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TEAM EDWARD OR TEAM JACOB? THE PORTRAYAL OF TWO VERSIONS OF THE "IDEAL" MALE ROMANTIC PARTNER IN THE *TWILIGHT* FILM SERIES

by

PAOLA BEDOYA

Under the Direction of Holley Wilkin Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The popularity of the *Twilight* saga, enhanced by the film adaptations of the books, sparked a series of interesting reactions of fans. One was the creation of "Team Edward" and "Team Jacob," in which fans aligned with one or the other character and argue about which one of them could be a better romantic partner. This study explores the messages the movies are sending to young girls around the world about what are the traits of the "ideal" male romantic partner as portrayed through the characters of Edward and Jacob. A textual analysis of the first three movie adaptations of the saga, *Twilight* (2008), *New Moon* (2009), and *Eclipse* (2010) was conducted. Based in social cognitive theory and using a feminist critical approach, I argue that these messages might be teaching young girls lessons about relationships that are up to certain degree dangerous, some of them perpetuating patriarchy.

INDEX WORDS: *Twilight,* Social cognitive theory, Feminism, Post-feminism, Romance, Chick flicks, Vampire, Werewolf, Patriarchy, Masculinity.

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PAOLA BEDOYA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2011

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December 2011

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family: my parents, who have supported my education and continue supporting all decisions in my life. Thank you for always believing in me, I don't know what I would do without you. My husband and daughter, for understanding me, and giving me strength to continue. You are both my inspiration and the loves of my life. My brothers for being an example in my life and always giving me advice. You are my guardian angels. And Khan my very own wolf.

And to my friend Ella, a member of Team Edward, who inspired me to write this thesis. Thank you for making me laugh everyday and for introducing me to the world of *Twilight.*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Stephenie Meyer released the book *Twilight* in 2005. It is the story of Isabella Swan, also known as Bella, a human teenage girl who falls unconditionally in love with Edward, an attractive and young vampire. A phenomenon was born; an impressive event in pop culture with such success that not even its creator could foresee the extent to which it would capture the attention of fans and media around the world. *Twilight* was the first book in a series that also includes *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007), and *Breaking Dawn* (2008), and also two spin-off stories, the novella *The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner* (2010) and the unpublished manuscript *Midnight Sun*, which tells Bella's and Edward's love story from Edward's perspective, rather than Bella's as is done in *Twilight.* The vampire-based romance novel series, which is targeted to young adults, had sold as of November 2009 "more than 85 million copies worldwide and has been translated into 37 languages" (Click et al., 2010, p. 3). The four books of the saga have made *The New York Times* best-seller list, and three books have been adapted to film by Summit Entertainment: *Twilight* (2008), *New Moon* (2009), and *Eclipse* (2010). The film adaptation of the fourth installment, *Breaking Dawn,* is projected to be released in two parts in 2011 and 2012 respectively.

The movie *Twilight* generated $351,449,475 dollars in the Worldwide Box-Office and currently ranks at number 165 on the all-time Worldwide Box Office.[1] A year later, the sequel *New Moon* was released and generated $678,627,752 dollars, ranking number 40 on the same list. Setting the biggest midnight opening record in the United States at

[1] http://www.imdb.com/boxoffice/alltimegross?region=world-wide Retrieved September 10th, 2010

the time, *Eclipse* was released on June 30, 2010. This movie ranks number 42 on the all-time Worldwide Box Office list with $678,627,752 dollars in gross revenue.[2]

The popularity of the *Twilight* series increased even more after the first movie release, leading many to question the influence that the narrative, with a prime focus on teenage romance, might have on its audience.[3] If there is a possibility that the relationship between Bella and Edward, (or even the one between Bella and Jacob, her best friend and potential love interest) is teaching young girls about love, then it is important to examine what messages the *Twilight* series are sending about romantic relationships through its three main characters. More specifically, this thesis explores the traits of the "ideal" male romantic partner as portrayed through the characters of Edward and Jacob in the first three *Twilight* films.[4]

Even though the books were already successful, it was undoubtedly the growing popularity of the film adaptations and its actors that enhanced the fervor in which fans aligned with "Team Jacob" or "Team Edward." The audience created a rivalry over which of the two characters (and the two actors) was the best ideal romantic partner for Bella (or as I suggest, for themselves). To understand how the phenomenon grew, and how the "Team Edward" versus "Team Jacob" antagonism developed, it's important to familiarize with the story that has captivated millions.

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[2] http://www.imdb.com/boxoffice/alltimegross?region=world-wide Retrieved September 10th, 2010

[3] The books and the movies are considered as Young Adult Fiction work, which means its target audience should be people between 14 and 21; in this particular case they are predominantly females.

[4] I am leaving the fourth installment *Breaking Dawn* out of the analysis since its release is projected for November 2011.

A closer look at *Twilight*

In the summer of 2003, Stephanie Meyer, a Mormon stay-at-home mother in Arizona who was married with three children under five years old, spent three months writing a novel based on a dream. In her dream, as she has described in several interviews, a young girl was in the middle of a forest talking to a young male vampire. This image prompted her to write *Twilight*. After the struggle to find a publisher, *Twilight* debuted at #5 on *The New York Times* bestseller list within weeks of its release in 2005.

Twilight is the story of Isabella Swan, better known as Bella, a young woman who decides to move from Phoenix, Arizona, to live with her father in the cloudy and quiet town of Forks, Washington. Bella meets Edward Cullen, who is young, rich, extremely handsome, well-spoken, intelligent, and mysterious. After Edward saves her life using super-human strength and speed, Bella discovers a secret: he is a vampire. Bella confronts Edward and tells him that instead of feeling fear about what he is, she is beginning to fall in love with him. Edward tells Bella about how his life has been so far as a vampire. Meyer has described the moment of Bella's confrontation as the dream that inspired her to write the novel. This part of the movie is what has popularly been called "The Forest Scene" as it takes place in the middle of a gloomy Forks' forest. Soon both embark on a passionate and dramatic journey, trying to survive and defend their forbidden relationship of human and vampire.

Twilight has been reported to have sold more than 85 million copies worldwide and has been translated into 37 languages.[5] Summit Entertainment released the *Twilight* movie in the United States on November 21, 2008. Directed by Catherine Hardwicke,

[5] http://articles.latimes.com/2008/nov/21/entertainment/et-twilight21 Retrieved September 10th, 2010.

starring Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattison in the roles of leading characters Isabella Swan and Edward Cullen, and adapted to screenplay by Melissa Rosenberg.

A year later they released *New Moon*, which continues the story of Bella, who is suffering because Edward left; he and his family moved because they believed that their presence in Forks was endangering Bella's life. However, other dangers approached. Bella's deep depression leads her to develop a close relationship to Jacob Black, who is played in the movies by the young star Taylor Lautner. However, this new man in her life holds a secret as well: he is a werewolf. In the meantime, in a Romeo-and-Juliet-like misunderstanding, Edward believes Bella is dead, and tries to get himself killed by means of the only vampire coven able to do such a task: the Volturi. However, Bella, with the help of Edward's sister Alice, portrayed by Ashley Greene, manages to save him. The couple is reunited but Bella's future is in jeopardy, since the Volturi order the conversion of Bella into a vampire in order to spare her life. This is because Bella knows of the existence of the vampires, the most important secret to be kept, and they feel their secret is best protected if she is one of them.

With the release of the film adaptation of *New Moon,* which was directed by Chris Weitz with Melissa Rosenberg returning as the screenwriter, it was clear that a new pop culture phenomenon was born not only because of its sales at the box office, but also because of the reactions and responses of fans around the world. The three protagonists of the movie became the center of media attention, and the attractive love-triangle plot they portrayed started a frenzy of fans choosing a team: "Team Edward" or "Team Jacob," with each actor acquiring sex symbol status. A rumor about the possible romance of the two main actors, Stewart and Pattinson, began to fill the tabloids, a rumor that still

circulates to this day. Not only did the *Twilight* series generate millions of dollars, but also they started fan frenzy with teenagers dressed like the characters and fan clubs around the globe, a phenomenon comparable to the success of J.K. Rowling´s *Harry Potter*. Comparisons between the two stories and authors arose at the same time as criticism about *Twilight*, with some saying that *Twilight'*s narrative was not strong and others even criticizing Meyer's writing skills. Nevertheless, all of these elements helped the popularity of the saga, resulting in the release of a third movie with similar success in 2010.

Setting a record for the biggest midnight opening in the United States at the time[6], *Eclipse*, directed by David Slade and with Melissa Rosenberg returning as screenwriter, was released on June 30, 2010. After Bella and Edward are reunited, *Eclipse* continues the story of their forbidden romance, which is now menaced by Victoria, a vampire who is obsessed with killing Bella. Victoria is a character who also appears in the two previous movies portrayed by Rachelle Lefevre, but due to complications with Lefevre's contract negotiation is portrayed in *Eclipse* by Bryce Dallas Howard. Jacob Black reappears to declare his love for Bella, urging her to choose between him and Edward. She affirms her love for Edward and rejects Jacob's advances, but they remain close friends, which drives Edward to jealousy. Meanwhile, Edward's sister Alice has visions that reveal Victoria's plan to kill Bella: Victoria has created a newborn vampire army in order to persecute and execute Edward's love partner. To protect Bella and the people in the town Forks, the vampires and werewolves decide to end their years of rivalry and form a pact to fight together against the army and to kill Victoria. Tensions arise as Bella

[6] The record remained until the release of the last of the *Harry Potter* movies in the summer of 2011.

and Edward get engaged, and Jacob, hurt by the news, decides to put his own life in danger. In order to stop him, Bella kisses him, but he continues on his way to fight Victoria's army. Victoria and her army are defeated, but Jacob is seriously injured. Meanwhile, the Volturi, this time commanded by Jane, who is portrayed in the film by Dakota Fanning, discover that Bella has not become a vampire and declare an ultimatum: either she converts or dies. At the end, Edward and Bella decide to get married and that once the wedding is done, she will become a vampire.

Just days before *Eclipse's* opening, author Stephenie Meyer released *The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner* (2010), a novella that tells the story of Bree, a newborn vampire who discovers a dangerous relationship between the Volturi and Victoria, the biggest enemy of Bella thus of the Cullen clan. The character was introduced in the book *Eclipse,* appearing to be largely irrelevant. Nevertheless, the new book, with Bree as a narrator[7], shows that in fact she plays an important role, as the secrets that she discovers are extremely relevant for the Cullen clan and for Bella's future. Part of this story was presented in the movie *Eclipse.*

Immediately, media started to speculate about who would be the director of the fourth movie and report about some problems with the cast. Summit Entertainment has announced that the fourth book *Breaking Dawn* (2008) will be adapted into two films, with the first part to be released in November 2011, with Melissa Rosenberg as screen writer and with Bill Condon directing both films. The cast will also remain the same. Since the announcement, much has been written about two crucial points of the story to

[7] Bella's character is the narrator in four of the *Twilight* saga books, *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse*, and *Breaking Dawn*, with the exception of a series of chapters in *Breaking Dawn* that are narrated by Jacob Black's character. There is an unpublished book that Meyer released online, arguing that a partial draft was illegally posted on the Internet. For this reason Meyer made a few changes and decided to post online her book *Midnight Sun*, which is basically the same story of *Eclipse* but narrated by Edward Cullen's character.

be shown in the movie: Bella's first sexual experience with now husband Edward Cullen, and the birth of their daughter Renesmee, a scene which has been criticized for its graphic description in the book and for many expecting this to be one of the most disturbing parts of *Breaking Dawn*.

As I have previously mentioned, one of the strongest reactions of fans to the narrative that was enhanced by the popularity of the movies and its actors, has been the creation of two teams among them: "Team Edward" and "Team Jacob," in which the audience seeks to determine or influence Bella's decision to choose one or the other character to be her love interest. Fans debate which the actors—Pattinson or Lautner—is more attractive, taking the argument outside the fantasy to the real world. This interesting reaction suggests that the messages of *Twilight* may be influencing woman's perception of the ideal male romantic partner. *Twilight* is unique as it intersects several different genres of film—romance/chick flicks, vampires, and werewolf films, which may explain why millions are attracted to it. Focusing the analysis on the movies, the *Twilight* saga not only can be categorized as romance (following the storyline patterns of a traditional chick flick) but also, has elements of the vampire and werewolves films, with non-traditional portrayals of these particular mythical creatures.

The genres in the *Twilight* films

The *Twilight* saga can be categorized into three major films genres: the romantic chick flick, the vampire film, and the werewolf film. However, not only do the movies represent and mix different genres, but they also have portrayals that to certain extent, differ from the traditional representations of characters in these genres. For example, they

use the traditional "damsel in distress" of romance chick flick movies to initiate the encounter between Bella and Edward, but do not use the usual portrayal of the "caped, coffin-sleeper, and dark-evil vampire" and the "predator, killer, scary-looking werewolf". These unique representations may be one of the reasons to explain the success of the story.

The genre of romance has been successful in literature and other media forms such as film, radio and television. However, it has undergone transformations, and the narratives have taken on new characteristics adopting the social and cultural norms of each period. Today, pop culture offers a variety of possibilities to enjoy romance, with the chick flick[8] being one of the most accepted among consumers, generating million of dollars at the box office. *Twilight* follows the traditional romance storyline, with the heroine being a "damsel in distress" that needs to be rescued. However, in the case of *Twilight* the heroine is more like an ordinary girl than a woman with extraordinary beauty and characteristics (at least not until she becomes a vampire) as traditionally represented in the chick flick (Hollinger, 2008). This aspect in particular is interesting because Bella's original simplicity can be one of the main reasons why ordinary girls might identify with her. What makes her character different is the fact that Bella is not dealing with the issues that an ordinary girl of her age would, as so far represented in chick flicks featuring young girls. Usually, in the plots of the movies featuring "high school" or "college" ordinary girls, the heroine deals with issues like popularity, adolescence

[8] In the 1980s "chick culture" introduced the term "chick flick" to describe the proliferation of movies targeting female audiences (Thompson, 2007). Ferris and Young (2007) noted that to their knowledge the term "Chick Culture" was used for the first time by Rochelle Mabry (2005), in her essay "About a Girl: Female Subjectivity and Sexuality in Contemporary Chick Culture." The chick flick is "a group of mostly American and British popular culture media forms focused primarily on twenty to thirtysomething middle-class women. Along with chick flicks, the most prominent chick cultural forms are chick lit and chick TV programming" (Ferriss & Young, 2007, p. 1).

rebellion, beauty, sexual initiation, and bullying, just to name a few (e.g., in *Never Been Kissed* (1999), *Mean Girls* (2004), *Legally Blonde* (2001)). Even though Bella is also dealing with these issues to some extent, the plot focuses on subjects such as marriage and motherhood, and a love story that resembles a more adult-like relationship.

It is also important to understand that *Twilight* is in some ways "different" than other chick flicks, since it has incorporated other genres into its narrative. The vampire genre was until now considered separate from romance. Vampires have been analyzed in both literature and film and the traditional characteristics of this genre are typically far from romantic. The combination of elements from different genres has not been entirely explored and considered in analyses on romance films targeted to women, which have been previously studied primarily for their role in women's construction of identity. This does not mean that vampire narratives have not included romantic scenarios and themes. However, *Twilight* differs from traditional vampire movies because it is primarily a love story, in which romance becomes the central theme and this is particularly different in the more traditional human-vampire interactions narratives.

Ames (2010) distinguishes two types of vampire narratives: "mainstream vampire narratives (intended to be read by a wide, and predominantly adult, readership), such as *Dracula* and *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976-2003), and young adult vampire narratives (marketed directly to a more narrow, usually female, teen demographic), such as *The Vampire Diaries* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003)" (p. 39). *Twilight* would be categorized in the second category, since the story is targeted to young adults, even though its popularity managed to reach other audiences. What is important is how the

mythical character has been depicted and how *Twilight* challenges the traditional vampire portrayals.

