

**VAMPIRE'S HEROIC IMAGES IN STEPHENIE MEYER'S TWILIGHT:  
AN ARCHETYPAL CRITICISM**

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**ABSTRAK**

Artikel ini memaparkan perbedaan sosok vampir dalam novel Twilight karya Stephenie Meyer dibandingkan dengan gambaran vampir yang selama ini diketahui secara umum. Dengan metode penelitian kualitatif, penulis mengaplikasikan kritik sastra arketip yang dikembangkan oleh Carl Gustav Jung, Northrop Frye dan Joseph Campbell untuk menganalisis data primer. Penulis menemukan bahwa keberadaan simbol-simbol dan imaji arketip dalam novel Twilight membawa citra positif bagi karakter vampir itu sendiri. Penulis juga menemukan bahwa simbol-simbol dan imaji arketip tersebut menciptakan citra pahlawan dalam karakter vampir yang diciptakan Meyer. Secara otomatis citra baru ini juga menyamarkan citra jahat yang sudah lama melekat pada sosok vampir sebelumnya.

***Keywords: arketip, mitos, imaji, vampir***

**ABSTRACT**

This article presents the images of vampire in Stephenie Meyer's novel Twilight, which are evidently different from what people have believed to be the images of vampire before. The writer applies archetypal criticism by Carl Gustav Jung, Northrop Frye, and Joseph Campbell in analyzing the primary data. The writer finds that the archetypal images and symbols in the novel bring positive images to the character of vampire. It is also found that those images and symbols shape the

heroic quality in the character of vampire in Meyer's novel. As the result, the new heroic images replace the dark, villainous images of vampire embodied in the character of vampire before.

**Keywords:** *archetypes, myth, image, vampire*

## 1. Introduction

Myth cannot be separated from reality. The existence of myth in the society has been known since human beings began to establish their culture. Myth is usually associated with religion, traditional and cultural believes. Sometimes it is also established by natural phenomenon or beliefs in particular institutions. In literary works, myth has an important role in giving values to the story. By relating the events to mythical belief in society, readers come to an assumption that the story is not a product of author's fantasy, but based on factual basis. Many literary works, which adopt cultural mythology, seem to preserve the mythology as well as the society does. The writer sees an exception in Stephenie Meyer's Twilight, which tells the story of vampires. Trough the story line, this novel seems to change the images of vampire from what people might have believed so far. People used to believe that vampire lives in darkness, feeds on human's blood, does villainous deed; and now those characteristics are changed into some heroic attitudes like avoiding human's blood and consuming animal's blood instead. This novel is evidently trying to change the images of vampire from a negative to a positive one.

## 2. Background of the Research

This article discusses the shifting images of vampire from the old mythology to the present day as appears in Meyer's Twilight. In the past, image of vampire was always associated with religion. Christianity describes vampire as a religious figure like A Christian devil and more truly depicted the dark image of Christ. People usually called them "the living dead" because they were not alive

nor dead; they were immortal. They could not walk in daytime because they would get burned under the sunlight. People believed that it needed a wooden nail to be tacked down right through the heart of a vampire to kill it.

The description above seems to be contrast with the image of vampire in Meyer's novel. Twilight's vampires have unnatural beauty. They do not show their fangs and their skin glitters when they are exposed to the sunlight. They do not stay in the coffin but socialize with human being instead; even they make a deep relationship with human girl. The vampire family named the Cullen Clan chooses to drink animal's blood rather than human's blood for feeding requirement. The most impressive fact is the contrast image of vampire character in the novel which is described as hero. This change is made by Meyer by utilizing some archetypal symbols, images, and journey in her novel. Jung's theory of archetypal images and Campbell's hero journey are applied in the analysis to show that shifting images of vampire. Thus, this article is entitled **Vampire's Heroic Images in Stephenie Meyer's Twilight: an Archetypal Criticism.**

### **3. Review of Previous Studies**

Before starting the analysis, the writer did some review on related researches that have been done before. The first review is on a research is by Sue Bohlin, entitled "The Darkness of Twilight". It states that most of Christian's followers stay away from reading this novel because they think Twilight is dangerous. She propagates that readers can stay long for these kinds of supernatural but ungodly powers, if not in real life, then in their imagination. She also assumes that reading this novel is a doorway to the demonic, which is all about gaining power from a source other than God.

