

The Eclipse and The Twilight of Familial Ligature: A Study of *Eclipse's* Vampire Covens and Werewolf Pack

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Abstract - Stephanie Meyer's novel *Eclipse*, along with its sequels, is packed with untold and disguised didactic elements and themes that must be instilled in young minds. This paper focuses on one of the prime facet of the young adult world, the familial ligature and its importance, consequences when there is deficiency of this bond and its impact on young minds, as it plays a significant role in creating, developing and moulding their lives with strong roots. The role of families in preparing and contributing disciplined, matured and socially responsible citizens is emphasized in this study by analysing the vampire Covens and werewolf pack of the novel.

Can a dream turn into a monstrous hit around the globe? Seems it has been possible with Stephenie Meyer, the American writer. Her literary debut work *Twilight* (2005) and its sequel novels *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007) and the fourth novel *Breaking Dawn* (2008) won several awards and recognition like British Book Award, Children's Choice Book Award, Teen Choice Book of the Year and the honour of Author of the Year as well for Stephenie.

The two core events of the third novel *Eclipse* are; Victoria (mate of deceased James) creates an army of newborn vampires to take revenge on Edward by killing Bella and the love triangle that reaches its peak in this novel. Meanwhile, Edward's vampire family and Jacob's werewolf pack join forces to safeguard Bella and destroy Victoria and her vampire army.

The stories of *Twilight* novels along with human characters has vampires, most of them frozen in their young adult age and horse-sized huge werewolves who stops aging once they phase from human form to wolf form. It is noted that they too exhibit the characteristics of teenagers.

The common issues and problems faced by young adults can be grouped under three major headings or divisions namely, 'familial bond, peer pressure and finance and employment opportunities' of which the first is discussed in this paper.

Familial bond is a kind of unique, strong, intimate connection or relationship that only family members can experience and share. This bond is very significant as it is the first and the most influential of all relationships in an individual's life. Family becomes the base of any individual's life and plays a significant role in creating, developing and moulding their roots. Stephenie Meyer's novels show types of parenting such as broken, single, divorced and remarried.

It is noted that, in young adult novels parents are given diminished or vague roles in the parent-child/children relationship in order to give more independence to the young characters, so they can take credit for their own accomplishments. Young protagonists are also usually portrayed as smarter and matured than parents.

Parents are the first model for their children from whom they learn social behaviours, values, etc and implement them later in their life. Carlisle and Esme proves to be a model of perfect parenthood though they are non-humans. Their bond with their foster children, the attachment and union among them is incredible. Carlisle's effort's to bind the members of the family together is extraordinary. Unlike Bella's family or any other human family, they are not biologically related to each other but originally belong to different background.

Carlisle was the first member of the family to be changed into a vampire centuries ago and underwent the novel, painful, burning experience of being a vampire all alone. He spent years in loneliness but utilized his vampire skills to acquire knowledge and so many good things. One such contribution to his new family is the successful experimentation of vegetarian lifestyle as an alternate option of their survival.

He changed Edward, Esme, Rosalie and Emmett into vampires when they were almost on the verge of death. Though Esme is eldest to Carlisle, they together make a perfect companion to each other and to their children. They did not refuse when Alice and Jasper joined their

coven but accepted them with all love and greetings as they adapted the new vegetarian lifestyle. They were even generous to accept and help one of the newborns (Bree Tanner) who craved for Bella's blood in the clearing of the woods.

Their challenges to be one single family (coven) with each possessing unique talents are great, that any dispute or misunderstanding among them would not only break the familial tie but will put their very existence and lives in danger either in the hands of werewolf pack as per the truce or the Volturi or among themselves.

Despite all such obstacles and challenges their bonding with each other and their relationship with both human and non-human world is exemplary. As vampires, moving around the humans is highly risky. Their true self might be revealed at anytime, for their prime distraction and temptation is the human blood. This is where the Cullens excel from the rest of their kind. They were not only living a vegetarian life, but also have established a close relationship with the human world.

Carlisle is one ideal example and an icon for his foster family members and the other red-eyes (vampires who feed on human blood) as he is the one who could be tempted the most. The choice of serving human world by being a doctor highlights his noble qualities and shows how much self-constrained he was regarding not to kill even a single human to quench his thirst for blood.

As a doctor he has to deal with patients' blood, especially during surgeries. Readers could wonder how Carlisle was able to achieve such perfection and loyalty in his profession for umpteen numbers of years. Probably, one of the vampire characteristics could have aided him greatly during such situations. They could hold their breath for a comfortable period of time, like Edward did in *Midnight Sun* in order to distract himself from the very inviting, mouth watery smell of Bella's blood.

