

## Chapter 4

### Construction of Metrosexual Males in Twentieth Century Vampire Narratives of the United States of America

#### 4.0. Introduction

With the emergence of Modernism in art and literature of Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, vampire narratives observed a decline in popularity in Europe. The legend of the vampire, however, witnessed a grand resurgence in post-World War II America on the silver screen endorsed and proliferated by Hollywood. The resurgence, I think, entailed a politico-cultural transformation of the figure of the subversive Victorian vampire into soothing, sexually desirable male and female fashionistas featured in popular fashion magazines and shows, movies and television soaps. Such metamorphosis of the vampire myth, as I think, renders the politics of domestication and appropriation of non-normative sexualities by heteronormativity on the one hand, while on the other, it manifests the shifting paradigms of masculinity and femininity in the new technocratic West, particularly the United States of America. This chapter explores the evolution of vampire narratives in the twenty first century with the emergence of hegemonic masculinity and its manifestation in metrosexuality<sup>86</sup>.

The transformation of the bizarre vampire into the desirable males, as I think, corresponds to the evolution of masculinity in the second half of the twentieth century following the emergence of Freudian psychoanalysis, sociological discourses on gender and Feminist radicalism. The traditional idea of gender<sup>87</sup>, I think, as ‘natural and universal’ had been contested. Gender, as I see it, had begun to be viewed as a politico-cultural construction rather than a biological offshoot. Post-World War II gender discourses in Europe and America, however, tried to validate gender as part of biological essentialism.

With the unprecedented growth in science and technology, birth of corporate houses, boom in information and communication technology and proliferation of entertainment, fashion and

---

<sup>86</sup> Discussed in detail in this chapter later.

<sup>87</sup> According to *World Health Organization*, “Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time”. Anna Kari. WHO. [www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab\\_1](http://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1). Accessed 11 December 2022.

audio-visual media, as it appears to me, a new group of technocrats emerged. The emergence of the technocrats and human resource managers in big corporate houses requires a reorganization of the division of labour in the system of production. The formation of the new blue-collar corporate labour force requires reshaping of masculinity.

The reshaped masculinity requires sophistication, intellect rather than crude physical prowess and aggression. In the wake of consumerism, according to me, heteronormativity had to change its strategies to appropriate and domesticate the ‘inverts’ and ‘deviants’ to expand and sustain its hegemonic control. Such change in strategies gets manifested in the representation of masculinity in the domain of popular culture. As R. W. Connell points out in her book *Masculinities* (1995):

Western science and technology are culturally masculinized [...] The dominance of science in discussion of masculinity thus reflects the position of masculinity (or specific masculinities) in the social relations of gender (6)

#### **4.1. The Study of Masculinities in the Twentieth Century**

In her magnum opus *Masculinities* (1995), R. W. Connell has made a survey of the evolution and metamorphosis of masculinity in the twentieth century. Connell has categorized three primary approaches in the construction of masculinity as a discourse: psychoanalytical, sociological and anthropo-historical.

The contribution of psychoanalysis in the understanding of masculinity lies in its analysis of the formation of gender roles by virtue of the negotiation of the self with its origin, with the dynamics of parent-child relationship and with its specific location in a specific cultural matrix. The primary influences come from Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung and Jacques Lacan.

The sociological approach to masculinity is centred around the concept of “male sex role” (Connell 21) in the realm of social space as well as sexuality. Such an approach is based on the assumptions that the roles performed by men and women in social and sexual activities, are generated by the expectations of family, peer groups, acquaintances in the educational and professional institutes etc. however, such an approach, as R. W. Connell sums up: “does not generate a strategic politics of masculinity” (27) as it fails to see gender role more as a dialectical formation than mere recipient of social expectations.

The Historical approach to masculinity “leads via institutions to questions of agency and social struggle” (Connell 30). This approach studies the evolution of the role human beings played in production system and various social institutions. I find this approach important as it stresses on the change of theoretical construction of the male body as the principal metaphor to exert the patriarchal ideologies concerning gender roles. In the next two sections, I will discuss the role of the male body as the principal metaphor to construct the theoretical paradigm of masculinity in reference to the theoretical assumptions of R. W. Connell in the book, *Masculinities* (Polity: 1995) and Michel Foucault in the books, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage Books: 1995) and *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings: 1972-1977* (Pantheon Books: 1980).

#### **4.1.1. The Body**

In *Masculinities*, R. W. Connell identifies the body as the primary pointer of masculinity. As she comments: “Either the body drives and directs action [...] or the body sets limits to action” (Connell 45). I think, therefore, that the male body, with its biological signs as the primary markers, determines the role of man in social spaces. Following the given assumption of Connell, it can be said that the body functions as the identifier to determine the actions suitable and unsuitable for men in social space. Man, I think, by virtue of his participation in the desired social actions such as the leading role in the production system, work that involve physical strength and swiftness, achieves the perfect body, desirable to the opposite sex. Moreover, as I see, the non-participation of the body in acts unsuitable for men such as homosexuality, child care, public display of emotional weaknesses and excess make it an ideal body in conformity with the behavioural codes associated with heteronormativity.

The male body is constructed in discourse concerning popular culture. In literature and art, fashion and entertainment, sports and fitness exercises, I think that the male body is carefully constructed and displayed with grandeur to make it attractive and desirable to the opposite sex.

#### **4.1.2. Foucaultian Assumptions of The Body**

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault makes a critical survey of the evolution of the body from the eighteenth century in Europe. Foucault conceived the body as “manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases its

forces” (*Discipline and Punish* 136). Following the Industrial Revolution, rapid mechanisation of the process and the forces of production, expansion of market and steady proliferation of capital, capitalist economy needed uninterrupted supply of skilled labour force to meet the insatiable need of the expanding market. Hence, the skilled labourer with a disciplined and equipped body became an inevitable and an indispensable component to accomplish the mammoth task. The male body needs to be reconstructed in order to suit the growing needs of automation and large-scale production. As Foucault comments, “The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 138). As the systematization of production in a capitalist system requires a systematization of family, conjugal life, and procreation in order to ensure uninterrupted supply of human labour, the social function of the male body, as I perceive, needs to be disciplined and reoriented in order to suit the new paradigm of production. As Foucault comments, “Thus, discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile’ bodies.” (*Discipline and Punish* 138). Heteronormativity, as I think, plays a crucial role in the process of discipline, reorientation and subjugation of the male body according to the requirements of the capitalist mode of production.

