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ENGL01

Degree Essay Course in English Literature

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The aspect of love:

A Comparison Between *The Twilight Saga* by
Stephenie Meyer and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë

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Introduction

The plot line of many novels and plays include a triangle drama. Some of the most famous ones include the stories of King Arthur, Queen Guinevere and Knight Lancelot, together with Shakespeare's Romeo, Juliet and Paris. It is interesting to see how the choices of the love triangle affect the outcome of plot. For instance how would the perceptions of the stories have changed if Juliet had chosen Paris, instead of the ending as it is known? This paper will prove that two novels, which are very different at first sight, are similar due to the outcome of the heroines' choices in love, which in both cases fall upon the more unconventional alternative. The two works to be compared in this paper are *The Twilight Saga* by Stephenie Meyer, a contemporary gothic and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, a female bildungsroman from the Victorian era; both of which contain love triangles.

Jane Eyre is never mentioned in *The Twilight Saga*. However, when the novels are read simultaneously many similarities are found. My interpretation is that a classic's influence on latter works never ends. As echoes of the earlier novel are found in many episodes and characters in *The Twilight Saga*, my conclusion is that Stephenie Meyer has adapted the different themes of *Jane Eyre* to our time. This essay will examine how they are similar. Some of the similarities which will be discussed are the wealthy men's power over their poorer, but still strong-willed female counterparts, dreams functioning as prophecies, and how settings are used to express personalities. One of the most crucial similarities between *The Twilight Saga* and *Jane Eyre* is that both novels express feminist opinions and ideals of femininity, but in very different ways. While the character Jane Eyre is a very modern feminist for her time, Meyer's Bella is a rather conservative one in ours. Bella's attempts to be independent fail. In contrast, Brontë's Jane Eyre is active and free. She does not allow herself, as Bella does, to be dominated or controlled. Investigating relations, both their differences and similarities, will reveal how *Jane Eyre* has influenced *The Twilight Saga*.

This essay will also examine the characters as parts of the love triangle. The main characters and the subjects of the triangle drama are rather dissimilar. The two male characters from *Jane Eyre* are combined in Bella's vampire sweetheart Edward Cullen, who has Rochester's personality and role in the love triangle, while his appearance is alike that of St John. St John is Jane Eyre's fair cousin, but unlike Rochester, her heart's choice, it is only his appearance which is gentlemanly. While Bella's werewolf friend Jacob could be said to have the opposite traits of Edward (i.e. some of St John's personality and role and more of

Rochester's wild exterior). Examining Bella Swan and Jane Eyre, the heroines are similar in that they share the same ideology and ideas, but they also differ. One of the most important similarities is the balance in the love triangle; how both women are forced to make a choice, the outcomes of which are both strikingly similar and at the same time dissimilar. The intention of this essay is to look at the novels in a new light and to make the readers aware of the historical remnants in the modern novel. It will be proved that the great classic *Jane Eyre* has influenced a most unlikely novel- the contemporary gothic *The Twilight Saga*. A primary focus of this essay is to examine Jane's choice of the 'demon' over the 'saint'; and in Bella's case the vampire over the werewolf, and how they truly are reflections of each other.

The Female Characters

Both novels are Cinderella stories with traces of the ugly duckling theme. The tale of the ugly duckling describes the development from a misplaced cygnet to a full-grown beautiful swan. *Jane Eyre* begins with an unsightly and poor girl and *The Twilight Saga* starts with an old fashioned, insecure and misplaced girl. Both heroines grow throughout the story and, like Cinderella, they receive their rightful happy ending; gaining happiness, wealth and their 'princes.' The Cinderella theme¹ is found in both novels, though the authors interpret the myth differently. The Cinderella which can be traced in *The Twilight Saga* is more passive, like the patriarchal versions as portrayed in Walt Disney's films, which is based on Perrault's tale from 1697 (Parson 143-144). The men in these patriarchal versions are the active characters, while the heroines, the Cinderellas, are portrayed as dependent, her strongest feature often being (as with Bella) that she is beautiful and caring. Bella tries to be an active agent for instance when she insists on driving her own car, but she usually fails and becomes the passive passenger while Edward or Jacob, her male counterparts, are 'at the wheel' (*Twilight* 395, *Moon* 378-380). Jane on the other hand shares traits with the more active version of Cinderella like the Grimms' version from 1812 in which the men are passive spectators and the heroines are capable of action (Parson 145). For example, Jane refuses Rochester's offer to go with him to France after their ruined wedding, since she does not want to become his mere mistress or "slave" (309). Jane does not allow herself, as Bella does, to be dominated or controlled by the men in her life. Active heroines are often represented as

¹ The different perspectives of the Cinderella theme are discerned in the article "Ella Evolving: Cinderella Stories and the Construction of Gender Appropriate Behavior" by Linda T. Parson.

rather plain, whereas beautiful women are evil forces, which is stated by Linda T. Parson (137-138, 144, 152). This is the case with plain Jane, and the beautiful, but insane Bertha Mason; who tries to burn Rochester in his bed (149-151). However the heroines' strength of mind is an important factor. For instance, Bella is the only one who can resist Edward's vampire powers; he is capable of reading minds (*Twilight* 180-181). Likewise, Jane can resist Rochester's will, and this he is surprised about; when he orders Jane to "speak" he is stunned by her refusal (134). Meanwhile, neither of the girls have physical strength which means that they are inferior towards Jacob and St John, whom they can only resist with the power of their hearts.