Related to the image of vampire, Alam Nasrah Ikhlas wrote a thesis entitled "The Human Being Belief in Vampire Myth in Dracula by Bram Stoker" (2003). He describes the figure of vampire as a creature who lives in darkness and in legend. Vampire awakens at night and drinks the life substance of his victims in

order to survive his own. This image has haunted human's imagination for centuries. He states that there is a wealth material in legends, hearsay, witness accounts, and true fact reported over centuries to enrich a compulsive fascination with the horror of "walking dead". Ikhlas also describes about modern people's assumption related to vampire as immortal, which means that vampires have finished their ordinary lives, but still tied up with the life then they have not been accepted yet in the life of the dead.

Carla T. Kung edits a collection of articles into a book entitled Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil (2003). One of the journals is written by Sally Miller entitled "Nursery Fears Made Flesh and Sinew, Vampires, the Body and Eating Disorders: A Psychoanalytic Approach". Miller states that modern vampires are physically stronger than humans and often possess some supernatural powers. They could live near of human being. They have ability to run much faster and have power much stronger than human being. Miller also has a notion that holy objects have little or no effect upon the modern vampire. They possess reflections and while they prefer the dark it is usually only newly-made or weak vampires that are killed by sunlight. Their bite is not usually a source of infection, with reproduction taking place by a normally consensual process of mutual blood exchange. Miller explains further that vampires have other alternatives in their feeding activities. She states that in order to avoid drinking from human, contemporary vampire usually opts for one of two alternatives, feeding from animals or drinking human blood from a secondary source such as a blood bank.

#### **4. Vampire's Heroic Images in Stephenie Meyer's Twilight: an Archetypal Criticism**

By applying some theories in archetypal criticism, the writer presents below the new characteristics of vampire used by Meyer in her novel Twilight. The writer divides the analysis into two parts: the analysis of the vampire's individuation and hero's journey, represented by Edward Cullen.

### **a. Jungian Individuation**

Carl Gustav Jung explains that individuation is a process to establish one's uniqueness that comes from selfhood or self-realization beyond social and cultural constructs. Jung identifies five primary functions of the human psyche. Each function has a specific role that defines the activities related with them. They are Persona, Ego, Shadow, Anima/Animus, and the Self (in Read 1953:173). In this case, the writer focuses on the persona and shadow, to see how the shadow images taken over by persona images that result in a shifting image of vampire.

- **The Persona**

The novel presents a group of vampires named the Cullen Clan who prefer to live among humans. They are regarded as vegetarian vampire and they commit not to harm any human around them. They act to protect the land from the attack of the other vampires, the villainous ones. They act like a righteous human while still secretly endure their activities as vampire. This is the persona of the socially acceptable good vampire. This persona explores the Cullens' humanity that causes them to feel real emotion like humans.

The existence of the Cullen family is just like an anomaly in the vampire world. They preserve some facet of their soul which is supposed to be removed when they were transforming into vampire. The Cullens' option not to drink human's blood for their dietary concern and prefer to socialize among human being, even make a serious relationship with a human girl, prove that all undeniable human emotions exist within them despite their vampire instinct. Those emotions associated with social condition have grown their persona side. It is strong evidence that the persona takes a wider space within their psyches, and then it creates brand new vampires, the more tolerable ones.

- **The Shadow**

Jung defines the Shadow as an unconscious part of the ego which is connected to the Id and its structures. Based on Jung's definition, the

shadow is a part beneath someone's consciousness that is instinctively felt by the person as their dark side, which they realize is there but too hesitant to look at clearly. Not so for the mythological vampire. In the case of ancient vampire, the shadow is clearly exposed.