#### **4.2. Hegemonic Masculinity**

There are multiple strategies employed by heteronormativity to subjugate and control the male body. In the book *Masculinities*, R. W. Connell identifies the idea of “hegemonic masculinity” (77) as one of the most effective strategies of heteronormativity to exert its control over the male body and construct a new idea of masculinity suitable for it. Connell follows the Gramscian method to theorize the strategy of patriarchal domination upon women. According to Connell:

Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (77)

“Hegemonic masculinity” (Connell 77) operates in multiple ways in order to appropriate and subordinate the dissident forms of masculinity by expansion, transformation and appropriation. Often it deconstructs its own dominant pattern and forms in order to appropriate a dissident

figure, which has emerged as potential threat to its monopolistic control. “Hegemonic masculinity” (Connell 77) operates primarily through mainstream media and modes of popular culture in which eminent personalities such as film actors, sports personalities, models in fashion industry etc. act as brand ambassadors of “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell 77). Connell provides an interesting phenomenon concerning the strategy of operation of “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell 77). According to her, hegemonic masculinity, far from being fixed and static, is characterized by its mobility. It changes shape and dimension as the existing spectrum of patriarchy becomes obsolete to counter the subversive trends emerging out of the counter-discourses (Connell 77). Hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell, seems to function most effectively when culture negotiates with the institutions of power (Connell 77).

With the advent of the Globalization in 1991, cultural icons of the Euro-American culture such as the Hollywood superheroes, comic characters, popular fashion models have been imported to Asia, Africa and Latin America as standardized icons to set the norms of gender and sexuality. The import of hegemonic masculinity was accompanied with idealisation of heterosexual monogamous family and compulsive heterosexuality. Hegemonic masculinity, therefore, functions as a supplement of heteronormativity. In the post-globalisation Europe and America, as I avow, the corporate emerged as a space to promote a form of masculinity that extends its hegemonic control over its inhabitants by imposing a specific form of work ethics, behavioural etiquette, additional activities cumulatively known as the ‘soft skills.’ Hegemonic masculinity, therefore, as I think, primarily operates in the household, workplace and spaces reserved for popular entertainment such as the sports complex, opera houses and cinema halls, fashion shows, mass and social media.

The rapid growth of technology and automation in Post-World War Europe and the United States of America resulted in the categorisation of hegemonic masculinity in two different segments, technocrats dedicated to programming and designing and labourers engaged in physical activities. Such fragmentation caused a split in the representation of hegemonic masculinity. Instead of raw physical strength and uninhibited violence valorised by fascism in the name of racial supremacy and heroism, I think, the post-war American and European societies began to promote a more sophisticated version of masculinity consisting of physical prowess combined with intellectual agility. The colonial adventurer, explorer, hunter in the nineteenth century fictional narratives of Europe is substituted with new American

superheroes, who act as saviours of the entire civilisation rather than functioning as explicit spokespersons of the Eurocentric colonial ideology.

The new icons of masculinity, such as Superman, Batman, Spiderman, I think, thrive more on intellect, technical skills, shrewdness, diplomacy rather than on mere physical strength, courage and heroic exhibitionism, prominent signature of the protagonists in the European heroic tales of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, derived from the tradition of the Medieval Romances. Superman alias Clerk Kent is a journalist by profession in the *Daily Planet*, Batman alias Bruce Wayne is an industrialist as well as philanthropist and Spider Man aka Peter Parker is an amateur technocrat and scientist. Superman appeared in Comic series in 1938 and Batman in 1939 when the world was on the verge of Second World War and Spider Man appeared in 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis and Sino-Indian conflict, when the Cold War was at its peak. Such political crises were paralleled by the growing movement of women's rights, which acquired the shape of radical Feminism in the United States of America in the 1960s in the context of the anti-imperialist agitation. Such challenges compelled US imperialism to re-strategize its policy of domination and control. It is significant to note that all of them had lost their parents at infancy and been brought up by foster parents.

Such absence of parents and legacy, I think, compelled them to become self-made men. Their personality, cultural and ideological orientation, and above all, masculinity have been formed without any ancestral baggage. Such denial of legacy symbolises a new construction of hegemonic masculinity in the post-war world. Hegemonic masculinity reconstructed itself in order to cope with the new world order- growing automation and advent of the cyber age, proliferation of consumption in the globalised economy and finance capital, gender awareness and Feminist movements, awakening of LGBT as a visible community. The new form of hegemonic masculinity, as I see, seems to have accepted and appropriated traits formerly associated with femininity such as self-care, physical makeover, empathy for the closed ones etc. Moreover, hegemonic masculinity has been constructed as more sophisticated, intellectual, technology-oriented, and entrepreneurial rather than as mere excess of muscles, gross violence, and blatant emotions. The new form of hegemonic masculinity, I think, has been channelised in the realm of the popular culture in the United States of America by introducing new icons of hegemonic masculinity (Superman, Batman, Spider Man etc.) as well as reconstructed forms of popular icons in Europe (Vampire, Werewolf, Norwegian and Greek Gods etc.). The second strategy primarily follows the policy of domestication and appropriation of the icons traditionally associated with dissident subcultures and subversion of the heteronormativity.

### 4.3. Metrosexuality

In *Masculinities*, R. W. Connell identifies “homosexual masculinity” (216) as the most viable alternative of and potent challenge before hegemonic masculinity (216). I think that the rise of the movement of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) and Feminism put forward serious questions concerning the patriarchal supremacy. The gay liberation movement, I think, not only challenged the existing paradigms of gender and sexuality, but also endeavoured to set up a new form of masculinity incongruous with the codes of heteronormativity. In fact, “homosexual masculinity” (Connell 216) vis-a-vis homonormativity<sup>88</sup> became instrumental to reconfigure the dimensions of masculinity. “Hegemonic masculinity” (Connell 77), as I think, had to acquire new strategies to reassert itself by domesticating and appropriating the elements of dissidence. It has expanded its horizon to accommodate them by appropriating the existing myths, legends and icons of popular culture representing homonormativity. One of the most effective strategies is indubitably the promotion of metrosexuality, a sophisticated, flexible yet a form of hypermasculinity.<sup>89</sup>

Metrosexuality, as I see, appears as a prominent phenomenon in the twentieth century as a form of hybrid masculinity. Metrosexuality apparently demonstrates a non-binary approach problematising the codes of heteronormativity. Yet, as I think, it promotes and validates hegemonic masculinity in a tacit and sophisticated manner. The term ‘metrosexual’ was coined by the writer Mark Simpson in the mid-90s. The British football maestro David Beckham had been hailed by the British media as well as Simpson as an icon of metrosexuality (Flocker xiii). As Mark Simpson defines it:

The typical metrosexual is a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis—because that’s where all the best shops, clubs, gyms, and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual but this is utterly

---

<sup>88</sup> According to *IGI Global Dictionary*, homonormativity is “a subscription by gay identities to the dominant discourse of gender and sexuality, reproducing social behaviours, norms and beliefs of the heteronormativity particularly as a strategy that hopes to achieve the rights and responsibilities bestowed upon heterosexual identities; essentially the discourse argues that gay identities are no different to straight identities excepting the target of desire. [www.igi-global.com/dictionary/masculine-normal-guy-here-lonely/13210](http://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/masculine-normal-guy-here-lonely/13210). Accessed 11 December 2022.