His kindness towards humans and non-violence, a bizarre quality for a vampire are witnessed in this novel. Rosalie narrates the tragic end of her human life to Bella, of being molested and abused physically by her human fiancé Royce and his friends who were in a drunkard state. They even failed to realize what a brutal act or offence they had committed and stumbled over with laughter thinking she was dead. It was Carlisle, attracted by the blood, found her lying on the

road shivering in winter cold and pleading for death to ease up her pain. He then carried her to his place and changed her into a vampire. Carlisle's pity towards dying human souls is seen in the case of Rosalie's past life and in Edward and Esme's histories as well.

Initially, Edward was able to overcome his inner conflict (drawn by the strong sweet smell of Bella's blood) only by realizing his father's (Carlisle's) love and endeavour's taken all these centuries to prune them and bring them to their present perfection. This Cullen coven has become one of the very few and rare covens with high population, extraordinary talents and the only competition to the Volturi.

Most of the parents intend to thrust their wishes, decisions and dreams on their children regarding their education, career and life. This kind of attitude towards children, especially on young adults and adults might bring out unfavourable consequences. Liberty to choose their livelihood or what they want to do with their life should be given to them.

It doesn't mean that parents must not meddle in their children's personal choice but should act as facilitators. A parent has every right to impart wisdom, knowledge and awareness about the world outside the secured and protected familial circle to the children and teach them the consequences of their choice or explain what would be the result of any choice that they make. But they can't have legal authoritative claim or right to insist their wants over their children, especially on adolescents.

Carlisle Cullen does the same with his foster family members. When Rosalie was changed into a vampire, he was more like a facilitator, who explained what she has turned into (a vampire) and what sort of alternate choices that she has for the survival, thereby leaving the decision making to herself. Now she can choose any vampire lifestyle (vegetarian lifestyle of the Cullen family or the carefree life of the other red eye vampires). It is also noted that, he even did not insist her to remain attached with the Cullen coven.

The emotions of 'suppressed motherhood' in Rosalie are well evident in chapter 7. Gaining admiration of the people towards her beauty is like air, confesses Rosalie. The only thing that she hated was the Cullens because they were beautiful (physical beauty of vampires) than her, especially the men, Carlisle and Edward.

However, one of her friend named Vera made her feel envious, not with her physical beauty, but by her

possession of a small, simple family. Her husband was a carpenter, whom by profession Rosalie's motivated human parents wouldn't even have considered for her. Vera is of course, not wealthy enough, but owns something that is much more precious than all the materialistic riches. A loving husband, who could express his love from the heart with a single kiss on her cheek, unlike Royce who preferred to just showcase or pretend to show immense love with all those costly displays and expressions.

What created an everlasting impact of this family in Rosalie was, Vera's child. This imprinted memory of little Henry helped Rosalie to get satisfied, at least with a part of her much desired dreams, later when she turned into a vampire after the unhappy ending of her human life in the very same day, to be accurate, hardly few hours after her visit to Vera's home. She saved Emmett from the bear because, he reminded her of Vera's little Henry.

This suppressed emotions and longing for a normal human life, which will grant her wishes of a huge flowery wedding, a fairy tale prince who would come and make her a princess, fair-haired children and grandchildren of her own, the family that she had actually desired for, seems to be one of the two reasons of her unfriendly attitude towards Bella.

Like Bella's mother Renée, who often used to remind her about the choices and decisions regarding education, career and marriage in the human world, Rosalie also plays the role of a facilitating mother by explaining the aftermath of Bella's choice of eternity. She points out how Bella is voluntarily ready to throw away the precious, unrenovable human life for the sake of a monster's immortality, for which Rosalie would trade in everything she has now as an immortal. She even highlights how Esme is made to do with them (Edward, Rosalie, Alice, Jasper) as, substitute, foster children. Yet her love, concern, understanding and affection over her foster immortal children are the true universal qualities of motherhood.

Vampires are more often associated with horror and hunting humans in a brutal manner. But here is a vampire who hated violence and fight. It is none other than Carlisle. On analysing his foster family's reaction, most of them agreed readily to the need to fight and destroy the newborn army which is set loose by its creator, except Carlisle who hesitates with the very idea of it.

Emmett is always too eager to have fun by participating in such wary situations as he always relies on his physical strength. Even Edward seems to be excited over this fight for they were leading a non-violent life for centuries because of Carlisle's restrictions towards violence with both humans and other vampires.

Jasper is an expert in dealing with newborns. It is evident that from the genesis of Jasper's vampire life he was duly in charge in training the newborn vampires for the war. His skill and knowledge about newborns are simply amazing. It is also noted that before he was changed into a vampire by Maria, he was the youngest Major in Texas, Major Jasper Whitlock. Jasper has to be given credit for taking much effort to adapt himself to the Cullen's vegetarian and non-violence lifestyle, in spite of his mastery experience over many newborns and carefree vampire life of hunting humans for blood.