Both girls see themselves as ugly ducklings, feeling plain and misplaced. The main difference between the two is that Bella is perceived by others as a 'swan', which is also her last name, while Jane is more of a classic ugly duckling, who is only seen as the beautiful swan by those close enough to her to be able to appreciate her inner qualities. What is also noticeable is that the name Bella means beautiful. This is another, more powerful, indicator of her beauty. Despite this fact, Meyer describes vampires as supernatural beauties; their beauty is unobtainable for Bella and other humans. When Bella is surrounded by them she therefore feels inferior and ugly (*Twilight* 487-488). The same scenario also exists in *Jane Eyre*: when Jane is among the wealthy and fair ladies at Thornfield, she feels inferior to the majestic Blanche Ingram (171-172). It can be seen that both novels show unfair comparisons, since, Bella is compared to the immortal and cursed beauty of vampires, while Jane, who is a poor governess girl is contrasted to the well dressed, rich and beautiful ladies. The main motif seems to be that the authors want to show that appearance is not important, what is underneath the surface is more essential. This moral is more obvious in *Jane Eyre* where both Jane's cousin Mary Rivers and Rochester think Jane beautiful. Rochester recognizes her whole being as beautiful (312), while Mary Rivers, in another episode, concentrates on her personality, saying that Jane is "too pretty, as well as too good" to be wasted in a marriage with St John (411). This is one of the most apparent ugly duckling similarities. Jane's personality is described as fair; instead of her outside it is her inside which is beautiful. In contrast, the transformation from the ugly duckling to the beautiful swan is more literal in *The Twilight Saga*. When Bella sees herself in the mirror after her wedding with Edward, he makes her realize, for the first time, how she looks to others. She is really surprised by "a dark-haired beauty" by his side (*Dawn* 52). All the guests at the wedding agree with this, and for once she feels that she belongs with Edward and the rest of his beautiful family (*Dawn* 52). Later on

she actually becomes a vampire and hence the transformation is complete.

Being intelligent and educated is highly regarded in both novels. It is a quality which both the female main characters share and which attracts the male characters to them. In the beginning of *Jane Eyre*, it is established that Jane likes to read by the fact that she sits in the window sill enjoying a book (10, 23). When she moves on to Lowood, a charity school for girls, she makes great progress since she works hard and feels satisfied reading and studying (85-86). St John expresses that he wants Jane to be his wife and companion as a missionary in India due to her intelligence and diligence. He knows she can learn Hindustani much faster than others can and therefore be a great benefit to his missionary work (393). Bella, too, is chosen by Edward because of her scholarly mind; he feels that she meets him on an intellectual level (*Twilight* 44-47), which is the case of Rochester and Jane as well. Rochester feels that he can speak freely to Jane because she is well educated and dares to speak her mind (310-311).

The degree of independence of Jane and Bella is slightly dissimilar, which is noteworthy, especially when considering the different time periods in which the novels were written. In *The Twilight Saga* Bella is a much less defiant character than Jane. She is more willing to give up her independence; she does not stand her ground and allows herself to be led by Edward and Jacob. In doing this Bella differs from Jane, who is, as stated by Heather Glen in *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History*, a woman who maintains her independence and her own point of view through the whole of the novel, and furthermore, constantly strives to enhance it (54-56). However, Bella does whatever is possible in order to protect the people she loves by sacrificing herself (*Eclipse* 550, 559). In this, Bella can be seen as a modern day example of “the Angel in the House”. This concept of the Angel is a Victorian ideal inspired by Coventry Patmore’s poem “The Angel in the House”, where he writes about the perfect middle class wife (Coventry 1586-7). Like Bella, the angel in the house is portrayed as a domestic and subordinated housewife who constantly sacrifices herself for other people. The tendency of the angel in the house is also present in Brontë’s novel. Jane too is domestic as seen when she offers to help the servant at the Rivers’ household (337-338), as it is more appropriate for a woman in Victorian times. Jane also constantly cares for others, though she does not meet the expectations of the angel in the house at the same level as Bella. She is more independent as proved in the episode when she negotiates with Rochester about what amount of her salary she should receive while she goes to visit her dying aunt at Gateshead, her childhood home. Here she proves to have a strong mind; she

does not take Rochester's opinion of the amount into consideration, but stays true to her own will (223). Bella in contrast to Jane, gives way to the will of her masculine counterparts (*Twilight* 395, *Moon* 44). She wants to drive her car herself, even though Edward insists on driving it for her. He is a better driver due to his vampire super senses (*Twilight* 181-182) but nevertheless, Bella could still defy Edward but she usually allows him to drive. This makes Bella old-fashioned for her time, while Jane becomes a modern woman of hers.

Bella Swan and Jane Eyre are alike in that they are both lonely orphans. Jane is the real orphan because both of her parents are dead. Both Bella's parents are still alive, but due to their divorce Bella's family is scattered. Her mother has a childlike behavior and lives several miles away from Bella, who stays at her father's house. The father works as the police chief in town and is rarely home. Therefore Bella has a semi-orphan status. Being the 'lonely orphan' creates the need of having a family. With Jane, it is recognizable in that she values her relatives and extended family highly. She even treats her dying aunt with kindness though she has never been just to Jane (237-238). Having divorced parents is a smaller factor in enhancing Bella's desire to start a family with Edward, but perhaps a bigger one as to why she wants to be a part in the Cullen family. 'The lonely Orphan in want of a father' is an aspect which can be found in both *The Twilight Saga* and *Jane Eyre*. In her article: "Twilight is not good for maidens", Anna Silver discusses Bella's desire for a father figure, which Edward fulfills (Silver 124-125), and it is possible to see that this also present in *Jane Eyre*. This is portrayed by the fact that Edward could be said to personify Bella's father figure while Rochester could be said to be the same for Jane. Edward constantly calls Bella by degrading nicknames, for example "toddler" (*Twilight* 297) or as Silver points out, "little coward" (Silver 124-125), while Rochester chooses to show his care and father-like-dominance by using sardonic and supernatural names towards Jane, for instance "little elfish -" (259). The superior father role of Edward and Rochester will be more evident when looking at the age difference and the aspect of money, equality and status.

