

Afterlife of the Romance Hero: Readers' Reproduction of Romance

By Fatmah Al Thobaiti

Published online: October 2019

<http://www.jprstudies.org>

Abstract: This study aims to present a feminist reading of the ways in which the character of the romance hero unfolds differently across and as a result of readers' participation in various activities on the internet. To examine the afterlife of the romance hero on the internet, this article looks at two types of readers' practices on the internet: fanfiction and image-macro memes. By exploring readers' reproduction of the romance hero through these practices, this study aims to answer the following questions: to what extent do readers' practices redefine masculinity as a flexible, dynamic and participatory construction? To what extent do readers' productive activities challenge the conventional formula of the dominant romance hero and participate in online feminism? And what do readers' practices offer, not only to the fans who read, celebrate, and critique the genre, but also to scholars who are interested in the cultural significance of the romance genre and online feminism?

About the Author: Fatmah Al Thobaiti is an assistant professor of Modern and Contemporary English Literature at Taif university, where she has been a faculty member since 2007. Fatmah completed her PhD at Queen Mary University of London in 2017. Her research interests lie in the areas of feminism, romance fiction and genre theory.

Keywords: fan fiction, feminism, genre, hero, online feminism, romance fiction

The Romance Hero

The hero is one of the main defining elements in the romance novel. Falling in love with him *is* the story. "The hero," Mary Putney writes, "is the most crucial character in a romance, the linchpin who holds the story together" (100). Without the hero, there would be no story. Also, commenting on the significance of the hero in the romance novel, Wendy Larcombe notes that he provides "the tension, the excitement, the danger and the satisfaction" in the story (42). The hero, in other words, moves the plot of the romance novel forward.

As in other types of narratives in genre fiction, the romance novel produces characters that are identifiable by professional critics and audiences as key to the genre. As Jens Eder, Fotis Jannidis and Ralf Schneider note, genres produce characters that are familiar to the audience:

The occurrence of one typical element of a genre will [...] trigger a complex set of expectations concerning the kind of characters to appear, the situations they encounter, the themes they are likely to be confronted with, their conception of flat or round, or static or dynamic, and typical constellations with other characters. (43)

Many aspects of the main characters of any given genre fiction, then, can be expected, even before one starts to read the text. Not only that, but also each of these characters is expected to have a certain function in the plot (Eder et al 42-43). In a typical heterosexual romance novel, the characters of the hero and heroine are expected to fulfil or enact distinctly delineated masculine and feminine roles in order to achieve their happy ending. Tania Modleski defines the function of the hero and heroine in the romance novel as follows:

a young, inexperienced, poor to moderately well-to-do woman encounters and becomes involved with a handsome, strong, experienced, wealthy man, older than herself by ten to fifteen years. The heroine is confused by the hero's behaviour since, though he is obviously interested in her, he is mocking, cynical, contemptuous, often hostile, and even somewhat brutal. By the end, however, all misunderstandings are cleared away, and the hero reveals his love for the heroine, who reciprocates. (35-36)

Besides giving specific features for the hero and heroine of romance, Modleski outlines the ways by which they behave and interact with each other according to traditional gender roles, where the man holds more power than the woman. This unequal distribution of power leads to the submission of the heroine.

Robyn Donald explains that unequal distribution of power between the hero and heroine is an essential part of the love plot in the romance novel. Seeing that the heroine's goal is to conquer the hero and gain his heart, his character must be constructed to test her skills and determination. The hero, in other words, must present "a suitable challenge" for the heroine because her power is measured by how successful she is in conquering him (81). Along the same line, Larcombe notes that the character of the hero has to be both "simultaneously desirable and threatening", and herein, she believes, "lies the problem that women's romance fiction continues to reconstruct – and redress": while the hero must be powerful and threatening in order to provide a suitable challenge for the heroine, acquiring these features puts the heroine in a vulnerable position in the relationship (44). This challenge, according to Catherine Roach, helps women:

deal with their essentially paradoxical relationship toward men within a culture still marked by patriarchy and its component threat of violence toward women. [...] Most baldly put, this paradox has women in a position of simultaneously desiring and fearing men. (2)

Masculine dominance and aggression in the romance novel, then, are eroticized on the one hand while viewed as problematic on the other.

Therefore, a number of feminist scholars have turned their attention to criticizing the romance hero for performing the traditional gender role of the dominant man. Susan Crane, for example, criticizes the way in which “romance implicates the dichotomy between masculine and feminine in a range of other oppositions between authority and submission, familiarity and exoticism, justice and mercy, public and private, with which the gender dichotomy suggestively interacts” (13). Repeatedly, Crane notes, the masculine identity in romance is constructed by alienating it from the traits assigned to femininity: “womanly timidity, passivity, and pity confirm the masculinity of bravery, initiative, and severity” (19). This type of hegemonic masculinity is normalized and idealized in the romance novel. Furthermore, as Jonathan Allan notes, it is “part of and contribute[s] to hetero-patriarchal-capitalism”, which critical studies of men and masculinity call into question (“Purity of His Maleness” 37). The romance hero’s embodiment of the ideal masculinity of heterosexism indicates a kind of homophobia behind the love plot of the novel. Indeed, Jayashree Kamblé notes that, “during the most visible moments in the history of the gay rights movement [...] the romance strand alters its hero to evince features of the Heterosexual Alphanman” (129). The character of the romance hero, then, is not only problematic because it puts the female character into submission, but also for the kind of masculinity it represents.

This article participates in this body of research that questions the character of the romance hero and the type of masculinity he embodies. It argues, however, that the production of the romance hero does not stop at the level of novel publication, but continues to appear, in various and complicated ways, in readers’ practices online. While many romance studies have long asserted that readers are not passive consumers of the genre—through ethnographic research, for example—readers’ ability to publicly voice and share their responses, creative recreations, manipulations, or critiques of the genre were rather limited before the digital era. In the 1970s and early 1980s, readers’ discussion and questioning of romance novels were not as easily accessible and visible as they are today. Therefore, the role of the romance reader as a co-producer of the genre, and the implications of taking this participatory role, have not yet received significant attention in romance studies. As Greenfeld-Benovitz notes, “while researchers like Regis address the derision directed towards romance and its readers, little has been done with respect to how members of the romance community deal with these issues” (203). In the age of digital media, romance readers’ active engagement with the genre is so exceptionally visible that it is no longer helpful to overlook or simplify it for the sake of argument. Unlike Radway’s reader, who “actively attributes sense to lexical signs in a silent process carried on in the context of her ordinary life” (8), readers today have the ability to share their engagement with texts widely.