The role of the shadow in vampire character in Twilight is seen through the character of Edward Cullen. However, Edward flexes his vampire's emotion more. He tries to protect and defend the humans, befriends them and develops real affection and even falls in love with a human girl. He decidedly feels those atypical behaviors for someone who fancies himself an embodiment of evil and a distinct threat to humanity. He and the rest of his family are aware that the shadow lies within them. They realize that the temptation from human's blood could appear anytime. The presence of Bella with her special scent also forced Edward's shadow to appear (24). It is really hard for him to fight against his shadow in order to prevent from harming the human girl. It is similar for the rest of the Cullen clan since Bella begins to attend among them, especially for Jasper who is the most recent member in the Cullen feeding style. The scent of Bella's blood is so alluring, thus, he needs to keep a distance from the girl to suppress his shadow.

## **b. The Archetypal Images and Patterns**

- **Water**

Water is believed as representative form of the mystery of creation, purification and redemption, fertility and growth (Guerin et al 161). Water in the novel occurs in the form of rain, as stated in Bella's first opinion about Forks in chapter 1, "It rains on this inconsequential town more than any other place in the United States of America" (3). Rain could be interpreted as medium of purification. The Cullens' choice to live along the river is also a kind of their rebellion against who they really are. River is an archetypal symbol of death and rebirth incarnation of deities and transitional phases of the life cycle. The Cullens' house stands aside the

Calawah River. It implies the Cullens' rebirth, which they prefer to consider as incarnation of deities rather than evil.

- **Sun**

Guerin et al defines sun, including fire and sky, as a symbol of creative energy, law in nature, consciousness, thinking, enlightenment, wisdom, and spiritual vision. (161). The presence of sun cannot be separated from the analysis of vampire image. Based on the old myth, as also believed by Bella Swan, sun is the most frightening thing for a vampire. A vampire will get burned or weak under the sunlight. Twilight presents a contrast story to the myth; sun is not giving any harm for Twilight's vampires, but rather exposing their beauty. Sun is a symbol of beauty since it brings enlightenment to the cold, rainy and gloomy town which also actually symbolizes the vampires themselves.

- **Colors (Red)**

Guerin et al state in A Handbook for Critical Approaches to Literature (1999) that red is a symbol of blood, sacrifice, violent passion, and disorder (161). The symbol of blood in Twilight is represented in villainous vampires' eyes. As described in the novel, "Their eyes were different, too. Not gold or black I had come to expect, but a deep burgundy (red) color that was disturbing and sinister" (376). The presence of red in villain vampires' eyes in Twilight symbolizes human blood that they sucked from their victim. Human's blood itself is a sign of warmth and life energy of mortal spirit.

- **The Archetypal Woman**

- **The Good Mother**

The Good Mother contains positive aspects of Mother Earth. The figure of Good Mother is closest to the character of Esme Cullen in the novel. It can be seen in the quotation: "I do think them as my children in most ways. I never could get over my mothering instinct" (368). Esme's tenderness is a form of her human facet left within her vampire body. Her concern to the

Cullen children has automatically grown respect within the entire family member.

- **The Soul mate**

Undoubtedly, the figure of Soul mate in the novel is represented in the character of Bella Swan. The fact that Bella is human while Edward Cullen is vampire does not mean that she cannot appear as anima figure of Edward Cullen. Most of the Cullens believe that Bella's presence among them especially in Edward's vampire life, is a spiritual fulfillment.

- **The Wise Old Man**

The role of Carlisle Cullen as the Wise Old Man can be seen in this quotation: "I was too ashamed to tell them how weak I was, they only knew something was very wrong – and then I went straight to Carlisle, at the hospital, to tell him I was leaving" (270). Carlisle is the only one whom Edward is able to tell about his problem and became the only one for him to come back after a decade of his rebellion to Carlisle appetite.

- **Garden**

According to Guerin et al, garden is a symbol of paradise, innocent and unspoiled beauty (165). The representative of garden in the novel is represented in form of a meadow, as stated in chapter 12: "I reached the edge of the pool of light and stepped through the last fringe of ferns into the loveliest place I had ever seen. The meadow was small, perfectly round, and filled with flowers – violet, yellow, and soft white" (259). In the novel, the meadow is described as untouchable secret place. It seems that the author uses symbol of garden to emphasize that her vampire characters are close to the figure of angel rather than evil as the nature of vampire in the ancient story.

