

Writing Mormonism – Vampires and Werewolves in the *Twilight* Saga as Exemplars
for an Ideal Way of Living

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1. Introduction

This study focuses on the series of four vampire books written by Stephenie Meyer, which are commonly known as the *Twilight* saga. The general aim of this study is to show how Meyer's religious background and views are portrayed in the novels, either directly or incidentally.

Teenagers quite often get interested in the same book or film which then become popular all over the world. In the past such films or books have been for example The Lord of the Rings -saga and the Harry Potter fantasy novels. The most well-known characters at the moment, however, are Bella and Edward – the central couple in the *Twilight* saga. It is not only the four books written by Stephenie Meyer but also the Hollywood film adaptations that draw the attention of teenagers as well as adults. The reason why I first started reading the *Twilight* books is that I work with teenagers, and I think it is important to get familiar with current popular literature. The subject of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) became interesting when looking at the writer of the saga, Stephenie Meyer, and after reading some of her statements. It awoke questions: How did she create the vampire image and why is it so different from the old terrifying image of a bloodsucker? Did her religion influence her writing and if so, in which ways can it be seen in the novels? The aim of this study is to find out answers to these questions by comparing the images and ideals presented in *Twilight* to the norms of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS Church).

Even though the LDS Church shares holy books with other Christian religions, it is still very different. The dissimilarity of the Mormon faith in comparison to the surrounding world is described in the following quotation by Gilmore:

My mother was born into a world of early twentieth-century Mormon Utah— a place that, in many respects, was dramatically different from the America that surrounded it. The Mormons had long possessed a strong and spectacular sense of otherness and unity: They saw themselves not only as God's modern chosen people, but also as a people whose faith and identity had been forged by a long and bloody history,

and by outright banishment. They were a people apart— a people with its own myths and purposes, and with a history of astonishing violence.

(Gilmore, 2003: 259)

This difference to the American society will be of importance when discussing how Meyer's faith is present in her novels.

In my thesis I first give a theoretical background to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and then outline the traditional and contemporary presentations of vampires and werewolves. These will be used to support my general argument that through her writing Meyer conveys her own religious beliefs through her novels. The analysis will be based on this theoretical foundation.

2. The *Twilight* Saga

The roots of the *Twilight* series lie in a dream the author Stephenie Meyer had: she saw a beautiful vampire and an average looking girl in a meadow. Meyer could not forget the discussion between this uneven couple and it led to the series which now consists of four novels: *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn*. The first book, *Twilight*, was published in 2005, *New Moon* in 2006, *Eclipse* in 2007 and *Breaking Dawn* in 2008. There are also two spinoff books, which I do not discuss in my thesis: *The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner* (the story of a new-born vampire who appears in *Eclipse*) and *Midnight Sun* (presenting the events of *Twilight* from Edward's view).

This modern vampire story – spiced with romance – rapidly became very popular among teenagers all over the world, and even adults are fascinated by the love story between the gentleman vampire and the girl next door. After the first film, *Twilight*, was released in 2008, an even wider public was attracted. In 2009 the sequel *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* followed, and the next year *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* came to the movie theatres. The last book's film version – *Breaking Dawn* – consists of two separate parts, which were released in autumn of 2011 and 2012. The books have sold over 100 million copies so far and have been translated into more than 30 languages.

2.1. Plot Summary and Introducing Central Characters

The first book, *Twilight*, tells how Bella falls in love with Edward, and how she finds out about the true personality of the Cullens and learns about vampires. It also depicts the threat vampires present as she is chased by a vampire. The novel begins with Bella Swan's move from the sunny city of Phoenix to a small town, Forks, to live with her father. Bella's mother Renée has re-married and Bella does not want to hold her mother back from travelling with her new husband. In Phoenix Bella was not popular, because she is not brown or athletic like the others. In Forks, however,

the new girl is almost an attraction and everyone wants to get to know her – except the Cullens. The Cullen family consists of the parents Carlisle and Esme and their adopted children Edward, Alice, Jasper, Rosalie and Emmet. Carlisle is a respected doctor and all the family members are beautiful. As is revealed later, they are all in fact vampires, most of them (Edward, Esme, Rosalie and Emmett) created by Carlisle. At school the Cullens keep to themselves, and they are admired for their looks and their money. The Cullen coven (coven is similar to a family) does not feed on human blood, and they have lived in the same area for several years – both uncommon characteristics for vampires in the *Twilight* world. Other central characters are Bella's father Charlie, Forks' Chief of Police, and Jakob Black, a member of the Quileute tribe (later a shape shifter and the leader of the werewolf pack).

The most important coven in the vampire society is the Volturi, the oldest and largest coven which is located in Italy. The three leaders of this coven have created rules and regulations to keep the existence of vampires secret. Among these are the laws that humans should not be told about vampires and that, child vampires should not be created. If a vampire violates these regulations, the Volturi punishes him or her, sometimes even the whole coven. The members of the Denali coven, on the other hand, live like the Cullens on animal blood and they have a permanent home as well. The more traditional way of living for the vampires in the *Twilight* saga is to live as nomads and obviously feed on human blood.

The second book of the saga, called *New Moon*, begins with Bella's birthday party. Bella has turned a year older than Edward's physical age, and Bella desperately wants to become a part of the Cullen family – a vampire like them. During the party Bella gets a small cut, and the drop of blood triggers the feeding instinct of Jasper who tries to bite Bella. However, Edward manages to protect her, and the situation is soon over. Edward realises that their relationship puts Bella in constant danger and decides that his whole family should move away from Forks to protect her. Edward's absence makes Bella depressed for a long time, until she starts spending more time with Jacob Black – a Quileute boy. Jacob falls in love with Bella, but she does not

have quite the same feelings for him. Even though Bella is fond of Jacob, she cannot stop thinking about Edward and misses him a lot. The lines of Bella's and Jacob's friendship are blurred, and it is obvious that they would become a couple without the existence of Edward. Bella and Jacob are the closest before Jacob's change into a werewolf. Then young Quileute boys – Jacob's friends – begin to alter; they start to spend more time together and their behaviour changes. Jacob finds this frightening at first – he does not want to become a part of this “cult” (as he describes it). Then Jacob himself becomes a werewolf (they are really shape shifters, but think of themselves as werewolves) and thus understands the others and the need to alter their manners. The transformations are due to the presence of vampires – the Quileute have the ancient ability of changing into wolves. Originally they could take any animal form they wanted to, but later the capability was restricted to wolf only. Their secret is revealed to Bella after the pack saves her from Laurent – a vampire whose friend James Edward has killed. Laurent has come to Forks to help James' mate Victoria to get back to Edward by killing Edward's mate, Bella.

Bella had promised Edward to be careful and take care of herself, but when she realises that in dangerous situations she can feel Edward's presence, she starts to put herself in unsafe places. As she jumps off a cliff – a common pastime activity among the Quileute youth – Alice sees this and thinks Bella killed herself. Edward hears Alice's premonition. Therefore he decides to seek the Volturi in order to provoke them and get killed. Bella and Alice manage to find Edward before he is hurt. All three end up in the Volturi mansion, but are able to leave unhurt with the promise of changing Bella into a vampire.

Eclipse is the third book of the *Twilight* saga. The main themes of this book are Bella's desire to become a vampire, Edward's resistance to it, Victoria's attempt to kill Bella, and the conflict between the Cullens and the werewolf pack with Bella in between. Edward and the other vampires do not trust Jacob to be able to control his anger; they are afraid Bella will get hurt. On the other hand, the pack feels the same way about the vampires. Vampires and werewolves are in Meyer's fictional world enemies; in fact werewolves only exist to protect humans from vampires.

From the beginning of her relationship Bella has had the desire to become a vampire, but Edward has not been willing to change her. In *Eclipse* his condition to change her into a vampire is that they get married first. Carlisle is willing to change Bella after her graduation. The transformation into a vampire seems unavoidable since the Volturi insist upon it (in *New Moon*).

In the last book of the saga *Breaking Dawn*, Bella and Edward get married, spend their honeymoon on a deserted island, and as a result Bella gets pregnant. No one thought that would be possible, and it is a shock to everyone except Bella and Rosalie who are determined to keep the baby. The carrying theme of the last novel is the child Renesmee – how she affects the Cullens and everyone around her. Bella has to be transformed into vampire after giving birth to Renesmee in order to save Bella's life. The Volturi come to punish the Cullens as they think Renesmee is a child that has been transformed into a vampire. Thanks to the special ability of Alice it is possible for the Cullens to prepare themselves for the arrival of the Volturi: they gather a large number of vampires in Forks in order to be able to defend Renesmee and their coven against the Volturi. The possibly dangerous attack of the Volturi dissolves into a mere dispute between the Volturi and the Cullen covens.

In general, vampires in the *Twilight*-saga are very difficult to kill, the only way is to tear the body into bits and then burn the parts; they can recover from other injuries, even decapitation. The vampires resemble each other and have similar abilities, but they are able to choose their way of living, and only a few have become members of the human society. There are not many vampires in *Twilight*, and they live rather spread out. They have laws to protect the secret of their existence. The vampires do not present a huge threat to humans; they live mostly as nomads in small groups of two or three vampires, and therefore, do not kill many humans in one area. This way they can hide their existence more easily.

2.2. Special Abilities of the Vampires

In addition to the special features all vampires have – their enhanced senses and the ability to be immensely fast – there are some distinct skills that only one vampire possesses. I will shortly introduce the most important ones in this section.

Alice Cullen has the ability to see the future. Yet, this skill is not fully reliable as the future is influenced and changed through our behaviour. Bella describes it quite well: “A million tiny decisions, her decisions or so many others’, too – Edward’s – could alter her path, and with that, the future” (*New Moon*, 423). Edward Cullen is capable of hearing everyone’s thoughts except Bella’s. This is one of the reasons he is attracted to her: he does not know what goes on in her mind. Jasper Cullen’s uniqueness is the skill to influence people’s feelings; he can calm down angry humans as well as vampires – even werewolves. Renesmee can show her memories and thoughts by touching someone.

The Volturi family and their guard consist almost entirely of vampires with supernatural talents. Aro can hear everyone’s thoughts, like Edward, but he needs to touch the person whose mind he is reading. Jane is one of the guards and of some importance in *New Moon* as well as in the final confrontation in *Breaking Dawn*. She has the ability of bringing pain by only looking at a person or a vampire.