The Male Characters

As established above, Bella Swan and Jane Eyre are similar in many aspects. It is interesting to note that their male counterparts also share features. Edward Rochester is, as Jane notices, grim looking and his manners are too sincere, but once she gets to know him better he removes his hard outward shell and shows her his warm and passionate inside (296-297). St

John Rivers, Rochester rival in the love triangle, has, in contrast to Rochester a fair appearance but a harsh and grim inside. Edward Cullen shares his personality and manners, and even his first name, with Rochester whilst reflecting St John's appearance. Looking at descriptions of appearance, it is easy to find that Edward Cullen's exterior is reminiscent of St John's, who is described in the following manner: "had he been a statue instead of a man, he could not have been easier [to describe][...], his face riveted the eye; it was like a Greek face, very pure in outline [...] colourless as ivory" (341). Similarly Edward is described as "a perfect statue, carved in some unknown stone, smooth like marble" (*Twilight* 260) and also "a Greek god" (*Twilight* 206). They both share a coldness in their appearance, which will also be brought into light in the section "The Love Triangle". One feature which Edward has that differs from St John, is his eyes that are likened to fire; he often is described with "liquid topaz eyes" (*Moon* 9). This is shared with Rochester, whose temper is emphasized with "forth flashed the fire from his eyes" (*Jane Eyre* 315). Rochester and Edward also share upper-class lifestyle and manners. They are both reserved and keep their distance to others. Vampires are known to be portrayed as rich, sophisticated and upper-class, as established in *The Gothic Other* by Ruth Bienstock Anolik (4-9), which is the case in *The Twilight Saga*. The vampires in *The Twilight Saga* have very few restrictions; they can move within different classes as is also mentioned in *The Gothic Other* (213). They are good looking, extremely wealthy, intelligent and, not to be forgotten, they possess super powers. The Cullens rarely face opposition; Edward, even as a student, has influence over the principal (*Eclipse* 84-85). The lack of restrictions applies to Rochester as well. It is visible in the episode when Rochester tells Jane that "I am used to say 'Do this' and it is done", proving that he has great influence and authority (125). In this sense they are both men of power. Rochester is powerful due to his wealth and family name, while Edward's superiority originates from his personality and vampirism.

Jacob also possesses features of Rochester and St John. He is, like Rochester, associated with fire and heat. When Jacob is introduced Bella states that she is jealous of his cheek bones, with skin "russet-colored" and "glossy black hair" (*Twilight* 119). Jacob's black hair and brown eyes are similar to Rochester's. They both also share the wild and rough appearance, in contrast to Edward's and St John's proper and tidy looks. However, Jacob's personality is perhaps more similar to St John, in that they both are ready to suffer, as seen from the occasion when Jacob wants to participate in the war for the sake of his pack, while St John wants to go to India, where he might die, to spread God's blessing among

humanity (*Eclipse* 480, *Jane Eyre* 369-370). The male characters in *The Twilight Saga* are similar to those of *Jane Eyre* but Meyer's Edward and Jacob are a blend between Brontë's Rochester and St John.

The settings of novels can be used to show the personality of the characters and the relations between them. Their mental state or status and their appearances can be reflected in the environments as Kelley Griffith shows in *Writing essays about literature* (61-62). The similarities in the use of settings in each novel are striking. In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester's personality and health is emphasized by his house and its garden. When Rochester's house is described, the impression is given of a majestic, though haunted house. The sense of the house being haunted is probably due to the secrets of Rochester's past, more specifically, his mentally ill wife, who is hidden in the attic. When Jane walks in Thornfield's garden it is wild, but still carries beauty, like Rochester himself (246). Once Jane returns to Thornfield Hall after her absence, she finds that the house has almost entirely burnt down, with the exception of a few ruined walls (419-420). The ruined house reflects Rochester's wrecked and scorched soul, and it also represents Rochester's injured body; his left hand and eyes (426). The garden belonging to the house becomes overgrown after Jane's departure. The garden and the house could represent the wildness taking over Rochester's personality and appearance when Jane leaves him.

Edward Cullen's character is likewise reflected in the Cullen mansion. Bella's first impression of Edward's house is that she cannot see any traces of it being populated by seven vampires. It is described as a very modern, beautiful, airy and bright house and therefore it does not share any resemblance to the expected vampire's lair (*Twilight* 322). Meyer has quite changed the monstrosity of vampires and the expectations that the reader might have of their characters and styles. Seeing the mansion and its interior as a reflection of Edward's personality and appearance, the light could be said to shine from him as a person but also from his pale, light-reflecting skin (*Twilight* 260). Moreover, the modern theme of the house reoccurs in his clothes and lifestyle.

The meadow is a place where Edward feels comfortable enough to reveal to Bella how his skin is affected by sunlight. The first time Edward and Bella visit the meadow she describes it as a beautiful and serene place which reflects Edward and their love (*Twilight* 259). Since it is in the early part of spring, the flowers are in bloom, like an image of their emotions. After their separation both the Cullen's mansion and the meadow reflect the characters' changed emotional states. When Bella goes alone to visit the abandoned Cullen

house she says it is like ‘a haunted house’ with the lights gone, shady and full of dark haunting memories – more appropriate now as a dwelling for vampires, as they are seen in a classical gothic fashion (*Moon* 161-162). Similarly the meadow has become overgrown and all the flowers are gone (*Moon* 234). Both these settings reflect Bella’s and Edward’s deprived and withering mental states.