Even before he met Cullens through Alice, he tried to lead a noble life by resisting his urge and thirst for human blood (traditional diet of vampires), but that failed him very soon. This much uncivilised behaviour drove him into depression and became worse that whenever he tried not to kill, the thirst would make him to give up.

However, he found peace and happiness with Alice and through her, the Cullens, a family that accepted him and helped him in all his troubles in adapting the novel survival methods. He was the latest member of Cullen family whose recent suppressed desire for human blood was kindled by just a single drop of Bella's blood that made him to try reaching her, struggling from Emmett's massive steel grip and Edward's protection in *New Moon*.

Relationships are easily established, but very difficult to disband as it leaves its scar and pain. Parents should teach which relationships to pursue and which to avoid. Know what to give and what to expect. When Jasper narrates the story of vampire battles or rather wars and newborns in chapter 13, he compares the span of his companionship with Maria, to Carlisle and Edward's life together. He says, though the life span of both the pair is similar, the bond between Maria and he is not as strong and intense as that of Carlisle and Edward.

In 1918, when Edward was on the brink of death and hospitalized due to influenza, Carlisle changed him into a vampire, so that Edward could be his companion

of a long lonely life. Edward was quite special to Esme when compared to rest of the foster children as he was supposed to be her first adoptive/foster child. Most of Carlisle's good qualities, like love for the wife, relationship as a father and family head, civilised social behaviour with humans and non humans, being meticulously responsible and humane, etc, are reflected in Edward's character throughout the novels, exclusively in *Breaking Dawn*.

Power hierarchy or the hegemony is well evident even among the supernatural creatures. The Volturi occupies the highest position in the paranormal social ladder of whom the other vampires are afraid of. But they are also portrayed as good because they keep the secrecy and situation of the immortals (battles among the red eyes to claim the territory where human population is high for feeding) under control. When power structure exists, politics also creeps in gradually. Cullen coven is considered to be the only rising threat or rather a competition with its almost equal members who possess unique supernatural talents.

The Volturi's failure to act towards the unrefined and uncouth behaviour of the newborns indicate their wish of the Cullens to perish in the fight, as then there would be no competitors to them. It is the largest and most powerful coven of vampires, who imposed the laws of the vampire world. Many of the conventions are primarily concerned of the secrecy of the existence of vampires. They are the foundation of peace and civilization of the vampire world as Edward declares in the fourth novel.

To mention few of the laws: Hunting must not be obvious and the remains of the hunting must be disposed of, Volterra (residential town of the Volturi) is prohibited of hunting, immortal children are not to be created, dealing with the Children of the Moon is forbidden, false witness is punished by death, should not be noticed in open sunlight, the creator is sole responsible for his newborn's conduct and teaching the laws before they are set loose on their own, drawing human attention will only provide two options: either change the human immortal or silence him/her permanently.

Among the three founders of Volturi, Aro, the most ambitious, manipulative, greedy yet careful, forms the official leader with his power of 'tactile or tangible telepathy'. Caius and Marcus are the co-leaders of the

Volturi, of which Marcus has the power of 'relationship identification'.

The second in power hierarchy are the Volturi guards, a group of vampires with powerful capabilities who serve as subordinates of the coven and are mostly assigned with protecting the prominent members of the coven or as executioners or assassins.

Each guard wears a cloak whose colour indicates their ranking in the coven. The darker the shades, the more valuable that vampire is considered. Their powers are as follows: Chelsea's 'relationship manipulation', Jane ('can burn you where you stand, mentally') and Alec ('total sensory deprivation') the most powerful weapons of the Volturi, Demetri an extremely 'powerful tracker', Felix the 'strongest warrior' (physically), Renata, Aro's personal bodyguard, with 'powerful shield' and others as well. If a guard member is dismissed, he is either released on his own or just disposed.

The unexpected twist in the novel is the acceptance, support and the coordination of the wolf pack with the Cullens to fight against the newborns. Vampires and werewolves are considered as natural enemies who carry grudge and hatred since the genesis. Jacob and his La Push friends' aversion towards the Cullens are evident even in the monikers they use like "leech, parasites, fortune-telling blood sucker, disgusting parasites, stupid blood suckers, filthy blood suckers" and shows their inhospitable attitude towards them. And Cullens in turn, except Carlisle and Esme, at times address their opponents as "dog, mongrel, pup". The two supernatural enemy families even disparage each other's odour. The scent of werewolves is woody and musky (but they smell like dogs for the vampires), whereas the vampires smell of some burning incense (too strong) to the werewolves (burning sensation). But both of them smelled usual for Bella. These strong notions of rivalry between them tend to break in this novel, creating a sense of trust and faith on each other apart from the truce. Edward and Seth are good example.