Bella is immune to most of the special gifts, except for Jasper’s talent to control emotional atmospheres and Alice’s gift to see her future. The reason for her immunity is revealed in the last book, *Breaking Dawn*: Bella herself has the ability to control her mind and to make a protective shield around her and others. This ability has protected her already as a human.

2.3. About the Author Stephenie Meyer

The author Stephenie Meyer is an average stay-at-home mother in her thirties, who grew up in Phoenix (the same city where Bella Swan lived before her move to Forks). She studied English at Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah – the university which is owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the LDS or Mormon Church). According to Krakauer (2003:77), there are thirty thousand students of whom 99% are white. The reason for the lack of ethnic diversity might be that the non-believers in the Book of Mormon (called Lamanites) are not fair skinned. God supposedly cursed the non-believers and gave them a darker skin. Both factors – the Book of Mormon and the lack of coloured people in Meyer’s surroundings – can explain why there are hardly any black people in Meyer’s books.

Meyer is a firm believer and has stated that she does not drink alcohol or smoke. She has portrayed Bella much in the same way she was as a teenager: a normal, good girl. The fact that she has grown up in a religious environment and has a positive way of seeing the world, influences the characters and her novels in general: there are not many evil personalities. There are also no references to forbidden drinks in the books: no one is said to drink for example coffee or Coca-Cola as the Mormons are expected not to drink tea, coffee and alcohol (Melton 1986: 33). In addition, tobacco is forbidden in the LDS Church and thus also absent in the *Twilight* saga.

At first glance it might be surprising that Meyer claims not to have read any vampire literature or watched any horror movies, but on closer reflection it is evident that the *Twilight* saga cannot really be put in the same category as Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* or John Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, simply because Meyer’s novels do not include horror in the same way. The vampires presented in the *Twilight* saga are quite different from the image of the frightening bloodsucker, even though some of the stereotypical looks of a vampire have stayed mainly the same: beautiful features in a pale face, exactly as the vampires described in *Twilight*. There is also a similar kind of

strangeness, not really fitting in, although taking part in social events, as Bella's first encounter with the five Cullens shows:

It was there, sitting in the lunchroom, trying to make conversation with seven curious strangers, that I first saw them. They were sitting in the corner of the cafeteria, as far away from where I sat as possible in the long room. There were five of them. They weren't talking, and they weren't eating, though they each had a tray of untouched food in front of them. They weren't gawking at me, unlike the most of the other students, so it was safe to stare at them without fear of meeting an excessively interested pair of eyes. But it was none of these things that caught, and held, my attention.

They didn't look anything alike. Of the three boys, one was big – muscled like a serious weight lifter, with dark, curly hair. Another was taller, leaner, but still muscular, and honey blond. The last was lanky, less bulky, with untidy, bronze-colored hair. He was more boyish than the others, who looked like they could be in college, or even teachers here rather than students. [...]

And yet, they were all exactly alike. Every one of them was chalky pale, the palest of all the students living in this sunless town. Paler than me, the albino. They all had dark shadows under those eyes – purplish, bruiselike shadows. [...] Though their noses, all their features, were straight, perfect, angular.

But all this is not why I couldn't look away. I stared because their faces, so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful.

(*Twilight*, 15-17)

The vampires in *Twilight* are beautiful, pale, strong and fast, but a human who is not familiar with the existence of vampires will not recognize them directly as such. They do not arouse suspicion or fear like vampires in other stories. Most of the teenagers at Bella's high school admire and even envy the Cullens for their looks, their wealth and their happiness. Even Rosalie, who herself is very good-looking, admits that she had been jealous of the Cullens in her human form: "I didn't like Dr. Cullen or his wife and her brother – as Edward pretended to be then. It had upset me that they were all more beautiful than I was, especially that the men were" (*Eclipse*, 143). In addition to the admiration, humans have an instinctive dislike towards the Cullens: "Despite the natural aversion most humans felt toward the Cullens [...]" (*Eclipse*, 10). The Cullens, however, do not really blend into the high school

environment. They seem and look older than the teenagers, and they keep to themselves. Their way of life stays mysterious for the other students. Bella is drawn to the Cullen coven by the beautiful features and the strangeness of Edward. It seems that peculiarity is for us humans both scary and fascinating at the same time. If someone does not belong it might make him an outcast or mysterious and interesting. The vampires have been presented as outsiders in previous literature, and Meyer's books continue this topic of being left outside the society. This strangeness and feeling of not belonging to the mainstream will be discussed later more closely.

3. Theoretical Background of Monsters and Mormonism

In the following sections I will give theoretical and historical background for my thesis by summarising and presenting theoretical texts about vampires, werewolves and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as explaining the connections to the *Twilight* saga and its author Stephenie Meyer.

3.1. Vampires and Werewolves

As I have mentioned earlier, the image of Meyer's vampires is very different from the Dracula figure that is most commonly seen as the stereotypical vampire. Why the *Twilight* saga includes such exceptional figures can be explained with the help of Nina Auerbach who has written studies on vampires of which four have been combined in the book *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. Auerbach (1995: 5-6) clarifies in her book how the vampires have changed from the ghostly folklore figures over the 19th-century British vampires to the vampires in the 20th-century America. She illustrates thoroughly the changes of vampires throughout history and depicts the influence of the world on the characters in vampire literature. Since the vampire image has always been varying, it is only natural that Meyer has portrayed yet again a different vampire type.

Auerbach (1995: 5-6) explains that the roots of the vampires lie in the folklore, in old stories passed on by telling (exactly like the origin of the werewolves). The versatility of the vampires Auerbach describes as following: "Some come to life in moonlight, others are killed by the sun; some pierce with their eyes, others with fangs; some are reactionary, others are rebels; but all are disturbingly close to the mortals they prey on" (1995: 5-6). As Auerbach says, the vampires have had various features throughout time – in the *Twilight* saga these features are somewhat different: e.g. the vampire skin sparkles in the sun. The reason for the changing image is according to Auerbach (1995: 7, 27) the society as well as the political surrounding in which the vampire stories were written. The 1980s are a good example of this.

This is when Ronald Reagan became the President of the United States of America as well as the time when the AIDS epidemic began. Coincidentally, vampires began to die in the literature and films of the 1980s. Auerbach's statement confirms my theory that Stephenie Meyer's writing, and her figures have been influenced by her social surroundings which in this case means the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the church's doctrines.

The most famous vampire of all times is Dracula. In literature he is presented to be the only male vampire and thus a solitary figure. He does not have friends or support, which separates him from the humans who have their strength in the community and groups. Traditionally vampires presented the evil that is contemporaneous for that time; around the time Dracula was created, in the 1890s, it was homosexuality (Auerbach 1995: 81, 83). The vampires of the Cullen coven are very different from Dracula; they have a strong bondage within their so-called family, and they do not present evil but quite the opposite: the vampires (and in some aspects also the werewolves) in *Twilight* stand for an ideal way of living.

Similarly with the new representation of the vampires, Meyer's books also introduce a kind of werewolf. To understand more about the image of a traditional werewolf and its origin I chose to read an article written by Leena Peltonen. She writes in detail about werewolves: their origin, their features, the reasons and ways of changing, different national epics about werewolves and lastly the werewolves in fantasy and science fiction literature. Peltonen (1992: 209-210) explains that the change of a human into different carnivores is known all over the world and the animal forms can vary from tigers and lions to bears and wolves. The reason why the wolf became the most common animal in the changing stories in Europe is explained by the fact that the social system of a pack of wolves resembles to a great extent the human society. Later in my thesis I will discuss this social system of a werewolf pack more closely.

Peltonen (1992: 210-211) states, that the shamanism gave the transformation into an animal a mythical status. A shaman could take over the role of an animal to the

extent that his spirit was believed to transfer into it. For hunting people it was only natural to relate themselves to predators. A similar story is told by the Quileute tribe in the *Twilight* saga – in the past shape shifters were able to take any animal form, but after the attack of a vampire only the wolf form remained and was passed on over generations.

Among native-Americans, animals were seen as helpers and god-like creatures. However, as Christianity spread the old gods became enemies and were told to be satanic. At this point the wolf converted into a symbol for evil. In our culture the wolf is seen as a symbol for the uncontrollable nature; violent and driven by sexual needs. Therefore, a werewolf can be seen as an example of a human who is led by his instincts only. This struggle between the rational, humane side, and a cruel animal side is often portrayed in literature, for example in Herman Hesse's *Steppenwolf*. However, in reality a pack of wolves is strictly controlled, and the hierarchy is very important. Even the forming of pairs is more monogamous than among most humans (Peltonen 1992: 212).

The traditional werewolf presented evil much in the same way as the traditional vampire; Meyer, however, changed both. In the *Twilight* saga both vampires as well as werewolves have more positive features and seem to stand for ideal values. When the werewolves first start to change, they have problems with control, but self-restraint is highly valued among them and thus strongly encouraged. Meyer can be said to promote self-control, because it is appreciated among both vampires and werewolves. Additionally the monogamous life mentioned by Peltonen exists within the werewolf pack in *Twilight*; it is even enhanced: the werewolf imprints on a human, who then becomes the centre of universe for that werewolf. It is not a matter of choice but faith. The details of imprinting will be discussed later.

Peltonen (1992: 213) writes also about the two different looks of a werewolf. There are two options, the total transformation into a wolf, which is the original theory, and the more modern version of the film industry: an upright walking and furry creature. Unlike many other mystical creatures the werewolf is not recognisable in his human

form. He acts like any normal human and eats in a normal way. Yet, they might have more body hair than the average human has. In *Twilight* the Quileute boys become more muscular once their change into werewolves has been triggered. In addition, they have higher body temperature than humans and thus need fewer clothes. However, they are not hairier as human beings.

Traditionally the reasons for becoming a werewolf were cursing, wearing a wolf skin or touching a certain object, e.g. a book, or through scratches and bites. More recently the genetics have become the reason for the change. Werewolves cannot control their transformations; they are controlled by outer forces, such as the moon. The killing of a werewolf is portrayed in different ways as well: usually either a fire or a silver bullet is needed (Peltonen 1992: 214-218). In the *Twilight* saga the facility of becoming a werewolf is within the genes: it runs in the blood of the members of the Quileute tribe. The change, as mentioned earlier, is caused by the presence of vampires. The aspects of transformation will be explained in chapter 6.

