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Saga as a Modern Fairy Tale

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Declaration of Authenticity

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To Georg Chvojka, Iris Šala
and Raphaela Rohrhofer

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1 Introduction

In 2005, American author Stephenie Meyer published her debut novel *Twilight*, the first book in the incredibly successful four-part *Twilight Saga*. The series follows the life of Bella Swan, a teenage girl who falls in love with a vampire. To illustrate how successful Meyer's novels have been, it should be mentioned that her first novel *Twilight* "[...] debuted at #5 on The New York Times bestseller list" (see McCauley Bannar 7). In 2008 *Twilight* and its three sequels occupied number one to four of the best-selling books of the year in the United States (see Debarros, Cadden, DeRamus and Schnaars). The fourth part *Breaking Dawn* became *Teen Choice Book of the Year* and Meyer won the award *Children's Choice Book Awards Author of the Year* (see Bell, *Awards*). According to an article in the *Los Angeles Times* from November 2012, "Meyer's four books, meanwhile, have sold 116 million copies worldwide" (see Kaufman) and "ha[ve] been published in nearly 50 countries" (see Sellers).

The novels caused an unexpected and massive hype among readers: there are thousands of Facebook pages and groups, blogs and homepages dedicated to the *Twilight Saga* in general or to the protagonists Edward Cullen, Bella Swan or Jacob Black in particular. Online shops offer "I love Edward Cullen" T-Shirts and mugs.¹ Fans organise Twilight-themed parties, there are *Twilight* Halloween costumes for sale online and there is a great number of people publishing self-written stories on the web serving as additional reading material for the insatiable fan community (see Platt 71, Bell, Focus, Parrish 177). In the course of my research I even came across an article entitled "Vampires ever after: Bride, groom in 'Twilight' wedding change names to Cullen"(see Elbaum). Apparently, the obsession of fans with Meyer's novels seems to know no limit. *Twilight* has become a brand and since the story of Bella and Edward was adapted for cinema, it has reached even wider audiences.

¹ Examples taken from <http://shop.cafepress.co.uk/i/%252520love%252520edward%252520cullen>

Obviously, the most important aspect in the series is the relationship between Bella and Edward which is characterised by the conflict between romantic love and mortal danger. On closer inspection, another aspect occurred to me: while reading Meyer's novels I noticed a number of similarities to traditional fairy tales such as *Snow-white*, *Cinderella* or *Little Red Riding Hood*. The strong appeal the Saga has among both teenagers and adults reminds me of the fascination children experience when reading or listening to fairy tales. Entering the terms "twilight saga" and "fairy tale" into a search engine yields over 800.000 results. It seems that there is a considerable amount of readers who associate Meyer's novels with the fairy tale genre. Statements in this connection are not only to be found in informal sources such as Internet forums, blogs or Facebook sites but also in newspaper or magazine articles, as can be seen in the following extracts.

Indeed, one of the biggest film phenomena in recent years is, at heart, a *fairy tale*. Stephenie Meyer's series of "Twilight" novels, which already has spawned three hit movies, takes *many cues from the genre* — there's forbidden love, evil monsters, creepy forests and the promise of *happily-ever-after*. *Classic fairy tales inspired the "Twilight" movies. Now the success of "Twilight" is inspiring fairy-tale movies.*

Hardwicke, director of both "Twilight" and "Red Riding Hood," says the two films come from the same place. "I love the *symbolology of fairy tales* and I like to see them reinterpreted," she said. Hardwicke and other creators say the new movies cut closer to the dark heart of the source material than did the Disney versions of the 20th century. (see Zeitchik) [emphasis added]

The Hollywood Reporter's Todd McCarthy observes, "*If the entire five-part, 608-minutes-all-in running time of The Twilight Saga means anything at all, it is that vampires are the ultimate fairy-tale characters, as this is a story that literally ends happily ever after and forever for all concerned.* Anyone who has seen even one of the previous cinematic installments of Stephenie Meyer's endlessly protracted cross-species love story basically knows what to expect here, and the multitudes who have seen them all will jam theaters the world over in the coming weeks to experience the consummation so devoutly to be wished: the ultimate and imperishable union of Bella Swan and Edward Cullen." (McCarthy qut in Exley) [emphasis added]

Still, even casual Twilight viewers won't be surprised about the *eventual happily-ever-after*. The frighteningly successful series, which has earned \$1 billion in the U.S. alone, wraps up with a When-Bella-Met-Edward flashback that pushes all the right romantic buttons. The future of Stewart and

Pattinson's off-screen relationship may be uncertain at this point. But the montage reminds viewers that for fans, Bella and Edward will always be *movie magic*. (see Jacobs) [emphasis added]

In addition, I also found topic-related material in the German-speaking media. There are, for instance, articles with titles such as *Nach Twilight: Stephenie Meyer hurt sich durch den Märchenwald* (see Kutzner) or *Das Märchen vom braven Vampir* (see Steiner).

At first, the *Twilight Saga* was only discussed in the tabloid press, gossip magazines or online forums. However, due to their massive success, a steadily growing interest in Meyer's books could also be observed among literary scholars in the last few years. More and more scientific texts on the topic are being published at an accelerated rate. Taking into account the quotes presented above and various informal posts found on the Internet, the association between Meyer's novels and the fairy-tale genre should be worth considering in detail.

Therefore, in my thesis I will raise the question whether the *Twilight Saga* can be classified as a model or pattern of the modern fairy tale. In the first section a theoretical basis is built. I will start with a definition of the fairy tale as far as terminology is concerned, which is followed by a chapter introducing the most important scholars and their contributions to the field of fairy-tale theory to provide a basic understanding of the genre. Based on these findings, I will outline parallels between the traditional fairy tale and the *Twilight* novels in order to justify the comparison, and I will elaborate on the deviating aspects which represent the core of what I define as the modern fairy tale. These aspects serve as the starting point and working material for the second section of the thesis that will pose the question what features constitute the modern character of the *Twilight Saga* as a fairy tale and what they mean to us or, in other words, why these contemporary aspects had to be added in the first place. Consequently, the first part of my thesis is based on findings of literary theory whereas the second part mainly reveals new insights in the context of cultural studies.

2 What is a fairy tale in the traditional sense?

2.1 Terminology of the fairy tale

As a number of scholars have already outlined, defining the genre of the fairy tale – also referred to as wonder or magic tale – is a challenging task (see Zipes, *Marvels* 221). To begin with, it is important to realise that before a line can be drawn between the different genres, the term fairy tale itself is in need of closer inspection. Not only is it difficult to describe the fairy tale in terms of genre but also with regard to terminology. Of course, the term fairy tale is problematic principally because in people's minds today this type of tale is often understood as an umbrella term reconciling all kinds of tales. When reading contributions on the subject it becomes clear that scholars use the term in a variety of ways (see Zipes, *Companion* xv; Haase qut. in Zipes, *Marvels* 222). The following quote shows one of many different versions of categorisation found in this connection, outlined by Swann Jones.

Folk Narratives

- I. Myths – etiological narratives employing immortal protagonists
 - II. Legends – quasi-historical narratives employing extraordinary protagonists
 - III. Folktales – quotidian narratives employing ordinary protagonists
 - A. Fables – didactic or moralistic tales
 - B. Jokes – humorous tales
 - C. Novellas – romantic tales
 - C. Fairy Tales – magical tales
- (see Swann Jones 8)

Swann Jones suggests that fairy tales are a subcategory of the folktale. In contrast to the quotidian folktale the main characteristic of the fairy tale is the magical aspect (8).

2.2 Folktale, fairy tale and literary fairy tale

The distinction between folktales and fairy tales is often a source of misunderstanding or confusion as they differ on two levels. For one thing, folktales

usually do not include magical elements whereas for fairy tales these are mandatory (see Swann Jones 7). For another, folktales constitute the collected

versions of orally transmitted stories while fairy tales can either be “folk fairy tales” (7), falling into the oral category, or literary fairy tales, representing “the product[s] of the individual imagination of literary authors” (7).

However, it becomes clear how problematic these definitions are when taking a look at works written by other scholars. Zipes, for instance, claims “that oral folk tales, which contain wondrous and marvellous elements, have existed for thousands of years” (*Dreams* 2). Lüthi notes that “folktales strike us as enigmatic because they mix the miraculous with the natural, the near with the far, and the ordinary with the incomprehensible in a completely effortless way” (*Folktale* 2). Apparently, both Zipes and Lüthi do not differentiate between folktales and fairy tales, at least not as far as the magical aspect is concerned. Whether the theoretical term folktale does or does not imply magic is fortunately of no significant relevance for my thesis because in order to analyse the *Twilight* series I will focus on fairy tales, which include magic in every instance.

With regard to my thesis, the distinction between oral and literary fairy tales is interesting indeed because Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight Saga*, which constitutes the text I will try to position in the fairy-tale realm, was written by one author and would therefore belong to the category of the literary fairy tale. Therefore my theoretical research is mainly based on the fairy tale and the literary fairy tale in particular rather than the folktale.

In *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* Jack Zipes provides an English-language summary of Jens Tismar’s comparison between these two tale types. Tismar was one of the first German researchers to contribute to this field of study and makes precise distinctions between the fairy tale, which he refers to as *Kunstmärchen*, and the folk tale, which he terms *Volksmärchen* (xv).

In his first short monograph, Tismar set down the principles for a definition of the literary fairy tale (das Kunstmärchen) as genre: (1) it distinguishes itself from the oral folk tale (das Volksmärchen) in so far as it is written by a single identifiable author; (2) it is thus synthetic, artificial, and elaborate in comparison to the indigenous formation of the folk tale that emanates from communities and tends to be simple and anonymous; (3) the differences between the literary fairy tale and the oral folk tale do not imply that one genre is better than the other; (4) in fact, the literary fairy tale is not an independent genre but can only be understood and defined by its relationship to the oral tales as well as to the legend, novella, novel, and other literary fairy tales that it uses, adapts, and remodels during the narrative conception of the author. (see Zipes, *Companion* xv)

Basically, the main difference between folktales and fairy tales is that the former evolved from the oral tradition, which implies the anonymity of the original source. One further characteristic is the layered composition of these tales as they had been in a process of change for decades until they were finally collected and written down. Folktales were particularly popular among the bourgeoisie that reshaped the tales with each retelling, contributing to their typical simplistic and radical features (see Swann Jones 5; Zipes, *Companion* xv).

The fairy tale is a subcategory of the folktale that is characterised by its obligatory magical element. The literary fairy tale is a genre that developed out of the fairy tale. It retains various characteristics of its origin, but it differs in the way it is created because it is the work of one individual author, usually from an educated background (see Swann Jones 8). Some literary fairy tales are very close to traditional fairy tales in form and content while others deviate significantly.

Traditional fairy tales obviously served literary authors such as Hans Christian Andersen as a source of inspiration. The literary fairy tale cannot exist without the traditional fairy tale as it is a particular subcategory of the genre (see Zipes, *Companion* xxvii; Swann Jones 43). I will therefore use the term fairy tale throughout the course of my study, as well as tale if no further description is needed, and literary fairy tale if detailed information is required.

In order to consider the Twilight Saga as a modern fairy tale, a definition of the term, as well as information on structure and essential characteristics of the genre, are needed. In the *OED*, the term is defined as “a. A tale about fairies. b. An unreal or incredible story. c. A falsehood” (see “fairy tale”). A detailed analysis of the fairy tale will follow in the upcoming chapters.

To provide a basic idea of how differently the genre is interpreted among scholars, what follows are three examples of definitions that can be found in popular works of reference of the genre.

The fairy tale belongs to folk literature (y.v.) and is part of the oral tradition (q.v.). And yet no one bothered to record them until the brothers Grimm produced their famous collection of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* or *Household Tales* (1812, 1814, 1822). In its written form the fairy tale tends to be a narrative in prose about the fortunes and misfortunes of a hero or heroine who, having experienced various adventures of a more or less supernatural kind, lives happily ever after. Magic, charms, disguise and spells are some of the major ingredients of such stories, which are often subtle in their interpretation of human nature and psychology. (see Cuddon 302)

A story about elves, dragons, sprites, hobgoblins, and other magical creatures. These supernatural “spirits” are usually represented as having mischievous temperaments, unusual wisdom, and power to regulate the affairs of man in whatever fashion they choose. The most famous writers or compilers of fairy tales were the Grimm brothers (Germany) and Hans Christian Andersen (Denmark). The term fairy tale is also applied to a misleading or incredible account, belief, or statement. (see Shaw 155)

A traditional folktale adapted and written down for the entertainment of children, usually featuring marvellous events and characters, although fairies as such are less often found in them than princesses, talking animals, ogres, and witches. The term is a direct translation of the French *conte de fée*, the writing down of fairy tales having emerged from a fad for such stories among the French aristocracy of the late 17th century. Many of these stories are of incalculable antiquity, some deriving from Sanskrit, Chinese, Arabic, and Persian traditions, and a few had appeared in early chapbooks and romances, but the first major literary collection was Charles Perrault's *Histoires, ou contes du temps passé* (1697, better known as *Contes de ma mère l'Oye* or *Mother Goose's Tales*), containing ‘The Sleeping Beauty’, ‘Cinderella’, ‘Little Red Riding Hood’, ‘Bluebeard’, ‘Puss in Boots’, and others. ‘Beauty and the Beast’ appeared in 1756 from the pen of Marie de Beaumont, a French governess working in England. Such stories began to

be used as the basis for pantomimes from the late 18th century, and were soon joined by the anonymous early 19th century English tale 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. (see "folktale", *OD of Literary Terms*)

A comparison of the three entries shows that they have only little in common. In fact, the common factor can be reduced to merely one element and that is magic. Even this one shared feature is referred to in different ways, namely magical, supernatural and marvellous. It seems that, except for the magical aspect, the idea of the fairy tale is far from homogeneous and rather vague. While in Cudden's *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* the focus is clearly on the plot and the protagonist's adventures, the second definition by Shaw presents a list of possible figures and a short description of their characteristics. The description found in the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* is the most comprehensive but still the definition of the fairy tale is as briefly summarised as in the other examples. Compared with the other two dictionary entries this definition is strongly based on the origin of the fairy tale since more than a third of the text deals with the history and development of the genre. This diversity of definitions implies that there is no such thing as the one correct definition of the fairy tale but a number of concepts. Ideally, equal importance should be attached to as many perspectives as possible as they all together build the complex concept of the fairy-tale genre.

There are various different approaches towards the theory of the fairy tale. Vladimir Propp, Jack Zipes, Max Lüthi and Bruno Bettelheim are often considered to be the most important scholars in this context, but since the fairy tale is continually gaining attention in various fields of scholarship, there are also a number of contemporary texts available on the subject. These sources are just as worth considering due to their currentness, providing new findings on traditional texts, as well as including new primary texts.

While taking into account all secondary literature I consider relevant for my research, there are three scholars who provide the major sources for my thesis, i.e. Steven Swann Jones, Max Lüthi and Jack Zipes. Swann Jones' and Lüthi's texts are of utmost importance with regard to the first part of my thesis, which serves as

a theoretical foundation and preparation for the subsequent chapters. Zipes, apart from considerations on the traditional fairy tale, also provides information on the fairy tale's development over time and its place in contemporary literature and culture. His works serve as an essential source for the second part, in which all findings of the previous section are analysed in connection with the fairy tale's role in society today and cultural developments of relevance in this respect. In addition, Zipes narrows down his research area by limiting his studies to the regions of North America and Western Europe as they "share common literary traditions" (see Zipes, *Companion* xvi). Regarding my thesis I will restrict my research to those areas as well.

3 Positioning *Twilight* in the fairy-tale realm

Taking a look at various bookstores and book reviews on the Internet, Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* novels are advertised and sold under the most different generic terms. The indications range from young adult fiction to vampire fiction, horror, romance to the fantasy genre. Accordingly, the novel series is difficult to classify as it draws on a range of different genres.

First of all, I want to point out that I do not have the intention to contradict that *Twilight* and its sequels have the quality to be assigned to certain genres such as romance, fantasy or horror – all these attributions are entirely reasonable and could be easily justified argumentatively by means of textual analysis with regard to these genres.

It is not my aim to try to “squeeze” Meyer's novels into the framework of a traditional folk tale such as *Cinderella* or *Red Riding Hood* – rather, my thesis is based on the assumption that the *Twilight Saga* represents the pattern or prototype of the modern fairy tale, a genre that is composed of both those elements from the traditional fairy-tale realm that are still appealing and interesting to our society and those that are new or modernised, which represent aspects of the world we live in today. My thesis is not exclusively based on findings gathered from literary studies but also includes ideas taken from cultural studies, which turned out to be particularly important in order to understand what the fairy tale means to people in our modern society.

The first part of my thesis will examine a literary approach to the subject, in which the *Twilight* series will be considered closely within the framework of various works of fairy-tale theory. In order to support my proposition that Meyer's novels feature a great number of fairy-tale characteristics, I will try to identify as many of the frequently occurring parallels as possible and analyse them in great detail. However, I will also elaborate on those aspects contrasting with the reference material, as these deviations are at least equally important for the outcome of this hypothesis.

3.1 Level of Story: Parallels and differences

3.1.1 Plot and chronology of events

Even though overlaps might be unavoidable, in order to preserve a certain order I shall start with an analysis of the plot. According to Swann Jones, “the plot outline is regarded as the defining feature of specific fairy tales” (4) in the context of the oral folktale. Nevertheless, he also emphasises that literary fairy tales, or “individual versions [...] are quite consistent in their *adherence to the plot outline* (that is, the sequence of basic episodes) of the tale type” (7). Of course, there is no such thing as the one correct plot or course of action and the same applies to the fairy tale. However, despite the great variety of tales there is still a considerable number of underlying elements most of them have in common (see Zipes, *Companion* xv).

Vladimir Propp is known for his attempt to identify a pattern that should constitute the origin of each folk tale ever collected. Swann Jones considers this method unrewarding, claiming that “Propp’s observation that many fairy tales depict quests to resolve problems is valid, his attempt to subsume that plot as well as other nonquest plots [...] into one Ur-plot is self-defeating” (15). Propp insists on a classification into thirty-one possible functions, which I have enlisted in the following for a better understanding. These functions can be understood as “the fundamental and constant components of a tale that are the acts of a character and necessary for driving the action forward” (see Zipes, *Dreams* 4).

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Absentation | 17. Branding |
| 2. Interdiction | 18. Victory |
| 3. Violation of Interdiction | 19. Liquidation |
| 4. Reconnaissance | 20. Return |
| 5. Delivery | 21. Pursuit |
| 6. Trickery | 22. Rescue |
| 7. Complicity | 23. Unrecognized Arrival |
| 8. Villainy | 24. Unfounded Claims |

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 9. Mediation | 25. Difficult Task |
| 10. Beginning Counter-Action | 26. Solution |
| 11. Departure | 27. Recognition |
| 12. First function of the Donor | 28. Exposure |
| 13. Hero's Reaction | 29. Transfiguration |
| 14. Receipt of a Magical Agent | 30. Punishment |
| 15. Guidance | 31. Wedding |
| 16. Struggle | (see Propp 26-63) |

In view of the significant number of functions it seems very unlikely that one single fairy tale should include all of the thirty-one steps and Propp does not consider this as necessary either. It is, however, of particular importance to him that the chronology of these functions is always maintained, which is the case with the majority of folk tales (22).

There is one further point that should be taken into account as concerns the attempt to associate the *Saga* with the fairy-tale genre and this is the difference in the length of the texts. In the *Twilight* novels, there are a number of different problems that have to be solved, the *Saga* is thus subdivided into several story units. Propp briefly discusses this problem in his morphology, presenting two different possibilities of classification: either a tale is subdivided into moves or one text is in fact composed of multiple tales. According to the rules that Propp has laid down in this regard the *Saga* would comply with the requirements of a single tale as Propp claims that “We also have a single tale if, up to the conclusive liquidation of misfortune, there is suddenly sensed some sort of shortage or lack which provokes a new quest, i.e. a new move, but not a new tale” (95).

However, Propp's morphology is also subject to reasonable criticism among his colleagues. Swann Jones, for instance, considers his functions to be “too general, such that his structure can be applied to any narrative, not just fairy tales” (14). As an example he mentions among others function number 8, “villainy”, which can be found in any type of fiction and thus is not specific enough to assign it to a

particular genre. Another point of criticism is that it is difficult to establish a structure when there is no reliable basis of comparison, as the number and choice of functions among fairy tales can vary significantly and as Propp does not clarify how many functions a text has to feature in order to be considered a fairy tale in the first place (see Swann Jones 14).

Moreover, Propp's theory should be examined closely with regard to his field of research. Although many of the included elements can be found in tales from all over the world, Propp restricts his studies exclusively to Russian tales and oral folk tales (see Zipes, *Companion* xvii). Throughout his morphology the word fairy tale can be found only at rare intervals, as in the majority of cases Propp uses the term "tale" – both refer to the oral folk tale in each instance. Even though Propp's theory is, in many cases, not applicable to literary fairy tales or tales from the European and North American area, the *Morphology of the Folktale* nevertheless served and still serves as starting point for a vast number of studies and therefore should not be ignored in any discussion on fairy tales (xvii).

Holbek also proceeds from Propp's model and adopts the aspect of chronology of events. Furthermore, he adds ideas from Lévi-Strauss as well as Köngas Maranda to his fairy-tale theory, which is based on oppositions instead of functions as suggested by Propp. Holbek distinguishes between three basic oppositions, which are young – old, male – female and poor – rich (or low – high). These are subdivided into further categories later in his work but essentially, Holbek claims that the fairy tale consists of three phases, beginning with the generation conflict. In this first part of the tale differences between the daughter or son and her or his parents or one parent result in the child leaving home and discovering the world on his or her own. What follows next is a "meeting of the sexes" (418), which soon leads to a romantic relationship and finally the model concludes with the low-high conflict, which demands equality and hence causes an elevation of the protagonist out of a lower class to a higher, more sophisticated society. *Twilight* can be embedded here easily: Bella leaving her mother as a result of a conflict of interests is followed by her meeting Edward, who becomes her first and true love and at the

close of the *Saga Bella*, who has a working class background, becomes a member of the rich Cullen family by marrying Edward. Aside from that, her status as a mortal, vulnerable human being compared to her immortal, strong and perfect vampire partner also creates an imbalance which is adjusted in the last sequel by means of Bella's transformation from a human into a vampire (see Holbek 347, 418).