The environments of both Edward and Rochester seem to be representations of them. When the girls leave, both houses get darker or ruined, as do the characters; the ruined souls are demonstrated by Edward’s suicidal behavior, while Rochester’s appearance deteriorates. From this it is possible to see that Edward’s wrecked soul is a more metaphorical show of his demolition, while Rochester’s ruin is more literal.

Gothic Elements

When *Jane Eyre* was written and published the Gothic genre was still relatively popular in literature. The Gothic contains many elements of the supernatural, such as vampires and werewolves, but the main characteristic of the Gothic is the unsuspecting and innocent girl who comes to the mysterious and dark castle, where the equally dark and mysterious lord lives and a bond of true love develops between them. Both *Jane Eyre* and *The Twilight Saga* have strong gothic elements, though in *The Twilight Saga* these are modernized to suit the present time, while *Jane Eyre* is gothic in a more classical sense. The gothic characteristics of *Jane Eyre* are also discussed by David Punter and Glennis Byron in *The Gothic* (96). The most apparent aspect is that Rochester lives in a dark mysterious house, with his mentally deprived wife hidden in the attic. Edward Cullen’s gothic attributes are more noticeable since he actually is a vampire. He shares many characteristics with other classic vampires. Like Polidori’s vampire he is very tempting to humans; he is both generous with money and also has an inviting appearance, with eyes that can see into human souls (*The Gothic Other* 212-213, 219, *Twilight* 180-181, 263-264). Edward is more than able to see into souls because he can read people’s minds. Both Edward and Rochester have the gothic trait of being dangerous and mysterious, with hidden secrets. Edward tells Bella from the start to stay away from him: “You really *should* stay away from me” (*Twilight* 84). His thirst for Bella’s blood is even stronger than for other humans, which makes him especially dangerous to her. Rochester is dangerous to Jane in a slightly different, though more realistic way. He knows that he himself is capable of violence (300). Jane is about to leave him, he says “I could bend her with my

finger and thumb: and what good would it do if I bent, if I uptore, if I crushed her?" (314). Despite the constant threat of their own physical safety the girls still love the men. Both men never actually hurt the women, showing that love can tame the gothic monster. In the Gothic genre, love restrains the evil forces from hurting the innocent and this is another trait which the novels share.

Edward has the conviction that vampires are evil and lost to God; he believes himself to be condemned; that his soul is banned from heaven (*Moon* 37). This is a rather Victorian belief as stated in Richard Noakes' essay titled "Spiritualism, science and the supernatural in mid-Victorian Britain" (*The Victorian Supernatural* 26-27). Edward therefore does not wish to stay with Bella since he is afraid that he will jeopardize her afterlife in heaven. This is opposite to what Bella believes, which is that her heaven has to include Edward (*Moon* 37). The cursed soul is one of Edward's strongest arguments for not turning Bella into a vampire. Rochester shares Edward's opinion about the damnation of his own soul. He tells Jane that her soul is destined for heaven, while he is "accursed" (313). The girls may be poorer, but they have higher morality and hence their souls are more "pure". This is a thing which the men do not have and the only thing which they cannot buy. The possession of a good hearted soul is what makes the girls superior and it is partly their pure souls which attract the two men.

In both novels the supernatural also plays a part, as seen when Jane hears Rochester's voice over a physically impossible distance (414-415). The element of supernatural makes itself present in *Jane Eyre* perhaps because it was a popular subject of discussion at the time, something that was still not definable or explainable. Noakes explains that in the 1860's some people made attempts to define the supernatural by using natural explanations and restrictions. Others found that all phenomena which could not be explained by natural laws belonged to the category of "supernatural", which accounted for Christian miracles, fairies, ghosts and second sights (*The Victorian Supernatural* 23, 26-27). In one episode Rochester sardonically asks Jane where the men in green are, and he also accuses her of being a fairy who has bewitched his horse. She simply answers, that they have left England many years ago (123-124). Her humorless answer surprises him since he is not sure whether she is serious or not. In contemporary times and society, science and medicine have replaced the concept of supernatural as is seen when we find Bella and Edward having a matter-of-fact conversation over lunch about Edward's 'vampiristic hunting habits' (*Twilight* 214-216). From this scene and the whole series it is evident that the supernatural has been degraded

from a serious topic in culture, to a subject which serves for entertainment. Even though the supernatural has been dismissed by science, there is still a desire to believe in the unbelievable. Hence, Bella easily accepts the other characters' supernatural traits. The supernatural has changed its place in literature; going from a subject of science to nonsense and amusement.

One example of the supernatural is the use of dreams and how they predict the plot. It is important to take into consideration the difference in time between the two novels. In Victorian times it was not exactly defined what dreams were. Some said they were divine, as established in the essay "What is the Stuff that Dreams are Made of?" by Nicola Brown (*The Victorian Supernatural* 31), while others believed them to be the work of Satan. Most people insisted that dreams had supernatural causes, as stated in Richard Noakes' essay (*The Victorian Supernatural* 23-24, 26-27). In our time it is generally accepted that dreams are activities of the subconscious and effects of the physical functions within the body (*The Victorian Supernatural* 151). Therefore the supernatural dreamlike elements are perhaps more important to the plot in *Jane Eyre*, than in *The Twilight Saga*.