<sup>89</sup> According to *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, hypermasculinity, sociological term denoting exaggerated forms of masculinity, virility, and physicality. Scholars have suggested that there are three distinct characteristics associated with the hypermasculine personality: (1) the view of violence as manly, (2) the perception of danger as exciting and sensational, and (3) callous behavior toward women and a regard toward emotional displays as feminine. Ronald O. Craig. "hypermasculinity". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2 Jan. 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hypermasculinity>. Accessed 11 December 2022.

immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference. Particular professions, such as modelling, waiting table, media, pop music and, nowadays, sport seem to attract them. (Mark Simpson, "Meet the Metrosexual," Salon.com, July 22, 2002, quoted in Flocker xiv)

Apart from the British soccer genius David Beckham, eminent actors and personalities such as the actor Brad Pitt (bagged the "Sexiest Man Alive" title twice), the American singer and songwriter Lenny Kravitz, the British film director Guy Ritchie, the Spanish actor Antonio Banderas, the American actor Adrien Brody etc have been hailed as the representative icons of metrosexuality.

As defined by the *Oxford Learner's Dictionary*, A metrosexual is "a heterosexual man who lives in a city and is interested in things like fashion, shopping and his appearance."<sup>90</sup> The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines metrosexual man as "a man who is usually heterosexual (= sexually or romantically attracted to women) and is very interested in fashion, grooming, and his appearance in a way that is usually seen as being like a woman".<sup>91</sup> Both of these definitions stress on compulsive heterosexuality as an integral part of metrosexuality, although the definition given by Mark Simpson is marked by a neutrality concerning sexual orientation. However, his inclination to fashion, self-care and concern about self-appearance not only blurs the distinction between masculinity and femininity, but also blurs the distinction between a heterosexual man and a homosexual man.

Self-care, fashion, makeover and grooming, as it appears to me, have so long been the prerogatives of gay men. With the rise of metrosexuality, the wall, which segregate the heterosexual men in external appearance from the homosexual men, began to crumble. Metrosexuality appears to be a gender fluid phenomenon<sup>92</sup> as far as the appearance is concerned. But its integral connection with heterosexuality renders metrosexuality as a form of masculinity with concessions. Such concessions appear to be necessary for "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 77) to re-orient itself and domesticate the nonconforming subcultures, which emerged as viable challenges to "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 77). The metrosexual man is as confident, dominant, and aggressive as his precursors, but assorted in style, taste, mode of living. He gets married out of choice rather than out of compulsion. His

---

<sup>90</sup> See [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american\\_english/metrosexual](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/metrosexual). Accessed on 11.11.2022.

<sup>91</sup> See [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/metrosexual](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/metrosexual). Accessed on 11 December 2022.

<sup>92</sup> Metrosexuality, by virtue of transcending specific behavioural norms associated with each gender according to the norms of heteronormativity, blurs the distinction between different gender.



sexuality acknowledges and often prioritises pleasure over procreation. However, metrosexuality does not necessarily entail sexual liberation and often holds orthodox ideas concerning sexuality. Such dichotomy appears to be an essential characteristic of metrosexuality.

Metrosexuality, as I see it, involves self-care and consciousness by mending and re-orienting the body of men. The use of cosmetic products such as moisturizer, sunscreen lotion, anti-tan and anti-ageing cream, facial and body rejuvenating gel, guyliner, blusher, lip balm, the removal of body hair, gym toned body, food supplement and balanced diet became the fascination of metrosexual males. Along with that, use of fragrant body spray, teeth whitening cream, bodily marks like tattoos and cosmetic surgery have been applied by metrosexual males to prolong their youth. Such attempts to define the body implicates a refusal to accept the body as a static and unchanging identity. According to Matthew Hall in *Metrosexual Masculinities* (2015):

The infinite possibilities for personal design open up a space for the negotiation and contestation of identities, which suggests they are multiple, shifting, ambiguous and often contradictory. (24)

Such negotiation and contestation, as I think, destabilize the body as a fixed normative entity on the one hand, while they induce a fear of deviation from the norm on the other hand. Excessive concern over the body generates an anxiety about the acquisition of the 'perfect body,' as the most desirable and cherished dream. Any deviation from and disruption of the 'perfect male body' implies disqualification in the test of masculinity. The irony is that the construction of the perfect male body not only invites attraction of the female, but also invites the male gaze. Metrosexuality therefore, on the one hand generates a 'queered body' desired by homosexual men, while on the other, it disciplines and constructs an ideal body in conformity with the codes and specifications of heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity.

Metrosexuality combines 'feminine appearance' in its application of the cosmetic products, tattoos, and colourful costumes and masculine vigour in its participation in various sports, exhibition of the gym-toned body and involvement in men's sports like football, rugby, baseball and basketball. Matthew Hall refers to the international football icons David Beckham and Cristiano Ronaldo as the metrosexual icons (29). Their celebrity status appears to complement and dominate the metrosexual traits evident in their external appearance. In their

case, metrosexuality is carefully contrived to manifest the masculine body and traits and set a standard to be achieved and wished for.

Although metrosexuality resorts to ‘feminine’ traits of self-care and consciousness of appearance by virtue of its adaptation of cosmetic products, beautification of the body and other narcissistic modes, it is always vulnerable to the desire for and obsession with hegemonic masculinity. Hence, the metrosexual men reframe cosmetic products to assert their masculinity. Hence, eyeliner becomes “guyliner” (Hall 31), ‘fair and lovely’ fairness cream becomes ‘fair and handsome’ fairness cream and face wash, mascara becomes “manscara” (Hall 31) to masculinize beauty products and cosmetics.

Moreover, metrosexual males masculinize the ‘feminine’ professions such as nursing, teaching in nursery schools by adding male dimensions like competence, perfection, craftsmanship to them (Hall 30-31). Thus, metrosexuality despite its appropriation of femininity and gay subcultures to some extent, validates the codes of masculinity at the end. “Hegemonic masculinity” (Hall 40), as Matthew Hall points out, is manifested and promoted in the institutions of culture such as literature, film, television, newspaper, fashion, advertisement etc. (Hall 40-41). He refers to the attributes of hegemonic masculinity manifested in the principal characters of the Hollywood movie *Fast and Furious* (2001-2021)<sup>93</sup>: “lean and muscular, technically savvy, competitive, emotionally stoic and pain resilient, tough, fearless, skilled with cars and weapons and desirable to women, indicating heterosexuality.” (Hall 39).