Compared to most of the scholars Lüthi's theory is not so much based on the chronology of events and the plot but on the four concepts one-dimensionality, depthlessness, isolation and universal interconnection and sublimation and all-inclusiveness presented in his groundbreaking work *The European Folktale*. (As already mentioned, Lüthi makes no terminological difference between the folktale and the fairy tale.) With one-dimensionality Lüthi means that the fairy tale takes place in a one-dimensional world in which the protagonist "deals with [...] otherworldly beings as though he perceived no difference between them and him" (*Folktale* 6). Depthlessness is assigned to all characters as they "lack physical and psychological depth" (*Folktale* 12). Furthermore, the hero or heroine as well as all persons he or she encounters are always isolated, living on their own without any close relations to others. Sublimation is the term Lüthi uses to explain that fairy tales include all the notions of the real world within their realm but they are reworked by means of magic. Lüthi's theory is (*Folktale* 4-80)

Bottigheimer primarily elaborates on the literary fairy tale, which she prefers to refer to as simply fairy tale and presents a slightly different subdivision of the fairy tale with regard to the plot by distinguishing between restoration and rise fairy tales. Restoration tales are characterised by the departure of the prince or the princess. Having left his or her home, he or she has to overcome stirring events and there is finally always a magical incident that enables the protagonist to solve the problem. The following steps are marriage as well as the hero or heroine being "restored to a throne" (212). As its name implies, rise tales involve the rise of the hero or heroine from a poor to a royal or at least very wealthy status. This purpose is achieved by means of a magical element which leads to the protagonist marrying

a wealthy man or woman (213). In either case, Bottigheimer argues that in both tale types the wedding is essential for the story and the only possible ending for the heroine (83-84).

Burkert's version of the fairy tale named "the Initiation Tale" or "the maiden's tragedy" constitutes the key pattern for my plot analysis, proving undeniably clear parallels between *Twilight* and fairy tales. His pattern is introduced in the following.

The Maiden's Tragedy can be analyzed by the methodology used by Propp, to make up a sequence of functions or motifemes. There are at least five of these in immutable order: (1) *A sudden break in a young girl's life*, when some outside force makes her *leave home*, separating her from childhood, parents and family life; (2) *a period of seclusion*, often elaborated as an *idyllic though abnormal stage of life*, in a house or temple, or instead of being enclosed in a house, she may be roaming through the wilderness out of reach of normal human settlements; (3) *the catastrophe that upsets the idyll, normally caused by the intrusion of a male*, in most cases a special male, a demon, hero, or god who violates the girl and leaves her pregnant; this results (4) *in a period of tribulation*, suffering, and punishments, wanderings or imprisonment, until (5) *she is rescued and there is a happy ending* after all. The ending is directly or indirectly related to the birth of children [...] (Burkert 71 qut. in Zipes, *Meaning* 238) [emphasis added]

Zipes in his article *The Meaning of Fairy Tale within the Evolution of Culture* quotes a brief discussion of Burkert's model. His interpretation differs slightly from the original source so that the *Twilight* novels are even closer to the pattern.

The key functions that set a pattern related to female experiences are (1) an eruption in a young girl's life that causes her to separate from family and home; (2) seclusion for a certain period in an idyllic setting that can be an island, forest, or temple; (3) a catastrophe that drives the young girl from the idyllic setting due to her violation of a promise or her being violated; (4) a period of wandering in which she suffers and must atone for her mistakes; and (5) accomplishment of tasks or rescue that brings about a happy ending. (see Zipes, *Meaning* 238)

Burkert proceeds from the assumption that the origins of Maiden Tales and also fairy tales in general are to be found in Greek mythology, or more specifically the story of Amor und Psyche, or *The Animal Bridegroom*, originally from Greek mythology, which "has often been called the one surviving fairy tale of antiquity"

(46). As typical examples he provides *Rapunzel* and *Snow-white* because both tales include the most important elements: seclusion, intrusion and rescue of the heroine resulting in a happy ending (71-72).

The pattern can easily be adapted to *Twilight*. The novel begins with a girl named Bella, who, albeit rather grudgingly, decides to leave her beloved sunny hometown Phoenix to live with her father in the cold and foggy Forks. She does this in order to give her mother the opportunity to live with her new husband who has to travel frequently because he “plays ball for a living” (*Twilight* 48). The opening of the book alone represents the first phase of the Maiden’s Tale, which entails the break in the heroine’s life as well as the departure from home. The life in Forks seems cold, monotonous and lonely to Bella in the beginning, but it turns out to be a memorable time for the girl, falling in love with vampire Edward and spending time with him in perfect idyll, also in total isolation in Forks woods. Obviously, this passage is also completely in line with Burkert’s model.

The idyll is broken by the vampire James, a tracker, who is passing through. After seeing the Cullens having a human girl as their guest and protecting her, the fact that the family acts counter to their vampiristic instincts, confuses and angers him. When he realises how much they care about Bella, he feels challenged and starts to track the girl. With the help of Alice and Jasper Bella disappears, but when James finally manages to find out their telephone number, he threatens to harm Bella’s mother unless Bella meets him in private. Bella lies to Alice and Jasper about the phone call, telling them it was her mother. She steals away secretly to deliver herself up to James, who attacks and tries to kill her. In other words, this passage represents the breaking of a promise towards Alice and Jasper and especially Edward, as he repeatedly tells her not to get in trouble and to be safe. Furthermore, this is a catastrophic situation, the state of harmony being violated and the reason for it being the appearance of a man.

The only difference to Burkert’s description is that James has no intention to rape Bella, thus there is no sexual reference to be found here. As a consequence, Bella

does not get pregnant like Burkert's maiden and is instead rescued by Edward, who wins a fight to the death against James.

Only a few chapters later, in the sequel *New Moon*, Edward and his family leave Forks as Edward no longer wants to put Bella in danger. What follows is a very difficult time for the heroine. After spending much time on her own she becomes friends with Jacob, who has strong feelings for her. Bella also has feelings for him, but these are "of a lower order" (see Kokkola 5). Although Jacob supports her and tries to distract her from her loss, she still suffers every day she is separated from her lover and cannot sleep due to her terrible nightmares. She even tries to commit suicide and repeatedly places herself into danger as in these situations she can somehow get in contact with Edward, "hear[ing] his voice" (*New Moon* 111). This phase of the protagonist is practically identical with Burkert's fourth point.

Due to a misunderstanding, Edward thinks Bella has committed suicide and thus sees no reason to live anymore. Therefore, he joins the Volturi, the most powerful vampire family domiciled in Italy, who are capable of killing members of their species, and tries to find a way to provoke the Volturi to kill him. Alice and Bella travel to Italy and finally save Edward, but as the Volturi find out that a human knows about their existence Bella is in a life-threatening situation and thus the Cullens decide to make Bella one of them soon. Before that, there is a battle between the Cullens and an army of vampires led by Victoria, who wants to exact revenge on Edward for killing James by doing the same to Bella. The family is supported by friends and the werewolf pack and finally it is again Edward who saves Bella's life. After the love triangle between Bella, Edward and Jacob is resolved, Edward and Bella eventually marry and shortly afterwards, Bella gets pregnant.

The pregnancy is life-threatening to Bella and, to prevent her death during the birth of daughter Renesmee, the Cullens decide to make Bella one of them instantly. It is ultimately Edward who carries out the procedure and transforms Bella into a vampire as he had already promised reluctantly beforehand. Finally, the last part of

the Maiden's Tale is fulfilled, the heroine is being saved even twice, the couple marries and has a child in the end.

Except for the mentioning of rape and the delayed pregnancy of the heroine, the *Twilight* Saga closely corresponds to the conditions of the Maiden's Tragedy.

Burkert contrasts this model with the male dominated one, often termed as heroic quest or male initiation myth, which is preferred by various scholars, among them Vladimir Propp. Here "the hero has to perform the quest before taking up full social responsibility" (see Burkert 78), whereas Burkert points out that there is no need to oppose the male to the female initiation tale as female protagonists can perform quests all the same, such as, for instance, Psyche does (78).

The Maiden's tragedy or initiation tale is based on the story *Cupid and Psyche* written by Apuleius in the second century:

Psyche, daughter of a king, is beloved by Cupid, who visits her nightly, but remains invisible, forbidding her to attempt to see him: one night she takes a lamp and looks at him as he sleeps, and agitated by his beauty lets fall a drop of hot oil on his shoulder. He departs in wrath, leaving her solitary and remorseful. Like the hero of the novel in which her tale is set, Psyche has forfeited her happiness through misplaced curiosity, and has to regain it through painful wanderings. (see "Cupid and Psyche", COC)

This sequence of events can be found in the *Twilight* novels in a significantly similar manner: Bella falls in love with a supernatural creature, a vampire, who warns her repeatedly that being with him is extremely dangerous as he is a monster, capable of killing her. Nevertheless, she ignores the warnings and soon her relationship with the vampire results in Bella getting into danger, which is why Edward decides to leave her as he does not want her to be harmed again. With the help of his sister Alice, Bella searches for her love and succeeds in saving him from committing suicide.

As far as the ending of tales is concerned, most scholars consider marriage an absolutely essential feature, among them Swann Jones (see *Mirror*, 14, 24), Bottigheimer (212), Zipes (see *Companion* xvii, *Dreams* 3), Jorgensen (28), Ross (60), Bausinger (9), to name but a few. In fact, Pöge-Alder found out that 90 per

cent of the tales ATU 300 to 745A contain a wedding as the last event of the story (229). *Twilight* is different in this respect and Meyer herself emphasises this matter in an interview for *USA Today*:

“[...] there’s a conditioning from fairy tales that the wedding is the end of the story, but I think most of us know that it’s another kind of beginning” (see Memmott).

Unlike most fairy tales the *Saga* does not end with the wedding, but is followed by further episodes, including among other things the honeymoon trip and finally also Bella’s unplanned and unwanted pregnancy. Bella’s and Edward’s daughter Renesmee is a hybrid and has the extraordinary characteristic of growing extremely fast. Her skin, like that of all vampires, is hard as stone, which results in her breaking several of Bella’s bones, and the pregnancy gradually threatens to kill her. Only by means of the transformation into a vampire it is made possible for Bella to survive and give birth to her daughter Renesmee. As mentioned earlier, what follows is the resolution of the love triangle and after they manage to ward off an attack on Renesmee by the Volturi, the young family is ready for a harmonious life and the *Saga* finally comes to a close.

Meyer’s ending thus introduces a completely new aspect, as traditional tales do not tell the reader what happens after the wedding is over and, if the birth of a child is involved, then most often this is mentioned in one cheerful, passing sentence. Several innovations can be observed here: first of all, the fact that the pregnancy is unexpected and in the beginning also unwanted. This is a significant deviation from the traditional fairy tale in which children are always the logical consequence of marriage. Furthermore, the horrifying descriptions of the life-threatening pregnancy would be unimaginable in conventional tales such as *Cinderella* or *Rapunzel*. These are exactly the elements playing a crucial part in the development of the modern fairy tale and I will discuss the underlying ideas of these tendencies in a later chapter in greater detail.

At a first glance the last move of the *Saga* seems to be totally atypical. On closer inspection, however, the fairy tale actually ends rather conventionally. After all, the

story ends shortly after the reunion of the protagonists and the birth of their daughter Renesmee and can obviously be classified as a happy ending, entailing a victory of good over evil. And as the family is immortal, the reader automatically assumes a “happily ever after” as added at the end of traditional tales. That constant happiness for all eternity, which seems rather unlikely, is no longer part of the plot. Nor is the fact that Bella through her transformation into a vampire has lost her parents as they are not supposed to know about the existence of vampires given any consideration. Also the fact, that her best friend and former admirer Jacob Black has imprinted on Renesmee and by this means is actually going to be her son-in-law when Renesmee is old enough seems like it could become difficult at times in the future. Bausinger aptly summarises this thought by posing the question “who asks what actually happens after we reach the king’s realm, after the hero is freed, after the joyous marriage – he who does so is consistent with reality, but misses the genre, fairy tale. The fairy tale is from the very beginning ruled by its ending” (81).

As is typical for the fairy tale it ends before it even starts and before a daily routine can set in. In this sense, *Twilight* and its sequels end very similarly to other traditional fairy tales, that is, just in time at the height of happiness, and gives the impression that this condition is maintained for all eternity.

3.1.2 Time and Space

The traditional folk tales found in the Grimms’ collection and also a considerable number of literary fairy tales often begin with the famous line “once upon a time”, frequently supplemented by phrases such as “in a certain kingdom,” “east of the sun, west of the moon,” “beyond three mountains, beyond three oceans,” or other vague local descriptions (see Nikolajeva 141). Bausinger provides an apt description in this connection with regard to the collection of tales of the Brothers Grimm and states that “Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm consciously removed the fairy tale from their own time and reality. They created a special fairy-tale world, whose

realistic references they took from the past: kings and princes, coaches and horses, knights and riders” (41-42).

Various scholars agree with this suggestion and characterise folk tales – and fairy tales to some extent – as “displaced’ in time and space” (see Nikolajeva 138). However, despite the fact that Bausinger repeatedly points out the wide discrepancy between fairy tales and our world in terms of time and space, he still adds that “fairy tales and reality do not simply stand next to or beyond reality, but that a reference between fairy tales and reality can be established” (79) due to the fact that the reader gains from the tale on an emotional level, strongly identifying with the protagonist who overcomes difficulties and finally attains happiness. Elaborating further on that argument, Bausinger indeed comes straight to the core of the matter with his brilliant conclusion that “A fantasy world, far removed from reality, would be no more a fairy tale than would be reality that does not allow for fantasy and the playful suspension of reality” (80).

As a consequence, it seems as if the fairy tale world and ours were being kept completely separate. For Bausinger, however, it rather makes sense to see the fairy tale as a place where reality and all that is associated with it on an emotional level, that is conflicts among family members, with colleagues, friends or partners or oneself, is reworked “in a condensed, symbolic way” in the various different tales (see Bausinger 80).

As far as the aspect of time is concerned, the characteristics of the fairy tale can be illustrated very clearly by comparing it with the genre of fantasy fiction as time is especially important in that field. In fantasy fiction there is a strong focus on modernity. There are frequent occurrences of futuristic elements, together with scenarios involving visions of the future and expectations or wishes that our technology cannot yet, or may never, fulfil. One good example here is the incorporation of the physical phenomenon of the space-time continuum into stories by creating time travel. Time is very relevant in this genre and thus, in most cases, the reader knows which time the story is set in. In contrast, in the fairy tale there is either no time designation or there are phrases like “in olden times when wishing

still helped one” as can be seen, for instance, in *The Frog King or Iron Heinrich*, most often referred to simply as *The Frog Prince*, or “A long time ago” used for example in *Little Briar-Rose* also referred to as *Sleeping Beauty*. Propp also lists “A thousand years ago, or longer,” “At a time when animals still talked,” or “Once in an old castle in the midst of a large and dense forest” as possible introductions (62).

Considering the *Twilight Saga* with regard to time and space leads to interesting results. Most obvious seems the fact that the *Twilight* novels do not contain any typical phrases such as the common introduction “once upon a time”. Interestingly enough, the reader does not get to know the year in which the story takes place, but it is possible to work out a timeframe on the basis of various circumstances and descriptions, such as the existence of cars, planes, mobile phones, laptops and the Internet. The only year dates are mentioned in connection with cars as Bella drives a Jeep bought in 1984 and produced in the fifties or sixties. When Bella starts her laptop and does research on vampires by typing the term into a search engine, the reader assumes that the story takes place in the twenty-first century. Taking all information into account leads to the conclusion that the protagonists live somewhere in the years between 2000 and today.

Traditional folk tales and also most literary fairy tales do not contain such detailed indications and certainly no exact year dates, the *Twilight* novels thus clearly deviate from the fairy-tale pattern. However, the “timelessness of the tale” (see Zipes, *Dreams* 4) can be challenged as it is also possible to limit the time range to a certain degree, taking into account that no folk tale includes cars, telephones or television. While the majority of scholars in fairy tale studies claim that the tales are both time- and spaceless, at the same time, there are scholars who argue that they are closely connected with the people telling the fairy tales since they “reflect their concerns and the contradictions of their age” (see Zipes, *Dreams* 82).

Of course, it is not advisable to put fairy tales directly on a level with the time in which they were created and retold as they naturally do not reveal a true portrayal of that time or society, but to define the fairy tale as “detached from its space and

in time” (see Nikolajeva 141) seems to be overly inflexible, leaving no scope for fusion or overlappings.

The traditional fairy tale is set in ancient times and although the characters in the *Twilight* series live in the twenty-first century, the novels contain “old” elements by the choice of characters. The vampire, for instance, “is as old as human superstition itself” (see Daemmrich 1373), and the werewolf is a creature that first “occurs in the *Metamorphoses* [...] by the Roman poet Ovid” (see Daemmrich 1384). These characters stand in contrast to modern, or futuristic, figures such as robots or aliens. Furthermore, vampires always trace an arc from the present to “olden times” due to their immortality – Edward, for instance, is already 107 years old and the reader becomes aware of this fact when Bella describes him as a man talking in “the gentle cadences of an earlier century” (*Twilight* 265).

Another vital difference according to Nikolajeva is that the two genres differ in space, as in fantasy fiction the characters leave reality by travelling not only in time but also between worlds. One important aspect in terms of space is pointed out by Nikolajeva, who claims that the fairy tale is characterised by the fact that everything happens in one world separate from human reality, whereas, for instance, “The initial setting of fantasy literature is reality [...]” (142). However, I would argue that the initial setting can also be realistic in the realm of fairy tales: not only when looking at literary fairy tales such as Andersen’s *The Little Match Girl* or Barrie’s *Peter Pan*, also oral folk tales often have realistic initial settings when looking at *Little Red Riding Hood* or *Cinderella*. Nikolajeva also claims that due to the isolated status of fairy tales, there is no such travelling between worlds (see Nikolajeva 142). Even if there is no travelling between worlds in the fairy tale genre in most cases, travelling in the traditional sense still is a central theme in numerous tales, as Messerli outlines in the following quote:

As a gift the hero often receives from a supernatural being a horse or other means of transport, such as a coach, magic shoes, or a cloak, which accelerate his movements in space. The protagonist can be transported by a goat, eagle, cloud, or some other means. He can transform himself into a bird or a fish in order to move through the air or in the water. [...]

The line of action of folktales is not confined within the narrow boundaries of homeland; its direction is decisively toward far-distant places. (277)

Examples for this statement would be Cinderella's father, who returns from a business trip, little Snow White who runs into the wild forest and finally arrives at a cottage over the hills where the seven dwarfs live, the little mermaid who transforms herself into a human in order to explore dry land, or the valiant little tailor who goes out into the world to tell everyone about his triumph.

For Messerli, the fairy tale should be seen as a description of two worlds – the world of magic and the real human world – and these are connected by means of a path or crossing that leads from one world to the other. Depending on the story, the line between them can be drawn very sharply or rather loosely, in any case, there is a connection between them, epitomised for instance by “a bridge, river, pond, seashore, well or spring, stone, forest” (see Messerli 274) or the like (274).

In this regard Swann Jones quotes a definition by Campbell, who shares a similar view on this subject matter as “Campbell's model illuminates the relationship of the fantastic and the quotidian in fairy tales: they are perceived as coexisting in tangential worlds that the protagonist experiences and must reconcile” (Campbell qut. in Swann Jones 15).

Whether one prefers Nikolajeva's argumentation mentioned in the quote above, i.e. that the fairy tale happens in one single world, or Messerli's and Campbell's view that there are two worlds, it is clear in any case that a distinction has to be made between human/quotidian and magic/fantastic. Messerli nevertheless points to the fact that “it is not always possible to distinguish, in the Euclidian sense, the spatial areas of the real and the other world” (275). This makes sense as in many tales the boundaries are fluent or not visible at all, for instance when supernatural beings appear without anyone crossing a bridge or any other portal or simply live side by side with the human protagonists. Examples are Perrault's version of Cinderella in which the fairy is simply one of her aunts, or Rumpelstiltskin appearing out of nowhere, or Thumbling, who is born into a human family (see Messerli 274-275).

In the case of the *Twilight* series the supernatural beings walk among the humans without being noticed by anyone but Bella so it could be argued that there is one world in which reality and magic coexist. As far as space is concerned in general, Messerli adds that, particularly in terms of space, the fairy tale is rather nondescriptive, as hardly any detailed information on what places look like is ever provided. Davidson and Chaudhri also argue that “the geographical settings of the tales are deliberately vague – a palace, a hut in a forest, a tall mountain” (4).

Messerli points out that a fairy tale only contains “those indicators of space [...] that are absolutely necessary for understanding the story” (276) and this is true for the vast majority of tales. A place discussed in detail in his study of tales is the forest:

It is regarded, in both the real and metaphorical sense, as a place of mortal danger and forbidden desires (14).¹ It is represented negatively as an antithesis of courtly urban society and linked to the stereotypical adjectives “dark,” “huge,” and “lonely.” (see Messerli 274-275)

The forest is also an element of particular importance in the *Twilight* Saga, as can be seen in the following quotes:

Everything was green: the trees, their trunks covered with moss, their branches hanging with canopy of it, the ground covered with ferns. ... It was too green – an alien planet. (*Twilight* 8)

Nothing had changed in this forest for thousand years, and all the myths and legends of a hundred different lands seemed much more likely in this green haze than they had in my clear-cut bedroom. (*Twilight* 137)

The first quote can be found at the beginning of the story and it is the day when Bella arrives in her new hometown of Forks. In this passage, it becomes clear that the heroine has entered a new area or territory. As the second quote suggests the forest is associated with magic in the *Saga*, as a portal to a place where magic is more likely to happen than in a familiar environment. One magical incident that takes place in this setting is the battle between Victoria’s army and the Cullens, who are supported by the wolf pack. It is also in the forest where Bella observes the reaction of Edward’s skin to sunlight as vampires in the *Twilight* novels sparkle

“like crystal” (*Twilight* 260) when they go into the sun. Moreover, Bella and Edward meet secretly in the forest to be undisturbed and enjoy their togetherness. As is the case in Messerli’s quote, here the forest is one of the places in which Bella gives in to her sexual lust at least to a certain degree and in this way puts herself into a life-threatening situation as Edward finds it hard to resist temptation and suppress his natural longings.