The interpretation of dreams is possible in a literal or metaphorical sense, which is stated in *Freud's Rules of Dream Interpretation* (188). In *The Twilight Saga* Bella's dreams are to be interpreted literally. At one point she dreams of Jacob and Edward as werewolf and vampire (*Twilight* 130-131). This is before she has had her suspicions of their true identities as vampire and werewolf confirmed. Earlier Jacob has told her a "scary story" on the beach, including the two different races. Therefore Bella's dream is not to be interpreted as some supernatural phenomenon (*Twilight* 123-126). What can be traced from this dream is that Bella's subconscious is working faster than her conscious mind, giving the readers a clue of what is to come. Bella later has a dream involving a baby; she is in fact pregnant when she has this dream and therefore her dream is to be seen as a prediction (*Dawn* 95). Also, in her dream she is protecting the child, who is immortal, from a hostile vampire army which tries to destroy it. This is exactly what happens later on. Jane's dreams are to be interpreted metaphorically. When Jane dreams of a baby, it is stated by her nurse Bessie that the baby is a symbol of trouble and therefore Jane will have troubles to come (219). The dream can be seen in two ways, one predicting and one non-predicting. It could be a vague metaphorical fore-telling dream in the sense that Jane faces troubles and, in the end, she gives birth to a baby. What she also sees in her dream are some shattered remains of a house. This could plausibly be a representation of Thornfield manor, which later burns down to the

ground (280). But according to Freudian dream interpretation a house can act as a representation of the dreamer's ego (Grinstein 85). Since Jane has already left when the fire breaks out, it could therefore represent her own shattered self. In *The Twilight Saga*, therefore, the dreams fulfill a literal foretelling purpose whereas, in *Jane Eyre*, they represent more metaphorical notions of possibility.

Equality

A similarity between the novels is the strive for economical equality and equality in love. Both of the heroines achieve this, though by different means. Jane gains economic equality, and hence equal love, by being an active agent, while Bella is the passive one who rarely acts actively, but it is Edward who finally helps her achieve equality with him.

Jane and Bella both want to spend their own money in their own way, despite what men around them consider appropriate and in both cases this means that they want to share their money with others. The men in the novels feel that wealth is a part of their power and that is why they do not wish to gain it from their women counterparts; they do not want to be inferior to them. Bella purchases two broken motorcycles in order to endanger her life after Edward has left her; the danger calls forth an image of Edward in her mind (*Moon* 111-112, 125-127). She wants to pay Jacob to repair the motorcycles and instruct her how to ride one. Jacob's pride is wounded, as he just wants to spend time with Bella and does not want her money but he accepts one of the motorcycles (*Moon* 134). The charity of Jane, when she tries to give St John money, is also difficult for him to accept and it infringes on his pride. When Jane inherits a large sum of money she wants to divide the fortune between herself and the three Rivers siblings. St John does not want to let her act "on first impulses; you must take days to consider such matter, ere your word can be regarded as valid". Jane insists that she should be able to do as she pleases with her own money (382-383). Both women are thus very generous and want to spend their money on family and friends, though the men around them have a tendency to refuse their offers. The problem here is also partly that Jacob and St John like to be caretakers; they therefore find it difficult to let women be in charge of money.

Jane and Bella are also, like St John and Jacob, unwilling to accept money and gifts. One reason for this is that both Bella and Jane feel the need to be independent and make their own fortune; they feel that being showered with money and gifts would give the men reason to underestimate them. Rochester wants to give Jane the finest

jewelry and clothes, but her reaction to this is: “And then you won’t know me, sir; and I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin’s jacket” (257-258). If he were to give her expensive things, then she would no longer be the girl with whom he once fell in love with. She feels that she would be less of herself as also noted by Glen (60-62). Bella’s truck is likewise important for her independence and she does only allow Edward to replace it with an expensive car once her truck has expired (*Dawn* 1-6). Another reason that Jane and Bella decline their partners’ gifts is that they feel that the men’s love is sufficient enough. Bella refuses to accept Edward’s rings and gifts because the gift of Edward’s love is more than enough (*Moon* 13). Finally, he manages to persuade her into accepting his mother’s “hand-me-down” ring (*Eclipse* 438) by telling her that the diamonds are crystals (*Eclipse* 438-439, 457-458, 475). A scene where Jane shows that she disregards Rochester’s wealth is when he has become blind and he is unsure of Jane’s affection. He asks her if she wants “A poor blind man, whom you will have to lead about by the hand?” and she assures him: “To be your wife is, for me, to be as happy as I can be on earth” (439-440).

In most horror books and films, vampires tend to be aristocratic or from the upper class, as stated in *The Gothic Other* (4, 9). The Cullen family is, like Rochester, upper class. The reasons for attributing wealth and power to the two men are that they gain a certain authority over the women, who both are of lower status. The case seems to be that the girls are ‘chosen’; being the one picked by the ‘rich prince’. The wealth of the men can also make the situation and choice more convincing for the reader; if the girl chooses the vampire or the bitter old man, she does not have to worry about her own economy. But it is never the money which appeals to the heroines; they are aiming for the man out of love and not for the love of money.

Still, a concept which the two novels have in common is that the two girls ‘reach for the stars’ or the impossible when it comes to their loved ones. Their love crosses “perceived differences” according to Ethel S. Person who states that some people choose “love-objects” defying set restrictions of society (Person 52-53). Both girls reach for something almost unattainable; a partner far superior than yourself. This is more obvious in Bella’s case than in Jane’s; Bella being a human who aims for the immortal vampire. But when *Jane Eyre* was written it must have caused a great commotion due to her being a poor governess in love with a rich man (Glen 65-66). In the Victorian age the threshold between the rich and the poor was much more difficult to overcome, and therefore almost as difficult as a vampire-human relationship. In Bella’s and Edward’s love, there is likewise a huge

difference between the two parties. Edward is an immortal superman; looking better than a model, musically talented and incredibly intelligent. In addition, he is one hundred ten years old, but he still looks like a seventeen-year-old, in contrast to Bella's nineteen years of age. He is, in other words, far superior to Bella and exceeds her in all fields. Jacob would perhaps be a more natural choice for Bella. He might be physically stronger than her, but looking at their mentality, Bella is smarter, more mature and one year older. This makes Jacob and Bella more equal than her and Edward.

