹⁴⁵

The biggest fan base for *Twilight* is teenage girls. Thousands of girls have flocked to the internet to proclaim their love for all things *Twilight* and coined the term “Twi-hard” to describe themselves and their undying passion for the series. A Twi-hard is described as an intense fan who “lives and breathes *Twilight*” and greatly supports and romanticizes Edward and Bella’s relationship. Because of their devotion to the *Twilight* world and the main characters’ relationship, these fans are “all for true love and love at first sight.”¹⁴⁶ These girls claim the series is like “literary crack” and many agree that if they were granted one wish they would “wish to be Bella” so they could marry Edward and live in Forks.¹⁴⁷ Teenage girls are reading these books in record numbers, but what is it that attracts them to this story? Caitlin Flanagan asserts in “What Girls Want” that the most “salient fact about an adolescent girl’s existence is her need for a secret emotional life” and Flanagan believes each teenage girl is

A creature designed for reading in a way no boy or man, or even grown woman, could ever be so exactly designed, because she is a creature whose most elemental psychological needs—to be undisturbed while she works out the big questions in life, to be hidden from view while still in plain sight, to enter profoundly into the emotional lives of others—are met precisely by the act of reading.¹⁴⁸

Flanagan essentializes teen girls by arguing that this predisposition for

melodrama and a secret emotional life tied to sexual desire is what lies behind the popularity of *Twilight*.

What Flanagan does not fully account for, however, is that many of *Twilight*'s fans are not teenagers but adult women. Flanagan asserts herself as a fan, agreeing that *Twilight* is a "fantastic" book that created a "slingshot back to a world of sensation that, through sheer force of will and dutiful acceptance of life's fortunes, I thought I had subdued."¹⁴⁹ On many websites devoted to older female *Twilight* fans, women claim to be obsessed with the books because the "crux of the saga is unconventionally adolescent" and the "real appeal of this story is Edward and Bella's pure, unadulterated puppy love."¹⁵⁰ One such *Twilight* fan explained that, "The books made me feel like a teenager again...It's been a long time since I got to feel that complete adolescent abandonment over a boy."¹⁵¹ On this subject a stay-at-home, Mormon mom and *Twilight* fan comments on a Mormon blog post on *Twilight*:

Edward is the ultimate fantasy for mothers of young children whose bodies have changed and whose husbands are always working. Edward exists to love, protect, and buy expensive gifts for Bella. He is always hyper-aware of Bella's needs, begs to buy her things, never has to work, and is constantly saving Bella from her own weaknesses and from scary villains. Plus, Edward is "beautiful" and can't resist Bella, who has always felt that she was plain. Contrast this with real life, with the competing needs of husband, wife, children, bill collectors, church, etc. "Twilight" is an escape from reality into a world where the perfect man (he even has supreme moral self-control!) finds the heroine irresistible.¹⁵²

It is important to note that the *Twilight* series follows Janice Radway's guidelines for popular romance novels in her book, *Reading the Romance*, in that *Twilight* celebrates a happy ending (Bella and Edward finally spend eternity together after

she converts to his religion and fulfills her divine Mormon duty by becoming a mother!) and also shows a female living in a state of weakness in a patriarchal society.¹⁵³ The latter characteristic mimics many fans' reality and Radway suggests female protagonists find fulfillment despite their weaknesses and male-centric society. Bella's journey of self-discovery lies in the trajectory of not only her experience of true love, but of her conversion to religion, becoming a married mother (thus, again, following the patriarchal rules of said religion), and defeating the bad guys all by herself! It's no wonder this fantastical story strikes a chord in girls and women of all ages who are supposed to "have it all."