Vampires have been depicted in several forms of art, with Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) being "the most iconic of vampires" (Butler, 2010, p. 178) and "the most influential of all vampire narratives" (Gelder, 1994, p. 1). Scholars such as Butler (2010) agree that the depictions of this character in literature, films and visual arts have changed through time. Nevertheless, there are characteristics that are archetypical. Butler (2010) suggests that there are attributes that give consistency to the character. According to Butler (2010), the vampire is a being that is neither dead nor alive, and this feature allows the character to be against the rules of God, men, religion and science. Vampire's distribution of energy depends on blood consumption. He explains, "Blood flows along the closed pathways of the body, it represents strength and life. When violence interrupts its course, blood changes aspect and becomes a sign of weakness and death" (p. 11). He also indicates that vampires have been associated with money, "for wealth proverbially assures health" (p. 11). Other characteristics he describes are its capacity to transform some of the victims into vampires, the ability to defy space and time, the thirst for inflicting terror, and the fact that the existence of a single vampire represents a menace to humanity since it means that there are others like him (or her). Skal (2004) says that most of us can recite the characteristics of the vampire without knowledge on its origins "how it sleeps by day, rising from its coffin-bed at dusk to feed on the blood of the living; its ability to take the form of a bat, a wolf, or mist; how it can be destroyed by a stake driven through its heart, and effectively repelled by garlic, wolfbane, the crucifix, or the power of the Eucharist" (p. 4). He explains that the reason why we become familiar with such

characteristics is because we have received the information culturally, reflecting a sort of "universal knowledge" (p. 4).

The representation of the vampire in *Twilight* challenges a lot of these characteristics. For example, as is explained in both the movies and the film, Edward and his family do consume blood, however they consider themselves as a sort of "vegetarian" vampire, since they have chosen to drink animal blood only and to not harm any human being. They also control their emotions with auto control practices and differ from other vampires as they act in more civilized ways. This characteristic helps them to cohabitate with humans without sparking any suspicion of their true nature; that is of course until Bella gets involved with Edward. While the *Twilight* vampires look pale, they are in no danger from the sunlight, but rather their skin sparkles like diamonds. They also do not sleep in coffins or make any reference to religious symbols, and getting killed by a stake or being repelled by garlic is also out of question. What are relevant from the traditional vampire storyline are the specific powers that some vampires possess. For example, Edward is a mind reader, and Alice can see the future. Also, vampires in *Twilight* are characterized by their speed and supernatural strength. There is a division between "good" vampires and "bad" vampires, with the former referring to those who do not intend harm for the humankind by choice, and the latter represented by vampires who follow more traditional animal instincts and have more similarities with the conventional depictions of vampires, as they inflict fear and do consume human blood.

The vampire representation in *Twilight* transforms the traditional vampire from a being that inflicts terror into a charming likable character, close to the accepted and traditional lead male romantic characters of the chick flick. Through the story, Edward is

not only portrayed as refined, educated, wealthy and charming but also has physical characteristics that are appealing, even being the most popular and attractive boy at school. His character is not intended to be feared; he is intended to be loved. Also, he doesn't represent a threat to Bella's life. Instead his sole purpose is to protect and rescue her from other dangers, a characteristic that is traditional of the romance novels.

Some traditional vampire narratives include other mythical creatures with the werewolf being the most predominant. In other instances, the werewolf films are considered a separate genre. The origins of the werewolf are attributed to Greek mythology and in a similar way to the vampire, the werewolf or lycanthrope is linked to evil forces or even a servant of Satan (Brayton, 2006). According to Summers (1933) the werewolf is "a human being, man, woman or child (more often the first), who either voluntarily or involuntarily changes or is metamorphosed into the apparent shape of a wolf, and who is then possessed of all the characteristics, the foul appetites, ferocity, cunning, the brute strength, and swiftness of that animal" (p. 2). Summers (1933) explains that the transformation is usually temporal and in some instances permanent, and it can happen as a desire or as an effect of certain circumstances, rites or ceremonies, usually under the influence of the full moon. At the same time "werewolfery is hereditary or acquired; a horrible pleasure born of the thirst to quaff warm human blood, or an ensorcelling punishment and revenge of the dark Ephesian art" (Summers, 1933, p. 2). Other physical characteristics are "shaggy covering of fur, glowing eyes, long canine teeth, and razor shape claws" (Frost, 2003, p.6).

Twilight reinforces some of the prototypical werewolf characteristics through Jacob and his Quileute tribe. But as is done with the vampire characters, *Twilight's*

werewolf images challenges the traditional depictions of this type of character. For example, the full moon has little effect on the transformation from human to wolf, but rather emotions drive the change. Also, the relation of the werewolf creature and a native-American tribe is new, linking myth with history. In *Twilight* werewolves serve as a sort of protector clan that does not intend any harm to humankind. Jacob is part of the Quileute tribe, settled in Forks Washington. As it is narrated in the book *Eclipse* (2007) the legend suggests that Quileute warriors were the first humans to have the ability to transform into wolves in order to protect the reservation from different threats. With time, vampires were one of those threats, but thanks to a pact made by Jacob's and Edward's ancestors they found a way to cohabitate but still remained as enemies. Jacob's pack was established to protect the reservation from a new vampire threat. Even though the Quileutes tribe member truly exist and live in the region, the legend is fiction.

Similar to Edward, Jacob Black is a likable character that does not resemble the traditional predator characteristics of the werewolf, but rather represents another potential love interest for the main character. His physical attributes are more exalted than Edward's. What Jacob resembles is the strength and physical traditional male features typical in romance novels that the hero has to have in order to be accepted and loved (Radway, 1984; Modleski, 2008). He also wants to protect Bella from external dangers and shows an unconditional support and admiration for Bella. Finally one important characteristic that both characters, Edward and Jacob, share and that separates them from other depictions of vampires and werewolves is that even though they are the main characters, they are clearly not intended to be feared, not by Bella or any other human, not even the audience. The fear factor is conducted through antagonist characters and

might enhance the appealing charm of Edward and Jacob as protagonists of a narrative that is ultimately a love story.

It is not only the mix of genres that are relevant aspects to understand the impact and uniqueness of the *Twilight* phenomena. Other characteristics brought by the film adaptations, can explain why the story was transformed from a best seller into a pop cultural trend, making *Twilight* an interesting subject of analysis with a diverse of elements worth to keep exploring.

The popularity of *Twilight*, from the books to the big screen

Two important factors have contributed to the saga's impact: *Twilight*'s fan base is predominantly female (Click et al., 2010; Behm-Morawitz et al., 2010; Parrish, 2010) and the books have been adapted to film (Behm-Morawitz et al., 2010; Aubrey et al., 2010). Both of these factors have attracted the attention of scholars eager to explore the *Twilight* phenomenon. "The impact and popularity of the *Twilight* franchise invites, and perhaps even demands, the attention of feminist scholarship on media and popular culture. In particular, its association with girls and women, as well as its resulting feminized cultural status, places it within the history of those feminized texts and experiences that evoke both passionate loyalty and intense derision" (Levine, 2010, p. 281).

Aubrey et al. (2010) explored how Summit Entertainment used the "teen idol machine" formula to create a specific niche for the *Twilight* movies, by linking the narrative with young audience's obsession with celebrities. "*Twilight* reflects this obsession through its basic love story, and Summit exploits it to encourage fans to re-

articulate it in order to deepen and prolong their connection to the franchise" (Aubrey et al., 2010, p. 238). Summit took an already popular narrative and put a familiar face to its characters. Through a strong and fast marketing campaign, the company managed to turn the three main actors of the movies into big celebrities, and soon audiences not only were identifying with them but were also bombarded with *Twilight* merchandise such as t-shirts, memorabilia, souvenirs etc. enhancing fandom and audience attachment to the characters and the story.

According to Summers (2010), online communities around *Twilight* also enhanced the popularity of the story, as *Twilight* fans have taken advantage of the current persuasive and fast viral marketing phenomenon. *Twilight* fans not only have the novel to enjoy but also, an entire culture developed surrounding the film adaptations, a culture that is discussed and shared in blogs, forums, websites, and even in scholarly research. Thus the audience has a great opportunity to participate in the creation of this culture in ways that consumers of previous chick flicks did not. Levine (2010) defines this as participatory environment which "adds a new dimension to the questions of meaning making, identification, and fantasy" for consumers of popular media. Jenkins (2006) adds another term to explain this phenomenon. He says that this new form of interaction can be known as "transmedia storytelling", and it has the ability to enrich the textual experience by creating other texts around the narratives, for example character guides, dictionaries, illustration books, family trees and so on.

Due to the popularity of the books and the subsequent film adaptations, it's normal to think that *Twilight* might be producing an effect in its audience; i.e., the audience might be learning from its messages. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the

representations of masculinity as portrayed by the characters of Edward and Jacob and how they each interact with Bella in the *Twilight* films. Specifically, I'm interested in finding what these characters might be teaching young girls about what is an "ideal" romantic partner. The analysis was conducted under the lens of two perspectives: Social Cognitive Theory and Feminist discourse, with textual analysis being the methodology. By comparing the qualities that Edward and Jacob present (and therefore the qualities deemed important by the women aligning with "Team Edward" and "Team Jacob"), I expect to have a better idea of what females may look for in a potential male romantic partner.

The next chapter describes the theoretical framework guiding this thesis, including the social influence of media and specifically, social cognitive theory. It also includes feminism background in order to explain further how feminists have analyzed texts targeting women, such as romance novels, films, and particularly chick flicks. It concludes with a scholarly exploration of the analyses made on *Twilight*.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand how the *Twilight* movies might be teaching young girls messages about romantic relationships, more specifically about the ideal romantic characteristics males should have, it is important to understand where the idea that media influence people's attitudes and behavior comes from. It is also important to look at how feminist scholars have explored the ways in which media texts such as romance novels, films and chick flicks, have influenced women's construction of identity, knowledge and even behavior. The following literature review includes the explanation of social cognitive theory, followed by a background description of feminism and an exploration of how feminists have analyzed romance novels, films targeted to women, and more specifically chick flicks. Subsequently, there is an examination of the scholarly research conducted to date about *Twilight* followed by the specific research questions of the present study.

Social influence of media: social cognitive theory

Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory explains how people learn through observation of the world around them, which includes mediated images. Human beings processes of adaptation and change are rooted in social systems, in which people can be agents of influence "by selecting and altering their social environment" (Bandura, 2004, 76). The process of personal agency, Bandura explains, works within a series of sociostructural influences that represent the "rules, resources, and social sanctions designed to organize, guide, and regulate human affairs" (Bandura, 2004, p. 76). Since

those social systems are created and managed by human activity, the relation between personal agency and social structures is one of interdependency. This is how symbolic communication provided by mass media (a social system) can encourage personal and social changes.

According to Bandura (2004) there are two pathways in which media systems may encourage changes. First, a direct pathway in which "communication media promote changes by informing, enabling, motivating, and guiding audience individuals" (Bandura, 2004, p. 76). And a socially mediated pathway in which "media influences are used to link participants to social networks and community settings" (Bandura, 2004, p. 76), which offer guidance, incentives and social support that help motivate specific behavioral changes. Bandura (2004) suggests that the second pathway has the strongest impact.

There are two basic models of learning: 1) through the direct experience of being rewarded or punished for actions, and 2) through the power of social modeling, a process of learning from the successes and mistakes of others (Bandura, 2004). It is this second type of learning that is said to happen through media. People observe mediated characters either receiving awards or being punished for their actions and decide whether they want to model (or avoid) those behaviors in their own lives. Mass mediated messages can simultaneously reach a large number of people dispersed around the world, which means that the messages and behaviors that are modeled can foster a "globally distributed consciousness" (Bandura, 2004, p. 78).

The learning process may or not produce a change in the behavior. Two concepts are important to understand when people will learn through watching others and change behaviors. First is self-efficacy, which is defined as "one's beliefs in his or her ability to

carry out a certain action" (Sood, Menard, & Witte, 2004, p. 125), or "the degree to which an individual believes that he/she can control future situations" (Sabido, 2004, p. 68). People will only change behaviors if they have adequate feelings of self-efficacy, i.e., that they are capable of performing the behavior. Bandura (2004) says that self-efficacy can be developed in four ways: "1) through mastery experiences, 2) social modeling, 3) social persuasion, and 4) construal of physical and emotional states" (Bandura, 2004, p. 79). Bandura (2004) says that the strongest way of establishing efficacy is through mastery experiences, with successes building a strong sense of efficacy, and failures undermining it. Social modeling is a second way to establish efficacy. Bandura (2004) explains "Models are a source of inspiration, competencies, and motivation. Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs in their own abilities. The failures of others can instill self-doubts about one's own ability to master similar challenges" (p. 79). A third mode of influence is social persuasion, which works with others instigating boosts in efficacy to increase chances of success, that is the case of pep talks. The fourth way—construal of physical and emotional states—can be explained as people relying on their physical and emotional states in order to judge the amount of efficacy, in which indicators of strength and good mood represent high efficacy and elements of vulnerability and bad moods create a low self-efficacy. Modifying interpretations of physical and emotional states can lead to a change in efficacy. However, Bandura (2004) explains that it's important to develop guidance through all of them in order for media to produce changes. Without guidance, he says, the effects can be smaller or unattainable.

The second element that determines whether one learns from observing others is motivation. Bandura explains, "the motivational function operates through the depicted benefits and detriments of modeled courses of action" (Bandura, 2004, p. 78). In this way, there are positive or negative motivators. Seeing others gain desired outcomes is a positive motivation and therefore may encourage adoption of a behavior, whereas if what it is observed has negative consequences, people are less likely to adopt a behavior. Bandura (2004), explains that there are "several motivators that provide support for adopting new forms of behavior" (p. 78), saying that media representations inflict a great influence because people's construction of reality is more dependent of what they hear, see, and read than based on direct experiences.

Bandura's theory can be used to explain how people learn through media. People are more likely to model behaviors when they identify—i.e., find similarities to the character and/or desires to be like them—with a character. Sometimes this identification is so high that creates a parasocial interaction, which is when the viewer perceives a real relationship with the on-screen character (Signal & Rogers, 1999) surpassing the fantasy to the real life, as if they were face-to-face.

For example, the Peruvian telenovela *Simplemente María* (1969) created unexpected effects in its audience in part due to the relationships that viewers established with the fictional characters. The story narrates the life of María, a young rural-urban migrant that moves to a big city looking for a better life. She eventually transforms from a rural poor girl into a great fashion designer gaining not only money, but also respect. The telenovela ends when María marries Esteban the lead male, after 20 years of courtship and struggles. *Simplemente María* was broadcasted for 21 months and received

high ratings, but the biggest legacy of this particular story was the effects that it produced in the audience. According to Singhal and Rogers (1999), the relationship that the audience established with the two main characters was so strong that people perceived them as if they were real. During the period when the series was broadcast, sales of the Singer sewing machines (the same María used) increased and many household maids in Lima followed in Maria's path and enrolled in literacy classes (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). People's relationship with *Twilight* characters, as evidenced through the Team Edward and Team Jacob alliances, suggests that a similar parasocial interaction may exist and therefore, the film's audience may be learning through the storyline like it happened with *Simplemente María.*

Several scholars suggest that young girls learn social skills from media forms, and more specifically, the celebrities and characters they watch and follow. "Media heroines are increasingly filling socializing and role-modeling functions previously provided by families, religious institutions, and schools" (Hylmo, 2006, p. 169). Media influence the ways in which audiences—starting at a very young age—perceive gender roles and "shape our views of what's normal and right in relationships between women and men" (Wood, 2009, p. 282). Behm-Morawitz et al. (2010) notes that studies examining the relationships between young people's media use and expectations about romantic relationships have found "that media exposure relates to both overly optimistic and pessimistic notions about romantic relationships, depending on the nature of the portrayal" (p. 141).

Feminist scholars criticize the media based upon the assumption that the images not only influence individual behaviors—as suggested by social cognitive theory—but

also because they believe media influences societal perceptions of femininity, masculinity and gender. To more clearly understand how scholars have analyzed and related media with gendered messages, it is first necessary to give a brief background on feminism and feminist scholarship.

Feminism background

Feminism means different things for different people, and in that way it is difficult to define the term completely (Wood, 2009). For that reason, it is often misunderstood. Wood (2009) explains that the word was first used in France in the late 1800s, combining two words*: femme* (woman) and the suffix *ism* (political position). In this sense feminism would mean, "a political position about women" (Wood, 2009, p. 3). However, that definition does not entail all what the movement has achieved and meant over the years. Wood says that her definition of feminism is "an active commitment to equality and respect for all forms of life" (Wood, 2009, p. 4) adding that this means being against oppression, "be it the oppression of women, men, people with disabilities, specific sexual identities, particular race-ethnicities, elderly people, children, animals, or our planet" (Wood, 2009, p. 4). She also explains that feminism is a rhetorical movement, understanding rhetorical movements as "collective, persuasive efforts to challenge and change existing attitudes, laws, and policies" (Wood, 2009, p. 66).