Jane also tries to 'reach the stars', though she is not as inferior to Rochester as Bella is to Edward. She is poor and plain but aims for the rich and powerful gentleman. Rochester is, like Edward, richer and more experienced than his partner. He also has, compared to Jane, a larger wealth and a more powerful name which grants him authority. Perhaps it is the wish for equality with Rochester that forces Jane to establish herself in her society in order to live a happy life with him. While she works as a poor school mistress, in pain and heartbroken, she learns to live on her own and gains her independence. Rochester on the other hand is dependent on Jane, since he has learned that his life is not worth living without her love. St John, may be more physically attractive than Jane and has the benefit of being a man, but he is only seven years older and he is also poorer than her, though, he is of the same social class as Jane. So it could be said that St John would have been a far simpler and more realistic choice for Jane to make, him being less superior to her than Rochester.

Equality plays a crucial part in love, as Bella states in the first part of the series: "a man and woman have to be somewhat equal... They have to save each other *equally*" (*Twilight* 473-474). Jane's aim for equality is visible when she claims that "women feel just as men feel" (111). Both heroines seem to struggle to gain equality with their loved ones. Bella wants to become equal with Edward; she wishes to be a vampire. Edward refuses her request and an outcome of this is that he stays her superior (*Twilight* 473-474). Rochester also consistently tells Jane, that he does not wish for her to be rich, as he loathes obnoxious Lady Ingram and his other past mistresses (308-309). This might be caused by a fear of her becoming his equal, since he will then lose what power he has over her; in both cases, equality would lead to 'the damnation' of their souls, as Edward would claim (*Moon* 37). Thus, the quality which makes the women appeal to the men depends on their preserved inferiority. The untenable situation is here apparent; the two parties are very unequal, and their situation is therefore impossible. For the situation to be resolved and come to a happy ending both partners have to become equals. This requires sacrifices from the men, but leads

to the same outcome of equality, though by different means. Edward has to suppress his unwillingness to put Bella through the pain of the vampire transformation and disregard his own conviction that vampires lack souls. Rochester has to be injured to reach the humility necessary to let Jane into his life as his equal. While both St John and Jacob simply have to accept their losses and be satisfied with their lots as brother or friend. However, both novels end happily with the impossible love being made possible by both heroines' struggle, each of which are rewarded with a greater sense of equality with their true loves.

The Love Triangle

In *Jane Eyre* and *The Twilight Saga*, it is important to be aware of the different kinds of love expressed. Bella is bound to Edward with true, romantic love. She would sacrifice herself for him, even if he did not love her; this is passion in a classical sense. However, brotherly or friendly asexual love is also present in the novels. Bella's feelings for Jacob are mainly those of a sibling or best friend (*Moon* 218-219). When Edward leaves her she tries to replace him with Jacob, but she never succeeds to return Jacob's passionate emotions. She loves him, but not as she loves Edward; nevertheless, she wants Jacob in her life. Bella tries to please both men. At one point, she even kisses Jacob to keep him from leaving (*Eclipse* 525-529). In Jane's case, her passion for Rochester is proven by the journey that Jane undergoes to see him again, neither knowing if he is alive nor if his love has stayed intact. Jane's devotion to St John on the other hand is that of a sister. This is actually put into words when Jane asks of St John to treat her as his sister (383). Both Jane and Bella want to keep the men in their lives. But by doing this they have to clearly distinguish between the different relationships, mostly for the men's sake. In Bella's case, this division results in her breaking Jacob's heart.

According to Harriett Hawkins in *Classics and Trash*, "the romantic hero" is classified as someone who will do anything to please the beloved one, regardless of its recklessness (29). Edward is a perfect example of the traditional romantic hero, who would do anything to please Bella. When the newborn vampires, who have been created in order to destroy Bella, come to Forks to complete their mission, The Cullens and the werewolves join forces for the first time to protect her. Edward endangers the victory at hand by not fighting, just because she asks it of him (*Eclipse* 419-422). He thus prioritizes Bella's mental health before his family and the others. One reason for this act is that Edward remembers their separation and what pain and misery it caused him and Bella (*Eclipse* 419-422). In contrast to

Edward, Jacob possess the characteristics of the “man’s man”, a term used by Hawkins (29). He acts tough and disregards Bella’s wish for him not to participate in the battle. Jacob loves Bella, but this is not in the same self-sacrificing way that Edward does; Jacob would rather risk Bella’s displeasure than the safety of his pack (*Eclipse* 480). Trying to apply the concepts of “romantic hero” and the “man’s man” on St John and Rochester is more difficult, mainly because they share characteristics of both. Rochester has the appearance of the rough “man’s man”, being very raw and wild looking, while St John looks like the perfect gentleman, handsome and well-dressed. Rochester, however, is eager to please and do what is best for Jane, but he is not always certain what that is (296). Whereas, St John is very cold and distant towards Jane and his behavior is described as rather self-centered; he wants her for his missionary trip and he does not care if it will result in her death (397-399). St John, like Jacob, is thus ready to risk his loved one for the greater good, as expected from the “man’s man”, while Rochester, like Edward, behaves as the romantic hero.