There are a number of scholars, among them Bettelheim (63) and Propp (55), who agree that the fulfilment of all tasks, the overcoming of all obstacles and the finding of a partner which is coupled with a wedding always implicate a return home. However, this claim is a point of contention. Other scholars insist that “Frequently the fairy-tale hero does not return to his home town” (see Lüthi 141). Bausinger suggests that a return is optional. He explains that “At the end there can be a returning home that leads to a higher plane; but often (and this is very close to life and reality!) it is the reason for a new relationship, even the beginning of a new generation” (78). In the last sequel when Bella is already both mother and vampire, the Cullens surprise her with a present for her nineteenth birthday. It is a small house for Bella, Edward and their child - “a place where anyone could believe magic existed. A place where you just expected Snow White to walk right in with her apple in hand or a unicorn to stop and nibble at the rosebushes” (breaking dawn, 444). As the quote illustrates nicely, in *Twilight*, the heroine does not return to her old quotidian life. Bella starts a completely new life after her transformation which does not even let her a choice whether to go with her new family or return to her old life.

3.1.3 Choice of characters and their functions

In terms of the descriptions of fairy-tale characters there are attributes varying flexibly from tale to tale on the one hand, and certain characteristics of a more permanent and essential kind on the other, which exist to a lesser extent. An example for the fundamental characteristics is the fact that “fairy-tale figures do not

talk so much” (see Lüthi 126) but only give away as much information as needed by the reader to be able to follow the plot.

Also, it seems that one of the main requirements for the hero or heroine is to behave in a way that makes it possible for the reader to identify with him or her (see Swann Jones 9). The most important traits the protagonist should have so that empathy of this kind can be guaranteed are ordinariness, benevolence and modesty. Additionally, the protagonists are “unambiguous characters” (see Swann Jones 30, 66) in the majority of cases. Furthermore, the fairy-tale heroes and heroines who have to overcome difficulties in order to find a partner and their own place to live and raise their new family “remind us of ourselves, and their quests and questions are on a very personal level the same as ours” (9).

At this point I would like to add that there are rather extraordinary protagonists as well, as for instance in fairy tales like *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, *The Frog Prince* or Grimms’ *The Riddle* with a prince or princess being the protagonist. However, these tales represent a clear minority, at least as far as the popular collection of the Brothers Grimm is concerned.

Ordinariness is also reflected in the naming of characters as in the majority of tales the figures have no names at all but are described by their function or physical appearance, such as for instance “a king, a poor man and his wife, a princess” (Davidson and Chaudri 4) or “an old man with a white beard” (Jorgensen 220). Sometimes names are invented that describe the function or role of a figure as can be seen with *Little Red Riding Hood* or *Snow White* and, this point is conveyed even more clearly in the original German sources as names such as *Dornröschen*, *Schneeweißchen*, *Aschenputtel* or *Rumpelstilzchen* represent newly coined compound nouns that only make sense in the context of the fairy-tale realm (see Bettelheim 40). Although there are a number of tales containing real names such as the various “Hans” tales or *Hansel and Gretel*, Bettelheim claims that “the use of very common names makes them generic terms, standing for any boy or girl” (40).

Characters in fairy tales are generally of a simplistic nature in the sense that the reader does not learn about their inner feelings and thoughts as there is no such thing to be found in these tales: emotions of that kind as well as “relationships are externalized” (see Lüthi 51) in this genre by symbolising them by means of certain deeds or objects (51). An aspect that can be found in all popular fairy tales is that the protagonists are always young and the heroines are always beautiful. Another characteristic shared by the vast majority of fairy tales is that the heroes or heroines are always on their own – there are no friends or colleagues keeping them company on their adventures. In Lüthi’s view, the reason behind this is that “The fairy tale sees man as one who is essentially isolated but who, for just this reason – because he is not rigidly committed, not tied down – can establish relationships with anything in the world” (143). In other words, Lüthi claims that only through isolation is it possible for the protagonist to establish contact with supernatural creatures and he further adds that these are also rather on their own than part of a community in most cases (141).

The easiest way of grouping characters in a tale is the distinction between good and evil creatures, as has been pointed out by various scholars, among them Swann Jones (88), Lüthi (51,62), Nikolajeva (145) or Bettelheim (8-9). As can be seen in each and every traditional tale, there is the hero or heroine who always represents good, and in a great majority of cases there is a villain trying to harm the hero or heroine, who represents evil. The villain can be embodied in various different ways, ranging from humans to animals to supernatural beings, including among others queens, kings, stepsisters and stepmothers, dragons, demons, the devil, giants, witches, dwarfs, midgets, wolves, and others. The hero or heroine is a young man or woman in most cases, but can also come from the faunal or supernatural realm as for instance in tales like *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Wolf And The Seven Young Kids*, *Puss in Boots*, *Thumbling* or *The Little Mermaid*. However, with regard to my thesis I shall concentrate on the fairy tale with a human hero or heroine (see Beckson and Ganz 85).

Thinking of the most popular fairy tales as for instance *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Beauty And The Beast*, or *Snow White*, it is interesting that all protagonists are female. However, this is the case only with regard to the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm as these were collected in a time when women were given a dominant role in most aspects of art, one of the main reasons being that the “Grimm brothers’ informants were predominantly women” (see Lüthi 136).

In other collections of tales the number of male and female protagonists is balanced or heroes may outnumber the heroines. However, it must be remembered that *Grimms’ Fairy Tales* are often equated with fairy tales in our society today as for most people they are the major or even only source of fairy tales they are familiar with and as a matter of fact, their collection is the best known worldwide and therefore particularly important within the framework of the Western world and its culture.

There is another interesting distinction in terms of the role of the protagonists that can be found in various different sources, which is the difference in the presentation of male and female main characters. To start with, as mentioned earlier, the most important attribute of a female protagonist is always beauty while this trait is rarely expressed in connection with a male protagonist. A study concerned with beauty in the context of fairy tales states that out of 168 Grimms’ tales there are about “five times more references to women’s beauty per tale than to men’s handsomeness” (717).

Swann Jones argues that the heroine is “encouraged to be passive and wait to be rescued [...], while the protagonists of male fairy tales are said to be encouraged to be active” (27) and to act independently (27, 65). Heroines are also said to be devoted, good-natured, but also “helpless” (see Lüthi 61) and “inexperienced” (see Davidson and Chaudhri 5) and are often associated with staying indoors, being there for the family, crafting and keeping the household (see Swann Jones 65). The male main character is described as a keen, audacious and brave young man,

going out into the world like, for instance *The Valiant Little Taylor* (see Zipes, *Companion* xxvi, *Subversion* 194).

For Propp, with regard to fairy-tale characters “the important thing is not what they want to do, nor how they feel, but their deeds as such, evaluated and defined from the viewpoint of their meaning for the hero and for the course of the action” (81). In other words, the functions of the various characters define who they are rather than their physical appearance or intentions (see Sellers 9).

In his morphology he lists seven different functions: these are villain, donor or provider, helper, princess (and her father), dispatcher, hero and false hero (79-81). To start with, the villain in some way hinders the hero from accomplishing his mission or has one or more fights with the hero, followed by the donor or provider who is responsible for enabling the hero to access a “magical agent”, a term explained in the quote below.

The following things are capable of serving as magical agents: (1) animals [...]; (2) objects out of which magical helpers appear [...]; (3) objects possessing a magical property [...]; (4) qualities or capacities which are directly given, such as the power of transformation into animals, etc. All of these objects of transmission we shall conditionally term „magical agents“ (44).

The helper, as the name suggests, is there to support the hero when in need (79). The princess and/or her father represent one function as they cannot easily be separated in this regard in many cases. Their constituents are wide-ranging, the most important among them being “the assignment of a difficult task” and “marriage” (80). The dispatcher embodies someone or something giving the hero a reason to leave home. The hero is defined by the functions of leaving home, seeking for something, “reacti[ng] to the demands of the donor” (80) and marrying. Finally, the false hero represents a special function not relevant for this study, including among others the same functions as the hero except for the wedding (81). As it makes no difference who accomplishes what as long as Propp's order of functions is maintained, it is possible to ascribe more than one function to a specific character or one single function to a number of different characters, for

instance “the father who dispatches his son, giving him a cudgel, is at the same time both dispatcher and a donor” (81). According to Propp, it should be possible to apply these functions to any tale.

As far as the *Twilight* series is concerned, following Propp’s rules the result would possibly be the following: villainy is distributed among different figures, including James, Victoria and all other vampires but the Cullen family. However, due to the realistic danger the Cullens and, first and foremost, Edward embodies for the heroine, it is Edward’s role in the tale that is considered particularly complex. Carlisle and Edward could be seen as donors as they are the ones involved in Bella’s transformation into a vampire and therefore provide her with the opportunity to gain her special magical talent of “shielding” (*Breaking Dawn* 599) at a later date. Jacob has the characteristics of a helper, giving Bella consolation and love in a time of crisis as well as supporting her in the battle against Victoria’s army of dangerous vampires.

As far as Propp’s fourth function is concerned, the princess would have to be changed into a prince due to the choice of a female protagonist in the *Twilight* series compared with a male protagonist presented in Propp’s model. However, the field of functions remains the same: owing to her relationship with Edward a great number of problems arise and Bella has to fulfil various tasks in order to be able to become his wife, which entails the second function of marriage. Bella’s mother Reneé obviously is in the role of the dispatcher, giving Bella a reason to leave her hometown Phoenix.

Bella is the character most easily recognised, obviously representing the heroine of the tale. As provided in Propp’s model Bella leaves home and feels a lack through loneliness, searching for a friend and partner, whom she meets soon after her arrival in Forks. Her future prince disappears and she is left behind in despair, getting support from friend Jacob in this difficult time. After solving various tasks, among them rescuing Edward from committing suicide, she becomes his wife. By giving birth to daughter Renesmee the heroine is given magical powers by her donors Carlisle and Edward and due to her new identity as a vampire the couple is

finally united, the only difference to Propp's instructions being the accelerated wedding. Again, as it is the case with all of Propp's lists, there is no declaration of how many functions a text has to contain to be still part of the fairy-tale realm. On the other hand, by reducing characters to functions a crucial part of research material is lost as by this means, certain aspects such as character traits or physical appearance are no longer taken into consideration.

Evidently, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible to make generalisations with regard to figures and their characteristics as the collection of tales is very comprehensive and diverse. This might be the reason for the lacking of delineation of characters in Propp's morphology and other works of reference. Lüthi has also dealt with the question of consistency in terms of fairy-tale characters and offers an interesting approach to the problem.

The fairy-tale hero, or heroine, to be sure, is sometimes a rollicking daredevil and sometimes a silent sufferer; at times a lazybones and at times a diligent helper; often sly and wily but just as often open and honest. At times he is a shrewd fellow, an undaunted solver of riddles, a brave fighter; at others, he is a stupid person or one who sits down and begins to cry every time he encounters difficulty. There are friendly and compassionate fairy-tale heroes, but others that are merciless and perfidious. To say nothing of the differences in social class: princess and Cinderella, prince and swine-herd. [...]

Thus, in the fairy tale, one and the same person can abruptly change from a mangy-headed youth into one with golden hair,[...] the stupid or loutish often turns out to be the wisest and cleverest of all. (*Nature* 137-138)

According to Lüthi, fairy-tale figures consequently do not have to remain as they are in the initial situation but have the opportunity to alter their personality and/or status. If this idea is further developed, this approach also implies that although a change of traits is possible, there are still rules that have to be observed. In other words, while the ordinary, clumsy and stupid hero can change into a clever and wealthy man or the unnoticed girl can become a confident and beautiful princess, there certainly is no such thing as a stupid prince or a clumsy girl in traditional tales. It can thus be argued that in most cases characteristics are organised in

specific sets and within a tale one set can change to another (see Lüthi, *Nature* 137-138).

When considering the *Twilight Saga* in the context of the delineation of characters one encounters typical fairy-tale elements but also innovative aspects. Starting from Lüthi's finding quoted above and the consequence that anything can happen to the protagonist in the course of the story I will try to identify these sets of attributes in the *Twilight Saga*. Bella is easily placed in the frame of the earlier-mentioned character delineation of a typical fairy-tale heroine, having many of the required attributes. Most importantly, she is a young and beautiful girl. At home, Bella is very dutiful and busy with cooking, running the household, taking care of her father and diligently doing her homework. These are all typical fairy-tale attributes of a good heroine. In the beginning the reader experiences Bella as a rather unnoticed average girl, especially in the context of her life at home with Charlie, but also on her first days at school. She is an extremely isolated person, cutting herself off from the other students and people in general. This behaviour is intentional as Bella is well aware of that trait.

And if I couldn't find a niche in a school with three thousand people, what were my chances here?

I didn't relate well to people my age. Maybe the truth was that I didn't relate well to people, period. (*Twilight* 10)

The heroine leaves her home to live with her father in Forks. That and the journey to Italy in a later episode make her a wanderer. Edward and the rest of the Cullen family can be considered wanderers par excellence as they move from place to place at regular intervals in order to keep their immortality and the implicated problem of never aging physically a secret.

Bella is astonishingly beautiful as already mentioned earlier. The fact that she is pretty is learned by the reader only in a roundabout way because the girl herself is not absolutely sure about this. When three of Bella's school colleagues ask her to be their date and go with them to a ball the reader already assumes that she might be good-looking. This assumption proves to be true when it is revealed in a later

passage by Edward who can read humans' minds except for Bella's that all boys in her school found her very attractive right from the start. After all, "it would not be sufficient to be merely beautiful, one must be 'the greatest beauty in the kingdom'" (see Oates 99). Although Bella is not the most attractive girl in a kingdom or the like, the situations can still be compared to a certain extent, taking into account the fact that a girl is admired by all males of her school, which can be considered as quite unusual and an extreme example of enormous popularity (see Wilson 41-42; McCauley Bannar 22).

In the beginning of the story Bella often feels sad, helpless and misunderstood in her new home and is afraid of having difficulties at school due the fact that she is the only one coming from a big city. There are various passages in which Bella describes her exotic role as for instance when she admits that she knows snow only from television (*Twilight* 39) when all of her classmates are having fun in the cold. In a way, she could be compared with Cinderella in various aspects as she feels uncomfortable in her environment and does all the "dirty work" at home. There is also a parallel in terms of her position in society as can be seen in the following quote.

I was glad to see that most of the cars were older like mine, nothing flashy. At home I'd lived in one of the few lower-income neighborhoods that were included in the Paradise Valley District. [...] The nicest car here was a shiny Volvo, and it stood out. (*Twilight* 14)

Evidently, cars play an important role in Meyer's novels because they not only function as an indicator of time but also of social status. While average Bella clearly belongs to a low social class, the extraordinary Cullen siblings own the most noticeable car at school.

However, the "dejected person who sits down on a stone and cries is not able to help himself, but help comes to him"(see Lüthi, *Nature* 145) and this is true for Bella in various different situations. Right on her first day at school Bella becomes rather unwillingly part of a group by getting invited by one of her classmates to join them. In this connection the previously mentioned passivity attributed to the

majority of heroines can be observed: although Bella herself does not talk to or look at anyone in her school, a considerable number of people still approach her in a very kind manner and provide her access to certain cliques, a kindness she does not really seem to appreciate as she is the one isolating herself, sitting with the others but not participating in conversation or even trying to pay attention.

The only people that interest her are the Cullen brothers and their girlfriends, who catch Bella's attention from the very beginning and immediately have a fascinating appeal to her. This is particularly true for the youngest brother, Edward Cullen. In the story he can be considered the epitome of a prince and a number of points of reference for that claim can be found. To begin with, as already mentioned in an earlier note, there is his outstanding wealth compared to his classmates, signified by the Cullens' extraordinary car always standing in the school car park. The family's high social status is also indicated by their clothes. Bella once notices "that they [are] all dressed exceptionally well [...] in clothes that subtly hinted at designer origins" (*Twilight* 32). Furthermore, not only is Edward part of a rich family; having a young doctor for a father also makes him part of a community with high standards of education. As people like these are greatly respected and admired and as Edward is the only one without a partner yet, he can be identified as the modern prince of the story.

When Bella asks her classmate Jessica questions about Edward she receives a slightly embittered answer.

B: "Which one is the boy with the reddish brown hair?" I asked. [...]

J: "That's Edward. He's gorgeous, of course, but don't waste your time. He doesn't date. Apparently none of the girls here are good-looking enough for him." She sniffed, a clear case of sour grapes. (*Twilight* 21-22)

As it is the case with *Cinderella* or *The Princess and the Pea*, where the prince is in search of a worthy bride, there is a similar situation in *Twilight*. Edward is presented as the aloof prince, who is not approached by others but is in the position to choose whom he wants to approach and apparently there has not been a girl of interest to him yet. The concept of isolation can also be observed here with

regard to the supernatural beings (see Lüthi, *Nature* 141). Bella observes an interesting situation in this connection at break in school.

They were sitting in the corner of the cafeteria, as far away from where I sat as possible in the long room. There were five of them. They weren't talking [...]

They were all looking away – away from each other, away from the other students, away from anything in particular as far as I could tell. (*Twilight* 18-19)

The given situation here is exactly like Lüthi describes it in his theory. By means of the isolation of both the female protagonist and the supernatural being, Bella is given the opportunity to make contact with the supernatural. Only because of her solitary lifestyle and her lack of interest in other people does she have an eye for detail with regard to the supernatural and is therefore the only person able to find and understand these creatures. No matter what Bella does, everything leads her in Edward's direction without her planning anything of that sort. This is the reason why the heroine falls perfectly into the thematic category of the idler, who is "also a favorite of the fairy tale; it may be that he is given the very thing he wants and needs most: that his every wish is fulfilled without his having to move a finger" (see Lüthi, *Nature* 143).

There are several occasions on which it becomes clear that for Bella things happen as they should completely of their own accord. One of the examples is that in her biology class, there is no other seat available than the one next to Edward. When one of her classmates, Tyler, does not see her in the parking area and almost runs her over, Edward happens to be immediately on the spot to rescue her and she again falls into his arms, both in the metaphorical and the literal sense of the phrase. Similarly, when Bella faints during blood typing in class, Edward is in the hallway to take her to the nursery. Furthermore, she arouses Edward's curiosity as he has the talent to read peoples' minds and Bella is the only person he cannot read. This uniqueness brings her even closer to the supernatural and to Edward in particular.

For a better understanding it has to be added here that the Cullens have imposed restrictions on themselves with regard to their lifestyle. Unlike their congeners they have decided to live without human blood and hunt animals instead. Carlisle, the head of the family, even helps people in his profession of a doctor. Usually, Edward does not have great difficulties being among humans and abstaining from their blood. However, the situation becomes difficult when Bella appears because the odour of her blood is more seductive than anything Edward had experienced so far and it demands all his strength and self-discipline to avoid her and to keep her alive. The two of them keep meeting by accident time and time again and in this way get to know each other better and realise there is strong sympathy between them. After warning her that being with him is highly dangerous Edward finally gives in to both affection and temptation and they become friends. Based on Bella's wishes and the way they are self-fulfilling, the heroine in Meyer's novels serves as a good example for the figure of the idler.

Only after reading the first chapters of the *Twilight* series does it become clear what Lüthi means when he claims that "in the fairy tale, all things are possible" (*Nature* 138). Feeling like an ugly duckling at the beginning of the story, Bella finally is chosen by the most handsome and wealthy boy in school. In the course of the series Bella, as the only human in a vampire community, frequently gets into trouble but the Cullens, and Edward first and foremost, protect her whenever she is in need. In a way, "the fairy-tale hero is gifted, in the literal sense of the word. Supernatural beings lavish their gifts on him and help him through battles and perils" (see Lüthi, *Nature* 142).

Considering the typical female initiation setting at the beginning of *Twilight*, Bella undergoes a significant change in terms of her personality. Her initial set of attributes – typical for the traditional fairy-tale maiden – is changed in the course of the plot and is finally replaced with a set of attributes that would more typically be assigned to the male protagonist and can be found, for instance, in Propp's distribution of function among dramatis personae. This change is realised through Bella being challenged by tasks, such as her trip to Italy in order to rescue her

lover Edward and her incredible courage in the face of danger in general. The final change of her personality is completed by the transformation from human into vampire, by means of which she ultimately abandons her old set of traits for a completely new one. She gains infinite beauty, self-confidence, bravery, strength and steely determination. She no longer does the housework but goes hunting with her new family and she gets rid of her clumsiness. Furthermore, she illustrates a perfect example for the protagonist of the rise tale as she leaves her lower social milieu and joins the wealthy Cullen family at the end of the plot.

The distinction between good and evil characters is especially interesting in Meyer's novels. At first glance, the reader might be tempted to argue that all protagonists except for the vampires James, Laurent, Victoria and her army and the Volturi are good. These good characters would therefore be Bella, Charlie, Renée, Phil, her schoolmates, the wolf pack and the Cullen family. However, both the Quileute community and the Cullens have the power to take lives. The interesting and obviously the appealing aspect for readers is the thin line between good and evil, especially with regard to the relationship between Edward and Bella. Edward's dilemma is described in greatest detail. He contains both sides within himself, being a monster and a gentleman at the same time. While he could be compared to the figure of the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood* because of his potential and his natural instincts to kill humans, he is at the same time a perfect prince for the heroine, rescuing her again and again in various situations in the *Saga*. This juxtaposition of good and evil and attractive and dangerous is discussed in a later chapter in more detail. A further aspect of interest is that on closer inspection there are no bad humans to be found throughout the entire story. Evilness only exists in connection with the supernatural, or more precisely, the vampires. This distribution of good for humans and bad for supernatural creatures or animals can be found in a number of popular fairy tales, among them *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty* or *Rumpelstiltskin*.

However neatly the *Saga* seems to fit into the traditional fairy-tale realm, there are, nevertheless, a number of elements that are rather positioned outside it and are

therefore to be discussed in relation to their innovative aspect. One of the most significant differences between the traditional fairy-tale characters and those in the *Saga* is the fact that Lüthi's concept of externalisation is lost as emotions are no longer only symbolised by certain deeds or objects but mainly communicated via language or at least – in the case of the heroine – by means of her thoughts and reflections (*Nature* 51). At the beginning of the *Saga*, only the most necessary information is exchanged in conversations. Charlie and Bella prefer silence and the heroine also does not participate in most of the conversations in school. Thus, Charlie, Bella and the Cullens convey Lüthi's idea of isolation quite clearly. However, the moment Edward chooses Bella to keep him company, lengthy dialogues of a flirty small-talk sort ensue, containing relatively little information. Here, there is a very strong deviation as far as the communication between characters is concerned.