- **The Archetypal Motif or Patterns: Hero Archetypes**

Joseph Campbell in his [The Hero with a Thousand Faces](#) (2004) explains that the hero's journey is a sequence of events which is presented in a story or myth that is common to all mythical structures. The hero's



journey consists of three main stages. They are separation or departure, initiation, and return, which Campbell names as the nuclear unit of 'monomyth' (28). Edward begins his first stage by an external call that drives him to go on a quest. The external factor appears through the character of Bella Swan; a unique scent of her streaming blood drives him into madness, grows his curiosity and creates a kind of affection to this human girl. There are only two choices for Edward as a good vampire; to be separated from her to keep her safe or stays beside her forever and be her guardian angel. He feels that the call to the second option is much stronger but his incapability to deny his vampire lust leads him to resist the call in the first time. Edward feels resistant because the journey means leaving his comfortable zone to face an unknown physical and psychological danger for him, the human girl and his entire family. Edward is helped by some guides and supernatural power of his vampire abilities during the first part of the journey. He must cross the threshold which is epitomized in the novel as the forbidden love between vampire and human. Edward may confront a threshold guardian that implies his own thirst to this human blood; it might discourage him and evokes doubt to cross the threshold, as it is stated in the novel: "In that close, warm little room, the scent was maddening. I so very nearly took you then. There was only one other human frail there – so easy to dealt with ... but I resisted ... It was easier outside, when I couldn't smell you anymore, to think clearly, to make right decision" (270).

Campbell suggests that when the hero crosses the threshold, he symbolically enters his unconscious psyche. Having reached his unconscious, the hero usually plunges into doubt and is in despair. However, this despair does not last long, and afterwards the hero enters a "dreamlike labyrinth of tests and trials" (92). After passing through all the trials he has to finally deal with his feminine side or Anima which is projected in the figure of Bella Swan. The role of Bella Swan as the temptress figure in the novel is to represent sacred marriage, the union of

the masculine and feminine sides. This union invites conflict among the other vampires; some of them regard this union as something impossible to happen, it leads Edward astray from his path which results in his failure. His eagerness to protect the human girl unconsciously pushed him over to show his unnatural power which involves risk to open up his truly identity (56). When Edward has completed all the tasks, he prepares to return as an individuated self, a vampire who is in love with his prey. The return is filled with difficulties because he must resist his thirst of Bella's alluring blood. At the same time, his desire to keep close to this human girl is undeniable. In the novel Twilight, the stages of Hero's Journey do not appear in the same order; some of the stages are missing in the story. But still, the story contains the same symbolic meaning as Joseph Campbell has presented.

## 5. Conclusion

The existence of vampire lore has created many accounts of superstitions spread in many religions and beliefs. Stephenie Meyer has adopted this popular ancient figure into a modern romance fiction, Twilight. The figure of vampire in this novel is presented in different perception. In the novel, vampire is presented as hero rather than a villain. Their appearance is described as Godlike creature with all of their beautiful attributes. All of vampire characters in the novel are adorably beautiful; they are incredibly strong and able to move in unnatural speed. The sunlight does not harm them; instead it makes them even more beautiful with their sparkling skins. They are capable of living among human, especially the Cullen whose dietary concerns to animal blood keep away them from harming any human. The Cullens use their vampire ability to give helps to human being rather than to hunt for their blood.

The occurrence of the archetypal images and symbols in the novel brings the positive imagery within the vampire characters in the novel. Water, sun, the color of green, garden and the figure of Good Mother and the Wise Old Man

which are presented in vampire characters, all of those implicate positive meaning inside. Through an analysis of the archetypal images and symbols in the novel, the writer concludes that the archetypal images and patterns are deliberately presented to strengthen vampire images as the hero in the novel. It will automatically obscure the image of vampire which is believed by people before.

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