What the men of both novels have in common is that they all see and treat the women as objects to some extent. They tend to take the dominant role in the relationship and leave the women with the submissive one. This is something which Ethel S. Person observes as common in heterosexual relationships in our culture (Person 265). Freud also states that the male mind tends to perceive women as objects rather than subjects (Chodorow 3, 55-56). This is something which is traceable and similar in both novels, in spite of the difference in time. Both Edward and Jacob treat Bella as an object; they behave like she has no ability to act on her own. When they have arranged a meeting at the border between the werewolf- and vampire-territory, Edward leads Bella by the hand into Jacob’s care (*Eclipse* 236-238). She seems like a precious object for them to fight over, and they act as if she has nothing to say in the matter, as if she has no will of her own. Rochester is the only one of the male characters who is forced to come to terms with the fact that the girl is a subject, a person of her own, in order for them to stay together. Whereas St John, at first, seems to treat Jane as a subject; he lets her decide if she wants to go with him to India. But when she declines him he becomes furious, because he actually sees her as an object only there to serve him (403-404).

Jane and Bella are framed by the concept of the “real” woman. According to Hawkins the “real” woman in fiction is supposed to make choices depending only on her emotions; with the “real” woman Hawkins refers to the fictionalized woman of our society’s norms and expectations. While our society expects a man to choose with both his brain and

his heart, giving him the opportunity to make a rational and well planned decision (Hawkins 28). Both Bella and Jane fulfill the criteria of “real” women as they “battle the choice between the claims of [the] art and [the] heart” as Hawkins states (6). Hawkins uses the term “art” to refer to matters of profession and career, while the term “heart”, simply refers to the loved one (6). In other words, a choice must be made between what is regarded as ‘good’ and ‘appropriate’ for their situation, and that which is their heart’s desire. Bella’s “art” tells her to choose Jacob, since he has her father’s preference and if she was to be with him she would be able to live a normal life with her friends and family. Jacob is, as he himself states, “the natural path” and it would be easy for her to be with him. He also states that their love would develop if Edward did not exist (*Eclipse* 598-600). Bella makes her choice with the heart though; she disregards Jacob and her father’s wish for her to have a college graduation and instead marries Edward (*Eclipse* 16, 19-20). Jane also follows her heart and disregards her art. With St John she knows that there can be no mutual love. If Jane chooses to go with him, she would dedicate herself to her faith, something which was highly regarded in evangelical Victorian times, that is the sacrifice in this life to gain salvation in the next (Glen 75). She leaves him, however. This is thus a similarity between the two novels, the best friend/brother-like figure, who would be a convenient and realistic choice for the women to make, is disregarded for the desire of the heart.

Religion is an important element in both novels. In the beginning of *Twilight* there is a quotation from Genesis, which refers to Edward’s and Bella’s love. Similarly, Rochester’s and Jane’s love is also portrayed by biblical similes as noticed by Glen (Glen 55-56). The biblical references are more in number and clearer to note in *Jane Eyre*, due to religion playing a greater part in Victorian society than it does today. Religious ideals are portrayed frequently in *Jane Eyre*; devastated after Jane has left him, Rochester chooses to become a martyr who saves every life without regard for his own being (423). Similarly, St John goes out on his missionary quest and dies a martyr’s death (447) In both novels religion is to some extent an obstacle that needs to be overcome in order for the relationship to work. Despite Edward’s assurance that by doing so he will damn Bella’s soul from heaven, he turns her into a vampire when there is no other way to save her life (*Dawn* 327, 331). It is actually Bella who tries to make Edward overlook some religious restrictions, for example she tries to seduce him before the wedding. He does not give into her demands and hence their love remains ‘virtuous’ in a Christian sense, meaning no sexual intercourse before marriage. Equally, religion stands in the way of the union between Jane and Rochester. It is a sign of the

time that the two female main characters of the novels, although both written by Christian authors, perceive the importance of marriage so differently. Bella is in love with Edward, she would in fact risk her life for him. But when he proposes to her she becomes irritated since she is convinced that he must be joking. She has been shaped by her parents' unfortunate experience of marriage, though the main reason for her doubt is the inequality she feels with Edward (*Moon* 540-542). *Jane Eyre* was written in the Victorian period and therefore the character Jane has the values of the time; marriage is a necessity for a relationship. For her, staying together and being married are two concepts which are united.

Both women try to commit suicide, more or less consciously. Helen Small states in *Love's madness*, that this is an action ascribed to many women in literature, from ancient Greek tragedy forward (5-6). Small depicts that women, in literature from male dominated societies, were often driven to suicide by the departure or betrayal of men (5) This happens to both Bella and Jane when they are separated from their loved ones. This suicidal tendency is apparent when Jane leaves Thornfield Hall. She wanders for days without any food or money which almost causes her to starve to death. Since her behavior greatly risks her own life, it could be said to be an unconscious suicide attempt (318, 320, 326). Similarly, at Edward's departure Bella tries to endanger her life by reckless acts, but the love for her family and friends forces her to keep on living (*Moon* 75, 359). The tendency to suicidal behavior also occurs among the male characters though. When Edward is misinformed that Bella is dead, he tries to kill himself by breaking vampire laws (*Moon* 451-452). Similarly, Rochester does not seem to care about himself after Jane's departure. He risks his own life while trying to save all the servants from the flames his mentally ill wife has caused (423). The men seem to feel that the loved one is part of their lives and their bodies – that their lives are not worth living without them. As Edward tells Bella: "You are the most important thing to me now. The most important thing to me ever" (*Twilight* 273). Just like Rochester tells Jane: "I love you as my own flesh" (253). This parallel is also found by Anna Silver in her analysis of *Twilight* (135).