In terms of labelling all characters in the *Saga* are referred to by their names, albeit mainly simple ones such as Bella, Charlie, Phil, Jacob, Jessica, Eric, Mike. The only rare names can be found among the Volturi vampire community and, more importantly, in the Cullen family. The three brothers and their parents are called Emmett, Jasper, Edward, Carlisle and Esme. These names sound as unique and graceful as the creatures behind them are, whereas the ordinary people have simple and common names. Here again the typical method of working functions into names is echoed in the name Bella, as for one thing this is also the name of the female heroine in the tale *Beauty and the Beast*, which is one of the best known Maiden Tales, and for another thing, because “bella” or “belle” are the Italian or French words for beautiful and thus “Bella” is not only the female protagonist's name but also an indicator of her outstanding beauty (see Buttsworth 59).

As far as the typical fairy-tale heroine is concerned there are striking parallels with the protagonist of the *Saga*. Bella is young, beautiful and industrious, as well as inexperienced, particularly in terms of sexuality. As she herself notes in a conversation with Jessica, she “never had a boyfriend or anything close” (*Twilight*

153). In addition, she can be considered benevolent and self-sacrificing towards her mother and father for taking work off their hands. The heroine is also frustrated in the first weeks in her new hometown Forks, as far as life in school is concerned, because she does not feel understood by her peers. Furthermore, while she loved the hot and sunny weather in her former hometown Phoenix the cold, foggy and dark days in Forks depress her.

The frequently quoted kindheartedness of traditional fairy-tale heroines is a trait Bella only shares with a carefully selected group of people she considers worthy. Especially in school, the reader gets to know another side of Bella that is mostly revealed through her inner thoughts. Describing her classmates as “girl with braces and a bad perm” (30) or “gangly boy with skin problems” (15) or by thinking about one of her admirers, Mike, that he is “taking on the qualities of a golden retriever, walk[ing] faithfully by [her] side” (30) indicates that benevolence is replaced by arrogance and sarcasm. Bella herself once mentions that she “had never been enormously tactful” (31). When her classmate Jessica hints that handsome Edward is not interested in any girl at school including herself the heroine even is mischievously asking herself “when he’d turned her down” and “bit[ing] [her] lip to hide [her] smile” (22). There is a dialogue between Bella and Eric in this connection that conveys the heroine’s feeling of superiority and lack of interest in others very clearly.

E: “So, this is a lot different than Phoenix, huh?” he asked.

B: “Very.”

E: “It doesn’t rain much there, does it?”

B: “Three or four times a year.”

E: “Wow, what must that be like?” he wondered.

B: “Sunny,” I told him.

E: “You don’t look very tan.”

B: “My mother is part albino.” [...] It looked like clouds and a sense of humor didn’t mix.

(*Twilight* 16)

As the quote above shows, not only does Bella think arrogantly about her peers but she also makes those around her feel uncomfortable in direct conversation in various situations. Consequently, Bella does not correspond perfectly to the

stereotype of a good girl as found in the majority of fairy tales. However, a similarly negative attitude can occasionally be found in traditional tales.

In the fairy tale about the frog-king, the heroine who repeatedly tries to avoid keeping her promise and finally flings the irksome frog against the wall in order to kill it is neither kind, compassionate, nor even dutiful. But by flinging the frog against the wall, she has, without knowing it, fulfilled the secret conditions for the release of the enchanted prince who had been transformed into a frog. The hero and heroine in the fairy tale do the right thing, they hit the right key; they are heaven's favorites (see Lüthi, *Nature* 143).

Lüthi adds that "the folktale is not bound to actual ideals of such a kind. The hero does not have to be a good-natured simpleton; he may also be a sly trickster" (*Folktale* 71). This phenomenon can also be observed with the heroine in *Twilight* since, in spite of her arrogance, her lack of sociability and her moodiness, everyone seems to like her and the entire male population of her school admires her. However, it must be added at this point that the princess in *The Frog King*, although she saves the prince in the end, is actually presented in an unambiguous way as she clearly is no good person and she does the right thing without intending it. In contrast, Bella is indeed an ambiguous character, being good in some cases and rather bad in others.

As already mentioned briefly, Edward is a handsome creature and the same applies to the rest of the Cullens. Edward's beauty, however, becomes the clear focus of attention, especially from Bella's and therefore also the reader's perspective. This significantly strong focus on male attractiveness does not occur in any tale of the traditional realm.

The former point is not only unusual due to the fact that male handsomeness is not often given priority in fairy-tales but also because it implies a dangerous figure with a pleasant and attractive physical appearance. This combination is uncommon in the traditional fairy-tale where "there is a clear link between beauty and goodness, most often in reference to younger women, and between ugliness and evil" (see Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 718). As I have already briefly touched upon, the evil aspect in connection with the Cullens is a complex idea as they manage to be

good despite the fact that their evilness of hunting humans is part of their instincts. However, in the *Saga* all vampires – including the evil ones – are characterised by their outstanding beauty and, therefore, it can be argued that in *Twilight* good is beautiful, but evil is even more beautiful and this is a completely novel aspect that will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

When comparing the choice of supernatural characters in traditional fairy tales with the *Twilight* series, the existence of vampires is overly untypical. However, this is due to the fact that vampires slowly made their way into Western literature from approximately 1800 onwards and it was only as late as the year 1897 that *Dracula* was published, “a culmination of disparate strains of literary vampirism and [...] to this day the work by which all vampire literature is measured” (see Daemmrich 1373). At this point, folk and fairy tales had already been a well-established genre. At the height of the fairy tales’ popularity the collection by the Brothers Grimm was published in several volumes between 1812 and 1815 (see Zipes, *Companion* xxv). In contrast to this, the figure of the werewolf is obviously very close to the wolf occurring in a vast number of fairy tales. Interestingly enough, there are various scholars who make no difference between these two terms with regard to the fairy tale realm. Vaz da Silva, for instance, claims that “although not widely known, ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ in oral tradition is a werewolf tale” (see Vaz da Silva, *Greenwood* 1026).

The last subject I want to raise is the way in which characters enter the story. In the *Twilight* novels, characters are woven into the plot. They do not come out of nowhere like, for instance, characters such as *Rumpelstiltskin* or the old woman appearing in the forest in *The Twelve Brothers* but are, if only briefly in some cases, introduced to the reader. However, this element survived to some extent with regard to vampire Edward as Bella notices repeatedly.

B: ‘How do you *do* that?’ I asked in amazed irritation.

E: ‘Do what?’ [...]

B: ‘Appear out of thin air.’

(*Twilight* 81)

Bella, like the majority of fairy-tale protagonists is obviously isolated in the beginning, but unlike them becomes part of a community fairly quickly. Furthermore, the supernatural beings in the story might be isolated from humans and enjoy their solitude, but both werewolves and vampires live in communities, have jobs or go to school, something rather unusual in traditional sources, but not entirely excluded. Taking into account groups like the seven dwarfs or the three bears in *Goldilocks* the fairy tale also includes companionable figures.

Although notions such as isolation or the occurrence of simple names are to be found in the *Twilight* series, they are rather sketchy and not followed through in such a consistent manner as it is done in the fairy-tale.

3.1.4 The magical aspect

As shown in the second chapter of this thesis there is no consistent understanding of the fairy tale; instead there is enormous vast number of partially quite different definitions. However, when comparing them there seems to be at least one element which the majority of sources share and that is the magical aspect in fairy tales. Swann Jones validates this statement, arguing that “In contrast to the realism of other forms of folktale or literary expression, fairy tales are dominated by fantasy; they involve significant interactions with the magical and the marvelous” (10). As the quote shows, the aspect of magic – or wondrous, miraculous, fantastic, supernatural or marvellous, as the term is also referred to in the various sources – is often understood as one of the “major ingredients” (see Cudden 302) of the genre. Swann Jones even defines fairy tales as magic tales and points out that “The very name of the genre is drawn from this essential characteristic” as it “depict[s] the wondrous magic of the fairy realm” (9). The only condition he imposes is that the supernatural in some way or another is encountered by the hero or heroine. The reason why magic is considered of such fundamental importance to the genre is that only by means of the supernatural element can the story take its course. Consequently, magic objects, creatures or situations are needed as they trigger various developments in the fairy tale plot (8-12, 30).

Or particular interesting in this context is the fact that there is hardly any scholar who explains what he or she understands by magic. In the *OED* we find the following definition of the term: "The use of ritual activities or observances which are intended to influence the course of events or to manipulate the natural world, usually involving the use of an occult or secret body of knowledge; sorcery, witchcraft" (see "magic"). In simple terms this means that the preceding definition contains someone doing something special in order to change a certain procedure or the human world as we know it. This change is effected by magical language, creatures or objects.

There are a great number of examples in popular fairy tales, including various different interpretations of the magic aspect. In tales like *The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids*, *Little Red Riding Hood* or *Town Musicians of Bremen* the magical element is incorporated by means of talking animals. *The Frog Prince* or *Snow White and Rose-Red* are also fairy tales including animals but they differ from the previous example as here the animals are enchanted and transformed back into humans at some point in the story. In *The Wishing-Table*, *the Gold-Ass*, and *the Cudgel in the Sack* as well as *The Pack of Ragamuffins* there are objects that can make magic happen in one way or another, or, as it is the case in the latter, objects are humanised and able to move and talk. *Thumbling*, the dwarfs in *Snow White*, or the giant in *The Valiant Little Taylor* are examples for tales including supernatural beings that are humanlike to a certain extent but differ in size and physique. Similar creatures in this context are gnomes or ogres. The imp in *Rumpelstiltskin* seems to belong to the same category, but this tale is slightly different as Rumpelstiltskin, along with, for instance, the fairy in *Cinderella* or the witch in *Brother and Sister*, has magic powers as well. As can be seen, magic occurs in various different ways, varying from tale to tale.

There is another aspect of interest in connection with the magic in fairy tales: the manner in which characters react to magic. This is a point various scholars put emphasis on. To begin with, Lüthi's concept of isolation is a crucial basis for all characters in order to come into contact with supernatural beings, but there are

more things to consider in this regard. When encountering magic of any kind in the traditional fairy tale, the situation is different in comparison to other genres as the magic is part of “a larger sequence of events, it becomes an episode – and for this reason loses significance” (see Lüthi, *Nature* 45). In other words, the magical aspect is involved in the events of the story in such a fundamental manner that it no longer has a striking quality both from the viewpoint of the characters as well as the reader (*Nature* 45).

Compared with other story types in the fairy tale the wonder or magic is not the reason why the tale is told but rather can be considered a necessary element in order to establish coherence of plot. Therefore supernatural events, creatures or objects lose their surprising and unexpected character and are understood as a matter of course by both protagonist and reader (see Lüthi, *Nature* 45-46; Davidson and Chaudhri 4; Swann Jones 10; Nikolajeva 153-154).

In this connection Lüthi stresses another matter which is the relationship between the protagonists and the supernatural beings they meet on their way as according to him “the otherworldly beings [...] interest [them] only as helpers or opponents and do not inspire [them] with either curiosity” (*Nature* 141). However, even in this case exceptions prove the rule when considering all tales belonging to the category of the Maiden’s tragedy in which the entire story is based on the encounter between the heroine and a beast.

Swann Jones does not only concentrate on the protagonist’s reaction to magic but also on the other human characters’ reactions and concludes that in many fairy tales the supernatural creatures, objects or events seem to be there but nobody notices them until the hero or heroine discovers them. As example for the former argument he gives the lamp as magical object in *Aladdin’s Lamp* as well as *Cinderella* as she is the only one who ever sees the fairy. In contrast, magic elements are not noticed by the minor characters, or if they are, they are not used for their intended purpose as for instance in “The Table, the Ass, and the Stick” (AT 563), where the magic items are stolen for personal profit” (see Swann Jones 13). Aside from that, “the magical element in fairy tales serves to underscore and

affirm a moral propriety in the universe, documenting a cosmic morality” (13), which in the majority of cases entails the unjustly treated protagonist being rewarded with luck, wealth and happiness with a partner, and often also the punishment of the characters having harmed him or her, in return for the long time of suffering so that a balance of good and evil is finally restored (13).

The strongest parallel with the traditional fairy-tale is the function of magic for the story since in the *Saga* the supernatural aspect clearly serves the purpose of bringing forward events and making the story complex and interesting for the reader as it is only because of the magical element that the relationship between Bella and Edward is of such a difficult nature and that the story involves so many tasks to be fulfilled until a happy ending is possible.

Taking a look at the various different fairy-tale types I have listed earlier, the *Twilight Saga* falls into two categories. First, it involves supernatural beings that had formerly been human but were permanently transformed into vampires, as well as the Quileute clan consisting of people who can transform into animals, or rather werewolves, when the situation requires it. Second, Edward Cullen as all other vampires has a humanlike appearance, but differs in terms of his extremely pale and stone-hard skin, the constantly changing eye colour and the ice cold body temperature.

It does not take long until Bella finds out about Edward being a vampire. By means of her isolated status she is the only one realising that, apart from the Cullens being reclusive and hauntingly beautiful, there is something else that is special about this family. When Edward saves Bella from a van almost running her over, magic is involved. Edward reaches her more quickly than is humanly possible and stops the van with his bodily strength so that he leaves an impression of his hand on the metal. However, Bella is the only person paying attention to these mysterious events. Tyler, the driver of the car, does not give it another thought as “it was all so fast” (*Twilight* 60). Therefore, compared with the protagonist in the traditional fairy tale, Bella – at least in the beginning – is surprised at the inexplicable incident, but only because she does not know the reason behind it.

After gathering information on vampires, or “the cold ones” (Meyer, *Twilight* 124) in conversation with Jacob Black whom she meets at a get-together with schoolmates at the beach, as well as by doing research on the Internet she is profoundly convinced that “Edward Cullen [is] not ... human. He [is] something else.” (Meyer *Twilight* 138). Shortly afterwards, the two of them sit in a restaurant and Bella eventually confronts Edward with her suspicions.

- B: “I ran into an old family friend – Jacob Black,” I continued. [...] “We went for a walk [...] and he was telling me some old legends [...] [a]bout vampires.” [...]
- E: “And did that convince you?” [...]
- B: “No. Nothing fit. [...] I decided it didn’t matter,” I whispered. [...] It doesn’t matter to me what you are.”
- E: [...] “You don’t care if I’m a monster? If I’m not human?”
- B: “No.” [...] He was suddenly resigned.
- E: “What are you curious about?”
- B: “How old are you?”
- E: “Seventeen,” he answered promptly.
- B: “And how long have you been seventeen?”
- E: [...] “A while,” he admitted at last.
- B: “Okay.” I smiled, pleased that he was still being honest with me. [...] “Tell me more,” I asked desperately, not caring what he said, just so I could hear his voice again.
- (Meyer, *Twilight* 182-185)

The last paragraph and especially the dialogue above give crucial information on the heroine’s attitude towards the supernatural. Although the heroine at first is uncertain what to think about the mysterious situation she never rules out the possibility and eventually is absolutely positive that Edward is a supernatural being. Despite the fact that Bella admits that when reading information about vampires on the Internet “nothing fit” (*Twilight* 184), the reader knows that in her conversation with Jacob, Bella does not understand his stories as mere entertainment, but as reliable information. She shows willingness to believe in the unbelievable right from the start, never trying to contradict others’ statements associated with the supernatural (see Davidson and Chaudhri 4).

However, the way in which protagonist and supernatural creatures encounter in the *Saga* needs to be examined in more detail as on closer inspection, the magical

encounter in the Twilight series is based on both elements from the fairy tale and the legend. In the fairy tale the protagonist “has neither the time nor the temperament to be puzzled with mysteries” (see Lüthi *Folktale* 7), whereas Bella is very curious about the magical creatures, a behaviour typical for characters in the legend. The hero in the legend is frightened while the fairy-tale hero only “is afraid of dangers, not of the uncanny” (see Lüthi *Folktale* 7). Bella is not afraid of Edward, although she should be as she notes in several passages. As can be seen in the quote, Bella only distinguishes between good and evil, not between human and supernatural. The men who want to rape her when she is alone in Port Angeles frighten her in the same manner as vampires like Victoria who want to harm her. In the fairy tale, the encounter of a supernatural creature is always an isolated situation: they do not meet in public or in familiar surroundings, the hero “comes across them only when he wanders far and wide” (see Lüthi *Folktale* 8). According to Lüthi, “in legends otherworld beings are physically close to human beings” (*Folktale* 7-8) and so is the case with the Cullens who live side by side with the humans in Forks. However, while “in legends people do not marry disenchanted spirits” (*Folktale* 10), relationships of this kind are very common in fairy tales. In this connection Lüthi claims that “in the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* [...] the bride does not fear or abhor the demon she has married (*Folktale* 9). The situation in the Saga is almost evident with the only difference being that Edward is a very handsome beast.

When Jacob tells her about the old legends, Bella is “struggling not to let him see how seriously [she is] considering his ghost story” (*Twilight* 125). When finally Edward admits that her suspicion is true she does not seem to be surprised at all, curiously asking one question after another. Like the typical fairy-tale heroine Bella does not care who or what her acquaintance is. Lüthi notes in this connection that “The wild beast in the forest may frighten the fairy-tale hero, but as soon as it begins to speak, the anxiety vanishes” (*Nature* 46). Bella reacts in a similar way because whenever she feels slightly scared the fear flies away as soon as she looks into Edward's face or listens to his voice as can be seen in the above-quoted dialogue.

This curiosity about the supernatural creature is something unusual when taking into account Lüthi's argument that magic in fairy tales is supposed to be only important for the protagonist for solving a problem, to be able to overcome an obstacle in order to move on (*Nature* 141). However, I want to add once more that even in the traditional fairy-tale realm *Beauty and the Beast* proves to be a counterexample and so is *Twilight*, being very similar to the tale in various ways. In both cases there is a heroine who enters into a relationship with a monster. Whereas in the first story, the beast is characterised by a frightening and rather unattractive physical appearance, in *Twilight* the creatures look astoundingly beautiful – the bad and unpleasant aspects are turned inwards, rooted deeply in their instincts.

The magic in *Twilight* is not restricted to the fact that there are supernatural creatures like vampires and werewolves. A considerable part of the *Saga* is concerned with the concept of transformation. Edward tells Bella about his and his family members' transformations and the reader also learns about the transformation procedure of the wolf pack. Most attention is paid to the heroine's transformation into a vampire as part of the life-endangering birth of daughter Renesmee – the incident setting the course for the resolution of the love triangle and above all, breaking down the sexual barriers between Bella and Edward and thus preparing the reader for an imminent happy ending. However, there are further magical elements involved such as, for instance, the special talents certain vampires are "reborn" with. All vampires in Meyer's story have in common the extraordinary speed at which they can move but also their incredible beauty that has a magical power as well. In a conversation with Bella, Edward explains this trait in more detail.

"I'm the world's best predator, aren't I?
Everything about me invites you in – my voice, my face, even my smell.
(*Twilight* 263)

The beauty of vampires thus serves as a lure that makes it easier to approach their prey. In addition to their shared attributes certain vampires also have individual

skills. Edward, as already mentioned, can read people's minds except Bella's, whereas his sister Alice has the ability to predict future events and her partner Jasper can influence other people's moods by "calm[ing] down a room of angry people [...] or excite a lethargic crowd, conversely" (*Twilight* 307). Bella as a vampire gains the skill of shielding, having the physical power to create an unbreakable transparent shield to protect herself and others. Also the members of the wolf pack have magical abilities as when in their transformed state the wolves can read each others' minds. The most peculiar magical procedure, however, is the concept of imprinting, which is explained by Jacob by reference to his friend Sam in the following abstract of the sequel *Eclipse*.

J: "Sam did love Leah. But when he saw Emily, that didn't matter anymore. Sometimes ... we don't exactly know why ... we find our mates that way."
[...]

B: "What way? Love at first sight?" I snickered. [...]

J: "It's a little bit more powerful than that. More absolute. [...] There are no rules that can bind you when you find your other half."

In other words, imprinting describes the process of a werewolf being magically drawn to a certain person that is meant to be for him or her a partner for life and this person interestingly always reciprocates to these intense feelings. The one imprinting guards his or her soul mate like gold and is geared to his or her needs, which means that if the imprinting takes place while the person of interest is still a child, the relationship is not of a sexual but of a parental kind. By means of Jacob imprinting on Bella's daughter Renesmee the love triangle can be finally resolved and this is done without any person involved getting hurt and without one of the three having to leave – in other words, this is a situation that could not be solved in the real human world but only with the aid of magic.

3.2 Level of Discourse: Fairy-tale symbols in the *Twilight Saga*

3.2.1. Essential stylistic features

As the title of this chapter suggests, I will consider only those aspects of language and style in connection with the fairy tale and the *Twilight Saga* I consider relevant for my thesis. It can be observed that most scholars who study the fairy tale or folktales in general completely ignore the aspect of style, concentrating exclusively on the level of story. Although the focus of my research is clearly on the story level as well, a brief consideration with regard to certain aspects of the discourse level will be conducive to an overall picture of my studies. For this purpose I will provide quotes from the opening paragraphs of both *Cinderella* or *Aschenputtel* and *Little Red Riding Hood* or *Little Red-Cap* as well as that of Meyer's first novel *Twilight*.

There was once a rich man whose wife lay sick, and when she felt her end drawing near she called to her only daughter to come near her bed, and said, "Dear child, be pious and good, and God will always take care of you, and I will look down upon you from heaven, and will be with you.." And then she closed her eyes and expired. (see "Aschenputtel", *Grimms' Fairy Tales*)

There was once a sweet little maid, much beloved by everybody, but most of all by her grandmother, who never knew how to make enough of her. Once she sent her a little cap of red velvet, and as it was very becoming to her, and she never wore anything else, people called her Little Red-cap. (see "Little Red-Cap", *Grimms' Fairy Tales*)

My Mother drove me to the airport with the windows rolled down. It was seventy-five degrees in Phoenix, the sky a perfect, cloudless blue. I was wearing my favorite shirt – sleeveless, white eyelet lace; I was wearing it as a farewell gesture. My carry-on item was a parka. (*Twilight* 3)

Considering all levels of analysis, the *Twilight* series deviates from the traditional fairy tale most significantly in terms of language and style. Taking a look at the quotes, *Twilight* does not have very much in common with the preceding texts. As already mentioned in an earlier note, the novel differs in length from traditional tales, the reason for it being the way in which information is presented. Whereas fairy tales are known for their concise style, containing much information within a small amount of text, the opening paragraph of *Twilight* is characterised by detailed

descriptions of weather and clothes. Furthermore, fairy tales only include information that is needed to follow the plot, whereas the *Saga* provides a great amount of side information that is completely irrelevant, such as descriptions of the weather or clothes. Another crucial difference in this respect is that, in contrast to the fairy tale, the narrator in *Twilight* frequently provides information in an indirect manner. The reader only needs to read the first paragraph in order to that the protagonist is female from the way she dresses. The reader learns that the heroine is about to leave a warm place called Phoenix to go somewhere cold and that this will be an extended stay as the protagonist is “wearing [her T-shirt] as a farewell gesture” (3). In contrast, the narrator in fairy tales tells the reader what is happening in a straightforward manner.