The women's movement developed in three waves (first wave, second wave, and third wave), each influenced by how feminists stood on two different ideologies. One ideology, liberal feminism, embraces the idea that women and men are equal in most all the spheres and for that reason, rights, roles, and opportunities should be equal. A second

ideology is cultural feminism; this position holds the idea that women and men an in fact different, so their rights, roles, and opportunities should remain different (Wood, 2009). Even though these are conflicting ideologies, they have led the movement to use different strategies and search for different goals through time.

The first wave (1840-1925) included followers of both conflicting ideologies, but this was not an impediment to accomplish change in the status and rights of women in the United States (Wood, 2009); in particular, women's right to vote was achieved in August 1920. However, the movement's membership and interests were "almost exclusively white" (Wood, 2006, p. 67). During this time, followers of the cultural side created what was called the *cult of domesticity*, focusing on "good homes, families, and communities" (Wood, 2009, p. 69). Their efforts led to prohibition, which is a ban on the consumption of alcohol, and the creation of child labor laws (Wood, 2009).

In the 1960s a second wave started to develop. This period ended in approximately 1995, however, there are still feminists who consider themselves as part of the second wave. The period was characterized for what is called radical feminism and used revolutionary thinking and policies, plus high-profile public events, to grab attention and fight against women's oppression (Wood, 2009). The movement started addressing inequalities in different spheres such as workplace, family, and even in relationships with men. Toward the end of the 1960s groups of women in the US and Britain were involved in student politics and shared a goal to overthrow patriarchy, which is "a system of male domination" (Hollows, 2000, p.5). Another important characteristic of this period is a greater participation of followers of liberal feminism, which included diverse groups of

women extending the movement to other parts of the world, including different ethnicities and groups, sexualities, ages, and classes (Wood, 2009, p. 79).

In the 1980s there was a backlash against the women's movement as popular culture helped to promote a false image of womanhood and women's movement (Faludi, 1992). Faludi (1992) explains that the media portrayed women fighting for their rights as miserable and unhappy in the attempt, which contributed to a backlash and the rejection of feminist ideals. Scholars such as Faludi (1992) and Walters (1995), who considered that the backlash was the responsible for the failure of feminism to engage female students in the movement during the decade, characterized this period as a negative outcome for the movement, even suggesting that the backlash era was indeed an anti-feminism era. Some argue that the backlash was partially responsible for the construction of stereotypes around radical feminists, which caused women to reject being labeled as "feminists" even when they agree with the ideals of the movement. For others, the period started what is called a post-feminism era, in which new forms of feminism emerged. The post-feminist movement reacted to and in some cases opposed prevailing feminist ideals, using in some cases pop culture as a tool to introduce post-feminist responses. Dow (1996) states that "shifting attitudes toward feminism do not always represent a rejection of women's liberation as much as an adjustment to it" (p. 87), and that "media have struggled to find ways to embody feminism in particular women and their lifestyles or attitudes" (p. 209).

This third wave of feminism for some represents "a more upbeat, rejuvenated and 'popular' version of feminism, both in terms of its increasingly mediated existence as part of the cultural field as well as in terms of its capacity to act as a commodity, selling

empowerment and agency for female consumers" (Genz, 2009, p. 82). Like in the case of the second wave, this period embraced (or even it is appropriate to say is embracing) women of diverse ethnicities, classes, sexual orientations, and so on. However, scholars agree that this period is less uniform than its predecessors, which makes it more difficult to define. There are some features that seem to be the common ground of the movement at this stage: a clear awareness and appreciation of the diversity of women and the differences between them; a desire to create coalitions not only among groups of women but also with men, in order to fight against different forms of oppression. This is particularly interesting, since third wave feminists consider the importance of the relationships with men to be a partnership; and the use of mass and social media as a tool for promoting strategies and ideals (Wood, 2009).

Another characteristic embraced by some third wave feminists is the "girl" or "chick" culture; this "encompasses the tabooed symbols of women's feminine enculturation - Barbie dolls, makeup, fashion magazines, high heels" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, 136) and shows them as positive elements that embrace femininity. Third wave feminists associate the word "chick" with solidarity and empowerment, while second wave feminists would more likely consider it demeaning to women. A related concept is "girl power," which is defined as "a celebration of self-belief, independence and female friendship" (Gauntlett, 2007, p. 217).

Some young members of "girlie culture" embrace an attitude that "a woman should be whatever she wants to be without labeling that view as feminist or even recognizing the term third-wave" (Dole, 2008, p. 59). Dole (2008) says, "in spite of the popularity of attitudes that have been articulated by third-wave feminists, in spite of the

recent embrace of femininity in fashion and marketing, there are still some doubts about how fully and how widely femininity is accepted as coexisting comfortably with female power" (p. 75-76).

Various waves of feminists have turned to popular culture to analyze the ways in which it may be influencing women's issues and identity. Romances are a particular interest since they are considered to be texts targeting women. In each case, the wave in which each scholar associates may influence the criticism made. The following sections on this chapter explore the different ways in which texts targeting women have been analyzed, starting from the romance novel to the chick flick.

Reading the romance: from harlequins to soap operas

Women's enjoyment of romance in novels and television soap operas has been a subject of study and debate for almost 30 years. One of the reasons why scholars have studied romance is to understand what function romantic fiction consumption plays in women's lives. For example, do the stories help fulfill certain needs or desires in their lives? The most common reason why feminist have studied romance texts, in connection with women's needs and desires, is the high degree of identification of women with the heroines of these texts.

As Bandura (2004) suggested one way in which audiences get to fulfill their needs is through identifying with the character. When the person relies in the character's features, may feel reassurance about his or her own issues, and also might learn from the experiences that the character lives, comparing the situations and also needs that both character and consumer share. Identification of the reader with the characters and the

story leads to the reader's immersion in the fantasy. Once the consumer is immersed, the identification can lead to strongest connections with the story and its characters. Radway (1984), one of the leading scholars of romantic fiction, explains that one of the reasons why women are immersed in romantic fantasies is because they "vicariously fulfill their needs for nurturance by identifying with a heroine whose principal accomplishment, if it can ever be called that, is her success at drawing the hero's attention to herself, at establishing herself as the object of his concern and recipient of his care" (p. 84). She explains how the reader experiences the need of being cared for and this is fulfilled as long as she continues the identification with the heroine, but once the story concludes, the reader returns to her real life situation.

Identification with the heroine then, is one of the most important subjects in romance research. Modleski (2008) explains that romances speak to real situations in women's lives and thus enables the reader a desire of identification with the characters. For Radway (1984) the process of identification with that heroine is complex and filled with characteristics that the reader enjoys but ultimately leads to "a promise of patriarchy" (Radway, 1984, p. 119), meaning that the stories ultimately reinforce patriarchal ideals in particular with regard to how they depict femininity and masculinity. For example, among the characteristics of the heroine are: "unusual intelligence, extraordinary fiery disposition, special abilities, early rebelliousness against parental structures, ambivalent feelings about female gender (since the heroine is usually identified with men), an impulse toward individuation and autonomy (in particular against the mother), and childlike innocence and inexperience" (Radway, 1984, p. 123-124). Radway (1984) explains that the lead female character does not need to be beautiful

but does need to possess an alluring appearance. Such beauty is related to sexuality, since the intention is that both reader and hero, find the heroine to be a sensual being and passionate, and usually she is repressed by those feelings. The hero on the other hand is characterized by an enhanced masculinity that emphasizes "emotional indifference and sexual promiscuity into expressions of love" (Radway, 1984, p. 127). Both heroine and reader tolerate the promiscuity of the male character and associate it with his lack of love. Satisfaction comes once the male character is transformed and promises sexual fidelity associated with true love.

However, the most important characteristic that refers to the promise of patriarchy has to do with the expectations of marriage of the heroine-- that is to find "the one," her savior, a protector that helps her in life and that she cannot live without. Many scholars associate this character with "the prince charming" of the fairy tales. He has to be smart, brilliant, and has to have status and power. Both Radway (1984) and Modleski (2008) identify certain attributes that romance novels gives to masculinity. The hero is physically strong, dominant, and handsome; he is usually older than the heroine by more than 10 years; he is smart but cynical, sometimes even hostile. Nevertheless, as the story progresses, the hero gets transformed into a more emotional being that at the end declares his love to the heroine. Radway (1984) suggests that women get immersed in these fantasies to vicariously feel how it is to be loved by a man with such characteristics, a love they crave. When people identify with the characters, they can become immersed in the fantasy, which can lead to transversing the fantasy. Zizek explored this notion in his 2002 book *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*. He suggests that "in our daily existence, we are immersed in 'reality' (structured and supported by the fantasy), and this

immersion is disturbed by symptoms which bear witness to the fact that another, repressed level of our psyche resists this immersion" (Zizek, 2002, p. 17). Referring to Lacan's notion of "transversing the fantasy," Zizek concludes: "To 'transverse fantasy' therefore, paradoxically, means *fully identifying oneself with the fantasy* –namely, with the fantasy which structures the excess that resists our immersion in daily reality" (Zizek, 2002, p. 17).

Some of the characteristics mentioned above can clearly relate to *Twilight*. Bella is a girl who is apparently normal, not of extraordinary beauty (at least not until she becomes a vampire, when she becomes beautiful and powerful), but is still appealing to the two main male characters. She is special and becomes the center of male's attention due to her clever comments, her innocence, and her inexperience; the men around her are eager to protect her. As described in the books, and portrayed later in the movies, her simple attributes are in fact what differentiates her from the rest of girls in school. She becomes a sensual being who is the object of Edward's (and later Jacob's) desire. In the case of Edward, she becomes a sort of addiction he cannot control and, as he tells her in the forest scene, she is like his "personal brand of heroine". However, Bella is not sexually passive. On the contrary, she is open to initiate sexual relations with Edward, but he refuses her advances arguing that his intentions are to protect her. Also, she is not the one seeking marriage initially. In this case it is the male lead who first approaches the issue. In terms of traits of femininity, many young girls can associate and identify with Bella. And the reason why they might be attracted to the male characters is because, as Radway (1984) explains, they want to feel what it is like to be loved by men with characteristics such as Edward's and Jacob's, that at a first glance match up with some of

the masculinity traits identified in the romance novels. For example, they illustrate physical strength and physical attractiveness, a desire to protect the heroine, and power and status (Edward is rich, Jacob is a pack leader). Also, there are parts in the story where the two male lead characters get distant and cold, even aggressive, but ultimately they declare the love for the heroine.

Some scholars argue that the appeal of romances come in the form of "escapism." Rollin (1970), who used the term "pop romance" to define all television programs, films, and comic strips that include a romantic storyline, suggests that the "escapism" of pop romance "resides paradoxically in the security it generates" (p. 432). He tells us that people use these stories not only to escape from the conflicts of reality, but also as a cathartic exercise, being in some cases a confirmation that in the end, deep within, people know that good ultimately should defeat evil: "Even though we consciously are aware that such victories do not always occur in reality, there is a part of us which very much wants them to occur" (Rollin, 1970, p. 432). In romance, the love between the main characters is always in conflict, mainly because there are other characters that interfere in the relationship: the antagonists. The characteristics of the antagonists usually relate with a person whose heart is not pure, somebody who embodies negative feelings such as envy, jealousy, resentment, and greed. Those characters act in a way to impede the happiness of the good and innocent heroine, therefore they are associated with evil. However, romances are also about hope, with the message that at the end love conquers all.

With time romances started to include other characteristics and subgenres surfaced. For example gothic novels provide a twist in the stories: the element of

suspense, mystery, and even terror. Gothic romances usually portray a young girl that falls in love with a mysterious man that is initially perceived as evil or criminal. She tries to convince herself that she has to believe in him and trust in her love. At the end, but not all the times, the man is innocent and the real criminal is discovered. The scenarios are dark and stormy, and the heroine is constantly frightened (Modleski, 2008). This kind of romance is closer to what *Twilight* reflects. The vampire and the werewolf are gothic characters. The mystery and fear, the dark and gloomy scenarios (going back again to the forest scene that Meyer initially dreamed that inspired the whole series), and a frightened girl (even though her fear is not toward the vampire or werewolf but a fear of losing them), are elements present throughout the stories.

Comparing both forms of romances, Modleski (2008) argues that the narratives address "women's fears and confusion about masculine behavior in a world in which men learn to devalue women" (p. 52). However, the stages in a woman's life (courtship, marriage, motherhood and family) mark important differences between them. She explains that motherhood and family are a common theme among more recent forms of romance; e.g., the soap opera genre. According to Modleski (2008) the soap opera is a romance that has specific types of characters and features: "the evil woman, the great sacrifice, the winning back of an estranged lover/spouse, marrying for money, respectability etc., the unwed mother, deceptions about paternity of children, career vs. housewife, the alcoholic woman (and occasionally man)" (p. 78).

Feminist scholars have associated the traditional romance genre with a way to perpetuate patriarchy. However there are those who suggest that the texts can also be studied as part of women's lives, since they might be reflecting real issues affecting

women. Modleski (2008) suggests that instead of seeing these stories as only a reflection of patriarchy or masculine dominance, analysts of women's texts should identify the opportunities that romances offer, acknowledging that the stories are concerned with women's issues and real problems, that they reach a significant number of women, and that the immersion in those fantasies can lead to an understanding of women's anxieties and wishes. Nevertheless, the analysis of the traditional romance was the starting point of the analysis of media texts targeted toward women. Romance has also been a theme in other genres and texts such as women's films. The analysis of those texts has brought to feminist discourse interesting discussions about how popular culture affect women's lives and their construction of identity. The next section will explore how feminist scholars have analyzed films targeting women.

Feminism and film: from the male gaze to the chick flick debate

Feminist scholars have focused on films targeted to women in particular, with melodrama and romance being dominant themes, although "the category of the woman's film may also include films from other genres such as romantic comedy and even film noir" (Hollows, 2000, p. 39). Hollinger (2008) described the different themes that women's films have depicted through the decades and demonstrates how central subjects such as romance and motherhood remained constant. She notes how movies in the mid-1970s introduced the themes of "the independent woman" and "female friendship," the appearance of the "paranoid gothic film" (with characteristics similar to the gothic novels described by Modleski), and the return to classic women's literature influenced films targeted to women.

In the mid-1970s, feminist scholars started to raise questions about "how gendered identities were culturally produced and reproduced" (Hollows, 2000, p. 20), paying particular attention to the mediated images of women and what they represented. Hollows (2000) explains how different studies of the time were conducted in order to demonstrate "how the media played a role in socializing into restrictive notions of femininity" (p. 21), finding that women were underrepresented and that the media portrayed stereotypical images of women. However, the most relevant idea of the period came from the notion that films not only served to reproduce patriarchal ideology but also "to reproduce its spectators as subjects of patriarchal ideology" (Hollows, 2000, 44). The concept of "the male gaze" (introduced by Mulvey in 1975) suggested that cinematic texts included a visual language in which objects and images were perceived to the viewer from a male's position of viewing. For example, females were viewed as an object of the male protagonist's desire. Feminist film critics started questioning the position of female spectatorship in a patriarchal cinema "organized around the psychic need of men" (Hollows, 2000, p. 46).

Beginning in the 1980s, the feminist backlash era, films started being criticized by scholars who claimed that media were perpetuating a false image of woman and attacking feminist ideals. The most cited example of the time was the movie *Fatal Attraction* (1987). The movie tells the story of Dan, a married man (portrayed by Michael Douglas) who gets involved in a one night stand with Alex (portrayed by Glenn Close), who becomes his stalker, assaulting and menacing his happy family. Audiences had a negative response to Alex's character, and such reaction gave pop culture a new stereotype of woman, "the bunny boiler" (in reference to a scene in which Alex attacks

and boils Alex's family pet, a bunny) (Genz, 2009). Feminist critics including Faludi (1992) claimed that Close's portrayal was the one of a single emancipated woman, career-focused, and sexually confident; however, she was also hostile, sadistic, unhappy, and even crazy. For feminists such as Faludi (1992) such representation was propagating the idea that single or independent women were menacing society, thus it was an attack on feminisms ideals.

However, during the same time the third wave of feminists started to incorporate new strategies to promote their idea of feminism. The chick culture introduced what is known today as the chick flick. Dole (2008) suggests that chick flicks serve as a space for third-wave feminism to be expressed. For Ferris and Young (2007), "chick flicks illustrate, reflect, and present all of the cultural characteristics associated with the chick post feminist aesthetic: a return to femininity, the primacy of romantic attachments, girl power, a focus on female pleasure and pleasures, and the value of consumer culture and girlie goods, including designer clothes, expensive and impractical footwear, and trendy accessories" (2007, p. 4). They explain how femininity and sexuality are depicted as empowering, but also acknowledge the conflict that consumerism included in popular culture has with the ideals of the previous waves of feminism (Ferris & Young, 2007).