Like Twilight vampires, Stephenie has recreated the representation of wolves and has excelled in portraying the characters in her debut work. Wolves are often described or depicted as bad omen, negative images, very violent and horrifying figures, greatly obscured by fiction and certain legends.

A typical wolf pack could be considered as a family with an average of six to eight wolves and at rare cases

fifteen wolves. The concept of 'alpha male' (the top-ranking and the head of the pack) is distinct in wolf pack. This does create a hierarchy or dominance in the pack, which is usually formed at the initial stage as some wolves are destined to rule the pack.

The rare exception is the lone wolf. In a larger pack, there may be also a 'beta wolf', usually the 'second-in-command' to the alpha wolf. In this novel, readers come to know that Jacob is the beta wolf, the second in command after Sam (alpha of the pack). Being the grandson of Ephraim Black, he is the supreme alpha of the pack who has refused to take the position and left the responsibility to Sam. In the fourth novel, he regains his supreme alpha status and moves away from the original pack.

The primary conflict of the novel is the fight between the new born army (lead by Victoria) and the Cullens. Vampire and werewolf conflict is seen since the first novel and throughout the series. The Volturi's envy on the growing Cullen family begins to show intensity in this novel. Even the only two non-violent, vegetarian families' show the traces of discomfort as the Denali coven refuses to side with the Cullens in the fight against newborns.

Hegemony is noticed in the families of werewolf pack, the Volturi, combined with politics includes megalomaniac characters like Aro. Vengeance, hatred, prejudices, conceit, etc, are also witnessed among the families in conflicts.

The intention of this study is to bring to light, the influence of contemporary young adult novels, to highlight the importance of familial bond as well as the consequences when there is no such bond and the impact of family on young minds.

The two things that arrest the reader's are Edward's noble and chaste attitude in his relationship with Bella regarding the straight forwardness in physical emotions and marriage and the joined efforts of vampires (Cullens) and the werewolf pack. The love triangle, in spite of its complications and emotional imbalance is well constructed and serves as a great tool in the development of the characters, their relationship and coordination with each other.

Parenthood, a demanding role, calls for numerous adjustments from both parents and family members. Being a parent, especially for young adults is a Herculean task. They have a great responsibility in shaping their children's lives that they consciously or unconsciously wield a great influence on their

children's young minds, behaviours, actions, attitude and the way they perceive life. This is what is seen in Twilight's non-human families. Even though Carlisle and Esme are vampires with all superhuman characteristics, they are responsible, loving, sincere and passionate and more over are non-violent parents which are peculiar with vampires.

The problems of discipline, responsibility and freedom are quite common in every family. There is a difference between reward and bribe. The *Eclipse* novella highlights the practise of bribing the newborns (by allowing them to hunt humans to quench their wild thirst) by Riley to an agreement of killing the strange yellow eyes (the Cullens). If they succeed in this mission, the reward he would offer was Bella.

Every child born in this earth is pure and innocent. The child, metaphorically, is similar to that of fresh, flexible clay that can be moulded, designed and displayed in the society in any ways possible. Families have a great responsibility in contributing (self) disciplined, responsible and independent citizens. Sympathy, humaneness towards fellow beings and to live in harmony with the society with all physical, mental, social and emotional adjustments are some of the most essential qualities that need to be instilled in young minds since their childhood.

If you want a coconut tree of your own, you have to plant the seedling six years ahead, says Balachandran Chullikad, a poet of Kerala. If a tree needs such a period of patient preparation, pruning and growth to grant a good yield in the future, how much an individual might require to prosper in the later life?

Familial relationships must be an accepting, affirming and supportive relationship. In this novel, the preparation of the Cullens and the werewolf pack to fight the newborn army serves as a 'family bonding time factor' which has diminished the enmity between the supposed to be natural rivals and has facilitated the emergence of hope and trust on each other.

'Time' is the underlying solution for many problems and misunderstandings. Everyone is preoccupied with every other work. In such situations the time we spend with our family, though is precise, it must be a quality one and should be given priority and equal significance with that of our 'already-occupied busy schedule'. Nothing is gained without any loss or pain, or at least loosing anything. We must realize the love and sacrifices of our parents and family members for our betterment, growth, goodness and maturity.

The familial relationship of the Cullen coven is beautifully pictured in the novel. Stephenie herself has been the second of six children and took on the duties of an elder sibling taking care of her siblings. The Cullens has succeeded in what other families have slipped i.e. to love each other selflessly and also sharing and shouldering others (members of the Cullen family) burdens and difficulties. They show how one must adjust to the needs and problems of the family members which aided them to lead a conflict free life. This family is one of the ideal families that anyone would be envious of, to be a part of this loving ligature!

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