The fairy tale is characterised by its simplicity on all levels, including language, as can be observed in the simple mode of expression. Neither the quotes taken from *Cinderella* and *Little Red Riding Hood* nor that from *Twilight* include any abstract terms or phrases. Interestingly enough, sentences in the fairy tale are rather long, being composed of a number of short and simple coordinate and subordinate clauses, whereas *Twilight* mostly contains short single clauses. Fairy tales more often than not include direct speech as is illustrated by the quotes above. Although this is not the case in the opening phrase of *Twilight*, a great number of dialogues can be found throughout this novel and its sequels as well.

The most obvious difference clearly is the point of view. In fairy tales there is, without exception, always a third-person narrator. In contrast, the narrator in the *Twilight Saga* is Bella, the main character of the story. She is a first-person narrator and therefore, in contrast to the third-person narrator in the fairy tale, her perspective is unreliable as she tells the story from her point of view. Stanzel observes that “the increase in embodiment of the first-person narrator results in a restriction of his horizon of knowledge and perception and a linking of the narrative process to the existence of the first-person narrator as a fictional character” (201).

A crucial stylistic element in fairy tales is the use of contrasts and extremes, including dichotomous pairs such as “good and evil, handsome and ugly, black and

white” (see Lüthi, *Nature* 51) as well as young and old, male and female or rich and poor (see Holbek 418). These juxtapositions are also part of the *Twilight Saga* and are very important to the delineation of characters. For one thing, there is the striking difference between the perfect Cullens and the common people that is described in rich detail in the first part of the series. However, the most significant and symbolic contrast is amply illustrated by Edward and Jacob in the first sequel *New Moon*. To start with, vampires and werewolves are enemies in the *Saga*. The two characters differ on four levels, that is with regard to their physical appearance, their personality, their social status and their supernatural characteristics. Edward is an astoundingly beautiful and mysterious vampire with an angelic face, his skin is white, his body icy cold and hard as stone. He “has the qualities of a Victorian gentleman” (see Cochran 12) and is characterised by aloofness, modesty, thoughtfulness, reason and attentiveness. He is a very well-behaved, highly educated, wealthy and conservative person. In contrast, Jacob belongs to the supernatural community of werewolves, which consists of members of the Quileute Indian reservation. Compared with Edward, Jacob behaves less maturely. After all, Jacob really is a teenager while Edward might look young but is mentally 107 years old. Furthermore, Jacob is less educated and reserved. He is reliable and predictable due to his straightforward nature and his language is of a casual, colloquial sort. Furthermore, Jacob is very tall and brawny, his skin tan and hot, his voice husky. He has a working class background and in his free time he likes to work on his car in the garage. As the examples show, the concept of contrast is carried to an extreme in the series (see Buchan 982; Lüthi, *Nature* 50).

[...] for a piece of writing to be termed ‘repetitious’ is for it to receive severe dispraise. Folk literature, however, does not place the same high aesthetic value on that kind of originality, preferring instead the benefits of repetitive stylization (see Buchan 983).

As the previous quote suggests, I want to elaborate on a stylistic method that is highly typical for fairy tales, namely “its delight in repetition” (see Lüthi, *Nature* 53). Repetition can be involved on different levels, either in terms of style or with regard to the plot. Stylistic examples can be found for instance in the tale *Snow-white*.

When the heroine enters the dwarfs' home it states that "there stood the little table ready laid, and covered with a white cloth, and seven little plates, and seven knives and forks, and drinking cups. By the wall stood seven little beds, side by side, covered with clean white quilts." (see "Snow-white", *Grimms' Fairy Tales*). Another example are the bread and the apples in *Mother Hulda*, calling, "oh, take me out, take me out, or I shall burn", or, "oh, shake me, shake me, we apples are all of us ripe!" (see "Mother Hulda", *Grimms' Fairy Tales*). One of the most popular passages certainly is the encounter between *Little Red Riding Hood* and the wolf in her grandmother's bed:

"O grandmother, what large ears you have got!" "The better to hear with." "O grandmother, what great eyes you have got!" "The better to see with." "O grandmother, what large hands you have got!" "The better to take hold of you with." "But, grandmother, what a terrible large mouth you have got!" "The better to devour you!" And no sooner had the wolf said it than he made one bound from the bed, and swallowed up poor Little Red-Cap. (see "Little Red-Cap", *Grimms' Fairy Tales*)

Repetitions are also a crucial element in the *Twilight* novels. They occur most frequently in connection with Edward, who is described by Bella time and time again in the series. Even when only considering the first of the four parts, Edward's eyes are mentioned over a hundred times and his "crooked smile" occurs literally nine times in the text. There are numerous references to his pale skin or his cold and marble body and even more descriptions of his beauty in general. As is the case in both traditional fairy tales and the *Twilight* series, repetition is used to emphasise certain aspects in the story. When Snow-white repeats her cries of astonishment the dramatic effect is heightened with each time. The same applies to several aspects of Meyer's novels, first and foremost to the tension between Bella and Edward, which is intensified by means of repetition throughout the entire series.

As I have already mentioned earlier, the *Saga* does not include typical fairy-tale phrases or rhymes such as "There they go, there they go! No blood on her shoe; The shoe's not too small, The right bride is she after all." (see "Cinderella",

Grimms' Fairy Tales) Nevertheless, the last lines of the series are worth considering.

E: "Forever and forever and forever," he murmured.

B: "That sounds exactly right to me."

And then we continued blissfully into this small but perfect piece of our forever.

the end

(*Breaking Dawn* 754)

The use of "and" in the beginning of a sentence can be found frequently in fairy tales as can be seen in the second last quote. The repetition of "forever" and the use of "the end" adds a certain charm to the ending that can indeed be compared with the opening and ending formulas found in traditional fairy tales.

3.2.2 Symbolism: names, numbers, colours

Scholars agree that fairy tales comprise symbols in various different ways. To start with, I shall elaborate on the use of numbers. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter repetition occurs either with regard to style or as far as the plot is concerned. In the latter case, repetition is embedded by means of certain numbers in connection with characters and actions. Buchan agrees that "folk literature's most evident form of patterning [is] its pervasive tendency to marshal its material – characters, ideas, events, plots, – in threes." (see Buchan 982). In connection with persons the number three is assigned to princesses or brothers and most often the youngest of them is the central character (see Lüthi, *Nature* 53).

The number three can be found in several episodes of the series, the most striking example of a "tripling" (see Lüthi, *Folktale* 67) certainly is the love triangle between Edward, Bella and Jacob. Bettelheim provides an interesting analysis of the number three, suggesting that it can also represent "the lowest position [or] the third in rank" (105-106), giving Cinderella as an example, who is unfairly treated by her two stepsisters. Here, three is understood as "two against one" (see Bettelheim 106). On closer inspection, there is also a constellation in which Bella is third in

rank: the reason why she has to leave her hometown is because her mother Renée wants travel with her new husband Phil for his work and Bella does not want to be an obstacle between them. Therefore, Phil obviously is highest in rank, followed by Renée and Bella comes last. In the *Twilight Saga*, the Cullen family consists of Carlisle and his wife and their *three sons* Emmett, Jasper and Edward, who is the youngest and the only one without a partner (see Lüthi, *Folktale* 67; *Nature* 142).

However, there are further numbers of utmost importance. Lüthi claims that the fairy tale “favors the numerals one, two, three, seven and twelve – numbers of firm definition and originally of magic significance and power. The hero or heroine either is alone or is the last member of a triad (the youngest of three children)” (*Folktale* 32). The number seven also occurs in other situations. All Cullens together constitute a group of seven, Edward is gone for exactly seven months and the hybrid Nahuel needed seven years from his birth to fully grow up. According to Lüthi, “such formulas convert multiplicity into unity” (79). Numbers one and two are explained by Bettelheim, who claims that “‘one’ stands for ourselves in relation to the world, as the popular reference to ‘Number One’ bears out. ‘Two’ signifies a twosome, a couple, as in a love or marital relation” (106). Evidently, the number two in the series is thus represented by the deep love between Bella and Edward and their marriage.

As already mentioned in an earlier chapter on fairy-tale characters, there are either no names, very simple ones or those that describe a character’s function. “Bella” belongs to the latter category, describing the heroine’s physical beauty. Swan, her last name, hints at “[...] many tales, from the ‘Swan Maidens’ to ‘Six Swans’ to the ‘Ugly Duckling’ [the latter’s transformative aspect is one that Bella by inference applies to herself, since in her own mind she does not fulfil the beautiful potential of her name until her ‘undead’ life]” (see Buttsworth 59). However, there are other names in the Saga that carry meaning as well. Edward, for instance, “derived from *ēad* ‘prosperity, riches’ + *weard* ‘guard’” (see “Edward”, OD of First Names). The name is perfectly chosen for Edward’s function in the story as he both guards Bella

throughout the entire series as well as makes her his wife and thus enables her to rise to a higher social status thanks to his wealthy family. Analysing Edward's last name also reveals useful information as "to cull" means "to reduce the size of (a herd or flock) by killing a proportion of its members" as well as "to choose or gather the best or required examples" (see "cull", Collins ED). When Bella asks Edward questions about the Cullens' hunting method, he claims that they "have to be careful not to impact the environment with injudicious hunting. [They] try to focus on areas with an overpopulation of predators" (*Twilight* 215), thus Edward's name also describes one of his functions. His main function in the novels is to choose the heroine in order to marry her and it perfectly applies to the second definition of the term. Jacob is referred to as the "supplanter" (see "Jacob", OD of First Names) in a biblical context and the name is therefore also suitable in this respect as it is Jacob who takes Edward's place in the second novel, being there for Bella when Edward is not. His last name, Black, is a very common and simple name but it still is suitable in this context, underlining the contrast to ivory-skinned Edward Cullen.

The next point I will consider is the symbolism of colours. Principally, "the folktale prefers clear, ultrapure colors: gold, silver, red, white, black, and sometimes blue as well" (see Lüthi, *Folktale* 27-28). The most important scholar in this connection is Da Silva who has elaborated on how colours are used in fairy tales and I want to include some of his essential findings that I consider particularly relevant in this chapter. Da Silva proceeds from the fairy tale *Snow-white*, identifying a "tricolor image" (234) with regard to the heroine. The three colours are of course "white as snow, [...] red as blood, and [...] black as the wood of the embroidery frame" (see "Snow-white", *Grimms' Fairy Tales*). White and red are understood as the primary colours being opposed to each other, while black is encompassing them exactly like the frame mentioned in the story. To be more precise, "the red-and-white contrast is the focus of the scene, and the black element is peripheral, to the point that it may vanish while the other two remain in sight" (see da Silva 243). White is associated with "luminosity and untainted sheen, thus for luminous heaven as much as for purity" (245). White is not only important due to the meaning of the

colour itself but it also serves as a contrast to the powerful red that represents blood and therefore life.

To demonstrate the striking occurrence of the three major colours white, red and black, I searched all four novels for colours. Thanks to the available Kindle versions of Meyer's novels I was able to take advantage of the search function of the Kindle app and therefore gain reliable results. I have provided a chart illustrating my findings.

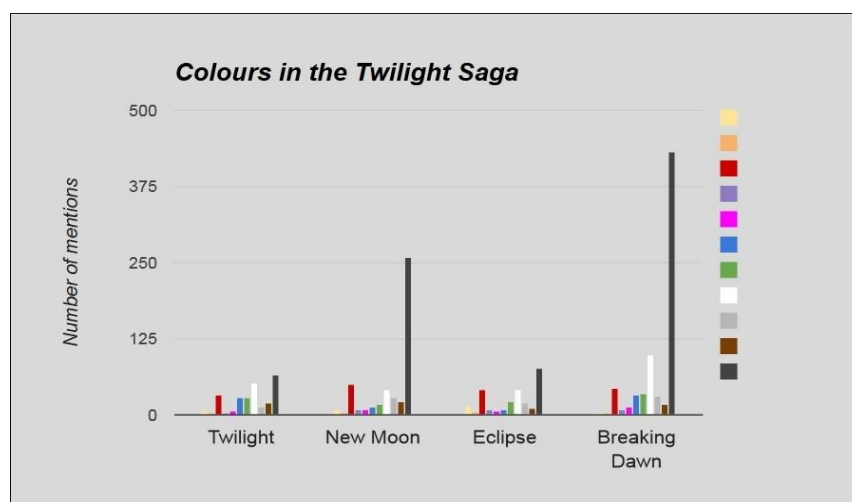


Fig. 1: Colours²

As can be seen in the diagram, black, white and red, the three colours highlighted by da Silva, are the ones mentioned by far most frequently in each sequel. The contrast between red and white is illustrated by the relationship between Bella and Edward in the *Saga*. Bella represents life, which is frequently visualised by blushing. Her blushing cheeks are mentioned over twenty times throughout the series and are also addressed in direct speech time and time again. White, especially in connection with skin, is of particular importance in the *Saga* as it is associated with the supernatural vampires. However, the whiteness does not only point to a specific supernatural species, it also refers to the aspects mentioned by

² The results for the colour black only refer to the colour as I have omitted all entries referring to the family name Black.

da Silva. Although vampires are immortal creatures longing for human blood the reader is tempted to forget these dangers when perceiving events from Bella's perspective, who repeatedly describes Edward as an angel or mentions his "angel's face" (*Twilight* 175) or "angel's voice" (*Twilight* 453). Taking into account that both Bella and Edward are virgins until after their wedding, the association of white with purity is also apt.

Da Silva adds that, with regard to womanhood, white represents the ideal otherworldly woman and red stands for "incarnation and motherhood" (246); in other words the whiteness is tainted by red, white stands for the innocent child and red for the change to a fertile woman and the implied menstruation. There is a passage in *New Moon* in this context that is worth closer consideration and I have therefore quoted it below.

I stuck my finger under the edge of the paper and jerked it under the tape. "Shoot," I muttered when the paper sliced my finger; I pulled it out to examine the damage. *A single drop of blood oozed from the tiny cut.*

It all happened very quickly then.

"No!" Edward roared. He threw himself at me, flinging me back across the table. It fell, as I did, scattering the cake and the presents, the flowers and the plates. I landed in the mess of shattered crystal. [...] Beyond the shock, there was also pain. [...] Only now did I feel the searing, stinging pain that ran from my wrist to the crease inside my elbow. Dazed and disoriented, *I looked up from the bright red blood pulsing out of my arm – into the fevered eyes of the six suddenly ravenous vampires.* (*New Moon* 28-29) [emphasis added]

This situation is strongly reminiscent of the opening paragraph of *Snow-white* or the corresponding passage in *Sleeping Beauty*, both of which including women pricking their finger so that it bleeds. Like da Silva, Bettelheim also concentrates on the sexual aspect, associating white with virginity and red with "sexual desire" (202). For him, the bleeding finger in *Snow-white* symbolises sexual bleeding. However, in the *Twilight* series, the themes of desire and lust are rarely of a subliminal nature but are described in detail. Due to the fact that in these novels desire is not only understood in a sexual sense but also as the unquenchable hunger or rather thirst for human blood vampires suffer from, the emotion is further intensified. In the *Twilight Saga* black is most often referred to in connection with

Edward's changing eye colour, which is light after he has satisfied his blood thirst after hunting and dangerously black when the effect wears off (*Twilight* 261). According to da Silva, "blackness connotes enchantment as well as death. In fairy tales the two notions are intertwined. Enchantment is something like reversible death, and death itself appears in tones of enchantment" (see da Silva 247).

Similarly, magic and death are closely linked in the *Saga*: death might not be completely reversible in this context but it is possible to survive death by being transformed into an immortal vampire. Vampires are thus associated with death as they live in an intermediate state between death and life and are said to have no soul (*New Moon* 37). As da Silva suggests, death appears in various magical ways as can be seen in the *Twilight* series as well: Edward and the rest of his species sparkle in sunlight, move incredibly fast and look exceptionally beautiful. The final conclusion is based on Girardot's theory that "the tricolor heroine enacts 'the idea of a union of the red (menstrual blood) and white (semen) through the agency of the black (the ritual 'death' involved in the initiation and marriage union)'" (see da Silva 247; see Girardot *qut.* in da Silva 247). This model is perfectly applicable to Bella as she loses her virginity with Edward and finally has to die to survive Renesmee's birth and to be reborn as vampire equal to her husband Edward. The heroine needs to pass through these three stages to find eternal happiness.

With regard to colours Bettelheim also mentions "the redness of the apple" (213) Snow-white is given by the evil queen.

"Are you afraid of poison?" said the woman, "look here, I will cut the apple in two pieces; you shall have the red side, I will have the white one." For the apple was so cunningly made, that all the poison was in the rosy half of it. Snow-white longed for the beautiful apple, and as she saw the peasant woman eating a piece of it she could no longer refrain, but stretched out her hand and took the poisoned half. But no sooner had she taken a morsel of it into her mouth than she fell to the earth as dead. (see "Snow-white", *Grimms' Fairy Tales*)

Here the interplay between red and white is seized on again. Not only the colour but the apple as a symbol in itself is of central importance in this passage. In the tale, Snow-white is tricked by the queen and eats of an apple that is poisoned and

forces her into a sleep that lasts for a hundred years. The apple is often a symbol of seduction, being referred to as “the forbidden fruit” (see Toscano 24). This image is taken from a biblical context, referring to Adam and Eve who “lived together in the Garden of Eden until the serpent tempted Eve to eat an apple from the forbidden tree; she persuaded Adam to do the same. As a result of this original sin of disobedience they were both expelled from the garden.” (see “Adam”, *OD of Phrase and Fable*).

In this regard, the *Twilight* series provides interesting metatext, including the already mentioned passage from the Genesis on the Tree of Knowledge, which is quoted on the page between the table of contents and the preface. Furthermore, the book cover of *Twilight* is an illustration of this motif, showing “[...] a pair of pale white female hands cradling an unbitten apple” (see Averill 224). There are also allusions within the texts. Bella, for instance, “[...] pick[s] up an apple, turning it around in [her] hands” and finally “put[s] [it] down [...]” again (*Twilight* 207). This passage can be interpreted as a reflection of Bella playing with fire. When Edward tells Bella that “the blush on [her] cheeks is lovely” (*Twilight* 275), the heroine can be compared to the seductive red half of the apple. However, the character of Edward could be interpreted in a similar way as he is as beautiful and appealing as the apple in the fairy tale, but beneath his charming exterior lies a highly dangerous man. There is a symbolic image in this connection in the first part of the series based on a comparison with animals:

E: “And so the lion fell in love with the lamb ...” he murmured. [...]
B: “What a stupid lamb,” I sighed.
E: “What a sick, masochistic lion.”
(*Twilight* 274)

The lion is a fearless creature as “he has no natural enemies” (see Daemmrigh 777) and he is often associated with royalty in literature (see Daemmrigh 776). The character of Edward is also (almost) indestructible and although he is not royal, he is at least very wealthy. Bella is described as a lamb, which “symbolizes youth and innocence [and is] seen also as a sacrificial animal [...]” (see “lamb”, *OD of Phrase and Fable*) in the context of religion.

Interestingly enough, the reader remains unsure about who is seducing whom as both Bella and Edward can be considered the forbidden fruit in this series: Bella is hypnotised by Edward's charm and beauty and thus falls in love with a dangerous creature able to kill her, whereas he is time and again seduced by the exquisite odour of Bella's blood and thus runs the risk of losing control and acting against his and the Cullen family's principles as well as of revealing his supernatural identity in public. With regard to Edward this contradiction is reflected in his physical appearance as well: while his beauty, friendliness and his soft voice represent appealing traits, the hard body as well as his cold breath and skin signify his cruel, supernatural side.

Although there is no doubt that further symbols could be found in the *Saga*, I want to come to a conclusion at this point as the items discussed constitute the relevant aspects in connection with my thesis in the context of fairy tales.

4 The *Twilight Saga* – a modern fairy tale?

4.1 How the fairy tale shaped us, how we shape the fairy tale

In the previous chapters I have provided definitions and ideas on what is understood by the term fairy tale. But in which ways has the fairy tale influenced our lifestyle today and what does it mean to people living in the twenty-first century? Has the fairy tale developed along with us? In this chapter I want to elaborate on these questions and offer insights for a better understanding of the genre's progress. For this purpose I will need to provide a basic outline on how the fairy tale has developed over the centuries.

Although there are some other scholars who have touched on the subject of the modern fairy tale, Jack Zipes is one of the few in the research field who studied the contemporary fairy tale as thoroughly and extensively as the traditional fairy tale “of the past”. In order to analyse my primary texts in this contemporary context I will, in the majority of cases, be drawing on sources based on Zipes's works.

Zipes makes us aware of the wide dimension of the genre when he explains that “[...] fairy tales have been in existence as oral folk tales for thousands of years and first became what we call literary fairy tales toward the end of the seventeenth century” (*Spell* 2). Between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century the progress of the literary fairy tale in Europe was assisted by a number of factors: languages slowly became official in the majority of nations, reproduction was made possible due to Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, more and more people were able to read and found delight in reading short narratives, and the privileged classes started to promote new literary genres no longer only in Latin but also in the vernacular. According to Zipes, “by 1720, at the very latest, the fairy tale was being institutionalized as genre, and the paradigmatic form and motifs were becoming known throughout Europe” (see Zipes *Companion* xx). It was also during that period that Perrault published his versions of various fairy tales “for an educated audience” (see Davidson and Chaudhri 8) which proved to be of central

importance in the fairy-tale genre as they introduced new and distinct elements (8) (*Companion* xx).

Whereas the fairy tale had initially addressed an adult audience the focus was starting to shift towards children. Owing to the fact that children continually were read fairy tales by educators and nannies and soon also by their mothers, increasing numbers of books for children were being published and it was in that time that stories were especially designed for children. These stories frequently contained instructions on how to behave appropriately in society. In the years between 1812 and 1815 the Brothers Grimm published their first collections of *Children's and Household Tales*, which have remained the most popular source of fairy tales until this day. Grimms' fairy tales are unique compared to other collections of that time because they were "[...] consciously designed to address two audiences at the same time, and [the Grimms] carefully cultivated the form of their tale so that they could be easily grasped by children and adults" (*Companion* xxvi). The view of children during this period of time changed: they were also allowed to play and read for fun, "[...] without the feeling that their reading and listening had to involve indoctrination" (*Companion* xxvi). In the middle of the nineteenth century literary fairy tales for children and adults began to flourish. The most important writer in this connection clearly is Hans Christian Andersen, famous for his tales *The Little Mermaid*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Ugly Duckling* or *The Emperor's New Clothes* (*Companion* xxi-xxvi).