The most popular website for adult, female *Twilight* fans is TwilightMOMS, a website created by a Mormon stay-at-home mother in 2007. The site is not overtly pro-Mormon but there are many Mormon members and Mormon-themed topics discussed in the forums. The site's creator, Lisa, wanted to create a space where adult *Twilight* fans "can gather unashamed of our irrational obsession with vampires and werewolves" and have a space delineated from teenage girls' *Twilight* fandom where "OUR world of balancing family, work, home, marriage...AND our *Twilight* obsession is unique, fun, and oh, so very humorous."¹⁵⁴ There are over 39,000 members of the website's forum and over 2,171,154 posts as of May 2010!¹⁵⁵ An overwhelming number of women on the site's forum post that the website creates a safe space for them to express themselves and connect with other women via their love of *Twilight*.¹⁵⁶ This shared community demonstrates that *Twilight* acts as a catalyst for women to come together and support each other much like Radway's romance readers

have done. The difference here is the ease of the internet, which connects users over vast spaces and gives women ample room to create their *Twilight*-centric world.

The Mormon audience writ large seems to fall into one of three camps: the obsessive fandom of the TwilightMOMS; moderate Mormon fans who support and discuss the LDS themes, theology, and culture present in the books; and the more conservative Mormons who claim *Twilight* is sinful and even dangerous for young girls.¹⁵⁷ These moderate fans are quick to praise the positive LDS elements of the book and many are pleased that through her books Meyer is presenting LDS beliefs to non- LDS audiences.¹⁵⁸ Others believe the books are anti-Mormon and one blogger in this camp goes so far as to call *Twilight* “soft porn for Mormon” females that teach a series of “damaging lies about relationships and the nature of love.”¹⁵⁹ The all-encompassing obsession that causes Bella and Edward to ignore everything but each other looks to some like pure infatuation, not love, as it conveys the belief that all emotional requirements will be met with Bella’s disinterest for anything or anyone other than Edward.¹⁶⁰

Bella and Edward are constantly alone, which leads to testing the boundaries of their sexual experience. While always restrained (they never get farther than a few kisses), their habit of chaste sexual experimentation while isolated from peers and adults is an unrealistic expectation of chastity for young, hormone-fueled libidos. Edward’s control is supernatural: he has to be under control because, if he relents, he will end up drinking Bella’s blood and killing the object of his passion. Additionally, Edward is the only one with control, since

Bella is often “intoxicated by [Edward’s] presence” and cannot think rationally.¹⁶¹

Most teenage boys do not have that kind of restraint and LDS literature for adolescents emphasizes restraint from any activity that arouses sexual feelings.

It is not surprising that some LDS commentators have been less than approving of these books for young people. Taking a step even further, Mormon blogger Anneke Majors on the popular Mormon website “Motley Vision” believes Edward is a prime example of an abusive boyfriend: his dictation of Bella’s every move and thought certainly suggests theirs is an unhealthy and possibly abusive relationship.¹⁶² It is important to note, however, is that there is no official Church statement endorsing or condemning the *Twilight* novels, despite Meyer being one of the most successful Mormon authors of this century.¹⁶³ Notwithstanding the lack of official Church opinion to provide direction, it seems many LDS members support Meyer rather than decry her work as immoral and unrealistic to virtuous teenagers.

Conclusion

On the subject of the vampire myth's most potent weapon and prevailing trait,

William Patrick Day explains that,

a vampire's sexuality is most powerful when it appears as an ambiguous suggestion of what cannot otherwise be portrayed, While contemporary vampire stories often portray the vampire as a charismatic, sexual being and celebrate the creature's erotic and romantic qualities, this is no longer the great, powerful secret of the vampire as it was in the nineteenth century...but simply another fact about it.¹⁶⁴

Stephenie Meyer takes the traditional vampire story and gives the vampires compassion, a conscience, and conservative sexual morals. The virginal love story that is central to the series' plot is also central to Mormon society. If, as a member of the TwilightMOMs forum blogged, "boundaries are what makes us human" then the Cullens enforcing "limits that enable rather than destroy" gives them meaning and purpose in their immortality.¹⁶⁵ These novels use a contemporary variation of the vampire genre in literature that stems from the Mormon Church's conservative beliefs. Meyer uses the vampire's long history of interaction with religion to bridge these discourses and create a new vampire legend. In the Mormon-influenced *Twilight* universe, Meyer shows how acceptance of order and adherence to rules for the good of the community, rather than the individual, is desirable and reinforces the possibility of diverse people finding common ground for relationship. and even love.