3.2. The Church of the Latter-day Saints

The aim of my thesis is to show in what way Meyer's religion has affected her writing, especially the characteristics of vampires and werewolves. Therefore, I have to be able to recognise Mormon ideas portrayed in the *Twilight* novels. In order to distinguish religious features, I first have to understand the views and the life of the members of the Church of the Latter-day Saints. Thus I got to know more about the Church by reading literature about Mormons. J. Gordon Melton gives general information about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) in his book about cults in America. Melton explains that the Mormon faith is based on the revelations that Joseph Smith and the restored priesthood had. The first important revelation lead to the *Book of Mormon*, next revelations were written down in *Doctrines and Covenants*, and the third volume by Smith is the *Pearl of Great Price*. The church has summarised Smith's revelations in their Articles of Faith:

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.
3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.
4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.
7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.
8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.
9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.
10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.
11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.
12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.
13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul-We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

(Melton 1986:31-32)

For my thesis the most interesting of these Articles are number seven, twelve and thirteen. In the Article number seven can be seen as an explanation to the vast imagination of Stephenie Meyer that produced the new type of vampires and werewolves – a type that is so different from previous literature. Number twelve on the other hand supports my notion of the importance of authorities – in the *Twilight* saga as well as in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The last Article

encourages members of the church to aim for good things; the virtuous way of life is clearly aspired by the characters of Meyer's novels as well.

Jon Krakauer has written explicitly about the Mormon faith, especially the more violent and negative sides, in his book *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* that was published in 2003. Krakauer portrays the many aspects of the Church of the Latter-day Saints: the life of Joseph Smith, the founding of the Church and the first years of LDS; the time when Brigham Young was the head of the church, the polygamy question which, among other contradictions led to Mormons having to move a lot, trying to find a place to settle; and lastly the violent and highly patriarchal fundamentalists that still follow the polygamy principle and marry even young teenagers. The resemblance between these fundamentalist Mormons and the vampire authority, the Volturi, is in focus in the section 4.2. There are surprising similarities between these two groups.

A more general view on the Church of the Latter-day Saints can be found in the Rise of Mormonism written by Rodney Stark and Reid Larkin Neilson. In the introduction of the book Stark is described as follows:

Rodney Stark is not a Mormon. He is, however, a renowned sociologist with an abiding interest in the Latter-day Saints. In his own words, the "miracle" of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter Church of Jesus Christ or LDS Church) makes it "the single most important case on the agenda of the social scientific study of religion." As a sociologist, he considers the rise of Mormonism to be "one of the great events in the history of religion."

(Stark and Neilson 2005: 1)

This book is based on scientific research, but Stark also has personal experience of Mormon networks. Stark combines both science and personal experience when he writes about scientific models in Mormon history, Joseph Smith, networks, rationality and sacrifice, modern Mormon Church, and the reasons for the popularity of LDS. Stark's text supports my general arguments in many aspects and he is mentioned in all three analytic chapters.

I found another perspective on the Mormon life in Lori Beaman's research, that is based on interviews with 28 Latter Day Saints women. It gave an inside view into the women's status in Mormon faith. Beaman (2001: 1) was interested in mainly two things: how women maintain autonomy and agency, and how women deal with the male authority within both church and family. The position of women in the *Twilight* saga, particularly regarding the main character Bella, will be discussed with this LDS point of view in mind.

In addition to looking at scientific research on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I read some of their holy books. The most important of these is the Book of Mormon which has given the religion its common name. I use the Book of Mormon to support my findings in similarities in the society chapter, and when considering conversion into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and transformations in the *Twilight* saga.

4. Society

In this section I am going to focus on social aspects in the *Twilight* saga in comparison to the values of the Church of the Latter-day Saints. The four main points are networks, authorities, capitalism and education. With networks I refer to the connections between vampires and humans in comparison to the Mormons and the non-believers. In the section Authorities I will show similarities between the leaders of the vampires, werewolves and Mormon communities. Lastly I will look at the attitudes towards capitalism and education in the *Twilight* saga as well as within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Based on these four topics I will show how Stephenie Meyer has achieved to convey her religious values to the readers.

4.1. Networks

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a relatively new religion which was founded by Joseph Smith in North America in 1830. It is clearly an American religion and America is seen as the holy land, as is said in the Book of Mormon: “And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations” (*Second Book of Nephi*, Chapter 10: 11-12). The church has gained members all over the world through active missionary work, although the religion does not seek to have as many followers as possible, but rather aims for the right amount of believers since members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints consider that the true believers are spread around the world, and that they need to be united. The pursuit for the right amount of believers, while living relatively unnoticed in the society, is similar to the vampire society in *Twilight*. The vampires live either in small groups or as nomads and the amount of new-born vampires cannot be too great.

The early years of the church faced hostilities, as Hamilton (1995: 3-12) states, mainly because of Joseph Smith’s teachings and claims of divine authority, but also

because of their writings, their isolated way of living, the rapid growth of their religion, etc. Therefore, the followers had to move several times, mostly towards the West. Eventually Salt Lake City became their refuge, although only around a third of Mormons lived there in the 1850s. Under the pressure of the government, the church abolished the practice of plural marriages in 1890. Nowadays the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints faces different problems with the surrounding world as Stark writes:

Today, Latter-day Saint tension with the outside world takes two primary forms. First, the Saints are stricter in terms of the moral rules governing their lifestyles and the levels of commitment expected of the individual member. Second, they embrace a significantly different theology.

(Stark 2005: 122)

Even though commitment within the religious circle is highly important, Mormons are at the same time encouraged to form social contacts outside their church, to make friends with non-believers. These norms are again similar to the vampire rules in the *Twilight* saga: vampires should live hidden from humans, and stay among other vampires. The Cullens have succeeded in living as part of the human society without rousing suspicion, because the Cullen coven has stricter moral rules as the other vampires, much in the same way as the Mormons mentioned in Stark's writing. The Cullens have – even though unwillingly – accomplished to promote their existence to Bella to the extent that she wants to be like them.

4.2. Authorities

As stated earlier, the vampires presented by Meyer in the *Twilight* series live either on their own or in family-like covens as the Cullens, but despite their different lifestyles they all have the same rules to follow. These laws are set by a large, ancient coven – the Volturi – which furthermore ensures, that all vampires follow their rules. They are described as follows: “[...] they were an old, powerful family – like royalty” (*New Moon*, 377). The regulations include for example that vampires should not live openly among humans – the secret of their existence has to be protected carefully. Creating any child vampires is also strictly prohibited (discussed in detail

later). Laws or in the case of religion, doctrines, are important for a society, as Stark states: “[...] brought into clear relief by the many examples of groups that failed (or are failing) for lack of doctrines defining a legitimate basis for effective leadership” (Stark 2005: 124). Every society needs an authority to ensure that everyone follows the laws, as is felicitously said in *Breaking Dawn*: “There couldn’t be a law if there was no punishment; there couldn’t be a punishment if there was no one to deliver it” (31). If one considers the Volturi from the present Mormon point of view, there are parallels to the official leaders of the Church of the Latter-day Saints as well as to religious fanatics. However, if the holy scripts of the LDS are examined there is resemblance to the non-believing kings in the Book of Mormon or even the Lamanites (the cursed non-believers). These different aspects are looked at in the following paragraphs.

The Volturi coven is ruled by three old vampires: Caius, Aro and Marcus. Along with their female mates they form the royal family of the vampire society in *Twilight*. They have gained their position through wars and by proving over time that they can keep peace among the vampire society. Their coven is by far the oldest, largest and strongest. These factors make it difficult to oppose them, yet, it is not impossible as can be seen in the last book of the saga. Caius, Aro and Marcus have so-called bodyguards (vampires with special talents) protecting their lives – much the same way as celebrities in our human society. Apart from the core family and their bodyguards, the Volturi coven consists of many other vampires who all serve different purposes. Their main purpose is to protect the lives of Caius, Aro and Marcus, but also to execute orders and to maintain order among the vampire society.

The three oldest vampires have very different personalities: Aro seems nice and calm, Caius is the most violent one, ready to act instead of talk, while Marcus seems completely neutral and bored by any conflict their coven faces. They make decisions together, but Aro speaks more than Caius and Marcus, and he seems to have the most influence on decision making (*New Moon* 413-416, *Breaking Dawn* 638-640). As said above, the Volturi has gained their status through wars with other covens. In the

LDS Church, however, priests are named directly according to God's will; all authorities come from God, as the Book of Mormon portrays:

“I, Alma, having been consecrated by my father, Alma, to be a high priest over the church of God, he having power and authority from God to do these things, behold, I say unto you that he began to establish a church in the land which was in the borders of Nephi; yea, the land which was called the land of Mormon; yea, and he did baptize his brethren in the waters of Mormon”.

(*The Book of Alma*, Chapter 5: 3)

The composition of the leading vampires in *Twilight* resembles the structure of the leading group of the Church of the Latter-day Saints which Krakauer describes as follows:

Control of the LDS Church resides in the hand of fifteen men. At the top of the hierarchical pyramid is the “President, Prophet, Seer, and Revelator,” who is believed to be God's direct mouthpiece on earth. The LDS president appoints two trusted apostles to serve as his first counselor and second counselor; collectively these three men function as the First Presidency. Immediately below the First Presidency is the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and, together, these fifteen men (they are always men; women are excluded from positions of authority in the Mormon Church) hold sway over the institution and its membership with absolute power. All fifteen men serve for life. At the time of the president's death, the Quorum of the Twelve appoints as new president the apostle from their ranks who has served the longest; hence the exceedingly advanced age of most Mormon presidents.

(Krakauer 2003: 4)

As one can see, in both cases three elderly (or even ancient) men form a group of leaders and one of these men has the main power: the President in the LDS church and Aro in *Twilight*. The two trios direct the lives of their subordinates – the members of the Church of the Latter-day Saints and the vampires – by regulating and controlling behaviour. The LDS leaders (the First Presidency) are supported by twelve men (the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) and a similar supporting group can be seen in *Twilight's* supporting vampires, the so-called bodyguards. Obviously composition of both directing sections is similar, but do they have similar leading styles as well?