Although fairy tales were told to entertain both children and adults, the texts nevertheless included fixed underlying principles based on patriarchal conceptions of the world, as well as strict beliefs in terms of sexuality, gender, religion and morals (see Zipes, *Subversion* 194). In the following quote Zipes provides a brief but informative overview of the situation of the fairy tale at the turn of the century:

By the beginning of the twentieth century, there were three currents in the fairy-tale tradition that existed side by side: the classical or conventional fairy tales of Perrault, the Grimms, and Andersen, which were increasingly sanitized and made more "appropriate" for an idealized concept of childhood when published for children; innovative fairy tales that often parodied the

conventional ones from multiple political perspectives and sought to bring about radical aesthetic innovations; and widespread oral storytelling of fairy tales of different kinds in homes, libraries, schools, recreation centers and spaces, and through the mass media. (*Stick* 89)

In other words, the fairy tale was available to its audience in the form of parodies, adapted versions of traditional fairy tales in all kinds of media and “classics”. By this term most scholars understand a particular selection of fairy tales that have survived throughout the centuries since they came into existence and that are still popular in the Western world compared with most of the other tales included in the collections by Perrault, the Grimms and Andersen (see Zipes, *Companion* xxviii). This “canon” is relatively small, essential tales included are *Cinderella*, *Snow-white*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *Rapunzel* or *Rumpelstiltskin* and only a few more (*Companion* xxviii). Why these particular preferences have been made is still unclear but there are already first approaches that will be discussed in a later chapter (*Stick* 2).

At this point the fairy tale was already fully established among all social classes and enjoyed such great popularity that it was often part of productions of other genres such as “[...] drama, poetry, ballet, music, and opera” (see Zipes, *Dreams* 23) and vice versa. However, there was still one decisive change to come and that was with regard to the innovations of motion picture technology, “[...] for the images now imposed themselves on the text and formed their own text in violation of print but also with the help of the print culture” (see Zipes, *Subversion* 196). Although there were several filmmakers in the first part of the twentieth century reworking fairy-tale material, only one of them left a lasting impression in that field and that is Walt Disney who has changed the perception of fairy tales worldwide in a fundamental manner. Therefore, I have decided to dedicate him a brief chapter in this study as I consider Disney vital with regard to the position of the fairy tale in our culture today and the role the *Twilight Saga* plays in this connection (*Companion* xxx).

A layperson might claim at this point that the fairy tale has gradually died out after the most important publications by Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Andersen. According to Zipes, this is not the case:

[...] [T]he classical fairy tale as genre has not been static. Such nineteenth-century writers as Charles Dickens, [...] Oscar Wilde, Andrew Lang, Edith Nesbit, L. Frank Baum, and others, designated now as “classical,” opposed the authoritarian tendencies of the civilization process and expanded the horizons of the fairy-tale discourse for children. *They prepared the way for utopian and subversive experiments that altered the fairy-tale discourse at the beginning of the twentieth century.* [...] Still, the innovative tales for children produced during the first three decades of the twentieth century did not successfully reutilize fantastic projections and configurations of the classical fairy tales to gain wide acceptance among children and adults. (*Subversion* 169-170). [emphasis added]

Consequently, Zipes suggests that the fairy tale in the nineteenth century increasingly became part of mainstream literature addressed at both young adults and fully grown-ups. However, he also points out that these new versions were not as well received as the traditional fairy tales and he ascribes this to the fact that the magical aspect was only given a minor part in these texts. Furthermore, the glorification of war, consumerism and stardom were the main concerns of that time and “[...] the forces that confined and subdued the protest elements in the fairy-tale discourse during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s” (*Subversion* 170). Considering developments such as “[...] civil rights movements, antiwar protests, the rise of feminism, and demands for autonomy by minority groups and small deprived nations” (*Subversion* 171) in the subsequent two decades, it is hardly surprising that the genre primarily offered people hope for a better world with a strong emphasis on the heroic struggle for good in a wholly evil world. Essential writers in this period are C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. According to Zipes, it was already in that period that fairy tales began to change significantly in form and content and were characterised by their experimental nature (*Subversion* 169-171).

It is from the 1980s to the present that the most significant changes of the genre can be observed. Zipes claims that “experimentation linked to magic realism and postmodern sensibility have become the key words in the fairy-tale genre [...]”

(*Companion* xxxi) and that “the list of contemporary talented writers who have endeavoured to break with the classical tradition is great” (*Companion* xxxi), including for instance authors such as Angela Carter or Salman Rushdie. This aspect is crucial in order to understand why and how the fairy tale as a genre underwent fundamental changes. Throughout his works Zipes always stresses the genre’s

[...] deeply ingrained adaptability and “evolvability,” especially its potential as a meme. [...] [I]ts utopian function has actually expanded in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to include a kind of negative dialectic that has imbued it with a significant self-critical feature and enhanced possibilities for aesthetic variation and experimentation. (*Stick* 92)

Again, Zipes lays emphasis on the utopian aspect of today’s fairy tales and adds the idea that fairy tales nowadays are told on two levels: on the one hand, there is the superficial level on which the story is presented, on the other hand there are elements on an underlying level that simultaneously provide critical, mocking or counterbalancing thoughts on what is being told. His favourite examples in this context are the first two of four *Shrek* films produced by Dreamworks in the years 2001 and 2003 and Japanese productions such as *Spirited Away* and *Howl’s Moving Castle* released in 2001 and 2004 (*Stick* 92, *Dreams* 29).

Taking a look at Zipes’s sources of contemporary fairy tales it turns out that he almost exclusively draws on material taken from films or advertisements but hardly ever from literature and he does this with a reason: books are no longer the primary source with regard to this genre in the Western world. Rather, people come across fairy tales through the media of cinema, the Internet and television (*Spell* 10). The latter represents a vital part of our quotidian life whereas books are not, at least as far as the majority of households is concerned (see Huston 1). The level of interest with regard to reading is particularly low among young adults and children. As a consequence, Zipes concentrates mainly on products of the film and advertising industries (*Subversion* 195, *Dreams* 26). However, from time to time there are books that find their way into mainstream and youth culture in particular. For instance, Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series was a great success worldwide and

awakened enthusiasm in reading books again, especially among boys. Similarly, “the Twilight series of vampire books by Stephenie Meyer has boosted the sale of children's books” (Harrison). However, the latter clearly is favoured by female readers (see Simmons, Smith, Harrison).

Considering this brief review of the fairy tale's history and development the impression is created that there are mainly two types of the fairy tale nowadays. Firstly, there are superficially modified versions of original traditional tales covered in all branches of media, the most influential producer among them clearly being Walt Disney and his crew. Secondly, there are authors, filmmakers and other artists who reject the idealistic nature of traditional fairy tales and deconstruct these texts by means of unconventional approaches and the addition of alienating elements. The latter are rarely referred to as fairy tales but are rather assigned to other genres. One further occurrence of the fairy tale is suggested in the following quote.

[...] [T]he programmed fairy-tale images will continue to warp our sensibilities in TV advertisements such as the ones which have women transformed into Cinderella by magically buying new dresses, paying money for beauty treatments in a health spa, using the proper beautifying cosmetics. Then there is the beast turned into a magnificent hunk of a prince by shaving with the right brand of shaving cream, using the proper deodorant, and grooming himself with the best hair tonic. One comes across fairy-tale motifs everywhere. (see Zipes, *Spell* 105-106)

Zipes therefore argues that contemporary fairy tales do exist but only within the two categories I have just mentioned or as elements and motifs that are added to other genres or ways of communication. Although I consider some of these comparisons rather far-fetched, the basic statement that the fairy tale has become part of all possible aspects of everyday life certainly contains some truth.

Where does this leave us? The fairy tale has shaped our generations decisively, first and foremost during childhood as in this period of time almost every child in the Western world is exposed to some material of the genre now and then, whether that is in playgroups, schools or at home, in the form of books, radio plays,

television series or films. Later on in life the fairy tale still influences the way people perceive the world as Zipes has illustrated in the previous quote. From the eighteenth century onwards, the fairy tale has always served three major purposes: instruction and education, emotional support and consolation, and entertainment (see Zipes, *Stick* 19, *Dreams* 22, Swann Jones 14, Bausinger 79).

In the first part of my thesis I have presented a number of arguments that qualify my suggestion that the *Twilight* series can be considered a fairy tale. For this purpose, I mainly concentrated my study on the story-level, examining plot structure and content-related elements. In this chapter I want to analyse those elements that I have identified as deviations from the traditional fairy tale on the level of discourse. Interestingly enough, despite all the innovative developments of the genre, Zipes still aptly observes that “when we think of the form and typical fairy tale today, we tend to think of a paradigmatic Grimms’ fairy tale (quite often modified by the Disney industry)” (*Companion* xxvi) as seen in films such as *Snow-white and the Seven Dwarfs* or *Cinderella*. This statement implies that for the majority of people the term fairy tale does not include modern material such as works by Angela Carter or J.R.R. Tolkien. It further means that the fairy tale in general is also associated with the classics by the Brothers Grimm in terms of underlying values and wishes. I have already hinted at what these are in the first part of the thesis but the quote below provides a clear explanation of what is meant by these underlying values:

Though the Grimms imbued the tales with a heavy dose of *Christian morality*, the *Protestant work ethic* and *patriarchalism*, they also wanted the tales to depict *social injustices* and possibilities for *self-determination*. *Their tales reflect their concerns and the contradictions of their age*. [...] Most of all they provide hope that there is more to life than mastering the art of survival. Their “once upon a time” keeps alive our *utopian longing for a better world* that can be created out of our dreams and actions.(see Zipes, *Dreams* 29) [emphasis added]

The question that arises now with regard to my thesis is how the *Twilight* Saga fits in here. Considering fairy tales in our modern world, Bloch asks whether wishes expressed in traditional fairy tales are still suitable for our living conditions: “[...]”

[T]he fairy-tale world, especially as a magical one, no longer belongs to the present. How can it mirror our wish-projections against a background that has long since disappeared?” (162). The question whether the values, fantasies and wishes conveyed in fairy tales have changed is highly interesting and this thesis will provide plausible answers based on the analysis of relevant and current cultural information. The second question I will approach is the following: could the *Twilight Saga* be considered part of the vast and steadily growing number of remakes of classics or should it rather be assigned to works that represent contemporary alternatives? I argue that there is something in between that implies “utopian nostalgia” rather than magic realism and a return to conservative ideas rather than a break with tradition. Proceeding from the hypothesis that the *Twilight* series can be considered a model or pattern of the modern fairy tale, an analysis of its underlying cultural and social values and messages as well as its effect on readers will provide interesting insights on how today’s culture and society have influenced the way popular fairy tales of today are created and could be composed and told in the future.

4.2 The “*Twilight* tale” – what will remain, what is new, *and why*?

As the analysis in the third chapter has shown the series contains various different fairy-tale motifs and symbols. Buttsworth identifies various references to the fairy tale in the *Twilight Saga*, claiming that “Stephenie Meyer’s stories are a gripping read from beginning to end partly because of their fairy-tale appeal, which, far from being ‘timeless’, is very much of *this* time” (49) and thus calls the series “a fairy tale of the twenty-first century” (49). Wilson refers to the character Bella as “fairy tale heroine” (*Seduced* 72) and observes that “*Twilight*, with its red apples, dark forests, dangerous wolves, deathlike sleeps, and magical transformations, has echoes of *Red Riding Hood*, *Snow-white*, *The Ugly Duckling*, and *Sleeping Beauty*” (72).

However, there are also certain differences to the original tales and the question that needs to be raised is whether these deviations have certain underlying meanings and if so, what these are. In this chapter, I will elaborate on those

aspects that are incompatible with the traditional fairy-tale realm on the basis of popular cultural studies.

4.2.1 Plot

I shall proceed with the most basic element, that is with the plot. The only strikingly deviating aspects found in this connection are the delayed ending and the focus on motherhood. While the classics most often end with a wedding, the story of the *Saga* continues after this event. The heroine becomes pregnant and only survives the birth of hybrid Renesmee by means of being transformed into a vampire. However, as I have already argued earlier, the ending is still very similar to that of traditional fairy tales in the way that it arrives at a point when all conflicts are solved and all good characters have found happiness but routine has not yet set in. The crucial difference in this regard is therefore the description of Bella's horrifying pregnancy and childbirth, and even more interesting is the relationship between her and daughter Renesmee:

Once Bella recovers from her transition into a vampire (now necessary to prevent her death), motherhood is remarkably easy. Renesmee is a perfect baby who inspires love from everyone. Bella receives unlimited support from her extended family, and neither she nor they need to sleep. Moreover, since Renesmee prefers donated blood, Bella does not even need to nurse her daughter. In fact, being the mother of Renesmee seems rather like playing with a doll. (see Kokkola 11)

At this point I briefly need to elaborate on the function of magic in fairy tales. Bottigheimer for instance stresses that the heroine needs magic "to achieve great wealth" (213) and Swann Jones points out that "[...] only by recognizing and communing with the magical elements in the universe will she truly succeed in the social realm" (83). He also claims that for the protagonists magic constitutes "[...] a remedy for their psychological and spiritual ills" (66) and Zipes concludes that "the magic of the tales can be equated to the wish-fulfilment and utopian projections of the people" (*Spell* 6). Thus it can be seen that magic in fairy tales serves the purpose of solving problems, improving social status and fulfilling wishes. As

Kokkola suggests this is also the case in various passages in the *Twilight* series. While childbirth is exhausting and – at least in Meyer’s novels – highly dangerous, being a mother is surprisingly easy. As already mentioned earlier, Renesmee is a hybrid and differs from a human child in various ways: she is immortal and incredibly beautiful like all vampires and she grows extremely fast so that she will be fully grown at the age of four. Moreover, like the rest of the family, Renesmee is born with a special skill, namely being able to communicate with others by touching a person and thereby showing him or her her thoughts in the form of images. In most countries of the Western World at least every second mother is in employment (see Martin).

There are a vast number of articles, books and discussions in the media about a mother’s wish of “having it all” (see Slaughter) – most often this includes children, a career, and a fulfilling relationship – and whether this is possible. In the *Twilight Saga*, Bella’s daughter is a self-sufficient creature, whose main role is to entertain her family. There is no need to worry about whether Renesmee’s parents have enough time for their daughter as there is no time pressure in an immortal world and besides, vampires lose no time with sleep as Kokkola has pointed out. Moreover, unlike in real life, communication is possible from the moment of birth thanks to the child’s extraordinary gift. Bella therefore does not have to worry about what her baby needs, she simply finds out by touching her. It is the magic in this story which solves all problems and effort involved in parenthood in the real world and that presents the reader with an idealised portrait of family life, consisting only of fun and love, an image continuously conveyed in the media (see Kokkola 11).

4.2.2 Time and space

As far as the aspects of time and space are concerned, the *Twilight Saga* differs from the traditional fairy tale by providing detailed information, including place names and descriptions of objects such as cars, planes or laptops with Internet access. Taking into account that the ways of communication have changed substantially in the last thirty years due to modern technologies and the fact that

the twenty-first century is often referred to as “information age” (see Naughton, Tabares) it becomes clear that technological progress is no longer considered something sensational but rather an essential part of everyday life. In a time when people are used to getting far more information than they need, a modern fairy tale has to include additional information compared with classics to make it more easily accessible to readers (see Naughton, Tabares).

4.2.3 Delineation of characters

Regarding the characters in the series, I have pointed out that the heroine is not as unambiguous as is typical for fairy-tale protagonists. Instead, the reader experiences Bella as good, helpful and understanding with those people she loves and sometimes also as arrogant, indifferent and insensitive with others. However, nowadays this ambiguity is vital for enabling readers' identification. By looking, for instance, at popular series or films such as *The Simpsons*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Big Bang Theory*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *My Best Friend's Wedding* or *Bridget Jones's Diary* it becomes clear that today's protagonists are always good at heart but also have certain weaknesses as is illustrated by a review of Bridget Jones's Diary entitled “It's Bridget's flaws that make her so perfect” (see Clark). Similarly, Bella is characterised by her beauty and affection but also by her clumsiness, naivety and moodiness. However, whereas Bella is described as a human with flaws with whom we can identify, Edward Cullen is represented as a creature characterised by such severe self-control and reason that despite his strong and deep vampire instincts he always manages to be good. In this connection Wilson suggests that readers prefer to celebrate the supernatural characters in the series and not the character of Bella as they “[...] do not root for Bella, but *become* Bella” (*Seduced* 41). In contrast, all other supernatural beings in the story and Edward in particular are worshipped by fans as they represent idealised versions of the readers that are beyond reach (*Seduced* 41).

The last aspect in this section is the choice of supernatural creatures. As already mentioned in the third chapter, werewolves and wolves in general have always

been typical characters in the fairy tale, whereas vampires have not. However, Murphy argues that the character of the vampire enjoyed “[...] increasing presence on page and screen beginning in the 1960s” (57) and that he has never lost his popularity since. The vampire, whether in literature, films or television series or in popular culture in general, is a frequently occurring and extremely popular creature, while certain characters of the traditional fairy-tale realm such as dwarfs, imps, ogres, fairies or talking objects have faded into the background. Therefore, the choice of a vampire as supernatural character in a fairy tale of the twenty-first century seems natural (see Murphy 56-58, Cancel).

4.2.4 Female fantasies about men

The character of Edward provides highly useful information on various levels with regard to ideals typical for our society nowadays. In this regard it is interesting to compare Meyer’s books with those of “J.K. Rowling, with whom she is often compared” (see Toscano 30). The most relevant difference is that Harry Potter is a male character, whereas the protagonist in the *Twilight Saga* is female and thus readers experience the world from a young woman’s perspective. Today, this also includes very detailed female fantasies about men. While it is implied that Bella is very beautiful but, apart from that, average person, Edward is the epitome of perfection. Apparently he is also the female idealisation of the perfect man and lover when taking into account the incredible success of the series and its film adaptations, as well as the vast number of websites, Facebook groups or pages, including oaths of love, dedicated to the character and merchandise articles such as T-Shirts labelled with “I love Edward Cullen”, “Bite me Edward” or “Mrs. Edward Cullen”.³

Edward is not only depicted unrealistically with regard to his magical existence but also in terms of the various different characteristics he seems to combine: Bella’s partner is friendly, attentive, reserved, polite, empathetic, gentle, thoughtful, caring,

³ Examples taken from <http://shop.cafepress.co.uk/edward-cullen> and <http://www.shirtcity.at/twilight-t-shirts>

helpful, reasonable, wise, cultured, musical, funny, confident, honest, conservative, earnest, dangerous, wild, dominant, passionate, moody, sad, stubborn, aloof, animalistic and self-destructive. It is hard to imagine that any one person can have all these attributes at the same time. Bella describes him as “too beautiful to be real” (*Twilight* 261) or as a “godlike creature” (*Twilight* 292) and the reader also learns about his numerous talents such as playing the piano and composing or his cultured nature as he is widely read and has studied medicine and various languages (see Cochran 13).

Stevens Aubrey, Walus and Click conclude that “Edward is presented as emotionally, physically, and intellectually superior to not only Bella, but to all other humans” (227). Idealised representations of women are already considered a standard part of everyday life in all types of media. Another subject that continually gains importance in our society is the increasing pressure women put on men nowadays. Simmons ascribes this tendency partly to the effect the *Twilight* series has on female readers, arguing that Meyer’s novels “[...] set a new, impossible benchmark for the perfect man” (ABC 2009). Edward protects Bella whenever she is in need and manages to dazzle her with one single smile. In addition to his ideally balanced combination of personal character traits the vampire is also perfect with regard to his physical appearance. The quote below includes revealing insights into how women perceive the character of Edward and what kind of impact the books have on their lives (see Behm-Morawitz, Click and Aubrey 138-139).

Dr Lisa Bode, an associate lecturer in film and television at the University of Queensland, is researching the cultural reception of the *Twilight* series. She says after reading the books, some women are gaining unrealistic expectations of men. “*They’re idealising Edward to the point where real men can’t compete anymore,*” she said. “It’s kind of a performative thing, an empowering gesture. “If you consider the way that women have had to put up with men’s ideals for centuries, and feeling insecure in relation to that, there’s perhaps a little bit of revenge coming through.” Facebook groups such as “*Twilight has ruined any chance I have at a realistic relationship*” and “*Because I read Twilight I have unrealistic expectations about men*” have attracted members across the globe. (Bode qut. in Simmons) [emphasis added]

At the time of the Brothers Grimm the telling of fairy tales was largely a female domain which resulted in a majority of female protagonists in Grimm's most popular tales (see Lüthi, *Nature* 136). Although female perspectives and wishes are already implied in these classics, they are addressed subtly and in a rather general manner, that is to find a loveable partner, raise a family and especially improve social status. Women today are encouraged to express their feelings and wishes equally to men which is reflected in contemporary magazines, advertisements and the like, as well as in the *Twilight* series, which reveals detailed and extensive ideas of female utopias, particularly with regard to love, romance and sexuality. In this regard experts see an increasing conflict between ideals and reality. Traditional fairy tales symbolise fulfilments of wishes that seem quite realistic or at least technically possible from today's perspective as far as people living in the Western World are concerned: it is possible to find a partner, become rich or start a family. However, the ideals seized on in Meyer's novels often cannot be achieved by humans at all, which is why they are embodied by supernatural creatures and events (see Alleyne).

4.2.5 Myths of romantic love

Reznik and Lemish define these utopias as presented in fairy tales, films and other sources of popular culture as "myths of romantic love" (153) that "[...] may be responsible for romantic illusions that lead to deep frustrations and disappointments when real relationships fail to match them" (153). The messages conveyed in the *Twilight Saga* and similar texts include, among others, stereotypical beliefs such as "[we are] destined to be together and nothing can separate us" or "the right partner completes you and make all your dreams and desires come true" (see Galician qut in Reznik and Lemish 153). With regard to the *Twilight* series, research has shown that these beliefs and fantasies are not only shared by young adults to whom the novels had initially been addressed, but by women of all age groups. As hinted at by Bode, Smithstein also observes that a considerable part of *Twilight* fans not only are enthusiastic about the story and the characters but they are, in fact, obsessed with them "[...] to the point of

sleeplessness, disintegrating marriages, and countless hours on the internet on fan sites and blogs". She tries to ascribe this hysteria to the desperate longing for re-experiencing the phase of first love and dreaming of a nostalgic happy ending that lasts (see Smithstein).