I think that although metrosexuality apparently surfaces an inclusive form of masculinity by engaging into the traditional domains of femininity, it does not negate the normative masculinity altogether. Instead, it upholds the principles of hegemonic masculinity by virtue of its insistence on the exclusive ‘male activities’ on the one hand and adding masculine dimension to the ‘female’ activities in which they are often engaged.

In his essay “State and Civil Society” (1947) Antonio Gramsci identifies hegemony as a prerogative of civil society in order to complement the repressive power of the state exercised by the army, bureaucracy and legislature (Gramsci 245-46). In the modern state, hegemony has been implemented by the institutions and strategies cumulatively known as “ideological state apparatuses” (Althusser 142). In his essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (1970), Louis Althusser identifies the “communications ISA” (143) that includes mass media

---

<sup>93</sup> *Fast and Furious* is a movie series consisting of nine parts so far released between 2001-2021. The owner of the series is *Universal Pictures*. The next part is expected to be released in 2023.

such as television, newspaper, films, internet, social media etc. and “cultural ISA” (143) consisting of art, literature, sports etc. (143). Althusser points out the dual function of ideological state apparatuses – repression and ideological orientation.

Despite the multiplicity and diversity of the ideological state apparatuses, they have a central function, which is to validate, legitimise, assert and implement the ideology of the ruling class (Althusser 145). Althusser identifies the apparent contradiction in the “Ideological State Apparatuses” perhaps to create an illusion of plurality (144). Thus, existence of the ruling ideology depends on the implementation and the function of these apparatuses. Hegemonic masculinity, the dominant ideology of the ruling patriarchy therefore, exists and manifests itself in the operation of the institutions of communication and culture in order to promote the codes of heteronormativity. The question that follows is the purpose behind the promotion of metrosexuality as an apparatus to promote hegemonic masculinity.

In the essay “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment and Mass Deception” (1947) from the collection *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Continuum: 1993), Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer comment:

The stronger the positions of the culture industry become, the more summarily it can deal with consumers’ needs, producing them, controlling them, disciplining them, and even withdrawing amusement: no limits are set to cultural progress of this kind. But the tendency is immanent in the principle of amusement itself, which is enlightened in a bourgeois sense. If the need for amusement was in large measure the creation of industry, which used the subject as a means of recommending the work to the masses (13)

The customers are bereft of the freedom to evaluate a product as the value and the utility of a product launched in the market have already been determined and promoted by the entrepreneur through advertisements and other forms of cultural and communication discourse in order to manipulate the opinions of the prospective buyers. The customers are only left with the illusion of choice of what has already been allocated to them. Hegemonic masculinity, an offshoot of heteronormativity promoted by capitalism shares an integral connection with the production and consumption in the market. In *A Treatise on Political Economy* (1846), Jean Baptiste Say<sup>94</sup> assumes that a product cannot be created unless it is capable of participating in

---

<sup>94</sup> “Jean-Baptiste Say, (born January 5, 1767, Lyon, France—died November 15, 1832, Paris), French economist, best known for his law of markets, which postulates that supply creates its own demand”. Britannica, The Editors

a market that comprises other products equal to its own value. Therefore, the production of a commodity paves the way for the production of other commodities of a similar nature (Say 157-158). Karl Marx, on the other hand, traces the mechanism of capitalist production and consumption in the “Introduction” (Marx 81-111) to *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)* (1857). According to Karl Marx:

Production not only supplies a material for the need, but it also supplies a need for the material [...]. The need which consumption feels for the object is created by the perception of it [...]. Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object. Thus, production produces consumption [...] by creating the material for it. (92)

The emergence and proliferation of metrosexuality as a socio-cultural trend in the twenty first century in Europe and United States of America, appears to perform dual roles in the realm of economy and culture. As an ideological phenomenon endorsed and promoted by hegemonic masculinity it implies a tactical alliance between the normative and the dissident masculinities to generate an illusion of liberation from the codes of normative masculinity. However, its declaration of affiliation with heterosexuality and masculinization of the ‘feminine’ traits and attributes endorsed by it implicates a tacit validation of normative masculinity manifested in the form of hegemonic masculinity, which domesticates and appropriates dissident subcultures of masculinity by providing them subtle concessions in order to create an illusion of inclusiveness and pluralism. On the level of economy and market consumption, the growing interest in and popularity of metrosexuality among the sophisticated middle class urban folk, not only in Europe and the United States of America, but also in the former colonies in Asia and Africa (e.g., India, South Korea, China, Japan etc.) became instrumental in the growth and expansion of the market for cosmetic products, dermatological pharmaceutical products, and fashion industry as a whole. Corporate media, as one of the most potent ideological state apparatuses plays perhaps the most effective role to valorise and sponsor metrosexuality in its diverse forms.

#### 4.4. Vampire on Screen

In the movie *Alex Strangelove* (2018), in response to Alex's confusion about his sexuality (Alex assumes, as the movie shows, that he is a bisexual following his fascination for another boy Elliot), his friend Dell asked: 'Do you listen to panic at the disco while jerking off to pictures of vampires?' Alex's denial made Dell conclude that Alex is neither a gay nor a bisexual. Such an innovative test of sexual orientation appears to be significant as it, as I see it, indicates obvious association of vampirism with non-normative sexuality in the American imagination even in the twenty first century. Although homosexuality has never been explicitly manifested in Victorian vampire narratives, the queer subtext of vampire narratives has been adapted and appropriated widely in the post-war European and American culture.

Hollywood became the industry to promote vampirism as a representative narrative of alternative sexuality. Several Hollywood adaptations of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897) demonstrate the non-normative sexuality of Dracula along with promiscuity, polygamy, incest, and subversive traits. The masculinity of Stoker's Dracula, far from being in congruence with the codes of hegemonic masculinity manifests a masculinity that conforms more to the suppressed homosexual subcultures in nineteenth century Europe. The widespread popularity of the image of the male vampire and his masculinity manifested in the figure of Count Dracula on the silver screen appears to be a potential image to be commercially promoted. Dracula made his first appearance on silver screen in the 1922 film *Nosferatu* directed by F. W. Murnau.

*Nosferatu* (1922) represents the figure of the vampire as a dreaded monster, a decadent form that induces a sense of repulsion and horror in the mind of the viewers. The 1992 adaptation named *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) directed by Francis Ford Coppola manifests the culmination of the tradition of vampirism manifested in the nineteenth century narratives. However, the chronology of the adaptations leads to a gradual development of the exploration of alternative sexuality. In the 1992 adaptation by Coppola introduces the encounter between the Count and Jonathan Harker in the shaving scene as an erotic encounter in which the irresistible sexual desire of Dracula for Jonathan, as I see it, is unmistakable, although in Stoker's text, the episode demonstrates anger and insecurity of Dracula than his fascination of Jonathan.