This study aims to present a feminist reading of the ways in which the character of the romance hero unfolds differently across and as a result of readers’ participation in various activities on the internet. To examine the afterlife of the romance hero on the internet, this article looks at two types of readers’ practices on the internet: fanfiction and image-macro memes. By exploring readers’ reproduction of the romance hero through these practices, this study aims to answer the following questions: to what extent do readers’ practices redefine masculinity as a flexible, dynamic and participatory construction? To what extent do readers’ productive activities challenge the conventional formula of the dominant romance hero and participate in online feminism? And what do readers’ practices offer, not

only to the fans who read, celebrate, and critique the genre, but also to scholars who are interested in the cultural significance of the romance genre and online feminism?

Dynamism of the Romance Hero

Despite the rigidity with which the character of the romance hero usually appears in the romance novel, it is important to note that fictional characters are not finished products; they continue to live, and sometimes develop and change, with the audience. As Mary Springer explains:

character is not given to us like a gift in the hand, or like a picture on the wall, but [...] it does in fact accumulate. This must make perfect sense since the story, unlike the picture of the wall, moves across time – we must turn the page in order to find out what else there is to know about the character, what new actions and choices there may be to expand or modify our knowledge, what decisions we are to make about whether the character is fixed or in change, individual or antithetical to another character, minor or main. (179)

A clear example of the continuity of acquainting oneself with fictional characters can be found in fanfiction. As Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse note, “the entirety of stories and critical commentary written in a fandom [...], offers an ever-growing, ever-expanding version of the characters” (7). The alternative scenarios presented by fanfiction allow characters to transform, develop and embody different codes of behavior. Henry Jenkins notes that “though many fans claim absolute fidelity to the original characterization and program concepts, their creative interventions often generate very different results” (181). For example, the alternative scenario in fanfiction can force characters to take decisions that they were not forced to take in the source text, which reveals them in a different light. This change, Springer notes, brings us closer to knowing the character:

one rhetorical mode by which character makes itself known to us is a process of change, an action in which we accumulate our knowledge of character chiefly in the apprehension of a change – new decisions and acts of which the character was always inherently but not overtly capable. (181)

In fanfiction, one can find various examples of how readers fill the gaps that need to be explored in characters, examine potentials in the characters that go unexplored in the source text, and bring them to the fore. We can witness how characters exceed the limits of the genre and, by doing so, bring more flexibility and dynamism to its form.

As they spread, these flexible forms serve as paratexts to source texts.[1] Paratexts are narrowly defined by the literary theorist Gérard Genette as the productions that surround the text, such as an author’s name, a title, a preface, or an illustration (1). “The paratext,” Genette writes, “provides an airlock that helps the reader pass without too much respiratory difficulty from one world to the other” (408). Expanding Genette’s definition, Jonathan Gray suggests that the paratext not only facilitates an understanding of the text, but

also violates its meanings. They “establish the frames and filters through which we look at, listen to, and interpret the texts they hype” (*Show Sold Separately* 3). What is more, Gray notes that paratexts are not only industry-created but audience-created as well. “[Audience’s] creative and discursive products,” he writes, “can and often do become important additions to a text” (*Show Sold Separately* 143). From here stems the importance of paying special attention to readers’ practices in studies of the romance genre. Readers’ prolific creation of paratexts—not only on the internet, but in their daily life as well—calls into question the type of meanings and challenges they bring to the romance hero and the genre in general. This study argues that the romance genre cannot be adequately understood without taking into account paratexts created by readers, which, as discussed above, have the ability to invade, interrupt and challenge the meanings of the source text and become part of it.

Significantly, as noted from analyzing readers’ practices on the internet, the paratexts created around the romance genre are not generated only by fans (regular readers of the genre), but also by antifans (people who dislike the genre), and nonfans (people who are not regular readers of it). A good example of this diversity can be found in discussions of *Twilight*, which are generated by three discrete groups: Twihards (fans of *Twilight*); Twihaters (antifans of *Twilight*); and *Twilight* nonfans (those who have a neutral position in relation to the text). This variation adds to the diversity of the paratexts created around the source text. Gray distinguishes between fans and antifans, and explains how the practices of each of these groups are different depending on how close they are to the source text. Fans, according to Gray, can certainly be categorized as close readers who analyze the text in order to derive its hidden meanings. In addition to close reading of the text, fans “actively look ‘outside’ the nucleus to intruders and intertexts, negotiating certain readings of the text, and they may well read over or in spite of it [...], fitting text into personal or group context” (“New Audience” 69-70). Fans’ practices, then, combine both close reading of the text as well as reading across other texts and contexts. These different types of activities make fan-produced work a rich material to use for the investigation of the afterlife of the romance hero.

Compared to studies of fans, however, Gray notes that there is little work on either antifans or nonfans. Neglecting these groups, he argues, limits our understanding of how media messages are received and used by audiences. To fully understand audiences’ interaction with media texts, Gray suggests that we must explore the work of anti-fans and nonfans too (“New Audience” 68). Gray defines antifans as “individuals spinning around a text in its electron cloud, variously bothered, insulted or otherwise assaulted by its presence” (“New Audience” 70). They “strongly dislike a given text or genre, considering it inane, stupid, morally bankrupt and/or aesthetic drivel” (“New Audience” 70). Beside their dislike of the text, the significance of antifans’ practices is that a considerable amount of their knowledge of the text comes from media and other people’s discussions, rather than a close reading of the source text. Whether they have read it or not, Gray notes, “anti-fans construct an image of the text – and, what is more, an image they feel is accurate – sufficiently enough that they can react to and against it” (“New Audience” 71). Thus, in contrast to those who read the source text closely in order to derive its meanings, antifans’ knowledge of the source text comes from the paratexts surrounding it, another important source from which genre definition and interpretation can be derived. Lack of close reading, however, does not mean that antifans are not engaged with the source text. As Gray notes, “behind dislike, after all,

there are always expectations – of what a text should be like, of what is a waste of media time and space, of what morality or aesthetics texts should adopt, and of what we would like to see others watch or read” (“New Audience” 73). The investigation of antifans’ engagement with different issues in the source text helps us understand how the romance hero is perceived and defined from sources other than the source text, such as paratexts.