These romantic myths include traditional gender relations as seen in classic fairy tales, which I have already discussed in the first section of my thesis. Basically, women accept a subordinate role to men for the sake of romantic love, while men are depicted as powerful, courageous and noble persons who save their heroine from danger, boredom and poor living conditions:

Thus yearning for the "missing (male) piece" that will make a girl's life complete and therefore is the key to happiness and fulfillment perpetuates female dependency on men and serves as the rationale for over-investment of resources in search of the "one and only" rather than in herself as an independent individual with agency and self-worth. (see Reznik and Lemish 153)

Reznik and Lemish thus arrive at a similar conclusion as Bode and Alleyne by stressing the aspect of illusion and frustration in real life and by recognising that it is especially those films, series or novels that support female subordination and male dominance as essential conditions for romantic love that are extremely popular today. Journalist Tanya Gold claims that "Twilight is not feminist: it's female masochism". Why are these old-fashioned values and gender inequality still accepted, or even embraced and desired in the context of romance? It could be argued that these patterns are still accepted by such a great number of women and girls out of a feeling of nostalgia, a term that I will define more closely in the following paragraph. The values conveyed in such texts are associated with the past, when wishing still helped. In this connection Zipes poses the question, "Are fairy tales part of a nostalgic longing for a happy past that never was?" (*Stick* 100) and thus gets to the heart of the matter. It seems that at least to some extent this wishing for a utopian nostalgia can be seen as the basis of romantic myths (see Reznik and Lemish 153, Alleyne, Cochran 9).

4.2.6 Conservatism versus progress

The aforementioned nostalgia can be observed not only with the aspect of romance but also with the conservative lifestyle presented in the *Saga*:

[...] [T]he most powerful feelings of nostalgia arise from the remembering or desire for that never really was, “past” that seems both safe and easily understood due to its simplicity and reliance on shared values. Bella envisions such a past for Edward as she muses about their engagement: “I saw the same odd vision of Edward and me on a porch swing, wearing clothes from another kind of world. A world where it would surprise no one if I wore his ring on my finger. A simpler place, where love was defined in simpler ways. (see Cochran 9, *Eclipse* 325 qut. in Cochran 9)

Cochran suggests that people tend to associate the past with a simpler and happier time. Edward Cullen stands for old Victorian values which include loyalty and gentlemanly manners as well as marriage as an institution and the refusal of premarital sex. Bella is also a conservative character in most instances, caring for her father by doing the housework and shopping and preparing meals when he comes home from work. When she is pregnant with a life-endangering hybrid she sticks tenaciously to her decision to bear the child and refuses an abortion even if that might result in her death (9). On closer inspection, the love triangle between Bella, Edward and Jacob can also be seen as a conflict of lifestyles: while Edward is conservative and dominant, Jacob is described as a young man of our time, being reckless and less of a gentleman. Instead he spends time with Bella working on motorcycles in his garage with the money that was intended to serve as her college fund. As we learn at the end of the series Bella chooses Edward as her partner and thus past triumphs over present. Gold aptly comments on the situation as follows:

Because Bella becomes a vampire and can, by the end, jump off cliffs and wrestle with mountain lions, it has been said that *Twilight* is a story of female empowerment. However, with all that goes before, it is more likely that Bella Swan surrendered her mortality (and what more can you surrender?) for a murderous love, and a private island. (see Gold)

Gold therefore stresses the fact that Bella's new identity as a strong, confident and gifted wife and mother only constitutes a minor part in the *Saga*. Besides, even her transformation into a vampire can be seen as an obedient act of sacrifice, giving up her former life and family for the man she loves. For the most part, however, her character is delineated as passive, anxious, naive, self-conscious and submissive and thus reflects a fairly conservative and patriarchally shaped personality. Also in terms of family values Bella chooses tradition over her present situation: the Cullens might not represent a typical family as far as their structure is concerned but they do share highly conservative family values as they are loyal towards each other, spend much time together and all live under the same roof. Furthermore, both the relationship between the "parents" Carlisle and Esme as well as those of their sons are stable and harmonious.

As Gold has claimed the focus of the story clearly lies on those events happening before Bella's transformation. Interestingly enough these parts are the ones readers like the most. I have drawn a comparison in this regard between the different parts of the *Twilight Saga* in terms of popularity among readers. For this purpose I used the rating system and the implied results provided by amazon.com and amazon.de.

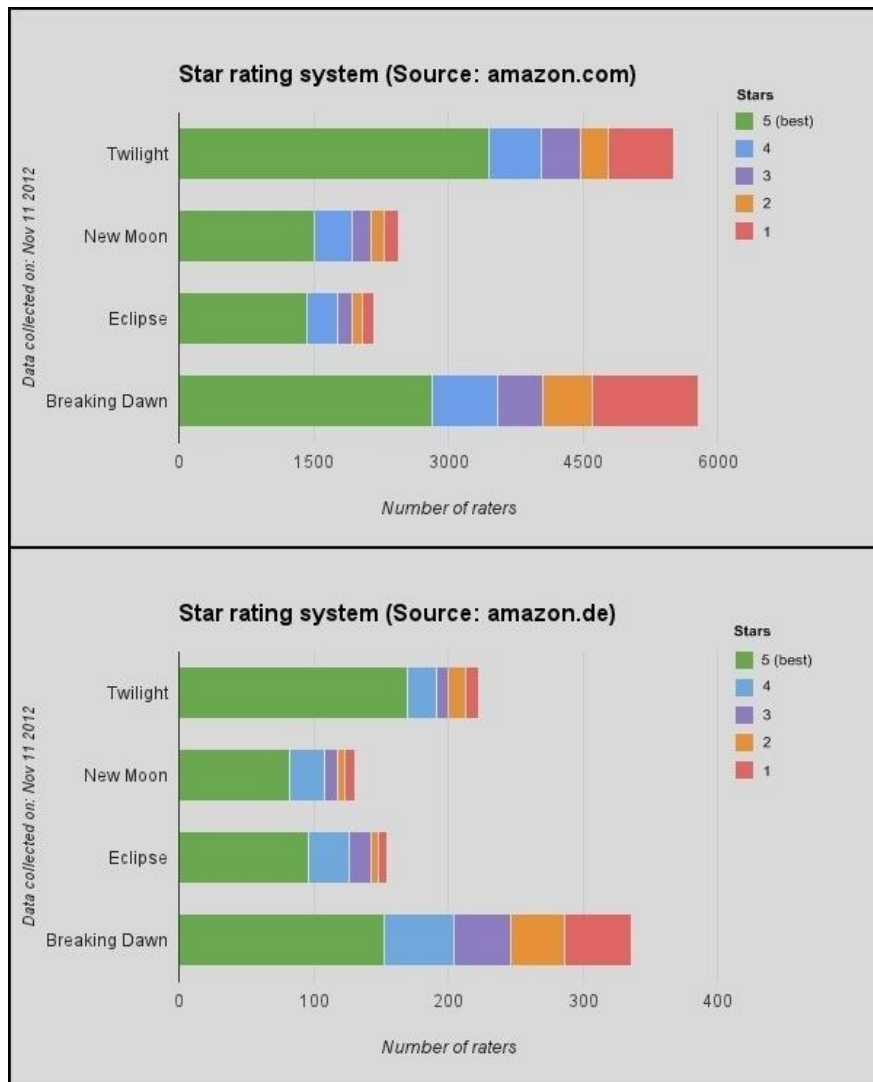


Fig. 2: Rating system

It is interesting to observe that the tendencies in America and the German-speaking countries are very similar. The graph shows that the first three parts had been well received by readers: the large majority rated them with five stars. The most interesting finding concerns the last book, *Breaking Dawn*: to begin with, this book has been rated by far most frequently, followed by *Twilight*. Although the fourth book was received very well on the whole, the most significant aspect here is the much greater amount of low or poor ratings both on amazon.com and amazon.de in contrast to the other sequels. While the majority of voters mostly agreed as far as the other books are concerned, the fourth part deserves closer

consideration. In both cases it can be concluded that proportionally *Breaking Dawn* received the most negative feedback and provides the highest potential of conflict and controversy among readers. The reason for this rating cannot be analysed in detail because it would go beyond the scope of this thesis, but skimming through some of the reviews it turns out that many readers did not like the fact that Bella had been transformed into a vampire as this intervention takes the edge and tension off the story. Another frequently criticised aspect was the cruel result of the couple's first sexual intercourse, that is, Bella's bruised body. Furthermore, Swann's claim that "the way we relate to a story about an immortal protagonist is quite different from the way we relate to one about a mortal figure" (8) could also play a central role in this discussion. The fact that the last novel is both loved and hated could also hint at the divergent perception of different age groups: while young readers might not be able to identify with the new mature and motherly Bella, adults might relate to the character in this phase in particular.

4.2.7 Beauty and youth

Beauty is not only a dominant topic with regard to the character of Edward but also with the majority of characters in general (see Wilson, *Seduced* 51). The importance attached to this topic does not seem surprising given the essential role beauty plays in our lives in the twenty-first century. According to Hamermesh we are "obsessed with beauty – from the day we are old enough to recognize our faces in a mirror until well after senility sets in, we are concerned with our looks" (3). Women and increasingly also men constantly feel under pressure to live up to the beauty ideals they encounter every day on magazine covers, in TV series, Hollywood films or in advertisements. In this connection McRobbie stresses the ideological power of magazines, claiming that they create "great bundles of meaning [...] [which] enter our unconsciousnesses producing desires and pleasures even when consciously we might not want them to" (193). The wish for perfect beauty is so deeply ingrained that according to a poll "a third of women say they would sacrifice a year of life to achieve the ideal body weight and shape" (see Swinson). There is also a new online trend demonstrating the extreme fixation on

our looks: young people, most often teenage girls, upload videos of themselves on YouTube and ask their viewers to comment on whether they think they are beautiful or ugly (see Ho). A great number of people do not feel comfortable with their physical appearance and this unhappiness often results in eating disorders, cosmetic surgery, addiction to sports or depression. Living up to the perfect people shown on television or in magazines is made even more difficult, if not impossible, by means of modern techniques of presentation such as airbrushing with programs like Photoshop. And although “[...] the vast majority of people know that advertising images are enhanced and are an impossible dream, it still hurts” (see Swinson).

Beauty today is frequently intertwined with an obsession with youth and the great fear of aging. The strong wish to stay young is the strongest among females and the people affected by fears of getting older and less attractive are becoming younger and younger (see Diller). These key issues of our time are already deeply ingrained in Grimms’ classics as can be seen in the tale *Snow-white*: perfect beauty is embodied by the heroine Snow-white and the fear of losing it is embodied by the queen. A further aspect I have not yet mentioned but that is of utmost importance is the rivalry among women with regard to physical appearance, which is also illustrated by the character of the queen who decides to kill Snow-white because she is more beautiful (see Chunn). Ralairach-Vielmas observed that “throughout the centuries, the heroines of fairy tales have always been shaped as ideally beautiful princesses, their beauty not only guaranteeing their morality but also enabling them to win a prince, hence securing their wealth” (262). In other words, beauty is represented as the key to love and success.

Although beauty plays an important role in Grimms’ classics as well, the subject still does not take up as much space as is the case in Meyer’s works. Beauty and youth are vital elements in the *Twilight Saga*, and compared with the traditional tale these themes are dealt with in a deeper and more extreme manner. Almost every person or supernatural creature in the novels is beautiful. Also Bella’s mother Renée is described as a very attractive woman, “young looking and thus able to

attract a young husband” (see Wilson, *Seduced* 51). The first time Bella sees the Cullens at school she describes them as perfect supermodels:

Of the three boys, one was big-muscled like a serious weight lifter, with dark curly hair. Another was taller, leaner, but still muscular, and honey blond. The last was lanky, less bulky, with untidy, bronze-colored hair. [...]

The girls were opposites. The tall one was statuesque. She had a beautiful figure, the kind you saw on the cover of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, *the kind that made every girl around her take a hit on her self-esteem just by being in the same room.* [...]

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. It was hard to decide who was the most beautiful [...] (*Twilight* 18-19) [emphasis added]

The quote shows how perfection of physical appearance is equated with artificially constructed images presented on covers of magazines or painted art and how frustrating it is for women to strive for those ideals. As I have already analysed in the previous chapters, special emphasis with regard to beauty and youth is put on Edward and Bella. In the major part of the *Saga* Bella is still human and when thinking about her relationship with an immortal vampire she struggles with the thought of aging, “[...] bemoan[ing], ‘I get older every stinking day!’ and admits, ‘Age is a touchy subject for me’” (*Eclipse* 119, 121 qut in Wilson, *Seduced* 51). This fear is also the storyline of one of her nightmares, in which she believes to see her grandmother beside her immortal lover Edward but eventually realises that the old woman is herself. Waking up shocked the first thing she does is look into a mirror and search her face “[...] for signs of ‘impending wrinkles’” (*New Moon* 6 qut in Shachar 151). Youth is presented as a precious gift, not only with regard to the immortal vampires.

Towards the end of the *Twilight* novels, Bella is transformed into a vampire in order to survive the birth of her daughter Renesmee. The change into a supernatural being allows her to solve a number of conflicts and opens up new perspectives: the aging process is stopped as Bella freezes at the youthful age of eighteen forever. Having been the most admired girl at her school already, she is now perfect due to

her new vampire identity. Also female rivalry is no longer an issue. Although it could be argued that as a vampire the competition is even more intense this problem is also solved as the Cullen family lives in isolation due to their alternative lifestyle as, unlike other vampires, they only drink animal blood. The use of magic is vital to provide an opportunity for readers to imagine a way to overcome their anxieties about growing old or not being attractive enough and escaping into fantasy as in real life these fears simply have to be faced.

4.2.8 Stardom

In this regard, another one of our society's typical fantasies is worth mentioning and that is the wish to be a star, or at least, something or someone special. Certainly, by means of her transformation Bella experiences a rise from poor to rich, pretty to impossibly beautiful and average to gifted. For Bella, being part of a family of supernatural creatures includes sparkling in the sun, moving extremely fast and shielding herself and others by means of nothing more than total concentration – characteristics that remind the reader of superheroes. The Cullens are described like celebrities, looking stunning, acting cool, and being aloof and unapproachable to ordinary people. However, while she is still human Bella already experiences situations in which she is perceived as special: for example, when Edward beckons her over to his table in the school cafeteria and her friend Jessica doubtfully asks whether he really meant her.

In the film adaptation, one scene was added in order to emphasise this special status of Bella's. When Edward and Bella arrive at school together arm in arm, all eyes are on her. Aubrey et al point out that "this scene is a fan favorite, consistently voted as one of the best scenes of the movie (e.g., Yahoo! Answers, 2008) because it demonstrates the first time that Edward and Bella go public with their relationship, much to the amazement (and assumed jealousy) of others" (228). An example from the traditional fairy-tale realm would be Cinderella, with the prince who has fallen in love with her at first sight searching the whole kingdom for her. The desire of being recognised as someone special certainly is deeply rooted

in humans. A phenomenon extant since the invention of celebrities is the wish to be picked out of a crowd and chosen as partner by a star. Fantasies of this kind are typical for teenagers, particularly nowadays, as Aubrey et al suggest (227-228).

Twilight reinforces a familiar script about romantic love, and it allows readers to engage in similar fantasies that someday their celebrity crush will discover them, realize their unique qualities, and set them apart from all other girls simply by paying attention to them. After all, if it could happen to Bella, it could happen to anyone. (228)

4.2.9 Sex

The one subject of controversial discussion in the series clearly is the motif of sex in general and abstinence in particular, which is a deviation from fairy-tale classics in principle as sex never is a conscious part of this genre but signified symbolically, if at all (see Burkert 73). In the twenty-first century, the way media and the majority of people deal with the subject of sex is no longer particularly subtle or embarrassed in nature. Sex has been accepted by our society as a vital part of everyday life (see Paris 10). The following quote shows how the understanding of sex in our culture has changed:

Sex is much more than it used to be. Sexual desire is now considered central to human identity, and sexual self-expression is seen by many to be essential for healthy personhood. [...] *The fact that sex is so important, and that sexual desire is seen as a central element of human identity, is new.*

At the same time, sex is much less than it used to be. [...] [S]ex is used for trivial purposes: to sell things, to gain attention, to build superstardom [...]. These trivial reasons, along with more hearty purposes such as enjoying marriage or making babies, are often mixed together in people's personal sexual histories.

The discussion assumes, of course, a shared understanding of what sex is, but such a consensus no longer holds. (see Paris 10) [emphasis added]

As Paris rightly states, sex is no longer a subject limited to human reproduction, it is also acknowledged as an important aspect of life in general. People nowadays are aware of their sexual needs and desires and are encouraged to actualise them in order to feel physically and mentally balanced. This straightforward way of dealing with sexuality was opened in the 1960s and has gradually evolved until

today and is still in a state of flux (see Paris 42). The quote above also suggests that there is no longer a standard definition of sex but various different trends instead (see Paris 10, 42).

However, issues having come to public attention especially in the last two decades and that are now more present than ever are the understanding children and young adolescents have of sex today and why the age at which teenagers begin to have sex is continuously decreasing and frequently results in teenage pregnancy. *New York Times* journalist Brody among others ascribes this tendency largely to the high amount of sexual content in the media and especially on television which children and adolescents are exposed to every day. An article in *Time Magazine* argues that children and young teenagers do not necessarily want to look sexy or to be sexually active like their idols on television, such as, for instance, characters in the popular series *Gossip Girl*. Rather, the younger the teenagers who watch these series, the higher the likelihood that many of them simply want to *look* like those people on the screen, which makes them feel older and cooler (see Luscombe, *Time*).

Another point of interest is the early age at which teenagers are exposed to pornography on the Internet nowadays, how easily information can be accessed, and what consequences this open access has on a teenager's understanding of, and attitudes towards, sex. In this connection, Brody refers to an American study that "[...] indicated that adolescents who watched shows with sexual content tended to overestimate the frequency of certain sexual behaviors".

How is the subject of sex approached in the *Twilight* series? Despite one insinuated sex scene in the last book *Breaking Dawn* the *Saga* is known for its depiction of romantic love, implying gentle touches and kisses but no petting or sex at all. Given the fact that sex is of utmost importance in our society, as well as that adolescents in the twenty-first century show an interest in sex as early as from early puberty and that most of them have their first sexual experiences at a very young age, the question arises why the series with its abstinent motifs has such a

strong appeal for children, young adults and grown-ups and apparently provides high potential for identification (see Brody).

Besides a great number of journalists, scholars and fans, Mukerjea also concentrates on Meyer's identity as a Mormon, claiming that "[...] notions of ideal love, romance, and sex are strongly influenced by her Mormon beliefs" (73) and thus searching the series for its numerous occurrences of Mormon symbols and motifs, such as, for instance, sexual abstinence before marriage or the categorical rejection of abortion (see Toscano 25, Wilson, *Seduced* 133-180, Mukherjea 81). However, even though there might be parallels between Mormon values and those conveyed in the novels I am not convinced that a biographical approach to literature can be considered useful. Furthermore, the Mormon aspect is of minor importance given the fact that the *Twilight Saga* has been and still is extremely popular worldwide although the readers and fans of the films are not Mormons in the vast majority of cases. Why is Meyer's series loved despite its old-fashioned central theme of sexual abstinence? Wilson argues that "despite our supposedly sexually liberated society, sex still has to be largely coded as romance (especially for females) in order to be acceptable" (*Seduced* 106). Especially in the society of the United States there is a strong contradiction between the celebration of virginity on the one hand and "hypersexualization of girls and the commodification of sex" (*Seduced* 107) on the other. Meyer's novels follow this pattern as the protagonists do have sex but only after Bella has reached the age of consent and after the couple is married.

As already mentioned, even when Bella and Edward do eventually have sex, the scene is completely omitted in the text and only hinted at beforehand and afterwards. The most criticised passage of the entire series is the following: after the couple has had sexual intercourse Bella thinks of it as pleasurable although "[...] she wakes up covered in bruises" (see Dick McGeough 92). Bella is totally surprised at the sight of her own body as she did not feel any pain. Of course, this is an extraordinary situation given the fact that Bella has sex with a supernatural creature with superpowers and although the character of Edward is very careful,

saying to Bella beforehand, “if I do something wrong, if I hurt you, you must tell me at once,” (*Breaking Dawn* 85) the scene still is to be regarded highly critically as it could convey the impression that pain is worth striving for. Especially very young adults who have not yet had sexual experiences of any kind could get a completely wrong idea of sex. Edward feels like a monster and expresses deep regret for what has happened. Dick McGeough concludes that “Bella’s first time having sex is idealistically represented as uncomplicated and painless, but the reality is, as Edward points out, she wakes up covered in bruises” (see Dick McGeough 92-93).

Carroll might offer further answers to the question of popularity. In her article from 2012 she portrays three 14-year old girls from Britain who provide insight into their sexual experiences. All three girls note that they had felt the pressure to have sex as early as possible to keep up with their friends and classmates. Furthermore, all of them agreed that their first time having sex was a painful, unpleasant and uneasy experience and although they all have had different sex partners since they have not been able to enjoy sex and prefer other forms of intimacy such as kissing or hugging. Sex for these girls is associated with fear and stress and they all noted in retrospect that they wish they had waited until they felt mature and confident enough to have sex.

Despite the fact that an interview with three girls cannot reflect a general trend, the article still seems to represent one of various ways in which young adolescents encounter sexuality today and thus might provide one of the reasons why *Twilight* and its sequels are so popular among girls. Although Bella is almost nineteen when she gives birth to Renesmee, the pregnancy is still unplanned and Bella is totally unprepared for parenthood. Therefore, very young mothers and expecting teenagers in particular might strongly identify with the heroine in this respect. With regard to sex, magic is the trigger of events. Because Edward is incredibly strong and his body hard as stone he does not give in to sexual intercourse in the first three books as he could hurt Bella in a moment of distraction and this conflict keeps the story going. The supernatural aspect serves as an excuse for delaying

sex and helps readers to escape stress, fear and peer pressure as well as responsibility (see Carroll, Kokkola 10).

4.2.10 Morals

Another topic I shall discuss is that of morality. As Beckson and Ganz suggest, the main moral aspect in fairy tales is the triumph of good over evil (85). Swann Jones claims that the “magical element in fairy tales serves to underscore and affirm a moral propriety in the universe, documenting a cosmic morality” (13) and concludes that the heroes or heroines “[...] are rewarded because they are inherently good and deserve to be rewarded, and the supernatural help serves as a confirmation that the world is indeed a moral one” (13). Similarly, evil is punished as can be seen with the lazy daughter in *Mother Hulda* or the stepsisters in *Cinderella* (see Swann Jones 13).