One of the most controversial aspects in the Mormon faith has been polygamy, which Joseph Smith promoted as a divine principle. Church leaders decided to forbid polygamy because of the negative attitude and strong pressure of the US government and the surrounding society. Nowadays the official Church of the Latter-day Saints' notion is that monogamy is the correct way of living: a family should consist of a husband, wife and their children (cf. Chapter 5.). In this matter the Church of the Latter-day Saints has adapted to the imposition of the mainstream culture instead of strictly keeping to their holy scripts. In a similar way the royal vampires Caius, Aro and Marcus forbid the creation of child vampires: at a certain time several children were changed, until the infant vampires proved to be uncontrollable, and they formed a threat to expose the secret of the existence of the vampires. It shows that both leaders are capable of adapting to a new situation in order to ensure the continuum of their lifestyle – Mormonism or Vampirism – even if it means altering their guidelines. Another important factor in making changes is, that the followers will comply and agree with the new ideas. All the vampires understand the importance of refraining from creating child vampires, even to the extent that the violation of the law will be reported to the Volturi immediately. The polygamy problem is more complex; most of the members of the LDS church now believe in a traditional marriage with a husband and one wife, but there are religious fanatics who disagree. The views of Mormon Fundamentalists and their parallels to the vampire leaders will be discussed next.

Above, I have emphasised the similarities of the Church of the Latter-day Saints leaders to *Twilight's* Caius, Aro and Marcus. Next I will state some similarities between the leaders in *Twilight* to the Mormon Fundamentalists. Besides being old-fashioned and corrupt, the vampire chiefs can make unconsidered, even violent decisions. For example if a vampire breaks the rules set by the Volturi, they will send for him, and he will be punished, his whole coven may even be destroyed. The punishment depends on the felony, on the size of the coven and the individual abilities of the coven's vampires. The Volturi, especially Aro, is willing to kill anyone who hinders them. The fact that the Volturi uses very harsh punishments – even death – is reminiscent of the Mormon Fundamentalists. I will use Dan Lafferty

as an example for a Mormon Fundamentalist. Dan Lafferty believed to be a prophet, and he did not agree with the changes the Church of the Latter-day Saints made in order to better fit into society. Instead Lafferty supported the idea of polygamy and “blood atonement”. Therefore, he studied and believed in the original teachings of Joseph Smith. Dan and his brother Ron Lafferty had so much faith in Joseph Smith and their own holiness, that they killed the wife of their brother as a result of a revelation. The only so-called crime of the victim Brenda Lafferty seems to have been, that she was not as obedient and submissive as the fundamentalists expected a wife to be. The following statement about Lafferty shows us more about his view of the world:

It didn't take him long to discover that polygamy wasn't the only divine principle the modern LDS Church had abandoned in its eagerness to be accepted by American society. Dan learned that in the nineteenth century, both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had preached about the righteousness of a sacred doctrine known as “blood atonement”: certain grievous acts committed against Mormons, as Brigham explained it, could be rectified only if the “sinners have their blood spilt upon the ground.” And Dan learned that Joseph had taught that the laws of God take precedence over the laws of men.

(Krakauer 2003: 135)

The punishment described above is similar to the sentence carried out by the Volturi: the vampire who does not obey their rules is destroyed and along with him the whole coven – except vampires with special abilities who the Volturi can take advantage of. The Latter-day Saints Church's official leaders do not believe in physical punishment, because they have to obey the laws set by the country's government. Instead, they use social and psychological pressure. A member of the LDS, who violates against the church guidelines for example by having extra-marital sex, will firstly experience great guilt for his actions and feel responsible for his own unhappiness. Secondly, he will lose his place in the church. For a male member it means that he will not be allowed to speak in the church and may even be excommunicated (Worthy 2008: 150-153). In the matter of consequences in disobedience the similarity of the authorities in *Twilight* as in the Latter-day Saints Church is obvious. Vampires in *Twilight* and LDS members alike aspire to keep to the rules given by their authorities; the explanation for this behaviour might be found

in this statement: “Mormon culture idolizes authority to a much greater degree than most” (Worthy 2008: 109). Again the vampires reflect the attitudes of the Mormon religion.

Generally considered, the Mormon Fundamentalists support the original guidelines of Mormon faith: the teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. They oppose the idea that religion changes, especially because of the pressure of the society. Most of the fundamentalist groups forbid their members to be in contact with non-believers, sometimes even members of the LDS church. They want to keep their sect members by giving them no free choice, no interaction with the outside world, only strict discipline. The Volturi are alike, they keep to their old traditions (eating humans, not interacting with the human society) as opposed to the Cullens who want to interact with humans and choose not to drink human blood. Again the Cullens resemble the ideal member of the Church of the Latter-day Saints by fitting into society, succeeding financially, interacting with non-believers (non-vampires) and at the same time maintaining ideal family values.

The similarities of the Volturi to authorities of LDS fundamentalists and authorities of the official LDS leaders have been examined above. However, one can argue that there are resemblances between the Volturi and the non-believing kings in the Book of Mormon. The holy scriptures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints include apart from the well-known Old and New Testament, the following Mormon books: the Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price and the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon was buried in the form of golden plates and revealed to Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni; the book, however, is named after Moroni’s father, King Mormon. It tells about Christ’s dealing with the ancient inhabitants of North and South America. The Mormons consider it to be a holy book along with the Bible, as Stark describes it:

[...], Mormonism embraces the *entire* Christian-Judaic tradition and adds to it in logical fashion, incorporating a more modern worldview. Latter-day Saints continue to read and study the Old and New Testaments, but they also accept the authority of the Book of Mormon, “Another Testament of Jesus Christ”.

(Stark 2005: 115)

The Book of Mormon includes stories about the believing followers and their lives. These believers encounter many difficulties, especially when facing non-believers. The non-believers are shown to be intolerant and violent against the righteous people; a good example for these struggles can be found in The Words of Mormon:

And it came to pass also that the armies of the Lamanites came down out of the land of Nephi, to battle against his people. But behold, king Benjamin gathered together his armies, and he did stand against them; and he did fight with the strength of his own arm, with the sword of Laban.

(Book of Mormon, Words of Mormon: 13)

In this quotation Lamanites are the non-believers who are attacking the holy people, in this case King Benjamin and his army. The similarities between the situations the Cullens are facing with the Volturi are remarkable, especially at the end of *Breaking Dawn*. The Cullens – a representation of an ideal LDS family – gather other believers (in this case vampires, who believe that Renesmee is not a child vampire) to fight against the evil non-believers: the Volturi. At the end of the *Twilight* saga it does, however, not come to a real fight, instead the opposite sides succeed in solving the matter by talking.

In addition to the Church of the Latter-day Saints' perspective, the Volturi can be discussed from a linguistic perspective if plainly considering the word 'Volturi'. It is very similar to the word 'vulture', which, by definition, means a person who hopes to gain from the troubles or sufferings of other people (*Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary*). Vultures are also scavenging birds feeding on cadavers. These definitions quite accurately describe the so-called royal family of the vampires, who take advantage of any mistakes other vampires make and as a punishment destroy whole covens – or spare one vampire with extraordinary powers. The positive outside image is only a facade to conceal the evil plans of the oldest vampires. That plan is not only to remain the strongest coven but also gathering useful vampires around them to strengthen their power. Yet, at the end the good wins over the bad; the Cullens succeed in keeping their family as a whole. It is almost the plot of a fairy tale with the battle of good versus evil.

Another important authority in the *Twilight* saga are the leaders of the Quileute Indians. The leaders have points of resemblance to the LDS leaders, but the Quileute Indians in general have certain parallel features with the cursed people in the Book of Mormon, the Lamanites. Firstly, I will discuss the Quileute leaders in comparison with the leaders of the Latter-day Saints' current leadership. The Quileute Indians have an inherited leadership system with a council of the elder which is led by one member of the tribe with two members at his side. It resembles the First Presidency in the LDS where the president appoints two trusted apostles (this has been explained earlier in this chapter). This leading triplet can also be found in the werewolf pack. The pack leader is called the alpha, and he has accordingly two supporting wolves at his flanks. Being an alpha is inherited (in the same way as being the tribe's leader); it cannot be attained any other way. The only exception is a situation where the alpha does not claim the status of the leader either because he has not turned into a werewolf yet or if he refuses the honour. Then the next wolf in line will be the alpha. In the pack the power of the leader is the clearest, because his command has to be obeyed; even if the wolf's mind is rebelling, his body will submit to the alpha's orders.

The Quileute tribe can be compared to the Lamanites, people who are cursed by God in the Book of Mormon. The Lamanites are punished because they do not believe in God or live according to his rules as is told in the Second Book of Nephi:

And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.

(Chapter 5, 21)

This is the explanation that the Book of Mormon gives for different skin colours, especially of the Native Americans. In addition to the dark skin colour of the Quileute, the change into a wolf can be seen as a curse. It is an uncontrolled transformation and makes the human behave like a wild beast. Even the most gentle and controlled man can hurt others involuntarily. On the other hand, the werewolves

learn to restrain themselves very well and therefore have high self-control, a feature Meyer seems to appreciate as she portrays it among both vampires and werewolves.

4.3. Capitalism and Education

Apart from similarities in networking and authorities there are resemblances in the attitudes of the vampires in *Twilight* and the Church of the Latter-day Saints towards money and education. When looking at some authors, who come from the rails of the Church of the Latter-day Saints, and their writings, one can see that both men and women write in the LDS community, and that there is a comparatively large number of LDS writers. It seems to me that female writes are slightly in the majority, but I have not made any calculations to support my impression. The authors lead the same lives as any members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: they are married (if they are old enough), and they have children who play the most important role in their lives. According to several writing mothers, they chose this career because they can write from their homes and thus keep the role of a mother as the priority. Some Mormon writers consider writing a job that they attend to six days a week, others believe their ideas are given them by God; both groups of authors seem equally productive as many complete one book every year and regard this as the norm. One of the authors – Chad Daybell – who feels his topics are given by God – writes as follows:

[...] I felt the prompting, "It's time to write your books." This came as a complete surprise to me. I'd written some family histories, but I'd never been able to come up with a plot for a book. But almost immediately after receiving the prompting, the entire plot of *An Errand for Emma* came to me. I wrote the book within a few months, and it was published about a year after that initial prompting.