Drawing on Gray’s argument, this study examines how the character of the romance hero is reproduced, negotiated and altered by readers with different levels of regard for, and involvement with, the source texts. Readers’ varying degrees of engagement with the source text, as we will see, result in a divergent—and even contradictory—reproduction of the genre, which further emphasizes its dynamism outside the confines of the source text. In order to account for readers’ various levels of engagement with the romance genre as theorized by Gray, this study does not assume an ideal reader of romance based on textual analysis alone, nor does it restrict itself to the investigation of practices performed by only fans or a limited group of readers. In its examination of the reproduction of the romance hero, it investigates different types of readers’ practices produced by fans and antifans. It is difficult, however, to affirm the position of the reader—fan, antifan or nonfan—from the practices he/she produces on the internet, especially because much of the work online is produced anonymously. In addition, readers’ position in relation to the texts is not fixed; they can move from being a fan to a nonfan and even to an antifan. Asking readers about their opinions of and position from the text is not helpful either because the aim of this study is to build a theoretical position from what is found on the internet; remaining open to influence rather than imposing a predetermined theory or questionnaire from above. Therefore, this study explores samples from what appears to be practices of different groups of readers, each of which, as argued above, bring different meanings and challenges to the romance hero. Examples of these different practices can be found in fanfiction and image-macro memes. While this study does not assert a certain position to the producers of any of these practices, this range of practices reflects different levels of engagement with the source text. While fanfiction reflects close engagement with the source text, image-macro memes reflect an anti-fan attitude towards it because of their satirical tone. Moreover, the jokes found in image-macro memes are built on each other, i.e. inspired by paratexts, which can be interpreted as an antifan attitude.

As a case study, this article submits to examination readers’ reproduction of the fictional character Edward Cullen from Stephanie Meyer’s *Twilight* saga, a paranormal romance series narrating a love story between a vampire and a teenage girl. *Twilight* is a suitable text for the investigation of the romance hero as a dynamic and participatory construction because of its huge popularity that is in direct relation to the hero. The investigation of fans’ activities shows that little attention is paid to Bella, the female heroine, in comparison to Edward. On the website *The Twilight Saga*, for example, while Team Bella has 7431 members only, Team Edward has 20005 members. The popularity of the text, which is in direct proportion to the popularity of its hero, provides us with excellent material for the exploration of readers’ reproduction of the romance hero because many people have left their responses and discussions on the internet, available for investigation and analysis.

Furthermore, Edward Cullen’s unconventional and multifaceted performance of masculinity provides rich material for readers to explore and opens up the opportunity for various and contradictory readings of his character. The character of Edward Cullen exemplifies the problematic paradox in the contemporary romance novel’s representation

of the hero, in which hegemonic masculinity—“which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 77)—of the hero is challenged even as it is romanticized. The paradox of the character of Edward Cullen stems from his portrayal, which represents an intersection of two movements: the move toward the domestic vampire and the move towards the alpha male. On the one hand, describing this new type of vampire, Joan Gordon notes that while the traditional vampire found in horror movies is inherently evil and his “power over his prey is both extraordinary and cruel”, the new vampire is “sympathetic” and a “super-survivor” (230). The Cullen family in *Twilight* belongs to this new class of vampires. Even though they have supernatural powers and feed on blood, they do not harm humans and follow a “vegetarian” diet in which they drink animal blood only. Edward, as a member of the family, uses his power to save Bella’s life repeatedly from accidents and attacks. Furthermore, he is represented as a caring boyfriend: he carries her books, sings her lullabies, and completes her college applications and sends them for her. Tracy Bealer believes that, as a romance hero, Edward’s character challenges normative gender roles. “By situating Edward’s reluctant and fraught evolution from a patronizing and callous loner to an empathetic and vulnerable romantic partner in a supernatural context,” she writes, “the novels hyperbolize and thoughtfully address the trials of negotiating a progressive male identity in a masculinist world” (140). Chiho Nakagawa believes the Edward Cullen belongs to a new generation of men who “express their feelings often enough to avoid major misunderstandings [...] always try their hardest to understand their girlfriends’ emotional lives, often putting concern for them ahead of their masculine code of behavior” (Nakagawa). On many occasions in *Twilight*, then, Edward Cullen represents a modified type of masculinity, where the man is emotional and caring.

On the other hand, however, despite the text’s portrayal of a groomed, sensitive and caring hero, power is still unequally distributed between him and the heroine, given that vampirism, as embodied by Edward, mirrors hegemonic masculinity and propels the human heroine, Bella, into an almost constant state of subordination. As Pramod Nayar affirms, Edward’s vampirism is used to emphasize his character as hegemonic (62). Jessica Taylor also asserts that “the inclusion of the supernatural [in *Twilight*] allows the depiction of an aggressive, even monstrous, masculinity” (393). Furthermore, studying common signs of an abusive partner, Melissa Miller comments that *Twilight* “promotes a dangerous and damaging ideology of patriarchy that normalizes and rationalizes the control of women by men” (165). We can say, then, that as a super-powerful vampire who is also generous and protective, Edward Cullen reflects features from different types of masculinity. In this sense, he represents a hybrid form of masculinity, or what Stéphanie Genz and Benjamin Brabon describe as “a melting pot of masculinities, blending a variety of contested subject positions” (143). Performing contradictory types of masculinity can partly explain the lack of critical consensus over whether the character of Edward Cullen is representative of hegemonic or more fluid forms of masculinity. The following analysis, however, shows how readers read between spoken and unspoken lines of the source text and use their interpretive power to challenge, undermine or reinforce the scope of the character of the romance hero and the type of masculinity he embodies.

Readers' Reproduction of the Romance Hero

A: Fanfiction

The fanfiction "Dusk: the Twilight Saga" realizes the potential within *Twilight* to subvert the hegemonic masculinity of the romance hero and present instead a soft, caring and emotionally available hero, and takes these traits to a new level of significance. It creates a version of Edward who deviates completely from the masculine role required by the romance genre and plays instead the role usually ascribed to the female protagonist. It does so by rewriting the story of the source text with the genders of the two main characters switched: Edward's role is played by a female character named Eliza and Bella's role is played by a male character named Ben.[2]

The use of genderswap in this fanfiction works as a critical response to the source text's representation of gender roles. The oddness of having the male protagonist play the role of the female, and vice versa, reveals the rigidity of these two roles in the romance novel, that, in most cases, reproduces men in the position of power and women as submissive. In doing so, genderswap fanfiction resembles the drag performances Judith Butler famously references when she discusses the notion of gender as "performative". Butler argues that:

As much as drag creates a unified picture of 'woman' [...] it also reveals the distinctness of those aspects of gendered experience which are falsely naturalized as a unity through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency. (175)

Drag performances, Butler emphasizes, make you ask, "is drag the imitation of gender, or does it dramatize the signifying gestures through which gender itself is established?" (viii). Drag performances reveal an important point about gender, which is that it comprises the illusion that it is authentic while it is not. Akin to the drag performance, genderswap in "Dusk: the Twilight Saga" excavates the performative aspect of gender. By exchanging the genders of the male and female characters, while preserving roles and behaviors attached to them as they are represented in the source text, the fanfiction actively destabilizes the notion of 'authenticity' of gender roles and presents them as exchangeable. My focus in this article, however, is on the challenges presented to the role of the hero and his performance of masculinity. Through genderswap, a thread of male domination and control in the source text is thrown into relief, thereby revealing that despite the source text's manipulation of conventional masculinity, its portrayal of the hero still maintains key aspects of traditional masculinity: dominance and control.