Another characteristic of the chick flick movement is the portrayal of younger women. Hollinger (2008) notes how the chick flick was characterized for resembling "protagonists entering young adulthood, ostensibly with the freedom to select what is right for them from a wide range of choices" (Hollinger, 2008, p. 225). Many of these teen chick flicks fall into the makeover film category, showing a "young independent woman who does not meet the criteria of conventional beauty experiencing an external

transformation that places her much more in accord with mainstream beauty standards. The changes she experiences in terms of her looks not only internally alter her sense of identity and self-confidence but also bring her external joys of love and/or marriage" (p. 226). These characteristics match those of *Twilight's* protagonist, since Bella goes through a transformation not only in her looks but also, as the story progresses, in her self-confidence and identity.

Hersey (2007) found other changes in the way females are transformed within chick flicks. After analyzing four of the most popular contemporary "chick flicks," *Never Been Kissed* (1999*), Miss Congeniality (*2000*), The Princess Diaries (*2001*) and Legally Blonde (*2001*),* Hersey (2007) shows how, in the narratives, the main character is transformed through a makeover that serves as a confidence-builder; it prepares the heroine to speak out at the conclusion of the movie in the form of a public speech. In addition, the heroines are no longer lonely characters, but are surrounded by "female friends and relatives who support their learning process, rather than a male love interest who demands that she conforms to his desires" (Hersey, 2007, p. 151).

Ferris (2007) considers the makeover a tradition that serves as "the vehicle for the female character's moral development" (p. 41). She explains, "both makeover television and flicks offer the female viewer reassurance. They suggest that external transformation is unnecessary, that she will ultimately be valued for herself, in relationships and at work. But they suggest that the means of gaining recognition are easily within her reach, and in more recent films, increasingly under her control" (Ferris, 2007, p. 56). Scholars Hersey (2007) and Ferris (2007) connect the fashion makeover with the culture of consumerism,

pointing out that the fashion element is a prominent characteristic in the narratives of contemporary chick flicks.

Since the beginning, the chick flick phenomenon has received ambivalent responses. Ever since the term was introduced, critics have been debating whether chick flicks represent empowerment for their audiences or if they reinforce the patriarchal status quo (Hersey, 2007). Hollinger (2008) argues that the debate is still inconclusive. She says, "these are films that undoubtedly shape women's thinking about themselves and about women's role in society. That we understand what defines these representations, how their history has evolved, how they relate to male-dominated cinema, and what effects they are having on their female viewers is a project that we must continue to pursue" (p. 231-232).

Among those who consider the movies to challenge the patriarchal ideal is scholar Turim (2007) who considers that "today's romantic comedy heroines and the female protagonists of melodrama engage in sexual encounters much more openly and with less direct chastisement for doing so than did some of their predecessors" (p. 26). This means that the heroine is aware of her sexuality and is not afraid to show it. Thus, she is not repressed by her passions and feelings, something that liberates her from the patriarchal standards that traditionally has given this right only to men. Hersey (2007) suggests that the genre has a liberating potential for its audience, particularly over the last two decades in which the stories are not only centered around the hero and the relationship per se, but also on the professional ambitions of the heroines. She points out how the heroines of contemporary chick flicks are "women fighting to achieve their educational and professional goals, who fall in love as part of the story" (Hersey, 2007, p. 158).

Negra's (2008) examination of contemporary chick flick narratives post-9/11, such as *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), *Two Weeks' Notice* (2002), and *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* (2003), shows how the stories favor an anxious preoccupation with structural, national and gender stability, adding other elements to the progressive view of the genre. She says, "these films simultaneously maintain a critical awareness of an attachment to traditional models of gender that would appear to play well within the context of current domestic policies' widespread impediments to female agency in the public sphere but seek to implement traditionally minded corrections to such problems" (Negra, 2008, p. 62). She adds that, "because female subjectivity is sketched so superficially in the majority of such films, narrative space is freed up to narrate (perhaps unconsciously) other interests" (Negra, 2008, p. 62). Negra's objective is to illustrate that the chick flick genre is not in fact politically neutral. The chick flick movie, in her analysis, places the city (New York, in all her examples) as more than a scenario and as a sight for rehabilitation and national stability.

Ferris and Young (2007) suggest that audiences are attracted to this type of film since it not only represents a great deal of entertainment but also, speaks to audiences in a way that people can identify with the characters and the stories. They explain, "films play a significant role in framing and reflecting women's place in culture, particularly during moments of cultural shift. It is not surprising then that chick flicks raise questions about women's place, their prescribed social and sexual roles, the role of female friendship and camaraderie, and play out the difficulties of negotiating expectations and achieving independence" (Ferris & Young, 2007, p. 4).

For other scholars, such as Turim (2007), "popular reception of chick flicks, even while acknowledging their legacy, often lacks the tools to read these films critically" (p. 28). For her, there is a need to raise questions of "how they situate female desire…how they situate the woman in the public sphere" (p. 39). Scala (1999) similarly recognizes that feminist and film theorists have not paid sufficient attention to the fact that the contemporary romantic comedy narrative offers more than a Cinderella-like story line, and that one must read those narratives from different perspectives. For example, in analyzing the movie *Pretty Woman* (1990), she says, "'*Pretty Woman*' has been no less understood as a regressive fantasy of modern, feminist viewers. Yet the real danger of the film, I would suggest, lies not in regression but in seeing it only as such" (p. 42). Scala (1999) suggests that since these stories can be successful and reach many people, it becomes important to analyze female identification with the characters and situations portrayed in them. In addition to the romantic nostalgia and the fantasy element that are the main components of the narratives, the analysis of the contemporary romantic comedy genre can be reinvented and used as a tool for feminist theory.

There are some that consider the chick flick regressive and even negative for female audiences; such is the case of Arthurs (2003), who expresses her opinions in an analysis of the successful *Sex and the City* HBO series (1998) and subsequent film[9]. Arthurs (2003) asserts that the success of the series is due to the excellent vision of the creators in generating a brand that was commercially appealing to a specific audience, while transforming the woman-centered discourse into a television drama using the

[9] *Sex in The City,* the movie (2008), is number 107 in the All-Time Worldwide Box Office earning $400,637,269 since its release and being the first movie of its kind to rank number one at its opening week-end, according to The Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com. Other chick flicks included in the list are *Pretty Woman* (1990), *Mamma Mia!* (2008), and the ultimate chick flick *Titanic* (1997). The sequel to *Sex in the City* was released in May 2010.

innovations of media, in this case the subscription to cable television. Arthurs (2003) analyzes *Sex and the City's* "having it all" theme, which she considers one of the main characteristics of post-feminist television in the 1980s and 1990s. "One of the main issues has been the division between the world of work and the private world of domestic sphere that prevents women 'having it all.' In *Sex and the City*, the world of work largely disappears from view as a distinct space and set of hierarchical relations, although the women's autonomy from men is underwritten by their economic independence" (p. 84). In sum, what Arthurs suggests is that the "having it all" theme as it's portrayed is at the end a fallacy because it gives the impression that women still haven't found a balance between their career and their love life, remaining in many instances dependent on men.

Another element of the series and subsequent films is the "continuing transformations in fashion that characterize consumer culture" (Arthurs, 2003, p. 90) that has placed Sarah Jessica Parker (who plays Carrie Bradshaw, the main character) as a fashion icon and a celebrity style influence. Arthurs (2003) explains that "it appears as though hedonism and narcissism have displaced the masochist position they occupy in patriarchal structures of desire" (p. 93). Consumerism is then relevant for a woman to fulfill her desires, that are no longer centered in love and relationships, but also in acquiring a certain status and power. However, this shows an "ambivalence in feminist evaluations of the aestheticised self, showing it to be both a source of confident autonomy and of disempowerment in its unstable oscillations" (p. 94). This means that women have found in money and power a way to feel confident and independent, but at the same time, this fact separates them from what they want in their love life, ultimately leading them to still depend on men to feel happy.

Barker (2008) argues that contemporary chick flicks are similar to the backlash movies of the 1980s, with narratives that depict work as an impediment to finding love. She says, "Typically, the heroine must give up her successful job, reject her female mentor, and choose the simple life in order to find love. Certainly these films are responding to the real problem that both men and women face today in trying to balance a career and a family (whatever form that takes) but the chick flick's balance between feminism and post-feminism seems to be tipping in favor of the later" (p. 113).

Other critics argue that chick flicks are simply a successful box office formula and do not "actually address issues faced by real women. If they did, chick flicks would overflow with themes like workplace discrimination, childcare, reproductive rights, racism, domestic violence, homelessness, aging, human rights…" (Thompson, 2007, p. 44). Thompson also emphasized the fact that "only 3 percent of all Hollywood cinematographers are female, and a woman has never won an Academy Award for film directing" (2007, p. 45) [10].

If we situate *Twilight* in the debate, it is possible that the narratives in the films are embracing the two sides: having messages that both reinforce and challenge the patriarchal status quo. Even though it is important to analyze if these kinds of movies challenge or reinforce patriarchy, there are other subjects that have not been explored in detail. So far, a lot has been said about what kind of woman the movies are portraying. There is also a lot of information about the traits of masculinity in films targeted to men, or films in general. So far, masculinity has been linked with "practices of strength, power, control, and domination" (Shugart, 2008, p. 280), with traits of masculinity similar as

[10] This changed in 2010 when Kathryn Bigelow won the Academy Award for film directing with her acclaimed movie, *The Hurt Locker*, a war/action film, not a movie with feminine topics.

those identified in romance novels. However, how masculinity is portrayed in chick flicks has not received as much attention. Scholars have identified the trait of the revolutionary masculinity of the hero that intends to liberate the world for some kind of danger (Barker, 2008) in epic and action movies. Shugart (2008) suggests that portrayals of masculinity have suffered a big transformation since the 1980s, when men started to acquire a bigger interest in aesthetics and fashion, promoted by pop media culture. She explains this is how in recent years there is a type of masculinity promoted as "commercial masculinity" under the name of metrosexual, a man "identified as urbane, successful, sophisticated, and well-groomed modern heterosexual man" (Shugart, 2008, p. 283). However, there is less research about the portrayal of masculinity particularly in the romance chick flick genre and what that says about what kind of man female consumers of such movies are attracted to, or what traits they desire in a man. This study offers this possibility. However, it is important to first explore what scholars have written about *Twilight* in particular, and the themes that are recurrent within the films in order to understand why this study will fill the gap in current literature about *Twilight* as well.

Analyzing the *Twilight* saga

Two common elements have emerged in the analysis and criticism of *Twilight*: eroticism and fandom. Edwards (2009) suggests that the relationship between Edward and Bella is attractive because it is dangerous, sexually charged, rebellious and potentially fatal, stating that "gothic fiction only functions successfully through exploiting this simultaneous emotional response in its audience –that we as readers are irresistibly attracted to things that frighten us" (p. 26). Edwards (2009) analyzed the concept of *scopophilia* or the love of looking in *Twilight*, explaining how the story

"explores the influence of 'the look' in constructing teen identity" (p. 28). In reference to Mulvey's concept of the male gaze, Edwards (2009) explains that in *Twilight* the gaze shifts between genders and gives particularly attention to Bella's point of view arguing that even though she is a visual object of desire "the real visual object of desire in (and beyond) the text is Edward, and thus the implied male authority of the gaze in fetishising an image as sexual stimulant is reclaimed by Bella, and by extension, her empathizing audience" (p. 29).

Another key point for Edwards (2009) is the eroticism of abstinence, which was influenced by the author's Mormon background. She argues that an erotic power beneath the portrayed self-restraint of the characters may appear at first glance pure and clean, but is in fact filled with sensual and suggestive elements. For instance, Bella fantasizes about Edward biting her and it is in these cases that "the erotic pleasure of looking that replaces sex in the film, for characters, camera and audience" (Edwards, 2009, p. 31). This means that in *Twilight* sexual desire is represented in other subtle ways, or even replaced by other desires. Edwards (2009) is suggesting that an initial reading can lead to think that the movie has an omission of sexual desire in the characters, but that in fact sex is far from being annulled by the author, the director, and the viewer.

Sexuality is not the only controversial subject related to the author's religious background within the narrative. Toscano (2010) argues that "in *Twilight* Meyer is subtly subversive of her church's teachings in two foundational ways: first, she invariably puts love before obedience; and second, she rejects the principle that moral purity is maintained by exclusion, by the avoidance of even the appearance of evil" (p. 21). Later she explains, "Meyer presents Bella as another Eve, one who perceives that mortality

must precede immortality and that evil must be experienced in order to become truly good" (Toscano, 2010, p. 34).

Fandom is another area of *Twilight* scholarship. Scholars have found that there is a connection with fans and the fact that the *Twilight* franchise was constructed with the help of the marketing of celebrities in the movies, relationship that encourages fans "to blur the lines between the beloved characters from the *Twilight* books and the actors who portrayed them in the films" (Aubrey et al., 2010, p. 225). This is the reason why they suggest that to understand the success of the saga it is important to understand the discussion of celebrity. However, other scholars suggest that fans are attracted to the story because it is offering a novelty around the human-vampire relationships, in a story that they can identify with (Gutierrez, 2009). In certain instances the identification of fans with the story and its characters is expressed in ways that are suggesting that *Twilight* is offering new examples and traits that may be shaping their expectations and desires of real-world relationships. For example, Behm-Morawitz et al. (2010) explore, among other things, the phrases adopted by fans, displayed in merchandise and websites dedicated to the series, such as "I like my men cold, dead, and sparkly" or "Forget the prince on a horse. I want a vampire in a Volvo" (p. 138). They argue that fans are reacting to the traits that the two male lead characters possess. Behm-Morawitz et al., (2010) suggest that fans are identifying with the relationships in the series, such as Edward and Bella, and Bella and Jacob. Thus the series offers "romantic relational models" (p. 140). A reaction to that is the formation of two groups, with some fans choosing "Team Edward" and others choosing "Team Jacob." I believe they are not only responding to certain traits, but also the division encourages fans to decide which of the

two models is a better choice for Bella and likewise, for themselves, as they identify with and put themselves in Bella's position of choosing.

Twilight has also been an object of feminist criticism. Important elements analyzed through that lens include the portrayals of gender and sexuality, centering the analyses in the relationship Bella sustains with Edward, and most of the times agreeing that *Twilight* belongs to the category of movies that reinforce patriarchy. Platt (2010) argues that the relationship between Edward and Bella is the portrayal of an overprotective relationship that reinforce patriarchal ideas such as women as objects to be possessed, who need men in their lives in order to be protected from dangers. She states that "Meyer employs conservative social values like the policing of female desire, the protection of the female virtue from ruin, the importance of marriage, and the sanctity of life as key plot devices, creating a world in which vulnerable women need to be protected at all times, both from external forces and from their own desires" (Platt, 2010, p. 73). In this way, the relationship between Bella and Edward has a resemblance to those of the romance novels. Clasen (2010) for example, places Bella and Edward into the "classic couple category" (p. 119), comparing the couple to other famous literary pairs such as Tristan and Isolde and Romeo and Juliet. She explores the use of myths of romantic love in the series, arguing that "such an examination is warranted because popular culture is regularly blamed for creating unrealistic expectations about romantic relationships" (Clasen, 2010, p. 119). The myths she identifies are: love at first sight, love is forever, love is the most important relationship, and love requires mind reading (Clasen, 2010). Clansen (2010) explains that *Twilight* has a narrow vision of romance, which she finds problematic considering that given the popularity of the series, it might be shaping the

audience perceptions of real-life love. However, she admits that in some level the models of interaction presented in the movies can shape relational expectations, and she explains that "by exposing the limitations of the myths in *Twilight*, perhaps scholars can help couples achieve greater relational literacy" (p. 132).

Others suggest that *Twilight* reflects an example on how the new form of transmedia narratives make possible for young women to redefine and negotiate the term feminism. Women have traditionally been absent of this form of transmedia storytelling, which have been used so far for stories with a predominantly male demographic, as is the case of *Star Wars*, *The Matrix*, and even *Harry Potter* (Summers, 2010). However, the fact that *Twilight* fans have managed to create different spaces to discuss the series, movies, characters, and other texts related to the saga, makes more visible the participatory environment that women can create around texts targeting them. Particularly, Summers (2010) examines the case of a discussion thread in February 2009 under the name "*Twilight* is so Anti-Feminist that I want to cry", that after two months "contained over 490 posts and has consistently been within the 15 most popular of over 600 discussion threads about the novels" (p. 317). Summers (2010) found that young women had different views about the story and also about the definition of feminism. Many posts provided examples supporting the initial comment of the thread, and others argued that *Twilight* also has examples of strong and independent women. What Summers (2010) finds relevant is the fact that women are more active in this form of transmedia storytelling than never before, and she shows how young women are inhabiting "these spaces and use them to interpret texts, situate texts politically and socially, and build relationships" (p. 323). For example, sites created by fans such as

thetwilightsga.com, twilightmoms.com, or twilightsaga.wikia.com have become popular spaces for discussions, forums, and blogs about the saga; they also provide information about the characters, books, films, and plot.