The adaptation of *Dracula* (2020) created by Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat explicitly brought the speculations of a supposed sexual encounter between the Count and Jonathan when Sister

Agatha directly asked Jonathan about the homosexual encounter supposedly that took place between them. Although Jonathan's confused response sustains the ambiguity on the surface only to transform speculations concerning the sexuality of Dracula into strong assumptions. In fact, the pale, bald, anaemic Jonathan with several scars on his body and face appears to have developed symptoms often evident in sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis. In "I Want to Suck Your...: Dracula in Pornographic Film," Laura Helen Marks has shown the affinity of vampirism with pornographic films by virtue of its erotic subtext (Browning and Picard 193). She refers to a host of pornographic films such as *Dracula and the Boys* (1969), *The Bride's Initiation* (1976), *Gayracula* (1983), *Love Bites* (1988) etc. which, homosexuality and monstrosity are presented as equally fearful and prohibited (Browning and Picard 195-96). Such representation of non-normative sexuality in hardcore porn films suggests, as Harry M. Benshoff has observed in *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (1997):

[...] homosexuals, like vampires, have rarely cast a reflection in the social looking-glass of popular culture. When they are seen, they are often filtered through the iconography of the horror film: ominous sound cues, shocked reaction shots, or even thunder and lightning. (1-2, quoted in Browning and Picard 195-96)

The figure of the promiscuous, polygamous, non-normative, lustful vampire dwelling in uninhibited sexuality and orgiastic pleasure emerged as the endorsed icon of the queer subcultures in the United States of America in the 1960s and continued with prominence even in the 1980s. As Laura Helen Marks has summed up:

Drawing on the novels' underlying queer sexualities, porn filmmakers have incorporated the Dracula character, and vampirism in general, into films that cover a spectrum of audience and sexual preference. (Browning and Picard 193)

The Fall of the Soviet Union and the Communist Block of Eastern Europe and the emergence of economic globalization opened up the possibilities before the corporate companies of market expansion. The proliferation of consumerism requires new advertising strategies to promote a narcissistic image of the self and sexualities to address and lure the prospective buyers to expand the market of cosmetic products, designer's apparels, fitness equipment, stylish accessories and dermatological products and services. It became necessary to bring women

primarily from the third world countries and men in general into the fold of fashion. Moreover, the non-normative communities such as gays, lesbians, transgender and intersexed have also been assumed as prospective customers of the newly flourishing fashion industry. The incorporation of these groups and communities into the fold of prospective customers requires new strategies of promotion. The new promotional strategies adopted by the corporates were twofold: first, construction of new iconic males and females as the standardized images to desire and imitate; second, reconstruction of the popular icons and legendary characters to suit the ideology required for the expansion of the market.

The image of the vampire, a popular icon and object of the sexual fantasy of a large group of the population was chosen as a potent discourse to promote not only consumerism, but hegemonic masculinity imparted by heteronormativity. Heteronormativity has targeted vampirism for appropriation of hegemonic masculinity for its potential to transform the deviant groups into subversive threats as the vampire not only feeds on his prey, but transform them into lustful, promiscuous creatures like himself. Heteronormativity therefore, has not only domesticated and appropriated the subversive vampire figure, but also transforms him into a charming, sophisticated, metrosexual alpha male who, emerged as one of the most desired, endeared representations of the hegemonic masculinity to assert its dominance and control.

#### **4.5. *Interview with the Vampire***

The transformation of the bizarre and monstrous vampire residing in a decadent and ageing body (although renewed with youthful beauty and vigour by the consumption of blood) into suave, sophisticated, handsome males is manifested in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) adapted in celluloid in a blockbuster movie with the same name, directed by Neil Jordan, released in 1994. The novel marks a paradigmatic shift in the realm of vampire narratives in its departure from the thematic and structural concerns of the tradition of the nineteenth century vampire narratives in Britain. The novel chronicles the biography of a vampire, Louis de Pointe du Lac, referred to as Louis in the novel.

The novel is set in New Orleans in the contemporary United States of America where, a young vampire, Louis gave an interview to a reporter referred to as "the boy". The plot revolves around the interrelationships between the male vampires Louis, Lestat (Lestat de Lioncourt) and Armand and the female vampires Claudia and Madeleine.

The narrative structure marks a deviation from the structure of the conventional narratives such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) in the sense that it is structured as an autobiography in the format of an interview. Such a deviation is significant because this narrative provides the vampire to unravel his mind, narrate his own story unlike its precursors, which mostly contain the version of the vampire hunters or the preys of the vampires. Bram Stoker's narrative follows the epistolary mode comprising journals and letters written by the members of Dr. Van Helsing's group and Lucy, the female victim of Count Dracula.

In her novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), Anne Rice introduces the vampire narrative in a new dimension. The protagonist of the novel Louis presents before the readers a new species of the vampire, who feeds on animal blood instead of a predator of the human blood. The new category is entitled as "vegetarian vampire" who survives solely on animal blood. The scariest predator of Victorian narratives has been transformed into a submissive, obedient, ascetic creature, who looks like a fashionable urban youth with a contemporary taste in lifestyle. He resides in a modern city either in skyscrapers or classy bungalows, drinks coffee, listens to melodious pop and hard music, visits gym every day, frequents pubs and music-bars, studies in high-school or college, demonstrates great capabilities in sports, helps women in trouble and above all, craves for love and family. Louis displays a melancholic mood emanating from his isolation from the society he lives in, and a frustration emerging out of his loneliness, which is sustained throughout the narrative.

Unlike his predecessor Dracula in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), who made an apocalyptic prophecy of having all the men in his clan by possessing the women they love, Louis craves for belonging, becoming part of the family. Louis' refusal to entertain the plea of the reporter, to transform him into a vampire, reveals his frustration about his own identity as a vampire and anxiety of existence. His initial confusion about his vampiric identity gradually turns into a bitter quest to return to his human existence finally leading to repentance. His final words to the boy, as I see them, bring out to the audience the helpless, hopeless existence that he had to endure for two centuries: "I've failed," he sighed, smiling still. "I have completely failed" (Rice 264). His enraged response to the reporter boy and his actions to scare him display his desperation about his own existence.

The novel *Interview with the Vampire* brings out a tension between the inexhaustible quest for a companion, a partner and the desire to follow the heteronormative destination—the family



with a child. However, Louis never really craves for a female companion, a wife, but a male companion like Lestat and Armand.

Louis' desperation to know the origin of the vampire clan seems to replicate a desire, a craving to know himself, to explore and decode his own sexuality. Throughout the novel, his fascination for a male companion is unmistakable. As Lestat drained him and he feels disgusted with his own life, he begins to acquire a preoccupation with death. Yet he could not help but to feel an enchantment about the "infallible instinct" (Rice 12) of Lestat to read his mind.