"Dusk: the Twilight Saga" illuminates various moments of masculine domination in the narrative of the source text and reworks them to a new significance when the gender of the two main characters are reversed. To start with, while both the male and female protagonists are represented as objects of gaze in the source text, gender reversal in "Dusk: the Twilight Saga" exposes that the type of the gaze directed at the male protagonist is different from the one directed at the female. Studying the function of the gaze and the

concept of scopophilia in *Twilight* texts and films, Kim Edwards notes that in *Twilight*, “the gaze denotes power and dominance, and the inability to see clearly indicates weakness and submission” (30). Nevertheless, Edwards argues that in *Twilight*, the power of the gaze is shifting between the hero and heroine. “The implied male authority of the gaze in fetishising an image as sexual stimulant,” Edwards notes “is reclaimed by Bella, and by extension, her empathizing audience” (29). In *Twilight*, Bella spends a lot of time describing Edward’s looks and body. For example, she says: “I looked up, stunned that he was speaking to me [...] His dazzling face was friendly, open, a slight smile on his flawless lips” (Meyer, *Twilight* 37). Like the female protagonist, then, the male protagonist in *Twilight* occupies both positions: the desiring gazer and the desired object of the gaze.

Nevertheless, as Dodai Stewart suggests, there is a distinction between the type of gaze directed at men in popular films and that which is directed at women. She notes that, “the objectification of men is a false equivalency to the objectification of women, because what’s being fetishized is strength. [...] ‘sexy’ images of women generally involve us being relaxed, lying down, finger in the mouth like a child” (Stewart). As Stewart’s analysis indicates, the objectification of the male protagonist in *Twilight* cannot be equated with that of the female: while the objectifying gaze is directed at Bella’s physical weakness, it is directed at Edward’s physical strength, which means that, despite the “shifting” gaze between male and female characters, the male is still in possession of power. When Bella gazes at Edward in the source text, she usually talks about his powerful physical features and dominance. For example, she says: “He had the long sleeves of his white shirt pushed up to his elbows, and his forearm was surprisingly hard and muscular beneath his light skin” (Meyer, *Twilight* 21). Using words such as “hard” and “muscular” to describe Edward suggests that what Bella finds pleasing in Edward’s appearance are frequently visual markers of his strength.

In “Dusk: the Twilight Saga”, Ben appears as an attractive, but fragile and weak man. The fanfiction starts by narrating Ben’s role of “being-looked-at-ness” in his first day at the new school: “Starting a new school in the middle of the year is not typically appealing, [...]. The moment I walked into the hall I was the object of every kind of stare possible” (Mathews). More specifically, Ben is the object of the gaze of a girl named Eliza: “I glanced over my shoulder and sure enough Eliza was staring at me. Her dark onyx eyes fixated on me, like a predatory [sic] glaring at its prey” (Mathews). This scene stands in stark opposition to the type of gaze directed at Edward in the source text, in which his physical power is emphasised. The gaze targeted at Ben here resembles the gaze directed at Bella in the source text which, as Florian Grandena notes, is defined by her “to-be-spied-on-ness” (47); that is, by being under control of the watchful eye of her protective boyfriend. Similarly, in this fanfiction, Ben is looked at as a weak object and “prey” under the control of Eliza.

Ben’s submissive position in contrast to Edward’s is also developed in the fanfiction through the reversal of a common romance trope: the endangerment and rescue scenario, in which the heroine is depicted as someone who is in constant danger and in need of protection. In *Twilight*, Edward rescues Bella from being struck by a van, from rapists, and from a murderous vampire. Indeed, because Edward is a vampire and Bella is a human, she is conceived as essentially weaker than the male to an even greater extent than in romances in which the hero is a mortal man, which increases her need for his protection. Bella says: “It was against the rules for normal people — human people like me and Charlie — to know

about the clandestine world full of myths and monsters that existed secretly around us” (Meyer, *Twilight* 11). Eva Illouz explains that the weakness of women is:

acknowledged and glorified because it transfigured male power and female frailty into lovable qualities, such as ‘protectiveness’ for the one, and ‘softness’ and gentleness for the other. Women’s social inferiority could thus be traded for men’s absolute devotion in love, which in turn served as the very site of display and exercise of their masculinity, prowess, and honor. (8)

Following the same scenario, in *Twilight*, Bella’s human status naturalizes her weak position in the relationship and, in return, emphasizes and reinforces Edward’s powerful and protective role.

In a direct reversal of the protective role of the traditional man, in “Dusk: the Twilight Saga”, Ben does not define himself as a superior, a decision-maker or a controlling lover. He is represented as a weak and fragile victim who is in need of constant watch and protection from the heroine. The fanfiction identifies several moments in the source text in which Bella is represented as a victim and Edward as her rescuer, and rewrites them with these roles reversed. For example, Eliza uses her vampire power to save Ben from a car accident. She also rescues him when a vampire tries to kill him: she “grabbed him by his arm, turned her body, throwing him out of a window. She rushed towards me, picking me up fireman style” (Mathews). Ben’s passivity is further emphasized by being carried like a child. Akin to the female protagonist in the source text, Ben’s status as a human makes him essentially weaker than Eliza and therefore in need of her protection. Genderswap in this fanfiction thus emphasizes that power is enforced from the outside and can be exchangeable. In the source text, vampirism provides an alibi for male dominance; giving that power to Eliza distinguishes the two and reminds readers that they aren’t interchangeable. That is to say, associating power with vampirism, but not with masculinity, challenges fixed gender roles as represented in the source text and depicts them as inauthentic.