Twilight has also been analyzed under the idea that it belongs to different genres, specifically as a vampire narrative. Ames (2010) describes how terms such as anti-abortion, teen motherhood, abusive relationship, and anti-feminist characters appear in several analyses about *Twilight*'s narrative. However, she argues that *Twilight* is also a vampire story, a genre that has traditionally questioned gender portrayals and representations of sexuality. Ames (2010) explains that vampire narratives have incorporated ideological and political elements reflecting the period they are developed in, and in the case *of Twilight*, the story comes at a time where there is support for a return to conservative values, including abstinence.

Another way in which sexuality has been explored in *Twilight* has to do with the visual elements brought within the film adaptations. Wilson (2010) notes the sexualization of some characters, in particular the character of Jacob Black, that becomes more apparent thorough the films. "The series represents Jacob (and the other wolves) as perpetually in a state of undress. Their bodies are sexualized more overtly than other bodies in the saga" (Wilson, 2010, p. 65). He explains that "the texts offer a precedent for this representation though, focusing as they do on Jacob's (and the other wolves') lack of clothing" (Wilson, 2010, p. 65). Wilson (2010) also relates this sexualization with the representation of race within the story. "Twilight relies on stereotypical representation of race, focuses on falsified legends, and leaves out any consideration of the lasting effects of colonization. While the texts are indeed fictional, we cannot discount the power such

fiction holds over our lives, over the socialization of young readers, and we need to, even as fans, be critical about some of the more delimiting messages the series offers about race" (p. 69). This is an interesting point considering that until now, vampires have not been considered as race, but as mythological creatures, human in form but turned into supernatural beings. However in the case of *Twilight* a reader might relate Edward and his vampire family as Caucasian/European descent, whereas Jacob and the wolf pack are a representation of Native Americans. These portrayals may represent false legends that fail to consider the effects of colonization.

As the series comes to an end at the movie theaters, it is worth continuing the analysis of the elements of *Twilight* that have not yet been fully explored. Even though scholars have started to explore the relationship between Bella and Edward, gender identity and sexuality, and even fandom, more research is needed to determine what it means when fans align with "Team Edward" or "Team Jacob". What do each of these characters represent when it comes to selecting a romantic partner? This study analyzes the movies portrayal of Edward and Jacob to illustrate what each character offers in terms of the "ideal" romantic partner for the fans.

Research questions

My interest *on Twilight* grew after I realized how big is the impact on the story in young girls, how it has been enhanced by the popularity of the movies, and in particular the reaction of the audience in creating two groups: those who believe that Edward is the ideal romantic partner (Team Edward) and those who believe that Jacob is the ideal romantic partner (Team Jacob). Based on Social Cognitive theory, I found it important to

analyze the messages that the movies are sending because young girls might learn through the portrayals what kind of characteristics they should look for when choosing a male romantic partner. A second motivation was the feminist debate generated around the chick flick genre, suggesting that the movies under this category are either reinforcing or challenging patriarchy. I consider that *Twilight* might be doing both: reinforcing and challenging patriarchy. The audience might identify with Bella, a character who is desired by others in the story (as a love partner, as a prey, as a friend), but is not the object of desire of the audience. This shifts the sexual stimulants between genders (as Edwards (2009) suggests), not giving this right to "look" exclusively to male audience members as feminist scholars suggest when discussing the theory of the male gaze.

Based upon the review of the literature, I pose the following research questions:

RQ1. How do the *Twilight* films depict the traits of masculinity through the portrayal of Edward and Jacob?

RQ2. What traits do the representation of each of the characters—Edward and Jacob—as viewed in the *Twilight* films suggest for the ideal male romantic partner?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

My thesis seeks to contribute to feminist scholarship on media and popular culture through an in-depth textual analysis of the representation masculinity and the "ideal" male romantic partner in the *Twilight* film series: *Twilight* (2008), *New Moon* (2009), and *Eclipse* (2010). Specifically, I analyzed the portrayal of the male lead characters, Edward Cullen and Jacob Black, to explore what the portrayal of each character suggests about what popular culture, and the fans that align with "Team Edward" and "Team Jacob", suggest are the characteristics of the "ideal" romantic partner.

Selection of texts

As stated previously, this is an analysis of the movies *Twilight* (2008), *New Moon* (2009), and *Eclipse* (2010). I selected the movies instead of the books for several reasons. First, the popularity of the *Twilight* book series increased even more after the first movie release, and this caused many to question the influence that the narrative, with a prime focus on teenage romance, might have on its audience. Also, it was undoubtedly the growing popularity of the film adaptations and its actors that enhanced the fervor in which fans aligned with "Team Jacob" or "Team Edward." The actors put a face to the characters, and the characters' physical and personality traits became visually recognized and uniform for the audience, whereas with the books, each reader could imagine the characters differently. That is why the films add significant visual elements to the text (which in the books would be subjective) offering a greater possibility of analyzing traits in the characters. These visual elements are crucial to my analysis.

In each movie, I selected the scenes in which each character interacts with the lead female character, Bella Swan, because this provided the ability to analyze the images based upon Bella's perspective.[11] As the narrator of the storylines, Bella provides the perspective through which the audience views the male characters. I posit that one of the main reasons why the relationship between the audience and the two male lead characters is strong is because audience members are most likely identifying with Bella. So by understanding Bella's perspective, I might understand what the audience sees in the male characters. Also, it has been suggested by Edwards (2009) that in *Twilight* the gaze shifts between the genders, allowing the viewer to see Bella's desires. I am mostly interested in how these two characters interact with the heroine, which is the reason why I am leaving out the scenes in which the characters interact with other characters.

Textual analysis

Textual analysis is a qualitative type of analysis that "focuses on the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions of the text" (Fursich, 2009, p. 240). Texts are defined by McKee (2003) as "something that we make meaning from" (p. 4). For example, films, television shows, books, magazines, etc. By analyzing texts, researchers try to find answers and understand how people make sense of reality through a particular text. It all depends on what questions the researcher has because different methodologies lead to different sets of answers. The researcher strategically selects a text in order to gather information that can explain or serve as evidence of an argument, or simply to understand how others make sense of the world (McKee, 2003). McKee (2003) suggests

[11] I have also included the scenes in which both characters interact with each other. It is worth mentioning that in all these scenes Bella is present, hence I counted them as scenes in which characters interact with Bella.

that media texts can be analyzed to understand how people of certain cultures, subcultures, and from particular times, interpret reality, and how they make sense of things around them.

Film texts can be analyzed in different ways. Film scholars such as Bellour (2000) are interested in the narrative structure and what the image represents, using methods such as segmentation, in which a scene is divided shot by shot and elements subtracted from each. Those elements (for example gaze, colors, light, camera angles and so on) can lead to a sequence of descriptions and are used to analyze issues and make sense of the image and the narrative. Barthes (1981), one of the most influential theorists in film studies thanks to his analysis and passion for photography, developed the notion of *Punctum*, to describe an element or detail in the image that captures the viewer's attention in a subjective way, creating a set of emotions. He suggests that in a picture, the viewer can perceive a detail that sparks a specifically emotional reaction that subsequently develops into meaning of the image. He explains, "a detail overwhelms the entirety of my reading; it is an intense mutation of my interest, a fulguration. By the mark of *something*, the photograph is no longer -anything whatever-. This *something* has triggered me, has provoked a tiny shock, a *satori*, the passage of a void (it is of no importance that its referent is insignificant)" (Barthes, 1981, p. 49).

Another way to analyze film texts is to look for the political discourse intrinsic within. This method is referred to as critical discourse analysis, which is "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). The concept of discourse

(developed by Michel Foucault) started as a concern about the problems in defining representation just as meaning, considering that representation had to do also with production of knowledge (Hall, 1997). Foucault found in discourse a way in which human beings make sense of their world culturally and how humans share meanings, beyond just using language. As Hall (1997) explains, Foucault's main concern was the relations of power. This is why discourse has been historically linked to ideology. Berger (2000) explains that the term *ideology* is usually related to texts based on Marxist criticism who argue in general terms "that the media and other forms of communication are used in capitalist nations, dominated by a bourgeois ruling class, to generate false consciousness in the masses, or in Marxist terms, the *proletariat*" (Berger, 2000, p. 72). In this sense, media contain hidden messages which shape audiences perspectives.

Feminism has developed strategies in order to fight oppression in a male-centered world. One of them is finding and exposing examples of perpetuation of patriarchy in the media, in which women are not only objectified but also under represented. Feminists argue that media do not reveal a real image of women's role in everyday life, but the images and objectification of women influence gender roles and expectations of both men and women. The messages that media sends to the public are suggesting how women and men should interact with each other, how their relationships must be, and how men should perceive women and vice versa. What feminism has tried to show is that media can serve as a tool to shape consciousness. The analysis of media texts is important to be used as a strategy to pursue the end of oppression and also to understand our current gender relations.

Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) explain how feminist research is challenging since knowledge of gender relations has been in constant transformation over the past three decades. However, they suggest that even when it is done in a minor scale, feminist research offers a possibility to understand the reality of gendered lives, thus allowing spaces for transformation. Meyers (2008) explores how women have struggled while finding meaning of what it really means to be a woman in this mediated and globalized world. She explained how media have been used to maintain and reinforce patriarchy and suggests that while there have been advancements for women, there is still plenty of room for keep developing strategies in order to challenge the status quo. Byerly (2008) suggests that women should "establish their own independent media systems to provide mechanisms for woman-made messages and images" (p. 272). In general, feminist researchers in media and popular culture have taken media texts and analyzed the feminist discourse intrinsic in them to generate knowledge and awareness of issues concerning women. In film, the most common subject of analysis has been the representation of women, women as the image or the object "to be looked at." My study takes that notion but instead of exploring the women as an image, I seek to explore women as the spectator, and men as the image they are looking at. My intention is to find how women might perceive and acquire meanings of masculinity through these two characters and find whether messages within the text challenge or perpetuate patriarchy. Also, I examine what the messages suggest about what the female's position should be in relation to the male in order to explore the potential of the portrayal of these characters might influence how women view what their role should be within a relationship if they want to be with one of these "ideal" males.

The analysis for this project was conducted through the lens of feminist political discourse. The best way to describe this type of methodology is as a textual analysis using feminist ideological criticism, with the objective to find, explore, select and point out the hidden messages movies are sending, in this case about the idea of what type of man a woman should select to be her ideal romantic partner (and likewise what men should look and behave like in order to gain a women's attention), and try to understand if those traits represent a perpetuation of patriarchy or if they are challenging it somehow.

I have situated myself as a post-feminist that believes that chick flick movies can both reinforce and challenge patriarchy at the same time. McKee (2003) suggests that people's backgrounds and cultures influence interpretations of popular culture. Like some of the members of the girlie culture, until now I have not found a need to label myself as feminist. Being a Latina living in the United States for almost ten years has given me the opportunity to analyze texts in a variety of ways, particularly texts related to women. My perception of romance portrayals is influenced by texts such as *telenovelas*, and a male-dominant, catholic, and diverse cultural background influences my sense of meaning. If I have to situate myself in the movement, then I am a post-feminist, who believes that texts in popular culture provide society with opportunities to understand how women are finding through them meanings of issues like sexuality, relationships, and power, how they are using them as tools for creating socially constructed knowledge about what it is to be feminine, and also how important these texts are for their construction of identity.

Analysis procedure

In order to conduct the analysis, I approached the texts following Hall's (1975) process for textual analysis. First, I conducted a preliminary, long, and general immersion in the text to "select representative examples which can be more intensively analyzed" (Hall, 1975, p. 15). Here I identified and selected the scenes in which Bella interacts alone with Edward, Jacob, and with both. I also identified scenes in which Edward and Jacob interact with each other. Second, a close reading was conducted to identify details in the selected examples. Here I focused on finding physical and personality traits of Edward and Jacob that can relate to masculinity, as they are portrayed in the films; for this I paid close attention to the images, dialogues, attitudes of the characters, and Bella's gaze. Finally, a third viewing was conducted for an interpretation of the text, in which I obtained and defined the meanings of the texts from within a feminist point of view.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Edward Cullen, the vampire, and Jacob Black, the werewolf, are the portrayals of two different versions of the ideal romantic partner in the *Twilight* saga. The first movie, *Twilight,* introduces both characters but focuses on Edward. *New Moon* focuses more on Jacob, who appeared in very few *Twilight* scenes. *New Moon* establishes the rivalry between the characters, which is likely the origin of the Team Edward versus Team Jacob fan response. Finally *Eclipse*, focused on how these two rivals competed for Bella's love, but then united to save her. Of the three movies, *Eclipse* offered the most developed depiction of the characters.

This analysis describes masculinity traits found in both characters, divided into physical traits (in which I have included supernatural powers), and personality traits (including specific attitudes toward Bella). The study shows how the movies depict a mixed notion of masculinity through both portrayals, in which traditional and new characteristics of the male romantic hero converge, making these two particular characters unique and attractive for audiences.

Edward Cullen: the vampire

Edward is not portrayed as a typical vampire; there is no evident evil aura and he does not appear dark in nature or as a predator. When Edward Cullen makes his first appearance in *Twilight*, he looks more like an angel or a Greek god look-alike than a vampire. In the scene he walks in slow motion, with an attitude, like knowing that all eyes are on him. There are no fangs, red fierce eyes, or even a cape. Instead, the audience

can see an "obviously gorgeous" young man, (as Jessica, one of the characters describes) and there is nothing scary about him. On the contrary his looks are appealing and stand out from the others around in the scene, yet with mystery in his eyes. The way Bella looks at him is like she has just seen a beautiful apparition that she can't take her eyes off. Edward is the antithesis of Dracula. As the movies progress, the audience can see that he is closer to the typical hero of the chick flick, good looking and charming but full of weaknesses. In other words, Edward is a romantic and even vulnerable vampire.

Physical traits.

Edward is an attractive seventeen year old man.[12] He has a Caucasian look with pale and delicate skin and bronze hair. His eyes change color from golden brown to black when he has not eaten.[13] He has strong masculine features, including thick and big shaped eyebrows, and squared jaw. Edward is slender, muscular, and of average height. He dresses casually but fashionably. However, sometimes he appears in darker formal wear.

Of the three movies, *Twilight* places the greatest emphasis on Edward's looks. In his first appearance Edward walks into the school cafeteria and Bella sees him for the first time. Another character, Jessica, described the Cullens as they entered by pairs. However, Edward, the last one to enter, is alone. This seems to get Bella's attention. She looks like she is a little intimidated and nervous as she sees him. Jessica emphasizes Edward's looks, calling him "totally gorgeous, obviously" but warns that he is unattainable for any girl in school. In fact she advises Bella to not waste her time. Bella's

[12] Actually, Edward is 109 years old, but his appearance is of a 17 year old man, which was the age when he was turned into a vampire.
[13] In both, the books and the movies, there is a description of how vampires' eyes change color depending what they eat, more specifically if they have or not drank blood.

gaze in this scene is completely focused on him; she looks at him with attention. In a later scene, she focuses her gaze on his face. As they are sitting very close next to each other in the classroom, the camera first shows her looking at him with attention and then shows his face. Almost immediately, the camera makes a close up on his eyes suggesting that Bella is focusing on them, noticing how they have changed color since the last time she saw him. She is constantly observing him, and little by little she starts discovering his extraordinary physical features, those that make him unique.

An important scene is the one in which Bella suffers an accident. Bella is standing in the parking lot next to her car. She notices Edward looking at her from the other side of the parking lot. She turns to open her backpack and then she realizes a van is spinning and is coming quickly towards her. She is basically trapped and there is no way she can run out of the way in time. However, Edward runs with incredible speed from across the lot to where she is standing, pushes the car with his own hands and stops it before it hits her and saves her life. She seems disturbed by the situation, not only because she was involved in a dangerous accident that could have killed her but also because she realizes that Edward has physical powers that are clearly not human.