Even the erotic overtones in their encounter are unmistakable: "I remember that the movement of his lips raised the hair all over my body, sent a shock of sensation through my body that was not unlike the pleasure of passion" (Rice 14). His relationship with Lestat was interrupted by the intrusion of Claudia, the moribund orphan girl rescued by them from the plague-ridden city of New Orleans. Claudia, who has been turned into a vampire in her adolescence (a forbidden act as per the vampiric ethics according to Lestat) ironically retains her infantile whims and sentiments unsuitable for a vampire. Her yearning for her lost mother compelled Louis to transform a mortal woman (Madeleine) into a vampire to compensate the loss of her dead mother.

The narrative demonstrates an endeavour of the group to form a family consisting of Louis and Lestat/Armand as minions and their daughter Claudia with Madeleine as her mother. The structure of their desired family (the structure differs as Louis desires a family consisting of him and Lestat/Armand as minions and Claudia as their daughter, while Claudia is in favour of having a mother, Lestat and Armand believe in companionship/male bonding beyond the purview of the heteronormative family structure) gets thwarted as Claudia and Madeline were taken captive by Armand's gang (without his consent) and burnt to ashes by the sunbeams.

The extermination of Claudia and Madeleine as well as the supposed extinction of Lestat and the final rupture between Louis and Armand symbolise the collapse of the alternative family they wished to form. The family, loosely structured on the desired homonormative pattern (the same-sex couple having a surrogate or adopted baby) has to collapse as the successful construction and sustainment of it could pose a serious threat to the fundamental premise of the heteronormativity. Moreover, as heteronormativity proposes, the family based on homonormative aspirations appears to be vulnerable to the assumed lack of fidelity and sustainability generating from the inherent polygamy and promiscuity practised by the LGBT communities. Such heteronormative anxiety is voiced in Claudia's apprehensions of Louis'

relationships with Lestat and Armand. Claudia seems to have personified heteronormative desires in the novel.

Claudia's desperation to have the body of a mature woman replicates the heteronormative aspirations for a perfect woman's body, which appears to be charming and desirable to the male gaze: "Six more mortal years, seven, eight [...] I might have had that shape!" (Rice 201). Moreover, she has the fear that Louis would be leaving her because of his intimacy with Lestat and Armand.

The supposed assassination of Lestat by Claudia and her strife to move Louis away from Armand are the endeavours to liquidate the threats to her heteronormative aspiration to have a family with her foster parents. The dilemma of Louis to choose between his minion and his foster daughter (ironically, Claudia was transformed by Lestat, who metaphorically becomes her father by giving her a new birth, a new life) seems to have heightened the predicament of a non-normative individual (by virtue of his choice of companionship if not sexuality though) to choose between heteronormativity and non-normativity. His final segregation from Lestat and Armand and the extinction of Claudia leaves him in a state of unending melancholia and restlessness. Such melancholia and restlessness may be considered as the penalty (a divine *vis a vis* social justice<sup>95</sup>) for his role as an overreacher, who aspired to subvert the codes of heteronormativity.

It is interesting to consider that the *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) initiates a new trend by categorizing vampires into two categories: good vampires and evil vampires represented by Louis and Lestat respectively. A good vampire is one who does not desire to be a predator, values human life, and prefers to survive on animal blood. He metamorphosed into a new age sophisticated, suave vampire who endorsed contemporary urban culture, prefers monogamy instead of licentious polygamy, prefers to live in modern apartments of the city, and craves for family and human life, and carries traces of humanity. Instead of a predator, he has been transformed into a saviour of human life. In her accusation against Louis, Claudia emphatically declares: "Your evil is that you cannot be evil, and I must suffer for it" (Rice 201). The evil vampire follows the vampiric tradition of polygamy, licentiousness, predation, exceedingly beautiful and charming, but a perfect embodiment of evil. He aims at usurping a space to dwell

---

<sup>95</sup> Eternal damnation is prescribed for transgressors of social and scriptural norms, since the medieval age. Social justice is implicated in the punishment of a non-conformist, who wants to have a child subverting the norms of procreation.

and continue his predation in secrecy. The screen adaptation of the novel marks a shift in the construction of the vampire figures in Hollywood movies.

The novel of Rice was adapted to the screen with the same name by Neil Jordan in 1994. The film appears to be faithful to the source novel except a twist at the end as the screenplay was written by Anne Rice herself. The novel casts the Hollywood superstars Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt in the characters of Lestat and Louis respectively. The casting of the film marks a paradigmatic shift in the representation of vampires in popular culture. Instead of the puckered faced, pale complexioned, weirdly dressed figure dwelling in the dark dilapidated castles, the audience encounters two most sexually desirable men of Hollywood. The exceedingly handsome face and gym-toned body of the vampire elevate him to the front cover of the latest fashion magazines in Europe and the United States of America. Their physical attributes and style of action seem to correspond more to hegemonic masculinity than non-normative masculinity.

In her Master's dissertation on metrosexuality, "Factors Influencing the Emergence of the Metrosexual" (2004) Amanda Alison Conseur discusses the formative role of the media to construct the image of masculinity. According to her, The "effect of the media in shaping men's image seems to be focusing greatly on appearance and aesthetic factors" (Conseur 18). In fact, the image of the male vampires as charming, sophisticated, masculine men represented by audio-visual media influences the change of the viewer's perceptions about the vampire. Louis, the model of the 'good vampire' seems to have conformed with the traits traditionally associated with masculinity. He rescued dying Claudia from death and gave a new life to her as a hero, a saviour rescues a damsel in distress. Such action was previously associated with the heroes in the adversary group of the vampire. By appropriating the role of his adversary, the good vampire of Hollywood seems to accept the norms of heteronormativity he previously subverted. Louis' affinity with metrosexuality is evident in his parental care and concern of Claudia, a role traditionally associated with the mother than the father.

Such acquisition of a feminine role by the male blurs the boundaries between genders and the vampire, typically associated with rejection of the familial bond and incest, now seems to enter and appropriate the core institution of the heteronormativity—the heterosexual family. Hegemonic masculinity is anticipated not only in physical traits, but also in the temperament of the 'good vampire' Louis in the movie *Interview with the Vampire* (1994).

Louis, the vampire, as the narrator in the film *Interview with a Vampire* (1994) displays an affinity with logic that seems to resemble almost a scientific temperament. His dismissal of the Victorian rituals to restrain and slay a vampire such as use of the crucifix, the stake, the vampire's preference for darkness and his reluctance to dwell even in artificial light as baseless superstitions, parallels the trivialization of vampirism as a fictitious tale by scientific discourse in the twentieth century. Such affinity with rationalism is an essential component of hegemonic masculinity, which prioritizes rationality as an indicator of superiority of men over the women. In fact, the vampire narratives since the 1990s show a dissociation between the vampire myth and Christianity.