Even though this fanfiction is not fully representative of the massive amount of fan works inspired by *Twilight*, it provides significant insights into patterns of readers’ participation in the reproduction and manipulation of the romance hero. While it does not ideally represent an equally powerful hero and heroine, Ben’s performance of a feminized version of the romance hero invites readers to question the extent to which these traits seem natural when attached to the heroine rather than the hero, as they are in the source text. Simultaneously, the forced and artificial gender-remapping in this fanfiction challenges essentialist notions of gender as they usually appear in the romance novel. While traditional gender roles are less visible when naturalized—that is, when they are attached to the “normal” gender—they are more obvious when exchanged. Whether intentionally or not, this fanfiction mirrors important arguments against essentialist notions and definitions of gender and masculinity and presents them in a romance narrative. Through its creation of a “feminized hero”, the fanfiction “Dusk: the Twilight Saga” gestures toward the introduction of alternative types of masculinity into the romance novel. It suggests that the hegemonic masculinity of the romance hero could be replaced by a more emotional and less oppressive means of being a man. By doing this, it participates in what Illouz asks for when she writes: “Instead of hammering at men their emotional incapacity, we should invoke models of emotional masculinity other than those based on sexual capital. Such cultural invocation

might in fact take us closer to the goals of feminism” (247). Likewise, Bealer asserts that one of the feminist goals is to “unhing[e] the social symbols of power from the male body, and imagin[e] new ways of inhabiting a masculine identity that do not reflect and encourage the emotional hardness and impenetrability associated with masculinist domination” (140). “Dusk: the Twilight Saga” participates in the discourse that tries to redefine, and accept, the category of masculinity in broader and more inclusive ways. Ben is not punished for challenging gender roles; on the contrary, Eliza approves of his version of masculinity and he achieves his happy ending. This interpretation and reproduction of the romance hero reflect readers’ yearning for a type of masculinity that is not restricted to the traditional image of the patriarchal man.

As I have discussed earlier, however, Edward’s embodiment of multiple types of masculinity apparently prompted readers to engage these different, and sometimes contradictory, forms and try to make sense of them. While the fanfiction “Dusk: the Twilight Saga” situates the character of the romance hero in the place conventionally occupied by the heroine, the fanfiction “One” recreates the hero in accordance with hegemonic masculinity and exaggerates his role as a superior and a protector. As in the feminized version, however, this reading of Edward’s character is not originated by the fanfiction, but rather is derived from the source text. As discussed in the introduction, despite its manipulation of some aspects of traditional masculinity, *Twilight* does not present a real challenge to the conventional theme of male dominance found in most romance novels. As Melissa Miller notes, the “*Twilight* narrative [...] promotes a dangerous and damaging ideology of patriarchy that normalizes and rationalizes the control of women by men” (165). In *Twilight*, Edward appears more like a father figure in Bella’s life than a lover. As Anna Silver notes, the relationship between Edward and Bella is portrayed as a “parental” one (124-125). Edward and Bella’s relationship, it often seems, is not between equal and similarly aged adults, but between a father and a child. Bella tells us: “Edward had scooped me up in his arms, as easily as if I weighed ten pounds instead of a hundred and ten” (Meyer, *Twilight* 83). On another occasion, she says: Edward “reached out with his long arms to pick me up, gripping the tops of my arms like I was a toddler. He sat me on the bed beside him” (260). In fact, Edward himself refers to Bella as “an insignificant little girl” (Meyer, *Twilight* 237). These moments emphasize Edward’s quasi-paternal role in Bella’s life.

The fanfiction “One” explores Edward’s role as a lover and a father in *Twilight* and reveals the patriarchal ideology operating in the text by making Edward literally Bella’s legal guardian. It narrates a love story between Bella, a sixteen-year-old teenager, and her adopted brother, Edward, a twenty-one-year-old man. After the death of their parents, Edward becomes Bella’s legal guardian. The attorney tells Edward: “It ultimately is your decision whether or not you want to oblige to your parent’s wishes and become her legal guardian” (ForeverJupJewel). Resonating with the way the source text establishes the relationship between Edward and Bella as unequal—one of them is a vampire and the other is a human—“One” narrates a story in which the male protagonist is a mature man, who has the choice to be Bella’s “legal guardian” or not, and a female minor, who has no choice but to follow her guardian’s decision. Edward agrees to be Bella’s guardian and become the legal equivalent of her father. As her elder brother, and only guardian, he becomes responsible for her money, which allows him to interfere with her choices.

The adopted brother-Edward in “One” uncannily resembles the lover-Edward from *Twilight* in the way he treats Bella. Narrated from Bella’s point of view, the fanfiction

describes her relationship with him throughout her childhood in a way that highlights these similarities. Like Edward from the source text who stalks Bella and questions her friends, in this fanfiction, Bella recounts: “As we both grew in age, his possessiveness over me leveled to new heights when I was thirteen. He rarely let me be alone [...]. Always hovering over me. He always questioned the friends I would hang out with. Ultimately, he made me question myself” (ForeverJupJewel). As in the source text too, Edward’s protective behavior in this fanfiction can be justified; she is young and weak and he is her guardian and older brother. She narrates: Edward “would help me through whatever I was going through. Wouldn’t get upset when I would stumble into his room late at night, awakened by a nightmare. He would hold me and tell me everything was going to be okay, lull me to a good night’s sleep in his arms” (ForeverJupJewel). As they grow up, Edward’s controlling behavior drives him to be overprotective of Bella’s sexuality too. He tells her: “please tell me you’ve never done anything physical with another boy? [...] I’ll kill him” (ForeverJupJewel). When Bella assures him that she did not sleep with anyone, he tells her: “Bella, please don’t speak so lightly about your virginity. It’s serious. Once you lose it, you can never get it back again” (ForeverJupJewel). Stating that woman’s loss of virginity is a “serious” issue replicates the source text’s insistence on the notion that female virginity is “breakable”. As Melissa Ames writes, the *Twilight* series is “hostile to female sexuality” and “overly concerned with the purity of [its] female characters” (50). In *Twilight*, Edward refrains from sleeping with Bella until they get married, even though this is not her preference. His refusal to sleep with Bella is not only because he is worried that his sexual desire for her might evoke his desire for her blood, but also because he wants to protect their virginity until marriage. He tells her: “it’s not possible now. Later, when you’re less breakable. Be patient, Bella” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 411). Despite his love for her, Edward will not sleep under the same cover with Bella.