However, it is the forest scene when Bella confronts Edward about being a vampire that unveils all his features. Edward admits that he is a vampire and explains that his looks are important for his survival as a vampire. He shows her how fast and strong he can really be in an attempt to frighten her. He tells her, “I’m the world’s most dangerous predator. Everything about me invites you in. My voice, my face, even my smell. As If I would need any of that. As if you could outrun me. As if you could fight me off. I’m designed to kill.” He also shows her how his skin sparkles under the sun;

Bella seems fascinated and says, "You are beautiful" even though he describes himself as a monster. This is a scene that marks Bella's desire for Edward, a desire for the unattainable and dangerous. She is not frightened but appears to be more interested in him and tries to approach him.

Edward's physical appearance remains the same in *New Moon* with the exception of a scene in Rio de Janeiro, in which Edward believes that Bella has died. In that moment we see a physically careless and untidy Edward. In another scene, Edward is in Italy, and he wants to unveil himself to humans in an effort to provoke the Volturi to kill him. This is a scene in which the audience can see Edward's slim, but muscular, body as he takes his shirt off. In *Eclipse* Edward starts dressing a little more formally than in the previous movies, looking a little more mature. However, the character doesn't suffer drastic physical transformations. Edward is a man that is not aging, as he conserves the looks of the age he had when he was turned into a vampire. This is why he conserves his looks through the movies.

Personality traits.

"What if I am not the hero? What if I am the bad guy?" Edward Cullen trying to explain to Bella who he is at the school cafeteria. *Twilight*

Edward projects a sense of self-confidence starting the moment he first appears on camera. He is generally charming and polite, which can be noted by the way he speaks and his good manners, clearly representing a gentleman in all the sense of the word. He is an endless romantic who listens and dances to classical music and has an old fashioned mentality due in part to being from the beginning of the twentieth century. He plays the

piano, is cultured, rich, refined, educated and adventurous. He considers himself and his family to be a sort of "vegetarian" vampire because they only consume animal blood, not human's, which reflects a sense of humanity. The Cullen's are against anything that endangers human's lives and possess a mental strength that helps them to restrain from harming humans. In that way, Edward is self-determined and compassionate. However, he is also extremely jealous, stubborn, possessive, impulsive, aggressive and even dangerous. How are all these features portrayed in the same character and still allow him to be extremely likable?

At the beginning of *Twilight,* Edward appears confident, but also intriguing and mysterious. When it comes to Bella, he has mood swings. When he first sees her, he acts like he is disgusted and bothered by her presence, first in the cafeteria, and later and most noticeably in class. Since it's impossible for him to change his class, he stops attending school in order to avoid her. Then all of a sudden he appears at school again with a completely different attitude. He is polite, introducing himself and appearing interested in her life, and is very amicable. But once she tries to confront him (for example about his eye color change, his strength, or his speed) he changes his attitude again and goes back to being rude: he walks away, gets angry, tells her they shouldn't be friends, just to name a few examples.

Aside from his mood swings, he is very protective of Bella and he is shown watching and following her. He even enters into her room to watch her sleep. In *Twilight* there are several scenes that can demonstrate how Edward is in fact the protective hero, and Bella the damsel in distress. First is the scene of the car accident, where he saves her and risks exposing himself as a vampire. Second, is the scene when she is at Port Angeles

and a few men start harassing her in the street; he suddenly appears in his Volvo car and inflicts such terror in the attackers that they run away. And finally, there is a scene with another vampire, James, who discovers that Bella is a human-friend of the Cullen's and decides to hunt her as his prey. Edward does everything possible to rescue Bella and once again saves her life. He protects her because he is in love with her. He doesn't even want to convert her into a vampire, which is Bella's dream, because he wants to protect her from being a being with no soul, something that is revealed in *New Moon*. So in a way, he is a vampire with spiritual concerns. Edward is the protector-savior hero, but in some ways this side of him leads him to show some of his negative characteristics. Edward is jealous and possessive, which makes me think he is a little insecure, despite his looks and apparent confidence. He hears Bella's conversations with other boys -- such is the case of when Mike asks her to prom, or when Jacob talks to her at the end of the movie. When he sees Bella talking to another man, he stands close and seems angry, sometimes questioning her about her conversations. This makes me think he is up to a certain degree insecure about Bella's feelings. Another scene that shows his unnecessary protectiveness is when Jacob appears at the prom and talks to her. Since she has a broken leg, Jacob offers his help, but Edward looks at him aggressively and tells him "I can take it from here." Then he puts his arm around her and takes her away and she cannot say a proper goodbye to her friend.

How is Edward, who apparently in more than a hundred years did not feel such attraction for anybody, so infatuated with a girl like Bella? In *Twilight* he is intrigued that Bella's is the only mind that he cannot read, but ultimately what is more attractive to him is her scent. He desires her, to the point that at the beginning he wants to kill her. In the

forest scene he says "I've never wanted a human's blood so much in my life… You're scent is like a drug to me. You are like my own personal brand of heroin…I don't know if I can control myself." He becomes vulnerable as he reveals to her the truth about his identity. In a way he is violent, grabbing her by her arm and running with her to the top of the mountain to show her who he really is. He tells her that he is dangerous and even tries to frighten her, but she appears more and more attracted. Slowly, the vampire opens his heart to her and trusts her, tells her the secrets of being a vampire, the story of his family, and even invites her to his house to meet them.

In general, *Twilight* shows how Edward is above all a romantic character. And I believe that it is with his romantic and old-fashioned manners that he wins the audience over. However, the negative and dark characteristics are equally relevant. In a way, Edward is not like any other teenager because in reality he is not one, and this makes him unique. He is a man that is self-confident, knows what he wants and demonstrates it, and this is attractive for Bella. For example, he is not afraid of expressing his feelings, constantly telling her how he loves her, how she is important in his life, and even demonstrates his affection in public. There is a scene where he arrives with her at school and notices how everybody is staring at them so he decides to put his arm around her, like saying "yes we are together." He is the kind of man who takes his girlfriend to meet his parents, showing her that she is relevant in his life enough to make her part of his inner private circle of people. In the sequence when he takes her to his family's house, Edward shows her the romantic and cultured side of him. He invites her to his room, and shows her his big collection of music, mostly classic, and even invites her to dance to the tunes

of Debussy. Then he takes her onto his back and climbs with her the tall trees of the forest to show her a majestic sight of the town, and later plays piano for her.

He is passionate, but is restrained and knows how to control himself. Even thought there is a constant sexual tension between the two of them, Edward is always the one that does not let the relationship become sexual. This is extremely important and emphasized in both the books and movies, showing that Edward does not look at Bella with solely sexual desire; he cares for her. He is scared of physically hurting her and he says he is an old-fashion man who believes that first the relationship should be a committed one. Sex is not an issue for him and this differentiates Edward from the stereotypical promiscuous hero. This sends the message that the ideal man is willing to wait for marriage for this type of relationship, that he considers sex a more mature step, a one that should be taken carefully, as a mutual consent and as an act of love. This is a very positive trait.

Edward shows other positive characteristics. He introduces himself formally to her dad, not in the same way that a regular teenager would do, showing respect for her family and traditions. He does not leave her side when she needs him (that changes a little bit later in *New Moon*, which I will further explain), protecting her or staying with her in the hospital until he was sure she was okay. He opens the door for her, invites her to dance under the moonlight, and lays with her in a meadow full of flowers.

At the beginning of *New Moon,* Edward says to Bella, "You give me everything just by breathing… You are my only reason to stay alive." He continues being romantic. However, in *New Moon* Edward starts showing a darker side. He tells her how he considered suicide once when he was afraid of losing her; he explains how he planned to

provoke the Volturi into killing him. In the real world, this message could be perceived as manipulative, but in the movie it is shown as a romantic demonstration of love, comparable to *Romeo and Juliet*. *New Moon* seems to be actually developed under certain influence of Shakespeare's tragedy. Edward astonishes Bella and other classmates as he recites by memory the verses of *Romeo and Juliet.* And like the tragedy's story, *New Moon's* plot involves misunderstandings and confusion that leads the male hero to think the heroine has killed herself; he believes he should do the same to be with her. However, unlike *Romeo and Juliet*, the lovers survive in *New Moon*. Edward and Bella are living a co-dependent relationship that blurs the line between obsession and real love, in which they have established that one cannot survive without the other. This particular portrayal suggests that a "can't-live-without-each-other" type of love is ideal. Edward emphasizes this point several times through the movies. This message is potentially dangerous to audiences, since the idea of committing suicide or dying for love is portrayed as romantic.

New Moon also shows a more possessive side of Edward; he is jealous, angry, and violent. He continues taking advantage of his mindreading power to listen to Bella's conversations with others, particularly Jacob. He is jealous of him, and in part the rivalry between them is justified by the fact they are from rival clans, but also because Edward sees Jacob as a competitor for Bella's love. His jealousy, however, is not the origin of his aggressiveness. I believe that the violence that Edward demonstrates is explained through his nature as a vampire, meaning that his characteristics, such as incredible strength and vampire instincts, make him aggressive. For example, in one scene Bella cuts herself on a piece of paper and a vampire, Jasper, loses control and tries to kill her. In an attempt to

save her, Edward pushes Bella out of the way with such strength that she flies across the room, hits the wall, breaks a mirror, and cuts herself deeply. He is ashamed of what he has done and leaves town with his family. He breaks up with Bella, leading her to believe he doesn't love her. In that scene he seems careless, even emotionless to a certain point, but he does seem regretful. He tells her "You just don't belong in my world… I don't want you to come." He asks her to not do anything reckless, and in return, he would not bother her again; he promises that it will be like he never existed. As a result, Bella becomes isolated and depressed, has nightmares, and even risks her own life. She discovers that as soon as she is about to engage in a reckless activity, she has hallucinations with him. So she starts looking for adrenaline rushes and dangerous things to do, such as riding motorcycles, leaving with strangers, and jumping off a cliff, in order to see him, more exactly to see a hallucination of him. Without knowing it, while Edward leaves to protect her, he actually makes her more vulnerable to a new enemy, Victoria.

Later in the movie, several misunderstandings lead Edward to think Bella has died. In this moment, Edward is depressed, internally destroyed, and loses his will to live. He goes to Volterra, Italy where the Volturi live. Alice takes Bella to Italy, since only her presence can save him. Bella doesn't hesitate and leaves everything behind to go rescue him. The audience can see with this that Edward is also vulnerable and needs to be rescued as well. While Bella thinks he wants to die consumed by the guilt of her supposed death, Edward in fact wants to die because he says he cannot live in a world where she does not exist. In the sequence the audience can see Bella's desperation to get to him in time to save him. When she sees him she runs toward and embraces him. He seems confused and even thinks she is a hallucination. When he realizes it is Bella and

that she is not dead, he confesses to her that he left her to protect her, not because he had stopped loving her. She forgets everything she had been through and forgives him. This encounter causes them to have an altercation with the Volturi. In this scene, Bella is in danger, as the Volturi consider her a menace. Edward, in an attempt to save her again, starts fighting with the Volturi's bodyguards and he is almost killed. Once again the heroine comes to the rescue, pleading for Edward's life and tells the Volturi to kill her instead. Aro, who appears to be the major authority of the Volturi, decides to spare Edward's life, amazed by how Bella, a human, is willing to die for a vampire. This is when the ultimatum of the Volturi of turning her into a vampire is ordered.

What *New Moon* brings is the sacrifice type of hero, the man who is willing to die for love; a hero that shows a great deal of vulnerability. At the end of the movie, the hero returns to his romantic and old-fashioned state. He proposes marriage to Bella, telling her that he will change her into a vampire, but they have to get married. Normally, marriage is not a common subject at such a young age. This seems to be a surprise even for Bella who in this scene appears to be scared by the sudden proposition.

Eclipse emphasizes the rivalry between Edward and Jacob. Edward consistently shows impulsive acts of jealousy, like damaging Bella's car so she could not go to the reservation to see Jacob and almost punching Jacob because he kissed Bella. He is also concerned with Bella's safety, as she keeps facing danger in the hands of two enemies: Victoria and the Volturi. In order to keep her safe, Edward is willing to share his protection duty with the other hero. That is how he accepts an alliance with the werewolves, which shows that his character has matured to a certain extent.

Edward does not doubt Bella's feelings for him at this point. He also knows deep inside how important Jacob is in Bella's life and also, how Jacob loves and cares for Bella. Nevertheless, he appears insecure, nervous, and anxious when he sees them together. He gets tense and angry. He even gets aggressive when he finds out Jacob kissed Bella. However, there are two scenes in which he demonstrates a more mature reaction to Jacob. First is when he and his family decide to accept the alliance with the werewolves in order to protect Bella and the town from Victoria's vampire army. In *New Moon*, it was stated how even though the Cullen clan and the werewolves had a pact, they cannot tolerate and trust each other. But Edward, putting aside his rivalry with Jacob and even with the wolves' clan, admits they need the werewolves' help. The second scene develops the night before the battle. Edward, Bella and Jacob have to wait in a tent in the top of a mountain. There is a snowstorm and Bella is feeling cold to the point that it becomes a life-threatening situation, as she can develop hypothermia. In order to make sure she does not get sick, Jacob, whose temperature is always hot, embraces her. This scene is often referred as "the tent scene." Edward sees their closeness, and even reacts to Jacob's thoughts as he reads his mind. But instead of acting aggressively he starts talking to his rival in an open and sincere conversation about Bella's future. In fact, Edward says to him that under other circumstances they could be good friends. However, the next morning he talks with Bella about their upcoming wedding in order for Jacob to hear. This is a childish reaction and completely incongruent with the scene from the night before.

A point that is relevant during *Eclipse* is the idea of marriage. Edward's character continues to make romantic demonstrations of affection. There is a scene in which he is

alone with Bella at his house, and despite Bella's advances, he refuses to have sexual relations with her, not because he does not love her, but because he feels (or at least that is what he says) that he needs to protect her. On one hand, there is the fact of his strength, something that worries him because he doesn't want to hurt her physically. On the other hand, he suggests that he comes from another era, where it was more appropriate to first engage in courtship. Then he goes on one knee and proposes to Bella in probably one of the most romantic scenes in the whole story. She finally accepts.

At the end of the movie they are shown in the meadow that has become like their meeting place, a romantic scenario in the middle of the forest and surrounded by flowers. They talk about the details of the wedding and he starts questioning her about her decision to get married, telling her that she is already giving a lot of herself and she always sacrifices for others. She tells him that this decision wasn't a choice between him and Jacob, but between what she is and what she should be, saying that she was never normal, and never will be, and being in his world make her feel stronger and real. Immediately he looks at her smiling and asks "so it was not just about me?" and she says smiling back at him "no. Sorry." I think this scene is important because he looks relieved knowing that Bella's actions are not in fact all made to make him happy but is about her looking for her own happiness. This final idea rescues, to a certain degree, Bella's independence, and shows how the hero is comfortable and not threatened with that.

Jacob Black: the werewolf

Jacob only appeared in three or four scenes in *Twilight*. The fan frenzy for the werewolf character has its origins in one specific scene that was featured in the trailer for

New Moon. In it Jacob rushes to help Bella after she has a minor motorcycle accident, hits her head, and is bleeding. Jacob stands up and takes off his shirt, putting it over her injury to stop the bleeding. When I saw *New Moon* at the movie theater, there were girls screaming with excitement during that scene. I thought, "Is that the same boy that looked like a fourteen year old in the first movie?" Lautner had to endure long and physically powerful training hours to acquire the body transformation from *Twilight* to *New Moon.* In a 2009 interview with mtv.com, the actor said that he doubled his intake of calories to gain around 30 pounds that were shown in a new muscle built body and if he had not transformed his body, Summit was considering recasting the role.[14] The result was that fans now expect to see Lautner shirtless and his character, Jacob, transformed on screen from a timid teenager to be a muscle-bound and attractive man. Ever since, the image of the robust and sexy werewolf was exposed and even exploited. Even though the books make reference to Jacob's physical transformation and partial nudity, justified by the fact that werewolves possess high body temperature and tear their clothes during transformation, the subject is more obvious, emphasized, and constant in the movies. The sexy werewolf character does not fit the traditional and stereotypical representation of the character. The majority of the representations of the werewolf before *Twilight* most likely have shown darker and more fearsome werewolves. However, Jacob's sex appeal and charm make a unique portrayal of the character.

The following is the analysis of Jacob's physical and personality traits, based on scenes meticulously selected for this study.

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[14] http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1626642/taylor-lautner-struggled-gain-weight-new-moon.jhtml Retrieved September 19, 2011.

Physical traits.