In *Twilight*, Mormon themes abound. Vampires do have souls and their eternal happiness lies in their immortality. Mormonism also abates a deep fear of death, as they believed through eternal progression that "death was merely the

transformation from one state of existence to another.”¹⁶⁶ Where in Stoker’s Catholic-tinged story, Dracula is an agent of evil until he is killed and then his soul is free to spend eternity in heaven, in *Twilight* the immortal Cullen family is already living their divinely-realized potential through their adherence to the path of salvation and Jesus’ gospel. Themes of free agency, eternal progression, conservative sexual morals and the family as the divine unit abound in *Twilight* and are all crucial LDS theological and cultural beliefs.

Vampires, throughout our cultural history, “address issues and attitudes about death and immortality that are meaningful in all times and places.”¹⁶⁷ We have needed vampires in the past to tell us how to deal with death and we need vampires now to show us the path to salvation, eternal love and eternal life. In *Twilight* you don’t have to die, you can live forever with your loved ones in a cherished, otherworldly family unit. Rather than be afraid of the vampire and wish to kill it with righteous violence, today we long to become vampires to gain eternal life without overtly converting within the confines of a religious institution. Our evil, predatory monsters of old have become our redeeming angels and Mormon missionaries of love, virtue and compassion.

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- ⁵¹ Ibid, p. 290.
- ⁵² Meyer. *New Moon*, p, 428.
- ⁵³ Ibid, p. 36-37.
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- ⁵⁶ Shipps, Jan. *Mormonism*, p. 144.
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- ⁶² Meyer. *New Moon*, p. 429.
- ⁶³ Ibid, pgs. 20, 19, 421-422.
- ⁶⁴ Smith, Joseph. *The Book of Mormon: an Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*, Doctrine & Covenants (D&C), section 5, 11-20.
- ⁶⁵ Hyde, Orson. *Journal of Discourses*, vol 1, p. 123.
- ⁶⁶ Young, Brigham. *Diaries of Brigham Young*. www.lds.org, p. 87.
- ⁶⁷ Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, p. 80.
- ⁶⁸ Smith, Joseph. *The Book of Mormon: an Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*. D&C section 42 18-93.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid, D&C 59:23.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid, D&C 76, 58-119.
- ⁷¹ Revelations from God given to Joseph Smith and written by him; considered to be part of the "standard works" of the Mormon Church along with the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price, which is another set of revelations given to Smith during his lifetime.
- ⁷² Smith, Joseph Fielding. *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:43-44, 48.
- ⁷³ Bushman, Claudia. *Contemporary Mormonism: Latter-day Saints in Modern America*, p. 40
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ Shipps, *Mormonism*, p.149.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 128.
- ⁷⁷ Bushman, *Contemporary Mormonism: Latter-day Saints in Modern America*, p.38.
- ⁷⁸ Mormon heterosexual couples who come together on Earth remain eternally linked.