While Edward’s control and protectiveness in the source text—and also Bella’s virginity—follow the conventions of the romance novel, the virginity of the hero is an inversion of these conventions. As Jonathan Allan notes, the romantic virgin hero is “perhaps a rarity, both in fiction and in scholarship” (“Theorizing Male^PVirginity”). “One” not only exaggerates Edward’s parental role in *Twilight*, but also reforms his character to match the traditional romance hero, who is hardly ever a virgin. It portrays Edward as a man who, unlike the virgin Edward from the source text, has many sexual experiences. While he is protecting Bella’s sexuality, he himself is indulging in sexual relationships with women. When Bella finds out about his ex-fiancé Tanya, he explains: “we started a more, um, physical relationship I guess you could say, two months into our relationship, [...] our relationship turned to be only physical, there was nothing emotional about [it]” (ForeverJupJewel). Thus, unlike the fanfiction “Dusk: the Twilight Saga”, in which the male protagonist deviates from the conventional portrayal of the romance hero, the fanfiction “One” reforms areas of deviation in the source text and recreates the hero in accordance with the traditional alpha male. It might be said that through this reformation and exaggeration, this fanfiction draws the reader’s attention to the patriarchal ideology that still operates in the source text despite its manipulation of some of the generic characteristics of the romance hero.

Indeed, the fanfiction’s resistance to the patriarchal ideology operating in *Twilight* is evident in the way in which it alters the heroine’s reaction to Edward’s controlling behavior from acceptance to objection. Unlike Bella in the source text, who, as discussed above, accepts Edward’s controlling behavior and finds it attractive, Bella in this fanfiction refuses his control over her life and does not see it as romantic. In “One”, despite Bella’s feeling that

she needs Edward's care, she makes it very clear that she does not want him to control her life. Consider the following conversation between her and Edward, for example:

'Edward,' I asked softly.

'Yeah Bella.'

'Promise me something,' I said.

He glanced over to me, 'Anything.'

I took a deep breath, 'Promise me that whatever happens, you'll let me live my life after this. You'll let me go. Promise me.' (ForeverJupJewel)

Compare the above lines with the following conversation from the source text:

'Don't leave me,' I begged in a broken voice.

'I won't,' he promised. 'Now relax before I call the nurse back to sedate you.'

But my heart couldn't slow.

'Bella.' He stroked my face anxiously. 'I'm not going anywhere. I'll be right here as long as you need me.'

'Do you swear you won't leave me?' I whispered. I tried to control the gasping, at least. My ribs were throbbing.

He put his hands on either side of my face and brought his face close to mine. His eyes were wide and serious. 'I swear.' (Meyer, *Twilight* 410)

The piece from "One" seems to be directly talking back to the dialogue from the source text. Unlike Bella in the source text, who asks Edward to stay and never leave, in "One", Bella asks him to leave her alone and let her live her life. She also asserts her right to choose for herself and not to let Edward control her choices: "Edward, you are not my dad. Hell, you're not even my real brother, so you have no right over me. Leave. Me. Alone" (ForeverJupJewel). The reader who is familiar with the source text can immediately recognize the sharp contrast between Bella's response to Edward's controlling behavior in *Twilight* and the response suggested by this fanfiction.

Thus, we can say that, on the one hand, "One" takes the dominant side of Edward's character and exaggerates it in a way that conforms with traditional patriarchy in order to dwell on its implications. Exaggeration, as a narrative tool, could suggest that the fan writer is attempting to transcend the patriarchal system operating in the source text by knowingly and consciously partaking in it. On the other hand, by making Bella refuse Edward's controlling behavior, "One" criticizes the romance novel's portrayal of the hero's control as

romantic. Through its portrayal of the heroine's objection to the hero's control, this fanfiction manifests a type of resistance to the patriarchal ideologies found in the source text.

B: Image-macro memes

Creating and sharing image-macro memes on the internet are important ways by which readers participate in the construction of a dynamic romance hero. *Twilight* image-macro memes are widely popular among audiences, especially antifans of the text or those who call themselves "Twihaters" (Gibron). In order not to restrict the search for image-macro memes to one website, my research strategy was to conduct a Google search on the phrase "Twilight memes" and look through the images suggested from different websites. I narrowed my search down to image-macros that responded to the character of the hero, Edward Cullen. The image-macro memes examined in this section are not representative of all the material produced on the internet. They are only examined as examples of the ways in which romance readers participate in the reproduction of a dynamic romance hero through their creating and sharing of image-macro memes.

Image-macros are multimodal memes, created by the combination of a picture and a text. What distinguishes image-macro memes from fanfiction is the ease by which they can be created and shared. As an easily created and accessed type of paratext, image-macro memes are expected to deliver their messages faster and more widely than other types of fan-practices, which means that, despite their simplicity, they form an important type of participation in the genre. The analysis of eight image-macros (divided into three groups) targeted at *Twilight's* portrayal of the hero enabled me to identify two main forms of resistant reading: (1) revealing the text's hidden messages, and (2) questioning and mocking the text's portrayal of masculinity and the vampire figure.

The first group of image-macros build their humor on exaggerating implicit messages in the source text and making them literal or explicit. Image-macro 1 shows a picture of Edward holding Bella in a protective/controlling way. The caption on the picture, which is supposed to be Bella's words, is divided into two lines: "how long will he make decisions", and "for me?". Separating Bella's question into two parts highlights the latter as the joke—or the "punch line"—and, thus, absurd. Edward's body language and Bella's question together blatantly brings the viewer's attention to this thorny side of their relationship, in which Edward plays the role of the controlling lover who takes decisions on behalf of his girlfriend. In image-macro 2, we see Edward and Bella's faces, with a dialogue bubble next to Edward's head saying "I like children", referring to the age gap between the two: Edward is 100 years old and Bella is only 17. In the source text, Bella does not ask "how long will he make decisions for me", nor does Edward say, "I like children"; however, their actions, as discussed in the previous section, imply these meanings. By making the text's problematic and implicit messages explicit, these image-macros present a serious critique of the text's portrayal of the hero. The generic aspects of the romance hero, such as being older than the heroine and having control over her, are being highlighted and mocked.

The second group of image-macros directly questions and pokes fun at Meyer's construction of the vampire figure and masculinity. Image-macro 3 shows Dracula's doubtful face, from the film *Dracula* (1958), with the caption "Dracula's face when he first saw *Twilight*", to suggest that he does not recognize Edward as a vampire. By referring to other

texts and putting Edward in opposition to Dracula, this image-macro achieves two effects: it draws attention to Edward's failure to be a vampire and makes general claim about how the vampire figure should look and act like. In a comic-like strip, image-macro 4 too rejects Meyer's interference and subversion of the traditional image of the vampire and expresses a desire to keep the vampire figure from being collapsed into the romance hero. It ridicules Meyer's manipulation of the vampire by giving Edward white, feathery wings, and making him say "I am a fairy".