(Daybell 2011)

The faith of the Latter-day Saints is existing also in the work of Mormons, and the in cited passage Daybell gives God all the credit for his ideas. On the other hand, there is a more rational view, here presented by Julie Coulter Bellon's (a female LDS author). Bellon's thoughts are somewhat commercial, and she supports the idea of writing being a convenient job:

I think that the LDS market has greatly improved to include books from almost every genre that the national market offers. We have mystery, suspense, romance, women's fiction, historical, western, sci-fi, fantasy and it is a wonderful thing to know that we can read all of those genres in the LDS market and not worry about finding anything against the gospel standards. My advice for people writing LDS books is to keep writing because we only continue to improve what we can offer to everyone who wants to read clean and compelling fiction.

(Bellon, 2008)

This citation supports the diversity of LDS writers on one hand, and their mutual belief on the other. The above-mentioned commercial aspect is present in Bellon's encouragement to keep writing Mormon literature – it is not only an attempt to spread their religion, but also a way to make money (success is highly appreciated in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). The popularity of science-fiction and fantasy topics among LDS writers and readers could be explained by religious details as Mormons have been made to believe the strangest things, e.g. that there are people living on the moon and even the sun (Worthy 2008: 34). Believing in things defined by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – or rather the ideas of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young – makes it easier to relate to fictional figures such as the vampires in the *Twilight* saga (stated in the seventh Article of Faith). Or as Julie Wright, another female LDS writer, puts it in her blog entry:

As a people, we believe in worlds without number, so populated planets on the edge of some other galaxy isn't science fiction so much as an inevitable truth. To write of aliens, or epic battles of good versus evil isn't much of a stretch.

(Wright, 2011)

The striving to succeed and gain wealth is directly linked to the Book of Mormon, more closely to The Book of Jacob. Jacob encourages in Chapter 2 people to seek the Christ and faith first, then to seek riches. People should not be proud if they gain wealth, but should rather help everyone to find fortune and thus be equal (*Book of Mormon*, the Book of Jacob, 27). Smith's view of wealth is described by Krakauer as follows:

In Joseph's more optimistic cosmology, God's chosen people — the Mormons — were inherently virtuous (albeit surrounded by wickedness) and didn't need to atone for anything. Making money was a righteous

pursuit: the Lord smiled on the rich, as well as those who aspired to become rich.

(Krakauer 2003: 112)

According to this interpretation the Cullens in *Twilight* can once again be seen to be perfect Mormons: they lack nothing. The Cullen family has money, they look beautiful and they are respected by the human society they live in. In short, they are faultless examples for the Church of the Latter-day Saints. The Cullens have become wealthy, but how exactly they obtained the money is not presented. However, it is hinted that Alice's ability to see the future has at least in some way benefited the family. Carlisle Cullen works hard as a doctor, but he is the only one in the family who works regularly. The other family members, on the other hand, focus on educating themselves further. With the amount of knowledge they have gained over the years, they would be more than capable of working. Again there is no clear explanation given to the cause of this behaviour. Nevertheless, they clearly follow the guidelines of the Doctrines and Covenants. A revelation from Joseph Smith in the Doctrines and Covenants 90 encourages people to study and learn, to read all good books, study languages and get familiar with people (The Doctrines and Covenants 90). Young women are also nowadays urged by the church to get an education to ensure a safe future (Beaman 2001: 72). The same appreciation of studying is clear in Edward's demand that Bella should study before she is turned into a vampire. The wish is especially clear around the time Bella is about to graduate from high school. Edward makes her fill in many applications to various schools – from the Ivy League to the University of Alaska (*Eclipse*, 10-20). Bella objects to Edward's wish to pay for her education or a new car; she represents the present-day view that a man does not have to provide alone for the family. As she gets pregnant her role changes: Bella falls into the part of a mother and wife – the role that is seen by the LDS as the most meaningful role for women, accordingly women should focus on family only. Nowadays the LDS way of thinking causes tensions, because women should be responsible for themselves, but at the same time be dependent on their husbands. It is desired that women are capable of handling the public life; however, they play no part in the church hierarchy (Beaman 2001:83). In short, the LDS church has mostly accepted the sexual equality of men and women, but they have not adapted the regulations of their organization to match the modern view. In *Twilight* it is once

again Bella who portrays the opinions of a typical teenager, whereas Edwards (and his coven) stand for the ideal Mormon life style.

When looking at the vampires in the *Twilight* saga and considering three of the four points within social life (networks, capitalism, education), it can be said that Meyer has succeeded in presenting the Cullen coven as an example of a perfect family from the point of view of a Church of the Latter-day Saints member. The Cullens keep up contact to humans, while keeping their true nature (being vampires) hidden. They are also wealthy and value education highly. As Stark (2005: 137) says: “Successful people are religious people” – the Cullens are an excellent illustration for this claim. The vampire authority in the *Twilight* series resembles the leaders of the Church of the Latter-day Saints, but there are also differences. All things considered the social structures in *Twilight* can be said to be influenced by the author’s religious beliefs.

5. The Nuclear Family

Since the early nineteenth century, Vampire books have always tended to romance. For – besides the obvious horror – vampires have evoked both romantic and terrifying emotions. These two themes also occur in the *Twilight* saga. In order to get a more complete view of how the image of vampires in English literature has changed since the early nineteenth century, I chose to look at John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (written in 1819). Polidori portrays the vampire as follows:

Those who felt this sensation awe, could not explain where it arose: some attributed it to the dead grey eye, which, fixing upon the object's face, did not seem to penetrate, and at one glance to pierce through to the inward workings of the heart; but fell upon the cheek with a leaden ray that weighed upon the skin it could not pass. His peculiarities caused him to be invited to every house; all wished to see him, and those who had been accustomed to violent excitement, and now felt the weight of *ennui*, were pleased at having something in their presence capable of engaging their attention. In spite of the deadly hue of his face, which never gained a warmer tint, either from the blush of modesty, or from the strong emotion of passion, though its form and outline were beautiful, many of the female hunters after notoriety attempted to win his attentions [...].

(Polidori 1992: 22)

The vampire in this example text is presented as a noble man, who draws attention to him, awakes curiosity because of his strangeness, but at the same time is feared. He does seem to be the odd one out, but not necessarily in a negative sense. His mysterious behaviour and his arrogance towards others are quite similar to the qualities of vampires described by Meyer. Nevertheless, the Gothic vampire stories are much darker and more depressing than *Twilight*. Yet, one has to keep in mind that they were written for a different audience in very different social atmosphere. The society and its expectations always have an effect on literature, giving a text the specific features of the time they are written in, as Auerbach states: "They [vampires] may look marginal, feeding on human history from some limbo of their own, but for me, they have always been central: what vampires are in any given generation is a part of what I am and what my times have become" (Auerbach 1995: 1).

Vampires threaten Bella in some way in each of the four *Twilight* books, but the sustaining idea throughout the series is love. The *Twilight* saga illustrates the love of a teenager, Bella, towards a vampire, Edward. The love between a woman and a vampire still draws the attention of us as readers. Since in the case of *Twilight*, the target audience is teenage girls, this topic is even more suitable than it might have been in other genres. First love is always intense, and Bella is ready to do anything to be with Edward. Bella is willing to commit to a vampire (a creature she should be afraid of but instead wants to emulate and live with forever), to place herself in danger and to abandon her family. Finally she gives up her human life and future for him. In the beginning Edward, who is older only by age, not by appearance, is fascinated by Bella for two reasons: the smell of her blood and the fact that he cannot hear her thoughts. Bella explains this in her own way, by thinking she is different from other humans: “It probably means there’s something wrong with my brain,” (*Eclipse*, 113). The love between these two is almost involuntary; something is drawing Edward to Bella and vice versa. While Bella is in high school and underage, Edward refuses to turn her into a vampire. He even leaves her, because he thinks it would be best for Bella to stay away from him. This is a classic sign of love: he will do anything to keep his loved one safe – even though it means staying apart and being unhappy. He also refuses to be intimate with Bella, this scene in the novel *Eclipse* shows:

If I had my way, I would spend the majority of my time kissing Edward. There wasn’t anything I’d experienced in my life that compared to the feeling of his cool lips, marble hard but always so gentle, moving with mine.

I didn’t often get my way. [...]

I knew I had about three seconds before he would sigh and slide me deftly away, saying something about how we’d risked my life enough for one afternoon.

(*Eclipse*, 38-39)

Edward uses the excuse, that he is afraid of hurting her and wants to wait until Bella is a vampire like him, so that they will be equally strong. This might be one reason, but later Edward poses two conditions for changing her: Bella first has to graduate from high school and show her love and commitment by marrying Edward. Thus Edward wants to engage in holy matrimony before changing Bella and making their

bond eternal. The Latter-day Saints church's opinion towards sex will be discussed more closely in the next paragraph.

On their honeymoon Bella and Edward end up being intimate, even though Bella is still human. She does get some bruises, but does not get hurt – on the contrary she enjoys sex. The sex is described by Bella as following:

It had all been simpler than I'd expected; we'd fit together like corresponding pieces, made to match up. This had given me a secret satisfaction – we were compatible physically, as well as all the other ways. Fire and ice, somehow existing together without destroying each other. More proof that I belonged with him.