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- ⁷⁹ Foster, Lawrence. *Religion and Sexuality: The Mormons, the Shakers, the Oneida Community*, p. 205.
- ⁸⁰ Shipps, *Mormonism*, p.137.
- ⁸¹ Meyer. *Twilight*, p. 288.
- ⁸² *Ibid*, p. 289.
- ⁸³ *Ibid*, p.. 288-289.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p.. 169, 479.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p.. 301.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 33.
- ⁸⁷ Meyer. *New Moon*, p. 132 and *Twilight*, p. 49.
- ⁸⁸ Meyer. *New Moon*, p. 375.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 281.
- ⁹⁰ This may seem like Bella is asserting her power here, but it is not so: Jacob's face, since he is a werewolf, is as hard as stone and Bella sprains her hand while Jacob feels nothing from the punch.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 370.
- ⁹² Bushman, *Contemporary Mormonism: Latter-day Saints in Modern America*, p.112-113.
- ⁹³ Meyer. *Twilight*, p.. 322, 327.
- ⁹⁴ Foster. *Religion and Sexuality: The Mormons, the Shakers, the Oneida Community*, p. 206.
- ⁹⁵ Meyer. *Twilight*, p. 4.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 464.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 468.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 459 and 463.
- ⁹⁹ Hanks, Maxine. "Let Women No Longer Keep Silent in Our Churches: Women's Voices in Mormonism." *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism*, p. 202.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁰¹ Meyer. *New Moon*, p. 143.
- ¹⁰² Meyer explains that upon conversion to vampirism the body enters stasis where it can neither age or change, thus eliminating the possibility of a female vampire carrying a child. Edward's ability to impregnate Bella, however, is never logically explained. This omission implies that a woman's fertility depends entirely on a man's virility whether that virility is logical or not.
- ¹⁰³ Meyer, *Breaking Dawn*, p. 178.
- ¹⁰⁴ Meyer. *Twilight*, p. 7.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 10.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 48.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p 73.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p 55.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p 79.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p 67.
- ¹¹¹ Meyer. *New Moon*, p. 451.
- ¹¹² Meyer. *Breaking Dawn*, p.398.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 177.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 393.
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 403.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 420.
- ¹¹⁷ Smith, Joseph. *The Book of Mormon: an Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*, 2 Nephi 2:16.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 2 Nephi 2:27.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 2 Nephi 2:26.
- ¹²⁰ Newell. *Latter Days: An Insider's Guide to Mormonism, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, p. 420.
- ¹²¹ Smith, Joseph. *The Book of Mormon: an Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*, D&C, 132:16-17.
- ¹²² *Ibid*, D&C 76:72-74, 79.

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- ¹²³ Ibid, 1 Ne 6:23
- ¹²⁴ Shipps, *Mormonism*, p.26.
- ¹²⁵ Smith, Joseph. *The Book of Mormon: an Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*, Enos 1:20.
- ¹²⁶ Ibid, 3 Nephi 2:15.
- ¹²⁷ Ibid, introduction.
- ¹²⁸ Quileute Creation Myth. www.nativelanguages.org.
- ¹²⁹ Meyer. *New Moon*, p. 47.
- ¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 145.
- ¹³¹ Ibid, p. 198.
- ¹³² Ibid, p., 193.
- ¹³³ Ibid, p., 214.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid, p., 102.
- ¹³⁵ Day, William Patrick. *Vampire Legends in Contemporary American Culture: What Becomes a Legend Most*, p. 5.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 5
- ¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 6 and 7.
- ¹³⁸ Vognar, Chris. "'Twilight' 'True Blood' Take Opposing Approach To Vampire Sex." *The Dallas Morning News* online, www.dallasnews.com.
- ¹³⁹ Gresle-Favier, "Raising Sexually Pure Kids:" *Sexual Abstinence, Conservative Christians, and American Politics*. p. xiv
- ¹⁴⁰ Carter, *Different Blood: The Vampire As Alien*. p. 92-93.
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid.
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- ¹⁴³ Meyer. *Eclipse*, p. 28.
- ¹⁴⁴ Grossman, Lev. "It's Twilight in America: The Vampire Saga." *Time Magazine* online, www.time.com.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ibid.
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- ¹⁶⁰ Majors, Anneke. "Squeaky Clean." Weblog post. *A Motley Vision: Mormon Arts and Culture*. 4 Feb. 2008. Comment by Katherine M. www.motleyvision.org.
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The College of William and Mary 8th annual Graduate Symposium (March 2009)

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