The sacred relics of Christianity such as the Holy Cross and objects traditionally believed to restrain and prevent a vampire such as garlic, branch of the wild rose, the sacred bullet, etc. referred by Dr. Van Helsing as the weapons to defeat a vampire in *Dracula* (Stoker 287) began to be insignificant and futile as the vampires have become immune to them. In the narratives in print and audio-visual media since the 1990s, such as the film *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* (1992), *Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017), *Van Helsing* (2004) *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) etc. such weapons become powerless as the contemporary vampire narratives focus on physical strength, skills, intelligence, planning and teamwork to slay vampires. Such attributes along with the scientific temperament is perhaps an endeavour to rationalize the vampire narratives and shape them in the format of science fiction in order to cope with the changing taste of contemporary readers and audiences. Moreover, the attributes of the new vampire slayers conform with the traits of hegemonic masculinity endorsed and promoted by corporates.

#### **4.6. *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer***

In *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* (1992), a 1992 American film written by Joss Whedon and directed by Fran Rubel Kuzui and later adapted as a series on print and television, Buffy Summers (played by Kristy Swanson), a high school girl, who studied in Hemery High School in the city of Los Angeles in the United States of America chanced to meet a stranger, who introduced himself as Merrick (played by Donald Sutherland), who performed the duty to train the women chosen to be vampire slayers. She refused to entertain him until Merrick described the scenes and images appearing recurrently in her nightmares and warned her about the threat of an impending vampire attack on the city. Soon a group of vampires led by Lothos

(played by Rutger Hauer) and his companion Amilyn (played by Paul Reubens) attacked the city and began to transform the young schoolchildren to form a vampire gang. Buffy reluctantly joined training and began to acquire competence in the art of slaying vampires. Meanwhile Amilyn attacked two young men, Benny Jacks (played by David Arquette) and Oliver Pike (played by Luke Perry) and transformed Benny, but Merrick saved Pike. Pike decided to escape from the city, but he was attacked by Amilyn on the way and rescued by Buffy and this leads to a romantic affair and a strategic partnership between them to liquidate the vampire army. As Merrick was killed by Lothos when Buffy was enchanted by the latter with a spell, she was overcome by grief. However, she recollected her mental strength and along with Pike, staked and killed Lothos, Amilyn and other vampires as they crashed into the dance party organized by the school and saved the city from the vampire attacks.

The film popularised the trend of the female vampire slayer to be followed in later movies on the vampire such as *Van Helsing* (2004). Buffy is shown more in conformity with the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity than those of femininity. She is presented as a gym savvy, physically strong woman, who can ride bikes at high speed, loves to spend more time in the basketball court, does not hesitate to be on the basketball court in spite of her role as a cheerleader. Her quick reflex, flexibility of the body and readiness of mind help her to become a vampire slayer. The character of Buffy has been masculinized in course of the narrative as she shows an affinity with physical fitness exercises, boxing and riding a bike and developed a close kinship with the locker room.

In his *The Metrosexual: Gender, Sexuality and Sport* (2008) David Coad refers to the novelist and columnist Robert Lipsyte to show how the values of the sports locker room have extended to the national life of the United States of America (3). In fact, the sports locker room represents close friendship, male bonding, team spirit and self-confidence and identity as a player and teammate. Thus, sports as well as the sports locker room become the symbolic space to valorise and endorse the values and characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity. By displaying Buffy's preoccupation with the locker room and sports culture, the narrative demonstrates the indispensable role of masculinity to liquidate any threat to the state.

The imposed masculinity as the most crucial factor behind the success of Buffy as a vampire slayer ironically establishes the supremacy of hegemonic masculinity over femininity. Such acquisition of masculinity by Buffy has been complemented by Pike who became a confidant of the former and functioned as a backup of her in her battle against the vampires. The

masculine role of the saviour of a damsel in distress has been bestowed on Buffy, who rescued Pike from the deadly attack of Amylin. In *The Metrosexual: Gender, Sexuality and Sport*, David Coad explores the “feminine side” of the metrosexual males (26-32). Metrosexuality, as has been discussed earlier, approves concessions to feminine traits as an apparent gesture of liberalism in the context of gender formation and execution. In *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, Pike shows evidence of such “feminine” traits by expressing his anxiety, care and concern for the female hero Buffy while displaying a strong heterosexual affection for her.

The poster of the film symbolically displays the images of Buffy posing with a stake in hand and Pike hiding behind her and peeping uneasily. The gesture of Buffy resembles that of an aggressive male protagonist in an action-based Hollywood film while Pike demonstrates almost a ‘feminine’ cowardice and anxiety. The reversal of the normative gender roles and the masculinity of Buffy seem to validate the role of hegemonic masculinity as the key factor and protective institution behind every victory over adversities. However, it is noteworthy to mention that the film appears more as a horror comedy<sup>96</sup> as the vampires appear to be caricatures of the vampires in Victorian narratives as well as their predecessors in Hollywood.

Far from being shrewd, cruel, deadly predators, they appear to be foolish clowns, and worthless buffoons dressed in vampire apparel for a comic show. Their whitish face, dark red lips, weird fangs, comical gestures and unimpressive physique clad in fluorescent coloured black overcoat and trouser, red tie and white shirt give an impression of a fashion disaster, consisting of loud makeup with an excess of foundation and compact powders and unmatched shade of red lipstick usually displayed by the clowns in the circus and the comedians in theatres. Such trivialization of the deadly predators somehow reduces the seriousness, valour and heroism demonstrated by Buffy in her action and battle against the vampires. The masculinization of the female protagonist therefore, ironically parallels the emasculation of the heroic actions otherwise suitable only for the male warrior hero.

---

<sup>96</sup>“Horror-comedy is a generic hybrid that deliberately provokes an emotional shift from terror, suspense, or dread to hilarity. In comedy-horror—its relative—a playful tone predominates, but it is undercut by horrific or startling events or effects.... The particular type of comedy in horror-comedy tends to emerge cyclically, often following then parodying horror film cycles as they appear, become popular, and wane. For example, old “spooky house” films of the silent and early sound eras parodied melodramas originally written for the stage; monster films from the 1930s were later parodied in the 1940s and 1950s; slasher films and splatter horror in the 1970s and 1980s quickly gave way to gross-out humor in the later 1980s and 1990s.’ Horror Comedy. Rebecca Gordon. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0077.xml>. Accessed on 11.11.2022.