The third group of image-macro memes shows a resistance to instances in which Edward deviates from traditional masculinity. Drawing on connections from a different film, image-macro 5 depicts Bella telling Edward, "I know what you are", combined with a picture of a girl from the movie *Mean Girls* (2004), failing to disguise as a mouse, but insisting on it by saying "I am a mouse, DUH!". Drawing on the same joke of ridiculous disguise, image-macro 6 depicts a picture of a small girl, with glitter all over her face, saying "I am a vampire". Besides mocking Edward's vampirism as false through the use of ornaments, such as the headband and facial glitter, the use of girls' pictures in both image-macros suggests a rejection of the type of masculinity Edward performs in the source text. The implication is that Edward's vampirism as well as masculinity are fake; he is nothing more than a dressed up girly-girl. Along the same lines, image-macro 7 compares Edward's "fake masculinity" with the hyper-masculine hero from the film series *Rambo* (1982-2008), which, according to the caption, is how "real men" should be.

Not all reproductions of the romance hero, however, express a desire to retain traditional images of masculinity. Image-macro 8 comments on Edward's over-rated beauty and charm by using his face as a model for make-up advertisement. This image-macro might be speaking to slash fanfiction communities which reproduce queer narratives of *Twilight*. Besides providing a safe space for the exploration of sexuality, queer narratives, as Lucy Neville explains, offer women "the chance to experiment with the power of their own gaze and to explore their sense of sexual orientation and gender identification" (204). Queer reproduction of the romance hero also challenges traditional forms of masculinity. As Sharon Hayes and Matthew Ball note:

the performance of masculinity in slash fan fiction is almost never stereotyped. Rather, masculinity is often depicted as a delicate balance of emotional, physical, and sexual interactions between the characters and as such is as varied as there are numbers of stories in fandom. (225)

The same thing can be said of image-macro memes in which the character of the romance hero is reproduced in ways that deviate from traditional masculinity. As a face for a makeup advertisement, Edward is represented as an object of gaze. Furthermore, gender is thrown open to interpretation in this image-macro, with Edward wearing makeup and demonstrating "feminine" attributes.

We can say then that image-macro memes' reproduction of the romance hero is multifaceted. In some cases, they show a kind of homophobic attitude and a desire to revert to orthodox masculinity that requires a man to be aggressive and not to take care of his looks. In this sense, they assert Jonathan Allan's argument that there is an "institutional homophobia" lurking in the background of the romance novel, "in which the male body must be constructed by what it is not feminine, queer, and homosexual" ("Purity of His Maleness"

35). On the other hand, however, there are image-macro memes that reproduce a queer image of the romance hero and present a direct critique of traditional masculinity. This army of impassioned responses attest to the extent to which Edward's character represents a complex blend of different types of masculinities that leaves audiences uncomfortable and feeling the need to intervene and make sense of these contradictions. What remains consistent, however, is the degree to which readers' reproductions of the hero of romance, in accordance with traditional masculinity or otherwise, remain open to endless reinterpretations and revisions, which contributes to the genre's dynamism.

It is true that most image-macro memes are created and shared for entertainment purposes; however, as we have seen, when we examine the ways by which they respond to the source text, different forms of interpretation and critique surface. In the context of popular fiction, the analysis above suggests that image-macro memes use satirical humor in order to expose and criticize what they see as failures in the source text. While criticism of Edward's controlling behavior and age is implicit in the fanfiction, it is openly addressed in the above image-macro memes. In the context of humor, image-macro memes are more direct and blunt in their criticism of the source text. The simple fact that many internet users create and share image-macro memes that criticize or protect the image of the romance hero is in itself an important finding because it shows that readers are eager to engage with and participate in the construction of this image. The construction of the romance hero and the type of masculinity he embodies, then, continues even after the publication of the source text. This continuous construction plays an important role in fostering the dynamism of the romance hero and destabilizing the image of ideal masculinity.

This article has examined the character of the romance hero as a dynamic and participatory construction. To examine this proposition, it has investigated the afterlife of the romance hero, Edward Cullen, as it has appeared in different types of readers' practices on the internet. Either in the form of fanfiction or image-macro memes, this article has argued that these practices participate in fostering and complicating the dynamism of the character of the romance hero, and simultaneously, the type of masculinity he embodies. This manipulation of the romance hero and traditional masculinity promotes feminist ideas, and from here stems its importance in romance genre studies. This study does not argue that power is ultimately in readers' hands in the romance genre production. However, even if readers' practices do not really change the romance genre at the present, they can be considered as means to highlight its different issues. Writers and producers can get invaluable feedback and content from readers' practices to consider for their future work. This is especially remarkable given that readers' reproductions of the romance genre, as this article has shown, are multiple and contradictory.

[1] The term 'source text' will be used throughout this study to refer to texts that are professionally published by novelists.

[2] The word 'switched' is not used here to imply or reinforce the binary model of gender as either/or. It is used merely to explain the fanfiction.