(Breaking Dawn, 80)

Edward is shown to have the opinion, that sex belongs to marriage – an old-fashioned view as Bella seems to think, along with many of the young readers. Meyer subtly introduces the adolescent public to the option of refraining from sex instead of the open sexuality shown in the mainstream media. The abstinence from premarital sex is one of the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – and the religious path that Meyer follows. According to the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sex and having children belongs only within marriage – as they make explicit in their proclamation about family: “We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife” (Family Proclamation). This strict opinion is presented by Meyer in a discreet manner, by using discussions between Edward (with his old-fashioned views) and the modern teenager Bella. On the other hand, sex within marriage appears to be normal – even desired – as after finding their mate vampires have a lot of sex and are rather open about it. This might again be connected to the guidelines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as from their point of view married couples should strive to have as many children as they can provide for. The sexual behaviour of Latter-day Saints has been researched by Holman and Harding and their results tell that the sexual behaviour of married Latter-day Saints is quite average – they do not have more problems in their marital sexual relationship than couples belonging to other religions. The sexual life of

single LDS people, however, is significantly different from the average, as they do not have premarital sex. According to this research, the abstinence of nonmarital sex does not have any negative influence on sexual adjustment and behaviour in LDS marriages (Holman & Harding 1996:58). A further subtle statement against premarital sex is given by Bella after their wedding on the Isle Esme as she ponders the upcoming actions with Edward: “How did people do this – swallow all their fears and trust someone else so implicitly with every imperfection and fear they had – with less than the absolute commitment Edward had given me?” (*Breaking Dawn*, 76). She is afraid and surprisingly feels, that only the eternal commitment through holy matrimony gives her enough courage to surrender to the physical lust with her beloved Edward. It is suggested that sex requires complete trust which cannot be achieved in a short relationship – not to mention with a stranger.

The vampires in *Twilight* are strongly monogamous. Instead of being called a couple or lovers, the expression “mate” is used. Vampire mates are faithful to each other for all eternity and take revenge if the other has been killed. The same kind of monogamous tendency is seen among the werewolves in *Twilight* – their relationships are subordinated to the concept of imprinting. This means that a werewolf knows immediately when he has found his soul mate, even if the human is only an infant at the time of imprinting. It is first explained as being gravity and the girl becoming the centre of the werewolf boy’s life – he will fulfil all her needs (*Eclipse* 156). Later when Jacob imprints on Renesmee the explanation is as follows:

Everything inside me came undone as I stared at the tiny porcelain face of the half-vampire, half-human baby. [...] Everything that made me who I was – my love for the dead girl upstairs, my love for my father, my loyalty to my new pack, the love for my brothers, my hatred for my enemies, my home, my name, my *self* – disconnected from me in that second – *snip, snip, snip* – and floated up into space.

I was not left drifting. A new string held me where I was. Not one string but one million. Not strings, but steel cables.

A million steel cables all tying me to one thing – to the very centre of the universe.

(*Breaking Dawn*, 330-331)

As I have mentioned in chapter 3, animal wolves are more strongly monogamous than humans are. The werewolf imprinting system in *Twilight* resembles that natural system of a wolf pack as well as the eternal marriage of Mormons.

Both examples of forming strong pairs (imprinting and vampire mates) present a love that lasts till death. This notion seems to judge the present day mentality of getting married several times and getting divorced. Both the vampires' concept of having a mate and the werewolves' manner of imprinting can be seen to reflect the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' idea of soul mates forever or as Stark puts it: "(...) ruled over by an omnipotent God *and* his wife – the couple is the basic unit in Mormon thought" (Stark 2005: 123).

The ideal family portrayed in *Twilight* is clearly the Cullen coven. Thus the vision of a perfect family is conservative and grounded in a coherent family structure since the Cullens are presented as a very respectable family with Carlisle and Esme as father and mother and the other vampires as their children. It is certainly unorthodox that four children within a family (or coven) form two loving couples, but since Alice, Jasper, Emmet and Rosalie are explained to be adopted by Carlisle and Esme, it can be seen to fit within the standards of "normal". The Cullens have a strong family bond; they take care of each other in every crisis. Additionally they have their own lifestyle which distinguishes them from other vampire covens (they restrain from human blood and avoid violence) and ties them together. This distinction from the normal vampiric way of living has similarities to Mormon life: as a unit they are strong against the main population. Bella, on the other hand, has had no strong family support, because she has divorced parents. Bella has had to take care of her mother; she has been the more responsible one of the two. Bella describes her feelings towards her mother as follows:

I felt a little frustrated with Phil, her husband of almost two years, for allowing that one, I would have taken better care of her. I knew her so much better.
You have to let them go their own way eventually, I reminded myself.
You have to let them have their own life...

(*Eclipse*, 39-40)

The last sentence, especially, shows their reversed relationship: it is something parents usually say about their children. Additionally to caring for her mother, Bella has made the choice of moving to her father's house in order to make her mother happy (by her being then able to travel with her new husband). When Bella arrives in Forks, she notices that her father does not know how to cook, and soon Bella is in charge of all the household tasks. It is evident that Bella has not had a family who is taking care of her as her parents are divorced, thus she is missing a core family with strong bonds. If one considers the factors why Bella wants to become one of the vampires, it may not be only because she wants to spend an eternity with Edward or that she will not age, it may well be because of the Cullens' strong family sense (even though they are vampires among which family bounds are rare). Bella might just want to feel like being a part of the family, have a sense of belonging. The importance of having a close family bond can be directly linked to the LDS church. The ideal family from the LDS church's point of view has greatly changed during the years from a polygamous family to a tight nuclear family, as Flake's text shows:

Defined by polygamous family structure, utopian communal economy, and rebellious theocratic government, nineteenth-century Mormonism seems to have little relation, except by contrast, to the twenty-first-century Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (L.D.S. Church). Indeed, the church's present reputation, for good or ill, appears to be based on a reverse set of identity markers: idealization of the nuclear family, unapologetic capitalism, and patriotic republicanism.

(Flake 2004: 17)

These today's guidelines of the LDS church, that Flake refers to are obviously represented in Meyer's novels. The strong monogamous bonds and the emphasis on the core family are indications, that the Cullen family is in the writer's view an ideal family and a concept to strive for – as Bella does. Flake further says, that Mormons have even become aggressive defenders of the traditional family structure (2004:10). A request – almost a command – to aim for the ideal family is the Proclamation of the LDS church:

WE, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

(Family Proclamation)

Meyer supplies these Mormon family values more discreetly – almost unnoticeably – to the reader by using her characters as examples. Almost all the main characters form pairs: Bella and Edward, Carlisle and Esme, Rosalie and Emmet, Jacob and Renesmee and so on.

Bella has also another – rather vain – reason to become a vampire: she does not want to age. She gets upset as she hears that Jacob will not age as long as he keeps taking the form of a wolf: “Am I the only one who has to get *old*?” (*Eclipse* 106-107). She does not want to be older than Edward – who is seventeen years old forever. In Bella’s opinion, it is unfair that her friends do not age in the same way as she does (meaning the normal human way). In addition to the aging, Bella sees herself as being inferior concerning her looks; she feels inadequate next to Edward, as she sees herself only plain looking:

I stared at the beautiful machine. Beside it, my bike looked like a broken tricycle. I felt a sudden wave of sadness when I realized that this was not a bad analogy for the way I probably looked next to Edward.

(*Eclipse*, 207)

The vampire laws set by the Volturi in the vampire society of the *Twilight* saga include the rule, that it is prohibited to create child vampires. It is explained, that in the past there have been infant vampires, who were not able to control themselves, and therefore jeopardized the safekeeping of the vampire’s existence. The major contradiction to this adult-only rule is Bella’s pregnancy. Against everyone’s beliefs Edward is able to impregnate Bella. At first, Edward does not follow the teachings of the Family Proclamation: “HUSBAND AND WIFE have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. Children are an heritage of the Lord (Psalm 127:3)” (Family Proclamation). On the contrary: Carlisle and Edward are determined to abort the pregnancy. The situation is new for the Cullens, and they (especially the men) are scared of it – not the foetus itself, but how it will affect Bella and what other consequences it might cause. Edward tries to calm Bella down in his own way when he realizes the situation:

Don't be afraid. We'll be home in sixteen hours. You'll be fine. Carlisle will be ready when we get there. We'll take care of this, and you'll be fine, you'll be fine.[...]

We're going to get that thing out before it can hurt any part of you. Don't be scared. I *won't* let it hurt you.

(*Breaking Dawn*, 120)

The men do not share the Mormon opinions on this matter. Krakauer tells us following about the rules of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

“The LDS Church forbids abortions, frowns on contraception, and teaches that Mormon couples have a sacred duty to give birth to as many children as they can support— which goes a long way toward explaining why Utah County has the highest birth rate in the United States; ...”.

(Krakauer 2003: 78)

Bella, the mother to be, however, has a strong motherly love, that makes her protect her child in every way possible. Bella's support in this matter comes from an unexpected source: Rosalie sides with Bella. Rosalie's reason for supporting Bella is her past human life; she wanted to have a family: “So I could have been allowed to marry someone who loved *me*, and have pretty babies. That's what I wanted, all along” (*Eclipse*, 145). The two women support the same idea, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints promotes: the unborn child should be protected. For these two females the offspring is more important than them: Bella would give her life to secure her baby's life, and Rosalie would give anything to keep the baby alive. The two women follow in their behaviour closely the message of the Family Proclamation:

THE FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. [...] By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. [...] Extended families should lend support when needed.”

(Family Proclamation)

There are several points to show that the Cullen coven mostly conforms to these rules: Bella and Edward are married before having sex (and a baby); Edward does everything to keep Bella and the child Renesmee safe; the extended family

(especially Rosalie and Jacob) help to take care of the baby; and men and women are equal – even though the men are more responsible for protection and fighting and accordingly women for the household. Actually dividing tasks into a man's and a woman's duties follows the faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as it is mentioned that women should take care of the house and the offspring, and the men have to provide and care for their families. All things considered, Bella and Edward comply with the guidelines of the Mormons' rather closely. The behaviour of the Cullens can be seen as ideal rational human behaviour – especially from the LDS church point of view.

The bond between vampire mates is strong, as discussed earlier, but also within a coven – especially if it consists of vampires and their creator as the Cullen coven: here the coven can be seen to represent a human family. The importance of family life is in central focus in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' doctrines and Meyer herself lives accordingly. This can even be seen in Meyer's writing process: her sister encouraged Meyer not to give up, but to send her writing to publishers. Later her mother influenced the storyline by recommending introducing the Volturi earlier than Meyer herself had planned (cf. *The Woman Behind Twilight*).

