

SUMMARY

Stephenie Meyer is the author of bestselling young-adult novels, most importantly *Twilight* (2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007), and *Breaking Dawn* (2008), which form the *Twilight* series. The dissertation compares the narrative structure and imagery in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* books and in fairy tales. Because of significant and numerous similarities, Meyer's novels can be identified as modern-time fairy tales. The novels include a number of well-known stock images, plots, and characters, which are identified and discussed in the present discussion.

One of the key concepts in the present inquiry, as defined in the first chapter, is the literary fairy tale and its relation to the folk tale. In the *Twilight* novels, Stephenie Meyer combines fairy tale material with the vampire character and imagery related to the vampire theme, discussed in the second chapter. This combination is an important research area in the present study, and it leads to interesting results. The dissertation will present a brief historical outline of the vampire character in literature and present the transformations of themes, functions, and readership of vampire fiction, from pre-modern times to the late 20th century.

Theoretically, the present study is based on Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, a standard book of literary structuralism, which might seem dated today, but is applicable for reasons explained in chapter one. Propp's study has been revisited recently in various disciplines because of its capacity to be used in criticism of a wide range of contemporary and popular narratives including media products, computer games, and political discourse. Another theoretical approach used in the dissertation is the anthropological one; as the discussion relies heavily on the Aarne-Thompson-Uther index of fairy-tale types, and on Stith Thompson's motif index of folk literature. The tale types and motifs used by Meyer will be identified, and the discussion will focus on Meyer's selection and modification of them.

The narratological analysis leads to a number of conclusions about Meyer's use of folk-tale material in *Twilight* and about the general plot structure of the series. The conclusions will be divided into four thematic sections: the selection of folklore motifs, plot structure, reversals and redistributions of functions, and the cultural and literary context. Right from the onset of analysis, it transpired that the number of folk-tale motifs in each novel is relatively large, larger than in a tale, which is an obvious consequence of a novel's bulk.

Another initial observation was that Meyer made a number of reversals and redistributions of functions (such as villainy or help) typically ascribed to characters in fairy tales. The discussion will conclude with an attempt at interpretation of Meyer's modification in the context of contemporary fiction.