Bibliography

- Allan, Jonathan. "Theorising Male ^[P]Virginit^[P]y ^[P]in ^[P]Popular Romance Novels." *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011, [http://jprstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/JPRS2.1_Allan_MaleVirginit^{\[P\]}y.pdf](http://jprstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/JPRS2.1_Allan_MaleVirginit^[P]y.pdf). Accessed 12 September 2016.
- Allan, Jonathan. "The Purity of His Maleness: Masculinity in Popular Romance Novels." *Journal of Men's Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2016, pp. 24-41.
- Ames, Melissa. "Twilight Follows Tradition: Analyzing 'biting' Critiques of Vampire Narratives for their Portrayals of Gender and Sexuality." *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media and the Vampire Franchise*, edited by Melissa Click, Jennifer Aubrey and Elizabeth Behm-Morawitz, Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 37-54.
- Bealer, Tracy. "Of Monsters and Men: Toxic Masculinity and the Twenty-First Century Vampire in the Twilight Saga." *Bringing Light to Twilight: Perspectives on a Pop Culture Phenomenon*, edited by Giselle Liza Anatol, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 139-152.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.
- Connell, R. W. and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society*, vol. 19, 2005, pp. 829-859.
- Crane, Susan. *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"*. Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Donald, Robyn. "Mean, Moody, and Magnificent: The Hero in Romance Literature." *Dangerous Men & Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, pp. 81-84.
- Eder, Jens, Fotis Jannidis and Ralf Schneider. "Characters in Fictional World: An Introduction." *Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film, and Other Media*, edited by Jens Eder, Fotis Jannidis and Ralf Schneider, Revision Series 3, De Gruyter, 2010, pp. 3-66.
- Edwards, Kim. "Good Looks and Sex Symbols: The Power of the Gaze and the Displacement of the Erotic in Twilight." *Screen Education*, vol. 53, 2009, pp. 26-32.
- ForeverJupJewel, "One." *Fanfiction.net*, 2010, <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5724551/2/One>. Accessed 3 August 2016.
- Genette, Gérard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Genz, Stéphanie, and Benjamin Brabon, *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
- Gibron, Bill. "A Twi-Haters Guide to Twilight." *Popmatters*, 2010, <http://www.popmatters.com/post/127521-a-twi-haters-guide-to-twilight-part-1-the-ten-reasons-twilight-is-th/>. Accessed 11 August 2016.
- Gordon, Joan. "Rehabilitating Revenants, or Sympathetic Vampires in Recent Fiction." *Extrapolation*, vol. 29, no. 3, 1988, pp. 227-234.
- Grandena, Florian. "Heading Toward the Past: The Twilight Vampire Figure as Surveillance Metaphor." *Monster Culture in the 21st Century: A Reader*, edited by Marina Levina and Diem-My Bui, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 35-52.
- Gray, Jonathan. "New Audiences, New Textualities Anti-Fans and Non-Fans." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2003, pp. 64-81.

- Gray, Jonathan. *Show Sold Separately Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. New York University Press, 2010.
- Greenfeld-Benovitz, Mariam. "The Interactive Romance Community: The Case of 'Covers Gone Wild'." *New Approaches to Popular Romance Fiction: Critical Essays*, edited by Sarah S. G. Frantz and Eric Murphy Selinger, McFarland, 2012, pp. 195-206.
- Hayes, Sharon, and Matthew Ball. "Queering Cyberspace: Fan Fiction Communities as Spaces for Expressing and Exploring Sexuality." *Queering Paradigms*, edited by Burkhard Scherer, Vol. 1, Peter Lang, 2009, pp. 219-240.
- Hellekson, Karen, and Kristina Busse. "Introduction: Work in Progress." *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, McFarland, 2006, pp. 5-32.
- Illouz, Eva. *Why Love Hurts*. Polity Press, 2012.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. Routledge, 1992.
- Kamblé, Jayashree. *Making Meaning in Popular Romance Fiction: An Epistemology*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.
- Larcombe, Wendy. *Compelling Engagements: Feminism, Rape Law, and Romance Fiction*. Federation Press, 2005.
- Matthews, Mason Taylor Matthews, "Dusk: the Twilight Saga." *Fanfiction.net*, 2013, <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9139545/1/Dusk-The-Twilight-Saga>. Accessed 20 August 2016.
- Meyer, Stephenie. *Twilight*. Atom, 2005.
- Meyer, Stephenie. *Eclipse*. Little, Brown, 2007.
- Miller, Melissa. "Maybe Edward Is the Most Dangerous Thing Out There: The Role of Patriarchy." *Theorizing Twilight: Critical Essays on What's at Stake in a Post-Vampire World*, edited by Maggie Parke and Natalie Wilson, McFarland, 2011, pp. 165-177.
- Modleski, Tania. *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women*. Routledge, 1982
- Nakagawa, Chiho "Safe Sex with Defanged Vampires: New Vampire Heroes in *Twilight* and the *Southern Vampire Mysteries*." *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011, http://jprstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/JPRS2.1_Nakagawa_DefangedVampires.pdf. Accessed 6 September 2016.
- Nayar, Pramod. "How to Domesticate a Vampire: Gender, Blood Relations and Sexuality in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*." *Nebula*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2010, pp. 60-76.
- Neville, Lucy. "Male Gays in the Female Gaze: Women Who Watch M/M Pornography." *Porn Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2015, pp. 192-207.
- Putney, Mary. "Welcome to the Dark Side." *Dangerous Men & Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, pp. 99-106.
- Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Roach, Catherine "Getting a Good Man to Love: Popular Romance Fiction and the Problem of Patriarchy." *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2010, <http://jprstudies.org/2010/08/getting-a-good-man-to-love-popular-romance-fiction-and-the-problem-of-patriarchy-by-catherine-roach/>. Accessed 20 September 2016.
- Silver, Anna. "Twilight is Not Good for Maidens: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* Series." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 42, 2010, pp. 121-138.

Springer, Mary. *A Rhetoric of Literary Character: Some Women of Henry James*. University of Chicago Press, 1978.

Stewart, Dodai. "Hollywood Men: It's No Longer About Your Acting, It's About Your Abs." *Jezebel*, 2014, <http://jezebel.com/hollywood-men-its-no-longer-about-your-acting-its-abo-1565779471>. Accessed 11 August 2016.

Taylor, Jessica. "Romance and the Female Gaze Obscuring Gendered Violence in *The Twilight Saga*." *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 14, no.3, 2014, pp. 388-402.

List of Image-macro Memes

Image-macro 1, Twilight Meme, *Everyday Feminism*, 2012, <http://everydayfeminism.com/2012/07/admiring-emotionally-abusive-relationships/>. Accessed 11 May 2014.

Image-macro 2, Twilight Meme, *Meme Centre*, <http://www.memecenter.com/search/twilight>. Accessed 14 May 2014.

Image-macro 3, Dracula is Disgusted, *Gagaholism*, <http://gagaholism.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2013-01-25T08:34:00-08:00&max-results=1&start=5&by-date=false>. Accessed 24 October 2019.

Image-macro 4, *Meme*, 2012, <https://me.me/i/bella-i-need-to-tel-you-something-seree-junkies-what-dca24505820f42cc835bb8646c75aa41>. Accessed 24 October 2019.

Image-macro 5, Twilight Meme, *We Heart It*, 2014, <https://weheartit.com/entry/76255918>. Accessed 11 May 2014.

Image-macro 6, Twilight Meme, *Meme Centre*, <http://www.memecenter.com/search/twilight>. Accessed 14 May 2014.

Image-macro 7, Real Movie Heroes (Then and Now), *Funny Picture Plus*, 2012, <http://funnypicturesplus.com/tag/rambo-twilight>. Accessed 14 May 2014.

Image-macro 8, Twilight Meme, *Pinterest*, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/20307230005799181684/?nic=1a>. Accessed 24 October 2019.