There are several parallels between the ideal family of the *Twilight*-saga – the Cullens – and the model family of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as has been explained above. Whether these similarities are included consciously or involuntarily by Meyer is irrelevant when considering the fact, that they represent the Mormon family values which are mostly unknown to non-members. If one further reflects the popularity and wide distribution of *Twilight*, it is clear that Meyer has not only achieved to write a bestseller but also to promote her world of thought – the beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – to a wide public. As a conclusion, it can be said that the norms in *Twilight* – in relation to family, love and sexuality – resemble rather accurately the guidelines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The marriages – presented in *Twilight* through mates among vampires and imprinting among the werewolf pack – are meant to last until death, or even until all eternity. Premarital sex is not encouraged, but sex after committing

oneself to the holy matrimony is seen as a desired part of the married life. In this case, being a new vampire couple can be seen as a parallel to the honeymoon after a human wedding. Meyer achieves the transmission of her ideology of marriage and love to the reader without seeming to preach about the glory of saving yourself until marriage.

6. Converting and Transforming

In this chapter I am going to compare the conversion of becoming a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the two different changing processes in the *Twilight*-saga: becoming a vampire and taking the form of a werewolf. There can be found both similarities and differences between all three – the main similarity is the desire to do the right thing and save a person either by changing his religious belief or becoming a completely different. I will present these three transformations in the following by introducing each alteration and by comparing them.

6.1. Mormon Conversion

Religious conversion is an interesting topic especially in today's world where faith has lost its meaning to a great part. In most cases a child stays in the faith he or she is born into, but conversion between religions is also possible, and converting infidels to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – mainly through missionary work – is a central part of the church doctrines. At the same time the church leaders try to assure that children stay in their church. Every young man, who is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is expected to serve a two-year mission (also young women and retired couples are encouraged to participate in this activity), during which he is not allowed to keep close contact to his relatives or friends, only letters and occasional phone calls are allowed. The purpose of this time is to strengthen their faith, to get to know themselves and obviously recruit new members for the church. As mentioned in section 4.1., the LDS Church seeks to find the right number of believers – people who will gain eternal life.

There are seven steps a person, who wants to convert into Mormonism, has to go through. In short these steps firstly include getting to know the main beliefs by getting in touch with missionaries, reading the church's doctrines and studying the Book of Mormon. Next stages are joining church meetings and attending a service at a Mormon church, as well as talking to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. An important step is praying: God supposedly gives a person, who

considers converting to Mormon faith, a sign whether he or she should or should not join this religion. Baptism follows after God's sign, and in it the convert is put entirely into water. The conversion is final when the person attains the full membership of the Mormon Church, which requires to be confirmed by a priesthood holder. At this point the name will be added to the church records (*How to Join the Mormon Church*). The process of conversion is complex and the person who considers joining the LDS Church is expected to study closely the doctrines of the religion as well as to get familiar with members of the church and discussing the faith with them. I assume the process is complex, because the church wants the new members to be certain about their choice.

As I mentioned earlier, it is important for the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to keep their children inside their circle of believers – it goes without saying that the souls of the children would be lost without their faith (according to the Church's beliefs). Worthy (2008: 13-14) describes the indoctrination of Mormon children as follows:

Mormon culture makes a very conscious effort to teach children to believe in a specific version of reality, and it warns them about the dangers of contrary beliefs and ideas. All cultures with beliefs and practices that differ greatly from Mormon culture are said to be wrong and misguided at best, and inspired by Satan at worst. Rather than trying to reduce children's natural tendency toward ethnocentricity, Mormonism strongly encourages it.

The Mormon Show uses a very effective three-step program of child indoctrination: first, indoctrinated parents are commanded to indoctrinate their children; second, parents and others who are responsible for teaching children are given detailed instructions on how to indoctrinate them; and third, they carry out the indoctrination.

(Worthy 2008: 13-14)

This upbringing makes it difficult for the children to form opinions on their own, as they are encouraged to think in very restricted ways. The indoctrination – or brainwash – has the effect, that believers feel strong guilt when they have sinned (as previously mentioned when talking about the psychological aspects after a LDS member has sinned) or violated the rules of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The books written by Mormons reinforce the indoctrination in their own way

simply by engaging only with the correct way of life and leaving out all despicable features or presenting them in a negative manner.

It is difficult to define the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as Stark and Reid (2005: 5) state: is it a sect, cult, religion, church, nation or subculture or all of these? The Church sees itself as part of the Christian world, as is evident in their name: “Today, the L.D.S. Church objects to the use of “Mormon” as a denominator, preferring that its entire name be used in order to avoid any inference that the church is not Christian” (Flake 2004: 4). Without doubt, however, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is an important part of the American society with approximately 6 million members in the USA. The LDS Church has followers spread widely over the world and the number of members is still growing.

6.2. Changing Vampires

The way a human becomes a vampire in *Twilight* is much the same as in most vampire stories: through biting. There are not too many descriptions about changing humans into vampires in the saga, but Carlisle Cullen has changed most of the members of his coven, and in *Eclipse* Victoria makes an army of new-borns to attack the Cullens. I am going to focus on Carlisle Cullen and his way and reasons for creating vampires, because it has similarities with the conversion to the Mormon faith.

Carlisle Cullen has transformed humans into vampires only to save them, only because otherwise they would have died. Carlisle first changed Edward during an influenza epidemic, because Edward’s mother begged Carlisle on her deathbed to do everything to save her son. Esme was changed by Carlisle when she was about to die because of a suicide attempt after a miscarriage. The two had already met earlier in a hospital; Carlisle remembered Esme, had feelings for her, and the two became a vampire couple. Next Rosalie was created after a cruel attack from her drunken fiancée and his friends: she was raped, beaten and left to die. Carlisle had hoped that

after Rosalie becomes a vampire, Edward and Rosalie would become mates – this, however, did not occur. The last human Carlisle changed is Emmett, who was found by Rosalie after a bear attack and then brought to Carlisle. Even though Bella is not changed by Carlisle, also in her case the same pattern is seen: Bella is refused her wish of becoming a vampire for selfish reasons. At first, the transformation is postponed until Bella's graduation, then until marriage, and lastly Bella gets changed because otherwise she would die when giving birth to her child. This means, that Bella is changed only as her life is jeopardised not before.

Earlier in this thesis the marriage and family life of Bella and the Cullens have been looked at in comparison with the ideal Mormon way of living. Bella's transformation into a vampire may, however, also be considered from a different point of view. Through marriage Bella does not only tie herself to Edward, but also to his coven (his family), and this change can be linked to changing religion when marrying – meaning that vampiric and Mormonic conversion can be compared. It is not unusual to adapt to the spouse and his family as Stark (2005: 64) states that marriage has the tendency to attach each spouse to a new network. However, the age of the marrying couple is of importance as young people are more apt shift their social environment when leaving their parents' home. Bella is very young when she commits herself to Edward and changes her social environment from the normal human society to the life of the vampiric Cullen family. Bella's change proceeds with little difficulties; perhaps due to her young age (Stark claims that young age makes the adaptation to a new religion easier). Stark (2005: 62) furthermore argues that converts were those "whose interpersonal attachments to members overbalanced their attachments to nonmembers" (Stark 2005: 62). Bella has such strong bonds to Edward, and thus to the whole Cullen family, that it overpowers the attachments she has to the human world. Changing Bella and emphasising the transformation to a new way of life is very similar to converting to a new religion. It is not only Bella who has joined the family by becoming vampire; Edward, Esme and Rosalie have all been changed by Carlisle. Carlisle's purpose in each case was to save the life of the soul, even though it meant turning humans to vampires. It is the same reason religious groups have in

mind when converting people: they believe to be saving the souls of non-believers by introducing them to the ‘correct’ religion.

The actual procedure of converting into a vampire and thus gaining eternal life is painful – Bella calls the pain bewildering, burning like flames, fiery torture, being charred alive, racking fire (*Breaking Dawn*, 341-351), and it takes several days. A similar process, the tormenting fire, is described several times in The Book of Mormon a similar process. In the Book of Alma it is presented as following:

“But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.”

(Book of Alma, Chapter 36)

It is additionally said, that it takes three days and three nights for this torment to end, which is about the same time as it takes for a human to change into a vampire in the *Twilight* saga “you were only unaware for just over two days” (*Breaking Dawn*, 369). According to the Book of Mormon, the first death will be temporary, and after that all shall stand before God who will judge them according to their life. The body will look the same, although its form is spiritual and immortal (*Book of Alma*: Chapter 11: 40-45). Again there is a clear similarity to *Twilight*, as the vampire converts look mainly the same as in their human form. Besides the look, the people will also have the same characteristics and attributes in the afterlife (restoration) as they had as mortals (*Book of Alma*, Chapter 41). Desired characteristics are being humble, submissive, gentle, patient, grateful and keeping God’s commandments (*the Book of Alma*: Chapter 7). In the *Twilight* saga the Cullens stand as perfect exemplars for these values, as they are patient and keep not only their own commandments (not hurting any human, no pre-marital sex, both God’s laws as well), but also the laws set by the Volturi. The Mormons admire self-discipline, which the Cullens clearly possess, or as Krakauer puts it: “This is a culture that considers obedience to be among the highest virtues.” (2003: 65). The three biggest sins, according to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are denial of the Holy Ghost, murder and sex outside of marriage (Worthy 2008: 139). The highest

level of restraining is the vampires restricting from human blood as the following scene between Edward and Bella shows:

His eyes closed as his nose skimmed along the skin there, and he smiled gently without opening them. Enjoying the bouquet while resisting the wine, as he'd once put it.

I knew the scent of my blood – so much sweeter to him than any other person's blood, truly like wine beside water to an alcoholic – caused him actual pain from the burning thirst it engendered. But he didn't seem to shy away from it as much as he once had. I could only dimly imagine the Herculean effort behind this simple gesture.

(*Eclipse*, 15)

In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints every male can be a priest as soon as he is ready to take the responsibility needed, and in *Twilight* every vampire can change a human into a vampire – whereas in most cases it is a male vampire who fulfils the task. Carlisle has changed several humans to save their lives – in a way he baptised them – and introduced the new vampires to his moral standards and his way of living – almost a religion. He has continued the role of his father (who was a priest) by never having harmed a human and spreading the word of the alternative lifestyle among vampires: feeding on animals instead of humans. In the *Book of Alma* the priests commanded by God are told to be pure and white, as is written in Chapter 13:

“Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God.” (*Book of Alma*: Chapter 13).