"Let's face it. I am hotter than you," Jacob to Edward in the tent scene. *Eclipse*

In *Twilight,* Jacob is a fifteen-year-old Quileute Native American. He is skinny with long, dark hair, and tanned, beautiful skin. He has strong masculine features, dark eyes, full lips, a white and symmetric smile, and looks tall for his age. He dresses very casually. At the beginning of *New Moon*, the character (now a sixteen year old) conserves the characteristics of the first movie, except that he looks more muscular and older. Jacob's remarkable physical transformation develops later in the second movie, after he starts phasing into a werewolf. He looks older, taller and more mature, with a toned and muscular body. His hair is short and he has a tattoo on his arm. He now typically wears tight shorts, tennis shoes, and no shirt. Also he becomes stronger, faster, and very athletic.

He possesses some characteristics that he shares in both his human and wolf forms, such as body temperature, strength, telepathy, speed, and endurance. He has an extremely high body temperature (108 degrees), hence the relation that Bella makes associating him with fire. He can read the thoughts of other members of the pack, an ability that the other werewolves also have. Werewolves can delay aging, as long as vampires remain close to them. They are also very strong and it is very difficult to hurt them physically. For example, there is a scene in *Eclipse* in which Jacob forcibly kisses Bella, she tries to punch his face but she breaks her hand in the attempt. In his wolf form, he has a red toned hair and dark eyes. Other characters describe him to be one of the biggest, strongest and fastest members of the pack.

In *New Moon* the audience gets to know who Jacob is and why he is relevant to the story. At the beginning of the movie, Bella notices how Jacob is starting to change. He appears at school and then she sees him and gets surprised by his noticeable change. She says "hello biceps!," and then he replies to her that maybe this change would not be that drastic to her if they spent more time together.

When Bella breaks up with Edward, she turns to Jacob for distraction. At first she was looking for a partner to get involved in adventurous experiences, knowing that this could lead her to see Edward in her hallucinations. However, she slowly starts getting attracted to Jacob. She is surprised by his strength when he lifts the motorcycle and his physique when takes off his shirt. Once Jacob is half naked he gets closer to Bella and puts his shirt on her head to stop the bleeding. This is the moment when she really notices him. She gazes into his face and exclaims with admiration "you are sort of beautiful."

At this point in the character's life, Jacob has never transformed into a werewolf. Jacob and Bella noticed how other male members of his tribe started forming a sort of gang, with Sam Uley as the leader. Jacob describes with sadness to Bella that the members of this group followed Sam like if "they were puppies," how one by one they were entering the group and emphasizing the changes in the way they looked, and how Sam started looking at him like he was expecting something from him, waiting for him to join the gang, without knowing that in fact what Sam was waiting for was Jacob's initial transformation into a werewolf. It is explained later in the movie that what triggers their initial transformation is a menace from vampires. This initial transformation seems involuntary. After the initial one, they can easily phase between forms. However, werewolves cannot control emotions easily, and getting angry can make them phase from

human to wolf. The Cullens have not represented a menace to Jacob's tribe because of the treaty. However, with the apparition of Victoria, the werewolf gene that some male and even female members of the tribe possessed sparked the transformation in several of them, including Jacob. However, he had no knowledge of what could happen to him or that he even had the gene. The first time he notices that something was abnormal occurs when he is with Bella at a movie theater; they are with Mike, another admirer of Bella. Jacob seems to irrationally trying to get in an argument with Mike. Bella tries to stop him and touches him. She notices that he is hot and she tells him that maybe he has a fever. He says "I don't know what is happening," seems confused and leaves. He stops seeing or calling Bella. Later in the movie, the audience realizes that this is the moment of Jacob's first transformation into a werewolf, triggered somehow by the anger he felt during an argument with Mike.

After a few days Bella decides to look for and confront him. This is when the audience first sees a different Jacob. The scene takes place outside of Jacob's house. It is raining and Bella parks her car and sees Jacob walking. She seems sad as she watches him from her car. Jacob acts like he does not notice she is there, so she decides to get out of the car and starts calling him, but he keeps walking. Jacob is wearing tight jean shorts, his hair is short and a round shaped tattoo is visible on his left arm. The same tattoo was previously visible in other members of the tribe, Sam's followers. Bella appears shocked and seems to dislike his new look, she nervously asks him, "You cut your hair off? And got a tattoo? I though you were too sick to come outside, or pick up the phone when I call." She looks surprised and disappointed.

In another scene, Jacob looks for her in order to explain all his changes. He starts throwing rocks at her window. She notices that Jacob is outside, again with the same shorts and without a shirt, and then he says he is coming up. In a very acrobatic way, Jacob climbs a tree and reaches the window and jumps inside the house. Bella gives him a surprised look, like she is confused about this new strong and acrobatic Jacob. At some point he sits on the bed and she reaches out to him, touching his hair and says "I hate this, I hate them for this," making reference to Sam's gang and disapproving the new look. Jacob is trying to make her realize what he has become, but he cannot tell her directly. As Bella is not able to remember the story he told her about werewolves and realize what is really happening to Jacob, he decides to leave the house. He is about to jump off the window and Bella gets nervous and yells "what are you doing?" Much to her surprise, Jacob jumps easily to the ground and runs as she stares at him with an expression of amazement on her face.

Even though Bella does not realize what Jacob is, at this point she already had seen Jacob in his wolf form. In a previous scene Bella is walking in the forest and encounters Laurent (a vampire friend of Victoria), who threatens her. She sees Edward's hallucination who advises her to lie in order to not get attacked by the vampire. But when Laurent is about to kill her, a pack of wolves appears and saves her. She notices how one of them stops in front of her and gives her a direct and deep look. The camera focuses on the wolf's eye, and the audience can see how he is looking at Bella directly, like a humanized wolf. For the audience that is familiar with the story, it is clear that this is Jacob in his wolf form. This wolf is beautiful; his fur is red brown, his eyes are black and

deep, and certainly he is one of the biggest of the pack. She is terrified; when she looks back at the wolf, he runs after the vampire. She decides to run and escape.

After Jacob's visit to her house, she tries to remember what story Jacob has told her about his true nature. She has a dream with Edward in which she sees a wolf. In the next scene she goes to visit Jacob. She encounters Sam's gang outside his house and decides to confront them. When Bella starts recriminating them about Jacob's new image, Paul, a member of the pack becomes angry and as a result, he phases into his wolf form. She starts running and sees Jacob running towards her. She thinks the wolf will hurt him so she yells at him to run, but instead he jumps over her and phases into his wolf form in front of her eyes for the first time. Bella does not seem terrified, but rather amazed as she realizes that the wolf she had seen in the woods was in fact Jacob.

In *Eclipse*, it is even more obvious how the clothes that the character wears (or to be more exact, the clothes he is not wearing) are manipulated to emphasize his muscular body. In fact there is a scene where Edward makes a sarcastic comment about it: "doesn't he own a shirt?" Later, in the tent scene, Jacob offers his help and suggests that he can lie next to Bella and embrace her so she does not get sick. Edward does not like the idea but knows he cannot help her. Jacob tells him sarcastically, "Let's face it. I am hotter than you." This scene is again one of the ones I remember clearly at the movie theater. As soon as Jacob says that line, girls were screaming, the majority with approval. There is a scene where Bella stands with Jacob on top of a snow covered mountain and he wears no t-shirt despite the cold temperature (of course justified by the werewolf body temperature.) The landscape in this scene is breathtaking, and yet she gazes at his beautiful and toned body, and then embraces him in a passionate kiss.

Jacob is a secondary hero in the story, also attractive and strong. However, Jacob's looks transform through the movies. He starts as a simple reservation guy and becomes a more sexualized character as the story progresses. Even though *New Moon* is the movie that reveals his physical transformation, it is *Eclipse* that transforms his looks into a sellable and objectified image, for the enjoyment of Team Jacob followers around the globe.

Personality traits.

"I am going to fight for you until your heart stops beating" Jacob to Bella. *Eclipse*

Jacob starts in *Twilight* as a timid, nervous, sweet, and friendly fifteen year old. He is innocent, modest, and simple. Gradually he matures and when he is sixteen, he starts appearing more secure and confident, without losing his charm and cheerful personality. Jacob is smart, romantic, and passionate. Once transforming into a werewolf, his personality alters with his physical appearance. He becomes temperamental, angry, extremely impulsive, more jealous, and hostile toward Edward and vampires in general. He is to some extent dangerous, as werewolves can lose control if they transform from human to wolf form suddenly, something that can be caused by anger. However, Jacob is someone who shows respect for his tribe, wants to protect his loved ones (Bella in particular) and mostly he is a persistent young man who is willing to fight for the love of Bella at any cost.

As I have mentioned before, Jacob Black has a secondary role in *Twilight.* In the few times he appears it's obvious that Bella intimidates him. He gets nervous when he sees her, but enjoys her company and is always eager to see her, with a constant smile

and kind of childish attitude. He tells Bella the legends about the Cullens, and of his tribe ancestors, which leads her to discover that Edward is a vampire, and later that he is a werewolf. However, he maintains a certain distance from Bella, especially after Bella makes her relationship with Edward public.

New Moon is a different story. Jacob is introduced as Edward's rival in the pursuit of Bella's love. Of course, if he had maintained his looks and personality from the first movie, then he probably would not stand a chance. But *New Moon* shows a completely different character. In addition to his physical transformation, the audience sees a much more mature Jacob the moment of his first appearance. He seems more confident, flirty, and starts showing a real interest in Bella. He gives Bella a special gift for her birthday, a dream catcher, and this awakens Edward's jealousy.

After Edward leaves Bella, Jacob comforts her and offers companionship. They start spending time together. She expresses that he makes her feel alive. This closeness leads Jacob to start feeling protective towards Bella. Some of her attitudes make him believe she is interested in him as well, for example the way she looks at him when she has the motorcycle accident and tells him that he is "sort of beautiful." Also, she admits she likes him at the movie theater. However, Bella still has strong feelings for Edward. She makes it clear that what she feels for Jacob is not the same as what he feels for her and that can ruin their friendship. But she admits she needs him. He responds, "I know what he did to you. I will never do that. I will never hurt you. I won't let you down." They get very close to each other and Bella puts her head on his shoulder. Then Mike interrupts them. This is an important scene because it marks the beginning of Jacob's

transformation. Jacob suddenly becomes aggressive to Mike and he decides to leave as he does not feel good.

The next time the audience sees Jacob they see a different character. The new Jacob is resentful, aggressive, angry, and hurtful. Bella confronts him because he had disappeared for long time and has been avoiding her. He tells her to go away and that they should not see each other anymore. Instead of being warm and cheerful with her he is trying to push her away. She tries desperately to get him reconsider, but he keeps rejecting her. She reminds him that he had promised to never hurt her. He says, "I used to be a good kid. Not anymore. This is me keeping that promise." This scene suggests that both heroes think alike; they both want to protect Bella from themselves and think that by hurting and abandoning her that they are protecting her. The difference between the two of them is that Jacob comes back. He tries to explain her why he reacted the way he did. Eventually, after Bella sees him transform in a wolf in front of her eyes, she understands. With time, Jacob also becomes more protective of her, especially when he finds out that the vampire his pack is after (Victoria), is looking for Bella to kill her.

In *New Moon* Jacob becomes the savior. He rescues Bella from her deep depression after Edward breaks up with her, and he saves her from Victoria. But he also demonstrates how childish and impulsive he remains. He is the one who leads Edward to think Bella is dead. He seems to enjoy making Edward jealous. At the end of the movie, Jacob becomes particularly angry when he finds out Bella's intentions to become a vampire. He desperately tries to make her see that this decision will end with their friendship and any possibility of a romantic relationship between them. He transforms into a wolf, triggered by the argument he is having with Edward. Bella gets in the middle

of the confrontation so he decides to leave. When it comes to Bella's decision of becoming a vampire, Jacob reacts violently and shows his anger; however, he does not hurt neither Bella nor Edward.

Eclipse features the rivalry between the Edward and Jacob. The characters are very similar: they are both overprotective of Bella and treat her like she is a belonging. What differentiates them (aside from the looks) is that one of them has always had Bella's heart and the other has not. Even though Bella is flirtatious with Jacob and is clearly attracted to him, she has always chosen Edward.

Jacob decides to talk to Bella after many days of being apart. Again, the audience can perceive a confident Jacob. He is in love with her and is determined to win her heart, but his approach demonstrates his immaturity. He tells her that he'd rather see her dead than as a vampire, but immediately apologizes. Jacob then reveals to Bella one of the most important characteristics of a werewolf: imprinting. In his own words: "imprinting on someone is like, when you see her everything changes. All of a sudden it's not gravity holding you to the planet. It's her. Nothing else matters." In other words, werewolves have an ability to fall in love with people and this love is both involuntarily and monumental. It is more than a physical attraction, but a path of destiny that is presented to the werewolf in the moment. Jacob explains that he has not felt it yet by experience, but he knows the feeling through Sam who is imprinted on Emily, as he can read Sam's thoughts.

Jacob is also impulsive. He decides to kiss Bella without her permission because his emotions get the best of him. He is a romantic and decides to tell her how he feels and let her decide. He states, "You need to know that I am in love with you. I want you to

choose me instead of him…I am not giving up. I am going to fight for you until your heart stops beating." Other scenes in *Eclipse* show how Jacob is open to talking about himself to Bella. He welcomes her into his world and takes her to a Quileute's council; she is the first person outside the tribe who has been part of one of the meetings.

Jacob's confidence in this movie is reflected in two different ways. On one hand, it is demonstrated as he stands up in front of his tribe to encourage an alliance with the vampires to protect Bella. His confidence is also shown in the way he acts when he is alone with Bella. He no longer seems nervous when he is with her. He even tells her, that she is the one who gets nervous when they are together, reason why he thinks she also loves him but she doesn't want to admit it. He reveals that he is the alpha of the pack by genetics and family history, but decided to decline the leadership position and defer the responsibility to Sam. This shows that he is giving away a power in order to have a simpler life. In a way he might be scared of such responsibility, or he feels immature to take it. He does not like to lead; rather he prefers to receive the commands from others. In this way, Jacob continues to be insecure of himself, even though he shows a tough exterior.

In the tent scene, Jacob wants to be honest with Edward. For the first time they are not hostile with each other, but they talk openly acknowledging each other's feelings and even Bella's. However, when Jacob finds out about Bella's decision to marry Edward, he wants to go into battle with the intention to get killed. After Bella kisses him, he promises to come back to her. He gets hurt in battle trying to save Leah (the only female werewolf) from the attack of a vampire, however he survives and admits that Edward has won her love, but he tells her he is still not giving up. In these scenes Jacob

shows that even though he has matured, he is still impulsive and childish. This is similar to the "can't-live-without-each-other-love," illustrated through Bella's relationship with Edward, where the decision to die for love is handled dangerously. In this case, this is an all-or-nothing type of love. Yet, Jacob is still a courageous hero that sacrifices, perseveres, and cares for the ones he loves.

Team Edward vs. Team Jacob.

Edward and Jacob might have different looks, however both are appealing and portray an accepted image of what is considered attractive in a man. I think that the traits that both characters have convey a mixed type of representation of masculinity, with characteristics that concur with the stereotypical romantic character (i.e., strength and good looks) necessary for the heroine to fall in love and feel protected but also, they possess traits of contemporary representations of masculinity commonly portrayed in the chick flicks. It is worth mentioning that the movies present Edward like a model, more towards the metro-sexual type of modern chick flick hero, whereas Jacob fits more into the more traditional romantic hero type looks. For example, Edward dresses fashionably, is popular, sophisticated, urban, and well groomed, all characteristics of the "commercial masculinity" (Shugart, 2008) that enclose a metro-sexual man, a more contemporary concept. This is the kind of hero that audiences are used to see in the modern chick flicks, a look that popular culture has established through different media vehicles. Jacob, in contrast, is rural and simpler, muscular, and manly, resembling the romantic hero of the Harlequin romance novels. However, his character is sexualized in a much more obvious way, with a considerable number of scenes in which the character is half naked, and with

the story focusing in his physical transformations through time. Another interesting fact is that Edward is initially older than the heroine (speaking in terms of his human age which is seventeen), and Jacob is younger. The traditional romances establish that the hero must be older. Ultimately, Bella, who is aging, gets older than both heroes.

The characters are both good looking and are presented as if they are a contrast of each other: one is Caucasian with pale skin and a slim frame; the other Native American with tan skin and a muscular body. They have different eye colors and hair. One is cold as ice, the other hot as fire, according to their respective body temperatures. However, they share some features. Both possess extraordinary abilities: Edward can read minds and Jacob uses telepathy to communicate with his pack; they are also both fast and strong.