Another noticeable similarity in the two novels is the symbolical use of "hot" and "cold"; "fire" and "ice". Both authors use these terms to describe the men and the women's relations to their worlds. In both novels the men represent the one or the other, Edward and St John being ice, Jacob and Rochester fire, each battling the other. The only characteristic which stands out is that despite his close connection to ice, Edward has burning eyes like Rochester. Often in novels fire represents what is good and nurturing, while ice is

cold and harsh. Edward is always described as cold as ice, with a body like a hard stone. His hard shell and outward hostility is a contrast to his inner self though, which is warm. The rivalry between cold and warmth is shown by the episode in the tent when Edward lets Jacob sleep next to Bella in order to keep her warm (*Eclipse* 490-491). He does this even though it pains him to see his love in the arms of a rival. Edward is saddened by not being able to supply Bella's need for warmth, whereas Jacob is; this is important since it is said that Bella craves warmth (*Twilight* 228). Still, as soon as she feels warmer she goes to Edward's side again; she follows her emotions at the instant that her human needs are satisfied (*Eclipse* 490-491). When Edward returns after his absence Bella prioritizes him before Jacob, whom served as a substitute for her need of love (*Moon* 549-550). Enduring the cold is something which both heroines have to do to be in reach of what they love. For instance, Jane as a young child reads a book in the cold window sill; she endures the chill to do something she loves – reading (10). Bella, as mentioned earlier, endures the cold from Edward's body in order to stay in reach of his love. The character St John is also described being very cold, but his coldness reaches beyond the surface; his inside is as cold as his outside. Another example of the use of cold from *Jane Eyre* is after Jane's and Rochester's interrupted wedding. Jane complains about her cold and it results in Rochester carrying her to the fire (269). To Jane, Rochester is the fire and from this episode it is possible to see that Jane needs fire to escape from the suffering of the cold. Fire and warmth are not always described as something positive in the novels though - there is also the dangerous element of a fire going out of control. Both Rochester and Jacob are described with "veins running fire" (*Jane Eyre* 314) and "fuming" (*Moon* 269) when they lose control over their temper they both become dangerous to Jane and Bella; they threaten to burn them. Though in *Jane Eyre*, the fire is also purifying, destroying Rochester's mad wife and makes their love possible (423).

In both novels love is described as something strong enough to overcome all obstacles; whether it is in space or time. Edward and Rochester feel the same way about their loved ones; they will not care if they age and lose their beauty. Bella has a dream of herself as an old lady, and is visited by Edward, who is not affected by time since he is a vampire. She sees a possible future scenario which shows that he still loves her and does not care how she looks (*Moon* 3-6). Likewise, Rochester tells Jane that she is "no transitory blossom, but rather the radiant resemblance of one, cut in an indestructible gem" (311) which according to Heather Glen means that she will always be his love regardless of her appearance (Glen 88). In contrast to Edward, Rochester will age. The men do not only love the outward

shell of the women; they truly care about their inner qualities. Likewise, in both novels love not only survives time, but also overcomes physical distance. Bella hears Edward's voice after his departure whenever she is about to do something dangerous (*Moon* 112-113). This might come from a subconscious knowing, which will not emerge to her conscious mind, that he still cares about her. But it could also be him actually calling out to her across the distance. A similar situation takes place when Jane, at one point, hears Rochester's voice calling out her name, despite the fact that she is several miles away (414-415). Here it is the power of their love which conquers the physical distance that would make it impossible for her to hear him. The same message of true love is obvious in both novels – nothing is as strong as the power of love.

Conclusion

There are numerous similarities between *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *The Twilight Saga* by Stephenie Meyer. An example of how Meyer uses but slightly changes elements from Brontë's novel is how they both use the relation between fire and ice to portray love. In both of the novels the men are, in one way or another, connected with fire and/or ice. Edward shares the cold marble appearance with St John, but the warm inside with Rochester. Jacob, on the contrary, shares his rough and burning appearance with Rochester, whereas his cold and stern inside can be traced to St John; Jacob wants what is best for Bella, but he disregards her own will. Edward's and Rochester's personalities are very similar; both express their love by giving their partners gifts and money. Both men are also under the impression that their love will decrease Jane's and Bella's 'value' in God's eyes and due to this they try to use money and material things as compensation.

In both novels, appearance is portrayed to contradict personality. Jane is described as being very plain, but she dares to speak her mind and she is not scared by her own inferiority. Bella is described as a very beautiful girl, despite that fact her personality is plain and shy. Both heroines are also diligent and disregard themselves for the welfare of others; as was the distinguished qualities of the Victorian ideal housewife – “The Angel in the House”. The Cinderella theme is also highly represented in the two novels; mainly by the girls' initial inequality in the relationships with their lover and how equality is achieved in the end, with different degrees of help from others.

Another important similarity is the dynamic in the love triangles. Jane

and St John share the same relationship as the one between Bella and Jacob. It is a sibling/best friend love from the girls' point of view, whereas the men regard it as passionate true romantic love. In Bella's and Edward's case there is the strong bond of pure, true and mutual love, the same being true of Rochester and Jane. Both women act as they are expected to by our society's norms, when choosing their partner before their professions. They act like classic lovesick women who follow their "heart" and disregard their "art", even though the path of the heart is the one that is most difficult and least natural for the girls' situations.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Stephenie Meyer's *The Twilight Saga*, was probably influenced by the well established classic *Jane Eyre*, whether consciously or subconsciously. *Jane Eyre* is a novel with many classic themes and a story with a dilemma that seems to speak to the hearts of many readers, something which *The Twilight Saga* has done as well; receiving great popularity in a short matter of time.

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