The looks are similar to the outer appearances of vampires presented by Meyer: vampires are white, flawless and sparkling. As stated above, the lifestyle of the Cullens can be said to represent a religion as: “Conversion refers to shifts across religious traditions” (Stark 2005: 59). That means, for example, changing one's religion from Christianity to Hinduism; Bella's change from her human life to the vampire life is in terms of religion a conversion. In similar ways that people convert to Mormonism – through family and friends – Bella is drawn by the way of life the Cullens lead. Although none of the Cullen family members try to convert Bella, she simply wants to belong. Vampirism is now seen as a sort of religion, whose features strongly reflect the ideals of contemporary popular culture: beauty, eternal youth,

strength, wealth and so on. Additional support gives Stark's statement that nowadays two things cause tension between the Mormons and the society. These are firstly the strict moral rules and secondly the significantly different theology (Stark 2005: 122).

I have described earlier in my thesis the networks of vampires as well as the social surroundings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the matter of conversion the social support is of great importance. When converting to Mormonism the new member will meet many believers and discuss the faith – he will be taken into the religious community and receive great support. In the same way the newborn vampires in *Twilight* are guided by their maker – he helps with the adaptation to the new way of living. The newborn vampire needs assistance with understanding his new urged and enhanced senses, as well as learning ways of hunting and feeding. In both cases the new member is introduced to the community and becomes a part of a tight group. The world outside the closed network – the LDS church or the vampire society – becomes of less importance. The same tendency of becoming a part of a group, even secret society, is evident in the werewolf pack as well and will be discussed in the next section.

6.3. Becoming a Werewolf

As has been said above, there are similarities in religious conversion and turning into a vampire. In addition to this, however, there is a second important transformation in the *Twilight* saga: turning into a werewolf. In this section I first describe the transformation into a werewolf according to Meyer and then compare it to the religious change.

What makes the traditional werewolf so scary, is the fact that his beastly nature is only revealed during full moon when human becomes beast without any possibility to control the change. At daylight – or even at most nights – he is as human as anyone else. Meyer's so-called werewolves have different qualities: Jacob and his pack are able to choose when to turn into a wolf – at least after practicing to control

their emotions since anger usually leads to transforming into the animal form. Their mind stays a human mind, yet they are able to hear each other's thoughts in their wolf state, and their senses are enhanced. They heal fast – the marks of injuries heal quickly and this makes them even more powerful. Although Jacob and his Quileute friends are called werewolves, they are rather far from the beast that has no control over his actions. They are furthermore no werewolves, but shape shifters who are only able to take the wolf-form besides their human selves. As explained in Chapter 3, wolf packs remind us of human societies – either the society as a whole or on a smaller scale of human families and their family ties. Jacob's pack has unusually tight relationships if one compares it to a human family; they hear each other's thoughts and are unable to leave one of the pack behind. As with the Cullen family, Jacob's pack seems an example of an ideal family: everyone holds together and supports each other. The imprinting guarantees that the pairs will be together forever, they can only be separated by death.

Traditionally there have been many ways, in which a human being can turn into a werewolf. Among these are for example cursing or biting, touching a certain object or genetic reasons (cf. chapter 3). In the *Twilight* saga, however, the transformation into a werewolf is triggered when vampires come to the surroundings of the Quileute lands – the werewolves exist only for protection. It is told by the chief of the Quileute tribe that originally the tribe members were shape shifters and could take any animal form, but after the first encounter with a vampire most shape shifters were killed, and only the capability to change into a wolf remained. The ability to become a werewolf runs in the family, and therefore not all tribe members become werewolves. The number of werewolves in the Quileute tribe depends on the need – the more vampires pose a threat to the humans the more werewolves there will be. This genetic reason for the transformation has been present also in other literature (Peltonen 1992: 216).

In earlier literature and films werewolves have had more body hair than human beings. For example, their eyebrows grow together and form a bridge or hair on their palms (Peltonen 1992: 213). Yet, *Twilight* the werewolves in their human form are

not hairier than humans. But as they start the transformation, they suddenly begin getting a lot of muscles and look older than their age. Another dissimilarity to the traditional werewolf is the fact that in *Twilight* the Quileute shifters mainly eat in their human form – some of them are even disgusted by fresh meat – therefore they are not driven by a blood thirst that is commonly described in other werewolf literature (Peltonen 1992: 217). The shape shifters change into their wolf form when there is danger in sight, danger being the vampires. At the beginning they also change if they lose their temper; if they get angry. This means that the werewolves have to be able to control their feelings and desires, similarly as the Cullen and the Denali vampires. They have to have great strength of mind to control the strength of their bodies. A warning example of losing one's temper is Emily, Sam's wife. Sam has hurt her and left her marked through scars. Sam was the first Quileute boy who changed, and thus he had no support. Sam was not able to understand the changes in his body or control his temper, and therefore by accident scratched Emily's face. Again it is suggested that changes in body and mind require adjusting, for young werewolves as well as for newborn vampires. Both need time to get used to their new form, and both are highly dangerous if not guided correctly.

While the humans in the *Twilight* saga are changed into vampires to save their lives, the reason of werewolf transformations is to save other humans by being able to protect them from vampire attacks. In both cases of shifting the main purpose is to do good deeds – either to the person being changed or being able to help others because of the physical change. As portrayed earlier, the reason for religious conversion – converting into Mormonism – is to give a human salvation, the eternal life. Therefore the vampires bear more in common with the members of the Church of the Latter-day Saints than the werewolves. The transformation of werewolves, on the other hand, rather supports the humans and protects them.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out if the Church of the Latter-day Saints had impact on the themes and characters of the *Twilight* saga. The choice of perspective was chosen because of the author's, Stephenie Meyer's, religious beliefs. I was interested in taking a closer look at the new, transformed image of vampires and werewolves – especially how they were conveying the beliefs of the Mormon Church. My research includes theoretical background on the literal development of vampires and werewolves, as well as clarification to the norms and rules of the Church of the Latter-day Saints. In my analysis I compared the contents of the four *Twilight* novels to that theoretical background by showing examples of how the vampire image bears similarities as well as differences in relation to the ideal Mormon behaviour. Additionally, the werewolves of the saga seem to convey behavioural models for teenagers, but they are not as equivalent to members of the Church of the Latter-day Saints as the vampires of the Cullen coven.

By analysing the behavioural patterns of vampires in the *Twilight* saga, I have been able to show similarities to the norms and guidelines of the Church of the Latter-day Saints first in three topics: networks, authorities as well as capitalism and education. Considering networks it was easy to find resemblance: the restricted amount of vampires correlates to the desired number of believers in the Church of the Latter-day Saints. In addition the way of living in a closed community within the society is very similar for both the vampires of the *Twilight* saga and the Mormons. Other topics were more controversial, especially the authority of the Volturi. There are points to support the similarity of the Volturi to the leaders of the Church of the Latter-day Saints, but also to more fanatic leaders – the fundamentalists – and even the Kings in the Book of Mormon. In this section I also discussed the leaders of the Quileute tribe, who, like the Volturi, have a leadership structure that is similar to one in the Church of the Latter-day Saints: there is one leader with two members at his side. Among the vampires these are the three Volturi leaders, in the werewolf pack the alpha wolf and his two supporting wolves and in the LDS Church the president

and two apostles. The last topic considering society in general is capitalism and education. In this section I presented the result that Mormon appreciation of wealth and education (introduced already by Joseph Smith) is passed on by the vampires in the *Twilight* saga – again by the Cullens. The Cullen coven is shown to be wealthy and highly educated. Furthermore Bella is encouraged by Edward to apply to college.

Next I analysed the family image in the novels. I looked particularly at love, marriage and children. Some of the parallels between Meyer's characters and the LDS Church were clear and easily found: there is no premarital sex in either, and bonds within family (and community) are strong. The forming of pairs in the *Twilight* saga – in both vampire and werewolf societies – is made for a lifetime, even eternity, exactly as the Mormon marriage: the Church of the Latter-day Saints considers marriage a holy commitment that is made for eternity. Meyer has incorporated this strong monogamy in the features of her main characters, both vampires and werewolves. The aspect of having children is not present in the three first novels of the series, but in the last book *Reveries*, a child, becomes the central theme. In this point Bella and Rosalie present the Mormon way of thinking: children are the most important thing in life.

Lastly, I considered the topic of transformation in the novels in comparison to religious conversion; of becoming a Mormon. The change from a human into a vampire gives an individual eternal life – similar as the correct faith, in this case Mormonism, is considered to give eternal life to the believers. Carlisle Cullen changes humans into vampires only to save them from death. He can be seen as a sort of priest who baptises non-believers into the Church of the Latter-day Saints. For both the purpose is salvation, saving the transformed human from death or damnation. The werewolves, on the other hand, are not saved themselves; rather their purpose is to save humans. Yet, in both cases the reason for transformation is kindness.

In general it can be said that not all the vampires stand for the ideal member of the Church of the Latter-day Saints; only the members of the Cullen coven. The Cullens

are considerate, wealthy, educated and family-oriented. They oppose to violence and do not harm humans, but rather want to protect them. Therefore, I claim that Stephenie Meyer has been influenced in the creation of her characters by her faith. When considering the werewolves, they seem to be more helpers and supporters rather than role models. They do bear features valued by the Mormons, especially considering their self-control, but also negative features. Even though they bond for life through imprinting, marriage is rarely mentioned. However, the reason for this might be that most of the werewolves are still underage and their imprinted partners are little children.

It is important to notice that in the *Twilight* saga vampires and werewolves alike differ strongly from their predecessors in one aspect: they both present good things, not evil. As I have stated, in earlier literature both vampires and werewolves stood for undesired features of humans, things that were considered sins or even criminal. Meyer, however, mostly conveys positive characteristics through her so-called monsters: kindness, self-control, strong family bonds and eternal love; things every human, especially teenager, should strive for.

When I started my thesis my main questions were as follows: How did Meyer create the vampire image and why are Meyer's vampires and werewolves so different from the old terrifying images? Did her religion influence her writing and if so, in which ways can it be seen in the novels? I succeeded to find answers to these queries. The answer to the first question lies in the author's religion; consequently the answer to the second question is yes. Meyer had no former opinions on vampires or werewolves, because she had not read any horror fiction before; therefore she made them kinder and gave them characteristics that reflect features valued by Meyer and the Church of the Latter-day Saints, as has been explained earlier. This means that the author's religion did influence her writing, and it is most evident in the Cullen coven's ideal behaviour.

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