In terms of physical traits, the movies are perpetuating patriarchy and are sending the same message that other stories have told women through centuries: the ideal man, whether he be prince charming, a vampire, or a werewolf has to be extremely handsome and possess a beauty that surpasses the heroine's expectations and makes her feel unworthy even; he also has to be supernaturally strong and fast in order to protect her.

Regarding personality traits, the characters have several similarities and dissimilarities. They are impulsive and jealous, possessive, and to certain degree, violent. Of course they both have positive traits as well. Edward, for example, is the kind of boy that is rare to find: old-fashioned, romantic, courteous, cultured, and smart. Jacob is charming, warm, romantic, supportive, and kind. Both characters are concerned with protecting Bella, again perpetuating the idea that a woman needs a hero to save her from the dangers of the world. Another important characteristic is the fact that they both

represent some sort of leadership and power. Edward is rich, and to judge by the way he makes decisions, the leader of his family. Jacob is the alpha of his pack and even though he renounces the position, he lets Bella know that he has power. This reaffirms the patriarchal ideal in which the man has to have more power or status than the woman he is with, and also the idea that he has to be dominant in the relationship. However, it is clear that Edward's and Jacob's charm and the way the characters are portrayed hide the dark side of the heroes and send the message that both are the embodiment of an ideal romantic partner.

This situation is similar to how Radway (1984) described that readers of Harlequin novels tolerated the heroes' promiscuity. In *Twilight's* case, women seem to overlook the dangerous and dark characteristics of the male heroes because they are justified in the story by the fact that the heroes are looking to protect the heroine and only hurt her to fulfill that purpose. The audience can see that Jacob, like Edward, has an internal battle between his human and non-human sides. They seem to have not encountered yet a balance between the two beings living inside of them, beings that are both romantic, yet dangerous. Both portrayals perpetuate the idea that women need a rescuer; that the heroine needs a man not only to save her from the perils of the world but also, to influence her in any decisions she may make in life.

The story suggests at some point that Bella is not choosing between Edward and Jacob, but between a normal or an abnormal life. However, her decision of staying with Edward makes me think about the messages that her decision is sending. Despite all of Edward's charming and old-fashionable qualities, the danger that his character entails is undeniable. Of the two potential male romantic partners, Edward is more dangerous,

manipulative, controlling, and possessive. Are these the traits that a woman should find attractive in an ideal romantic partner? Why should a woman not opt for the cheerful, confidant, loyal man, who despite all sorts of rejections is still willing to fight for her? The story is of a teenager who is struggling with her own identity and chooses a romantic yet extremely dangerous man in hopes of making her life extraordinary and significant, and she is willing to sacrifice everything and die for that. Is this what we want teenage women to learn?

By watching the movies, women have the opportunity to see through Bella's eyes and gaze with her upon the male characters. The audience can see what Bella is seeing, how Bella focuses in on both character's physical features, what she likes in each of them and how she looks at them. In this sense, the movies are trying to challenge patriarchy by objectifying the male rather than female characters. It is also worth mentioning that Summit only used a female director in the first installment, *Twilight*, which I believe, helped to introduce the characters and images to a female audience. Even though *New Moon* and *Eclipse* continue to be shot to enable the female gaze, this was more evident in *Twilight*. This makes me question the over-sexualization of Jacob's character. Since a male is directing the movies, ultimately what the movies (except from *Twilight*) are offering is a masculine perspective on how women see men.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Two characters in the popular *Twilight* franchise initiated fan frenzy around the world as people chose sides on the question about who was the ideal romantic partner: Edward Cullen, the vampire, or Jacob Black, the werewolf. Even though Bella ultimately chooses Edward, fans continued the rivalry off-screen aligning with Team Edward and Team Jacob. This reaction lead to the research questions presented in this thesis about the kind of messages the movies are sending to young girls about what are the traits of the "ideal" male romantic partner.

In real life, probably Bella would have had been safer if her choice would have been any of her human friends from high school. But this idea would not have sold millions of copies of books and movies. So first of all, we have to say that the idea of the ideal man according to *Twilight* is impossible; disregarding Bella's choice, the series suggest that the ideal romantic partner is not entirely human, or perhaps that he does not exist in real life. Also, the ideal man has to be dangerous. Both characters represent a great level of risk in a romantic relationship. On the one hand, in order to be with the vampire, the heroine has to die first. And on the other, to be with the werewolf, she has to be careful not to enrage him, otherwise he can rip her face apart. The dangerous traits are among the most concerning findings, since they are congruent to patterns of intimate partner violence (IPV), a public health issue that affects an alarming number of adolescents in the United States (Gomez, 2011). Signs of IPV include obsessive jealousy, manipulation, depression, invasion of privacy, and physical and verbal aggression. Studies have found that women between the ages of 16 and 24 are in great risk for dating

violence (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). In addition, 32% of adolescents have reported suffering some sort of psychological or physical abuse (Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, & Kupper, 2001). In *Twilight*, Edward and Jabob posit a physical and in many ways psychological threat to the heroine. However, these threats seem to be forgiven by the heroine who ultimately accepts, and in some ways enjoys, the danger that these two characters represent. Both characters are accepted by fans, who seem to have enthusiastic responses to them, overlooking or perhaps forgiving the dangerous traits they represent.[15] The problem is the movies represent IPV-type of behaviors as normal, even desirable, in a relationship. By identifying with Bella and choosing Team Edward or Team Jacob, fans are essentially saying that these are the type of men that they desire and that they will accept possessive, jealous, and manipulative behaviors if it is "true love". In real life, they may not recognize IPV signs and end up in abusive relationships.

Portrayal of Masculinity in *Twilight*

The first research question asked how the *Twilight* films depicted traits of masculinity through the portrayal of Edward and Jacob. This study found that the characteristics of these two characters as portrayed in the movies as the "ideal" man concur with the masculinity traits identified by Radway (1984) and Modleski (2008) in traditional romance stories. The story also offers a reinforcement of patriarchal values, with both characters sharing the traits of the romantic hero: a savior, a leader, powerful, and handsome; he struggles to

[15] In the youtube video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6Z1HN2-nyc, retrieved November 15th, 2011, the reactions of fans of the two teams, and the reaction of the cast on the same subjects, provides evidence of how fans seem to omit or overlook the dangerous traits. Only a few of them acknowledge that there is a level of risk in trying to sustain a relationship with either of the characters. Mostly, the reactions are positive and enthusiastic.

show his emotions to the heroine, but ultimately declares his love to her; he is physically strong, dominant, smart, sometimes hostile, and romantic. Also, both representations are congruent with the transformation of masculinity seen in popular culture starting in the 1980s, in which the hero is a more sensitive being and (more in the case of Edward's portrayal) the ideal man is a metro-sexual who cares about the way he looks and possesses a "commercial masculinity" (Shugart, 2008, p. 283). In this sense, the masculinity depicted in the *Twilight* films is a mixed masculinity that encompasses both the traditional masculinity of the romances with the metro-sexual masculinity of the chick flicks.

However, the ideal man as portrayed in *Twilight* through Edward and Jacob also has some qualities that reinforce the idea that chick flicks can both perpetuate and challenge the status quo. The portrayals show how the hero is sometimes vulnerable and needs the heroine to rescue or defend him, and he is comfortable with this. He is a man that is not afraid on showing this vulnerability opening his heart to the heroine, letting her get in his inner circle of trust, as both Edward and Jacob do. Some of the *Twilight* saga's themes coincide with those that Ferris and Young (2007) described as having been used by third-wave feminism in chick flicks. For example, there is, to some degree, a positive portrayal of romantic relationships, as the story shows us how Edward's and Jacob's priority is Bella and the love they feel for her. Here, love becomes a tool, and impulse that help the characters to grow and fight for what they want, Bella in particular -- this despite the dangerous messages of obsessive type of love portrayed. Also there is a focus on female pleasure and pleasures, letting the audience perceive the male characters from Bella's perspective in a story in which the two male leads are among the heroine's

desires. Another interesting point is that the movies have a male character who is objectified; Jacob is the one who is transformed physically and captures a lot of the audience attention. There are also specific messages that each character sends about how the ideal romantic partner should be, which leads to my second research question. What traits do the representation of each of the characters—Edward and Jacob—as viewed in the *Twilight* films suggest for the ideal male romantic partner?

The romantic, protective, and dangerous hero.

Overall, Edward is a hero that physically fulfills the expectations of the traditional romantic hero. He is attractive, which is presented as necessary for vampires to survive; in fact the story suggests that all vampires are attractive and possess certain charm. Initially it's shocking and even confusing to see how Edward doesn't look like the traditional vampires, but like a handsome teenager. But I think that is part of the charm of the character and in this sense Edward as a vampire is an unexpected kind of hero. As a matter of fact, nobody would expect that a vampire could be a hero. I need to give credit to the author on that, and even when the story is predictable, I believe no vampire movie has presented such a positive representation on the character like *Twilight*, speaking in terms of looks.

What Edward resembles, at least to me, is an ad or runway teenage model. He could be selling the clothes he wears or the car he drives. In fact, some scenes of *Twilight, New Moon* and *Eclipse* look like Volvo ads (he owns and drives Volvo cars). Another fact that intrigues me about Edward's physical traits is the association that Bella makes between his sparkling skin and diamonds. It is a common association in popular

culture to portray women's fascination with jewelry (e.g., *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*, *Titanic, Pretty Woman*) and in particular diamonds, which have not only been associated with high economic standards, but also with the promise of love. This has sold the idea that a diamond represents women's desires of love. The sentence 'a diamond is forever', introduced by popular media, has given us the idea that if a man gives a woman a diamond it is because his feelings had transcended toward commitment. When Bella discovers Edward's sparkling skin, she looks at him like she just have found a treasure. She is completely fascinated with the shining figure in front of her. This is also reinforced in the scene where Edward wants to get killed and takes off his shirt. Thus, beauty shines, beauty is a treasure, and Edward is the ultimate diamond. There is also an association with Edward and ice, due to his cold skin. This is interesting as the other male hero (Jacob) is associated with fire. It's interesting how "cold" and "ice", words usually associated with a negative connotation in relationships, convey in this case meanings of desire.

However, internally this hero is in conflict. Despite his charm, his kindness, and his exhausting efforts to protect the heroine from the dangers of his world, Edward has a dark side: he is aggressive, extremely jealous and possessive. But in a way all of his dark traits are justified in the story, either by his physical traits, or by the attitudes of the heroine towards him. In *Twilight*, his positive traits are reinforced and this is important for the audience to accept and fall in love with the character. It is worth mentioning that Edward has a respect for old-fashion values, and has a very particular perception of marriage that a regular teenager would not have. In this case, we can see how Edward embodies the two sides. He is conservative, and yet his appearance is current and hip. He

gives a value to courtship, and states that this is a crucial step that is followed by marriage and then sex, whereas the traditional romantic hero has been described as promiscuous. Also he is vulnerable and seems comfortable with exposing this vulnerability to Bella's eyes. However, it is clear that the power in the relationship is in Edward's hands, although the movies try to sell a different image. Even though at the end of *Eclipse*, Bella states that the decision was not between two men, but between what she was and what she wanted to be and Bella submits to Edward's desires. She cannot conceive of a life without Edward, and vice versa, and this is a dangerous message. The fact that Edward desires Bella as something that he can literally consume, represents his animal thirst for her blood, to the point he compares her to a drug, and has thoughts of suicide. This also shows how their relationship is the all-or-nothing type, in which both are risking everything, or are willing to give everything up to be with one another.

In a way, through Edward the movies are sending these messages: that it is okay to sustain a relationship with a dangerous man if he protects you; that it is okay to put your feelings and desires aside in order to maintain such relationship; that it's okay that a boyfriend invades a women's privacy with acts such as watching his girlfriend while she sleeps, or that he resorts to lies and tricks to isolate her from other people, being distrustful, possessive, and also a stalker. Also, it is okay to let the man be vulnerable, and this is not a sign of him losing his masculinity; it is okay that the man is the one who waits for a sexual encounter to happen and this doesn't mean he doesn't like his female partner or doesn't desire her, so is okay to have a relationship where the sexual pressure is gone. My question is, whether Edward is a protective romantic hero, who saves Bella from perils and dangers and is willing to risk his own life in order to be with her, or if in

fact he is a dangerous man who is limiting Bella's decisions and desires and isolating her from the real world?

Jacob, the eternal friend hero.

I see this character more and more frequently in chick flicks, the heroine's best friend. It is also a movie cliché with specific few options: The heroine has a male friend who usually is in love with her, sending the message that a male and a female cannot be friends without having sexual and/or romantic intentions from one part. When that is not the case, we see how the heroine has a homosexual best friend (e.g., Carrie Bradshaw and Stanford Blatch, *Sex and the City*; Julianne Potter and George Downes, *My Best Friend's Wedding*), which takes the sexual pressure and tensions off the relationship between them. In any of the forms, this is a hero in disguise, because he is the one who rescues the heroine from the deceptions and misfortunes caused by the male lead hero. But traditionally there is no focus on his looks or on his traits (or alternatively he is portrayed as unattractive), because he is usually not considered a threat for the male hero. Jacob is undoubtedly the best friend type of hero, but he changed this scenario. He might start as the stereotypical friend, the confidant, always cheerful, and always available. However, once he takes off that shirt for the first time, both Bella and the audience stop seeing him as a regular friend, but as a potential romantic partner. And who better to be the ideal romantic partner if not a best friend? However, what is even more interesting is that as the story progresses and Jacob becomes a threat for Edward, the more Jacob starts resembling Edward's negative personality traits. Jacob, could have done much better, with all the looks and remaining cheerful and positive, to portray an ideal man.

Jacob, who could have been a character who could have challenged a lot of stereotypes such as the dominant, hostile, and indifferent male hero, ended up being again one that embodies exactly that: patriarchy. He also ended up being sexualized in a way that I have not previously seen a male character portrayed in a chick flick. The character of Jacob is objectified in a similar fashion to how females have been objectified in media and popular culture. As Mulvey's concept of the male gaze describes, the gaze in this case, claimed to be Bella's, is looking at Jacob as an object. Hence, the audience is also objectifying Jacob. What this is suggesting is that women should look at men just as men look at women, hence we see movies from a male perspective but we believe it is from ours. I applaud the intention. The concept of changing the gaze is positive, but it might have been different if Summit would have kept a female director for the other installments.

Jacob not only had to change his looks, but also his personality and become muscular, dangerous, more powerful than the heroine, and even distant to get the attention of Bella and the audience. Of course for the people familiar with the story (spoiler alert) they know that Jacob ends up imprinting on Bella's and Edward's child Renesmee, which justifies all his initial attraction for Bella. Jacob represents a man than in theory can be better than Edward, since he is offering Bella more human and normal possibilities for life. Also, Jacob is to an extent less dangerous than Edward, however, he is immature and impulsive. Ultimately, when Bella chooses Edward it is the same message: choose danger, and sacrifice your life, because the ideal man does not exist. You need to adapt to the one you like more, even when you know that he is not entirely right for you.

Conclusion

Reactions such as the one from *Twilight* fans demonstrate that audiences are no longer passive and have influence on media and popular culture. Summers (2010) described how young women are using the new form of transmedia narratives, not only to create spaces of participatory environment in which they can redefine terms such as feminism but also, I believe fans such as *Twilight's* are taking advantage of transmedia narratives to explore and find their identity. There is the idea that women's enjoyment of romance is pure entertainment, or escapism. But I believe that women can be learning about relationships and traits of masculinity from romance stories and sharing knowledge through their discussions and reactions.

Sadly, most of the messages found in this study are perpetuating patriarchy, and also they are dangerous for young women who are at an age that is crucial to define their identity. However, this could be an incentive for women in the film industry to consider, include, and defend subjects that challenge the status quo, knowing that young women are out there, not only consuming media but participating and learning from it. Also, they need to try to exploit the messages that are in fact positive and empower women, through heroes that can redefine masculinity as well. Also, the idea of using the chick flicks to explore the female gaze, suggested in *Twilight* and described by Edwards (2009), has to create an impact over females in the industry, because this can potentially change the way female audiences watch such films.

In terms of scholarly analysis, chick flicks have to be taken more seriously. Even though the stories are in majority predictable and similar to one another, each of them

offer elements that may be challenging the status quo, with themes that can be useful for audiences to keep constructing knowledge.

This study is limited in the way that I cannot be sure how the audiences are really engaging in the messages that I found, and if they are really learning something from them. Future studies should focus more on how audiences are using those messages and how the entertainment industry is changing the way people make sense of the world around them.

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