Taking a look at the events in the *Twilight Saga* the same pattern can be observed. Characters who are good at heart find happiness, whereas evil characters like James or Victoria are punished or rather murdered. After her life as an outsider in her former home, her escape from a group of men who want to rape her and from a vampire who wants to kill her, surviving a battle against vampire Victoria and her army and rescuing her lover Edward from committing suicide, heroine Bella is finally rewarded with a happy ending with the partner of her choice, which includes marriage, motherhood, wealth, eternal beauty, magical skills and immortality. However, there is another moral principle which represents a rather modern tendency in societies of the Western world, which is the choice of alternative lifestyles in terms of ethics. The extraordinary characteristic of the Cullen family compared to fellow members of their species is that they have decided to live without human blood and to hunt animals instead, no matter how strong the temptation might be. Therefore they like to refer to themselves as the “vegetarians” (*Twilight* 188) among the vampire community. Carlisle, the head of the family, even works as a doctor at the hospital of Forks, where he encounters and helps humans every day (see Wilson, *Seduced* 13, Reagin 2, 240).

Evidently, the Cullens are to the vampire world what vegetarians, vegans or environmentalists are to the human world. In the last decades and especially from the end of the twentieth century onwards, the awareness of ethically sound lifestyles has increased dramatically. There are various newspapers, magazines and television programmes with a “green” section, including subcategories with information on food, recycling, fair trade, climate change, green travel or health⁴. The fact that these topics are paid serious attention in all different types of media proves the increasing importance ethically sound living assumes in our lives although it must be added at this point that these green topics also arouse criticism and are met with scepticism or refusal. Nevertheless, people are encouraged to rethink their behaviours and to make the world better by giving up meat, buying ecological garments or choosing public transport and cycling over private cars. The underlying idea in the series – that there is always an alternative option to evil and potential for improvement and that it is up to each individual to choose a better way of living – is an essential element of the *Saga* and also a topical issue of modern society. However, due to the fact that the topic is dealt with on a utopian, supernatural level it is no longer considered a point of contention in the series.

4.2.11 Family

As I have already suggested in the first part of the study, the ways in which families are presented in the *Saga* are very untypical for traditional fairy tales and represent one of the strongest deviations from the genre. To start with, Bella is a child of divorced parents, a constellation that does not exist in the classical fairy-tale realm. Her new family, the Cullens, also are atypical in terms of their structure as their members are not blood-related. Thus, Carlisle and Esme refer to themselves as adoptive parents. On the other hand the family could also be considered a living community since none of them actually is a child that needs to be taken care of and Carlisle and Esme did not really adopt them in the classical sense. The series clearly seizes on the change the image of family has undergone from the 1970s

⁴ Examples taken from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/ethical-living>

until today. Before that time the family was understood as a stable, indivisible unit, composed of a married couple and children. There was a clear distribution of roles: the man as head of the family and respected father, responsible for earning money and making all important decisions, the woman as loving and devoted housewife and mother to their children. Problems are never raised and the relationship between children and their parents is not overly close or intimate as father and mother are mostly considered persons of authority. However, the situation gradually began to change and by now, the differences are of a profound nature. As Daubert outlines, “the social unit that is the family is no longer defined by the institution of marriage, but by parent-child relationships. Alongside the customary father-mother-child(ren) structure of the traditional nuclear family, we see more and more alternative groupings and new familial structures” (8). Children in the twenty-first century are required to be extremely flexible to adapt to constantly changing family constellations. In the United States the estimated rate of divorce is between forty and fifty per cent, in Great Britain the approximate percentage is forty-five and Daubert gives information on the situation in Europe, claiming that “every third marriage ends in divorce and, statistically, a marriage can be expected to last about five years” (9) as it is more likely for adults to have temporary partners than to live with one person for their entire lives. The number of single parents is continually rising as is the modern constellation of patchwork families. As Daubert points out, “these familial configurations are less and less likely to be long term, and their members experience openness but also instability” (9) (see Sher, Carvel, Daubert 6-9).

Another aspect in this regard is the relationship between parents and their children. Daubert observed a trend in modern children’s fiction, where mother and father often “[...] can no longer be relied upon for wisdom, stability, strength and orientation, and are not dependable yardsticks of values. Rather, the children themselves must often take over the role of parents, and with it the responsibility for their beleaguered and psychologically feeble parents” (11). In these texts children are often faced with “childish parents” (13) who are preoccupied with finding themselves and convey the belief that one is never really grown-up. In the

Saga similar trends can be found. Bella also feels responsible for her parents. When she leaves her mother Renée she is more worried whether her mother can live without her than vice versa, as Bella's thoughts reveal at the beginning of the series: "How could I leave my loving, erratic, harebrained mother to fend for herself? Of course she had Phil now, so the bills would probably get paid, there would be food in the refrigerator, gas in her car, and someone to call when she got lost, but still ..." (*Twilight* 4). The quote suggests that the traditional parent-child-relationship is reversed in the story. Daubert also found out that the parent's new partners only play a minor role in the majority of Children's books. Evidently, also Renée's new fiancé Phil is only mentioned as a side note (see Daubert, 9-13, Mukherjea 94).

In the *Twilight* series the problems frequently encountered by modern families are addressed with regard to Bella and her parents so that readers who are in similar situations relate to the protagonist and feel understood. The leaving behind of one parent is played down by presenting Bella as the only actual adult of the family who is not in need of care compared to Renée and Charlie. Leaving her parents at the end of *Breaking Dawn* by entering the world of vampires permanently could be equated with leaving home or the situation when adults are confronted with the death of their parents. By becoming a physically and mentally strong vampire problems like these can be faced more easily. In addition to the image of a broken home, the text also provides an alternative ideal image of family as epitomised by the supernatural Cullens who constitute a stable, healthy, intimate, loyal and caring family unit. According to the phrase "you can choose your friends but you can't choose your family" the series introduces an optimistic fantasy for children who live in a broken family, or alternative ways of living such as the living community of the Cullens for adults who have broken off contact with one or both parents.

The analysis has shown that the clear majority of deviations from the traditional fairy tale identified in the *Twilight Saga* has served the purpose of providing further potential for identification for readers of the twenty-first century. There are certain motifs the classics and the *Twilight* novels share, such as beauty, youth or morals

that are only given more emphasis and depth in the series. The reason why it is exactly these novels that have had such a strong appeal to readers is difficult to answer but it might have to do with the great variety of very contemporary deep underlying wishes and desires the series offers. Furthermore, Zak, an expert in the field of neuroeconomics, shares an interesting thought, remarking that “recessions [...] refocus us on what's most important: things like family [and] friends” (qut in Novotney 42). In other words, the strong focus on love in relationships in the *Saga* might have hit the mark in a time characterised by financial crises and terrorist attacks. I shall carry out further examination on this question in a later chapter of this thesis.

4.3 The Disneyfication of the fairy-tale genre and its consequences

In order to demonstrate the important role Disney films play with regard to the fairy-tale discussion I would like to share an anecdote Zipes tells in one of his works:

In the summer 2001, I conducted a storytelling session with a group of ten-year-olds in College Park, Pennsylvania, and at one point I told a version of “Snow White” and asked the students whether they knew who had written the tale. None of them knew except one small boy who stated confidently, “Walt Disney.” (*Grimm* ix)

The story shows how deeply Disney's versions of fairy tales are embedded in the minds of people who have grown up with these films. Wood agrees, mentioning that “after dutifully reading the variants of ‘Cinderella’ by Perrault and the Grimms, [her] students will often politely tell [her] that these new versions are all very well, but that they prefer the ‘original,’ by which they mean Disney” (25). Although Disney is not overly popular among fairy-tale scholars the massive impact of his works on fairy tales and popular culture cannot be denied. Fairy-tale motifs had already been present on screen in the form of short films by other filmmakers, and at the start of his career Walt Disney and his team also produced short films featuring fairy tales. However, these films were completely different from those fairy-tale versions we are familiar with today. Popular classics such as *Puss in Boots* or *Little Red Riding Hood* were released as “*Laugh-O-gram Films*” (see

Zipes, *Subversion* 197) which were characterised by chaotic and absurd events, funny characters and Disney's unique style as he was the first to show pictures in Technicolor: "In *Little Red Riding Hood* the girl brings donuts to her grandmother and is almost raped by a "wolfish" dapper gentleman. However, an airplane pilot rescues her and disposes of the wolf by dropping him into a lake" (*Subversion* 197). Shortly afterwards Disney started to work on his soon-to-be breakthrough hit *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which he changed in a variety of ways in order to customise it ideally for the intended American audience. Ever since, more and more scholars have used the term Disneyfication, which Zipes defines as the effect of being "[...] subjected to the saccharine, sexist, and illusionary stereotypes of the Disney-culture industry" (*Dreams* 25).

To demonstrate what is meant by Disneyfication in practice, I will refer to Zipes's analysis of the latter film, in which he outlines various alterations made to the plot. To start with, Snow White is reduced to a house cleaner after her mother's death, whereas in the Grimms' original there is no mention of such duties. Secondly, the prince, who only plays a minor role at the end of the story in the Grimms' tale, is given more space in the Disney version, appearing also at the start of the movie and singing a love song for Snow White. The queen secretly observes this and becomes even more envious of Snow White. Furthermore, Disney added a scene in which Snow White makes friends with animals in the forest and the most significant alteration is the presentation of the dwarfs who play a considerably more important role than in the original. All of them are given names and specific characteristics and they are portrayed as hardworking but infantile men who like to sing happy songs. When the queen tries to destroy the dwarfs' home it is hinted that she accidentally dies by falling off a cliff, whereas in the traditional fairy tale she dies because she is forced to dance on hot coals. One of the most decisive changes is the intensely romantic way Snow White awakens in the Disney version as it is a kiss from her prince that revives her. However, in the Grimms' original, Snow White awakes in her coffin carried by the dwarfs because one of them stumbles and thus the poisoned piece of apple is dislodged from her throat. As the examples show Disney intended to add more humanity to the plot, emphasising

motifs such as romantic love, friendship, envy and motherhood, as can be seen with Snow White's motherly relation to the dwarfs (see Zipes, *Subversion* 197, 203).

Disney's films are mainly criticised for destroying the value of traditional fairy tales and for exploiting the material for economic purposes, making money with theme parks and an enormous variety of merchandise. One of the main issues is the fact that children no longer read tales but prefer films, which implies that their imagination is deactivated due to the ready-made images and melodies carrying them away. Furthermore, in Zipes' view the visualisation is given priority in the films while the story is marginalised as well as modified into an Americanised utopia. Zipes also criticises that "Disney managed to domesticate the fairy tale and restore its conservative features so that it lost its rebellious and progressive features" (*Subversion* 193) and "though the characters are fleshed out to become more realistic, they are also one-dimensional and are to serve functions in the film" (*Subversion* 207). However, the latter statement turns out to be contradictory due to the fact that Lüthi describes typical fairy-tale characters as one-dimensional and Propp defines them exclusively by their functions (see Zipes, *Subversion* 207, 210).

Wilson describes the *Twilight Saga* as "a newfangled Disney-esque fairy tale" (*Seduced* 42) – can this explanation be considered a proper definition? There are certain parallels between the *Twilight* texts and the Disney material and these can be mainly seen with regard to the presentation of the characters. In contrast to the original sources, both in the Disney films and in the *Saga* characters are given more text to speak, a more detailed description of their physical appearance and a wide-ranging set of emotions. Especially the visual aspect is stressed in both sources, as can be seen for instance with regard to the contradictory illustrative presentation of Edward and Jacob, which I have already elaborated on in the previous chapter. Moreover, in both sources the character of the prince is given higher priority and great attention is paid to romance. Disney stands for conservative values and passive characters and this also applies to extended parts

of the *Twilight* series. However, these characteristics are also assigned to the traditional fairy tales by various scholars as the first part of this thesis has shown. Another similarity can be observed in terms of marketing as both Disney and *Twilight* products are part of an impressive merchandise industry (see Behm-Morawetz, Click and Aubrey 138; Zipes, *Stick* 105).

However, in many respects Meyer's novels and Disney productions are strikingly different from each other. For instance, characters in the Disney classics are entirely unambiguous as is typical for traditional tales, including an invariably good heroine and a wholly evil villain. In contrast, characters in the *Saga* are allowed to be moody or even combine good and evil such as is the case with vampire Edward. Although unambiguity in the sense of clearly and sharply depicted characters and situations is typical for the traditional fairy tales as well, Zipes argues that in Disney productions purification is put to an extreme and Wood also claims that Disney makes use of nostalgic elements that present to the viewer stories of a perfect past with sterile appeal (*Subversion* 210, Wood 29).

One of the most striking features in Disney films is the addition of charming humour and naive fun as well as the embedding of cheerful songs to sing along to. In contrast, there are no comparable happy poems in the *Twilight* novels or songs in the film versions. The general atmosphere is of a more sombre and dramatic nature due to the irreconcilable differences between Bella and Edward that cause dangerous events and prevent sexual union. While in traditional tales and Disney films sex is a taboo and only hinted at subtly, it is one of the key themes in the *Saga*. Furthermore, Meyer's novels show a clear interest in contemporary issues, which stands in marked contrast with Disney material in the field of the fairy-tale genre. To conclude, what Disney films and the *Saga* share in contrast to Grimms' tales are mainly aspects concerning the characters as these are presented in more detail with regard to personality and physical appearance. Nevertheless, given the striking differences to Disney films it can be stated that the *Twilight* novels are too distinct to simply place them side by side with Disney productions (see Zipes, *Dreams* 25).

4.4 How *Twilight* fans pave the way to modern folk literature

4.4.1 Memes

This chapter is best introduced by means of a significant observation Zipes has made with regard to a text's relevance:

The fact that a text becomes a bestseller does not mean that it is a work of great literature. Relevance may have little to do with the intrinsic value of a work of art. What relevance reveals is that at a certain point in time, relevant information necessary for cognition can be considered crucial for understanding social relations, for adaptation to changing conditions, and for changing the environment. [...] As we continue to form and re-form fairy tales in the twenty-first century, there is still a glimmer of utopian hope that a better past lies ahead, but more practically, a fairy tale like "Cinderella" replicated as meme reveals to us what we have not been able to resolve and how much more we need to know about the world and ourselves. (*Stick* 127)

In other words, it is not as important how "good" a certain text is as what effect it has on readers and, in further consequence, on society in general. Before I elaborate on the exact meaning of the chapter heading it is first necessary to provide information on the terminology required in this context. Zipes mentions the term "meme", describing a phenomenon that will be of importance in the course of this chapter: "Memes are skills, habits, songs, stories, or any other kind of information that is copied from person to person [...] with variation and selection. A central question for memetics is therefore 'why has this meme survived?'" (see Blackmore). Memes thus can be images, phrases or ideas that are coined by someone at some point, are shared and survive within a community, a state or even worldwide in contrast to other images, phrases or ideas. Zipes emphasises that "memes should be regarded as living structures, not just metaphorically but technically" (*Evolution* 4). Examples for global memes would be religious beliefs, while small groups may share memes in form of jokes.

Similarly, there are certain memes that have survived longer than others in the fairy-tale realm. As I have already broached earlier the question why certain fairy tales are preferred to others is a subject of memetic studies. This unofficial canon of classics is often considered as a small collection of stories that are ideas

implanted in our minds. As Zipes adds, “we respond to these classical tales almost as if we were born with them, and yet, we know full well that they have been socially produced and induced and continue to be generated this way through different forms of the mass media” (*Evolution* 1). Therefore, the distribution of memes not only depends on the behaviour of individuals but also on what information is disseminated by institutions like television, radio or magazines.

In the second last chapter I have tried to identify the underlying meme(s) of the *Twilight* series. However, defining particular ideas as memes is a difficult task to undertake as the only reliable information is that there is a certain item or idea that is currently more talked about, copied and shared than others but it is highly difficult to find out why that is. Zipes encounters similar difficulties when analysing the memetic quality of *Little Red Riding Hood* (*Evolution* 1, 5).

There is a specific subcategory of this phenomenon and that is the Internet meme, defined as “an image, video, phrase, etc. that is passed electronically from one Internet user to another” (see “meme”, OAD). Internet memes represent an entirely new phenomenon of the twenty-first century. The only difference to general memes is that the distribution is limited to the frame of the World Wide Web. Internet memes in the strict sense also have a certain layout and although one can find them by simply typing any word together with “meme” into a search engine there are also websites offering collections that are constantly expanded at minute intervals. The most popular types of Internet memes are images provided with a one-line text which mockingly comments on the picture and those that are characterised by their cartoon style and the use of specific insider jokes. These memes centre around a group of poorly-drawn stickman characters. The source of these figures is unknown but they are so simple to copy that Internet users constantly add new comics to the already vast collection. As a consequence, the creators of Internet memes remain anonymous. The memes are posted on some platform on the Internet. Other users come across them and, if they like them, they might copy them on another platform and so forth. People talk about these Internet memes and include them in their everyday language. In many ways Internet

memes can be compared to folktales. It has to be considered at this point that the field of Internet memes is still very young and unexplored and we do not know how it will develop in future (see Maroney, Dailey).

4.4.2 Modern folk tradition

Folktales are characterised by their distribution by means of oral transmission and by the fact that it is impossible to trace their origin exactly due to the vast number of circulating versions (see Zipes, *Companion* xv; Swann Jones 4). Similarly, Internet memes are anonymous. They frequently seize on current themes or events and there are various different products referring to the same situation but in slightly different ways. For instance, during this year's presidential election in the United States a strikingly high number of Internet memes featuring the candidates in some way or another was circulating online. (see Dailey)

A similar tendency can be observed with the *Twilight* books and films: a great number of people electronically contribute information pertaining to the *Saga*, this information is reminded, copied and further distributed by others and so on and so forth. Since the publication of Meyer's novels and the release of the film versions the number of Twilight-themed Internet memes on the web has been growing steadily. However, circulation of information concerning Meyer's novels goes beyond the concept of Internet memes. There are fan fiction websites "with over half a million stories" (see Parrish 177) enabling individuals to share alternative topic-related stories or to read those created by others and in this way to keep the story going. Primarily J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and Meyer's *Twilight Saga* dominate the field of fan fiction on the Internet. Furthermore, there are numerous blogs, Facebook pages and groups, fan sites featuring image galleries of the actors of the film versions or websites with encyclopaedic information on plot and characters. The Internet is evidently gaining importance in the field of readers' perception and memetics. Taking the previous arguments into account, memes could be considered a modern virtual form of folk tradition. The future will show how the phenomenon of Internet memes or fan fiction will develop and which role

they will play in the field of literature (see Wilson, *Seduced* 10; Parrish 176-177; Dailey).

5 Conclusion

Considering my primary texts within the framework of fairy-tale theory I have shown that the *Twilight Saga* is consistent with the traditional fairy tale in a clear majority of aspects. Most of the deviating aspects reflect the cultural and social changes of our time, which qualify the text as *modern* fairy tale and increase the potential of identification for today's readers. As far as the place of the *Twilight* series in the fairy-tale genre is concerned the study has revealed that the series neither is a simple adaptation of classics, nor does it belong to the canon of innovative tales breaking with tradition, nor can it be assigned to the typical Disney genre, mainly due to the thematisation of sex, the serious nature of the narrative and the omission of musical elements. As Meyer's series features striking similarities in structure, as well as addresses contemporary issues and still conveys conservative ideas, it is to be placed somewhere between the three fairy-tale types outlined by Zipes.

As most people associate the fairy tale only with its origins of the past my aim was to bring focus on its contemporary aspect. Like the majority of other genres I have outlined that also the fairy tale is vivid and in a state of flux. Given the extremely high popularity and memetic quality of Meyer's *Twilight Saga* it seems to have considerable potential to serve as a prototype or pattern for following works. However, whether succeeding texts will provide as strong memetic power as Meyer's novels remains to be seen.

As the framework of this thesis is limited there are still aspects I did not have the opportunity to consider in more detail. For instance, further insight into the modern fairy tale could be gained by extending the study by adding further primary texts for analysis. Through identifying further examples of modern fairy tales and drawing a comparison between these different texts contemporary tendencies of the genre could be documented.

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Illustrations

I have drawn figures 1 and 2 myself. The information was gained by searching all parts of the *Twilight* series for the required keywords. For this purpose, I used the Kindle versions of Meyer's novels and collected the needed data by means of the search function of the Kindle app.

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8 German Abstract

In der vorliegenden Diplomarbeit geht es darum herauszufinden ob Meyer's *Twilight*-Buchreihe den Vorstellungen eines modernen Märchens entspricht. Dafür war es nötig, zuallererst den komplexen Begriff des Märchens zu definieren und die einflussreichsten Theorien von Vladimir Propp, Max Lüthi, Bengt Holbek, Bruno Bettelheim und Jack Zipes vorzustellen.

Das nächste Kapitel dient als theoretische Grundlage der Arbeit. In diesem Abschnitt werden die *Twilight*-Romane mit dem traditionellen Märchen sowohl auf dem Story Level als auch auf dem Discourse Level verglichen. Die erste Ebene beinhaltet inhaltliche Aspekte wie Plot und Reihenfolge von Handlungsabläufen, räumliche und zeitliche Dimension, sowie Auswahl der Charaktere und ihre Funktionen und den magischen Aspekt. Auf der zweiten Ebene liegt der Fokus auf dem Text und wie er im sozialen Kontext verwendet wird. In dieser Arbeit stehen vor allem die Aspekte Stil und Symbolik im Vordergrund. Folgende Fragen gilt es in diesem Zusammenhang zu beantworten: Was sind die Parallelen zwischen der *Twilight Saga* und dem traditionellen Märchen, welche eine Positionierung von Meyer's Romanen im Märchengenre rechtfertigen und wo gibt es wesentliche Abweichungen?

Die Ergebnisse des ersten Teils dienen als theoretische Basis und Ausgangspunkt für den analytischen zweiten Teil, der die Kernthematik dieser Arbeit darstellt. In diesem Abschnitt wird versucht, die im ersten Part herausgearbeiteten strukturell vom klassischen Märchen abweichenden Elemente zu analysieren und zu erklären. Während der erste Teil auf Kenntnissen der Literaturtheorie basiert, werden die Romane im zweiten Teil vor allem im Rahmen der Cultural Studies beleuchtet und es soll ergründet werden, ob die Abweichungen Informationen darüber liefern können welche Bedeutung das Märchen für Menschen im einundzwanzigsten Jahrhundert hat.

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