#### 4.7. *The Vampire Diaries*

The figure of the suave, sophisticated, charming vampire emerging in the characters of Louis and Lestat in the movie *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) became more prominent in the blockbuster Hollywood television series *The Vampire Diaries* premiered between 2009-2017. The series, based on the novel of the same name written by L. J. Smith was originally a trilogy consisting of the three sections- *The Awakening*, *The Struggle*, and *The Fury* published in 1991. Later, a fourth volume entitled *Dark Reunion* was added and published in 1992 because of the viewer's demand. The second series is a trilogy entitled *The Vampire Diaries: The Return* (2009-2011), comprising three novels: *Nightfall* (2009), *Shadow Souls* (2010) and *Midnight* (2011). The third series known as *The Hunter Trilogy* (2011-2012) consists of three novels: *Phantom* (2011), *Moonsong* (2012) and *Destiny Rising* (2012). The fourth series entitled *The Salvation* (2013-14) consisting of three novels *Unseen* (2013), *Unspoken* (2013) and *Unmasked* (2014) was written by Aubrey Clark. The television series premiered between 2009-2017, consists of one hundred and seventy-one episodes covering eight seasons. *The Vampire Diaries* presents an epic canvas comprising a host of legends such as vampires, werewolves, witches, ghosts, sorcerers, alchemists etc. The series has played a formative and crucial role in reorienting the image of the vampire in the vampire fiction and familiarizing them in the audio-visual media. The popularity of the series renders the shifting paradigm of the myth of the vampire as well as the shifting terrains of hegemonic masculinity in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

*The Vampire Diaries* marks a development of the departure initiated by *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* in the setting of the vampire narrative. The series explores the life of the teenage generation of the United States of America. Set in an imaginary town Mystic Falls in the State of Virginia, the series revolves around the lives of a host of teenagers studying in the Robert E. Lee High School. The narrative is recorded by Elena Gilbert (played by Nina Dobrev), who fell in love with the vampire Stefan Salvatore (played by Paul Wesley), in her diary and the journal of Stefan Salvatore. It revolves around the tension generated by a love triangle between Salvatore brothers and Elena, which began with the love triangle between the brothers and the female vampire Katherine, Elena's doppelgänger. The tale began in contemporary America and kept on switching back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in flashbacks. The narrative, like that of the *Interview with a Vampire*, categorizes vampires into good/moral and evil/immoral vampires embodied in the characters of Stefan Salvatore and his brother Damon Salvatore (played by Ian Somerhalder) respectively. Stefan is a moral and monogamous

vampire, who has transcended the basic instinct of the vampire—the thirst for blood and learned to survive with it after a pursuit of violence over a century. Damon Salvatore, his brother embodies the conventional traits of the vampire- seductive, charming, polygamous, immoral and violent predator.

The Victorian vampire tale of horror has been metamorphosed into a teenage high school romance in *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017). Instead of the unidentified locale of the medieval castle with dungeons, secret chambers, mazy staircases, underground graveyards and weird old predator of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the narrative of *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017) is set in the functional backdrop of a contemporary high school in a town in late twentieth century America. The angry young sportsman of the baseball ground, the teenage druggies in American high school, the fashion-freak, girls of the sophisticated urban society, the weirdos with strange hobbies and inclinations, the beautiful young girl desired by almost every boy in the class, the unruly, restless and confused brats – everyone features in the narrative to present a cumulative image of the cultural milieu and structure of the urban upper and middle class of any American town in the 1990s. What appears to be significant is the demonstration of the nuances of the contemporary American culture to reshape and reorient the forms of masculinity in accordance with shifting ideological terrains of gender and sexuality.

In his *The Metrosexual: Gender, Sexuality and Sport*, David Coad explores the predominance of “jock culture” (6) in the realm of sports and its extension in the culture of the new age American teens. According to him, jock culture legitimises, validates and makes male supremacy enduring over the female, and the ideas of hegemonic masculinity (Coad 6). As he concludes:

It propagates the gender myths, insisting on the “natural” differences between men and women and, finally, it relies on the heterosexual myth, attributing naturalness to heteroeroticism and unnaturalness to homoeroticism. (Coad 6)

Jock culture imparts the practices of violence, bullying, unhealthy competition, jealousy and above all, toxic masculinity. In *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017), jock culture gets manifested in the Robert E. Lee High School of Mystic Falls. The character of Tyler Lockwood, the unruly son of the Mayor of Mystic Falls (played by Michael Trevino) in Season I where he displays over-arrogance, affinity with violence and bullying and rivalry with Jeremy Gilbert (played by Steven R. McQueen), the younger brother of Elena and wooer of Vicki Donovan (played by



Kayla Ewell), the supposed beloved of Tyler. Tyler suggested to Matt Donovan (played by Zach Roerig), the former lover and classmate of Elena to hurt Stefan on the playground, as Elena began to show interest in him. Their effort to hurt Stefan on the field suggested the violence, personal jealousy and unhealthy rivalry permeated through sports among the teens in America towards the end of the twentieth century. Jeremy's antipathy towards Tyler and his intended strife with Tyler in Season I complements Tyler's arrogance. The bullying of Stefan by the history teacher and the football coach of the school William Tanner on the ground and in the history class, renders the unhealthy practice of humiliating the students even by the teachers and such humiliation evidences the extent of damage done by the jock culture. In fact, Jock culture in Sports, a preoccupation of metrosexuality promotes violence and arrogance as part of maleness in order to validate hegemonic masculinity.

The narrative of *The Vampire Diaries* refashioned the image of the vampire according to metrosexuality, endorsed by hegemonic masculinity. In *The Metrosexual Guide to Style* (2003), Michael Flocker has noted the emergence of a new male who would be a fitness freak in possession of a lean figure but "toned and muscular. Shoulders, chests, arms, legs and abs are still defined, but not to cartoonish proportions" (118). Instead of the fiend-like bodies of the wrestlers in WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) shows consisting of the pumped muscles and titanic expansion, metrosexuality endorses slim and lean forms with few enhanced muscles and flat abs. In fashion, "Looser, boxier styles are being rejected in favor of narrower cuts, fitted shirts and slim-line jackets." (Flocker 118). The vampire brothers in *The Vampire Diaries* - Stefan and Damon Salvatore and Klaus Mikaelson (played by Joseph Morgan), the hybrid of the vampire and the werewolf appear to conform with the new metrosexual masculine icon in their lean yet strong figures, flexible postures, swift and prompt physical movements, excessive speed in strife and chase, perfectly stretchable body postures ideal for a passionate and pleasurable sexual encounter. Stephen and Damon appear in the series in striped shirts, skinny jean trousers, black chinos, tight leather jackets of jet-black colour. The black chinos, black t-shirt and black leather jacket seem to become the signature style of the vampires not only in this series, but also in the following vampire movies and series as well.

The scary black overcoat of Count Dracula with lifted collars like wings of the vampire bat has ironically been substituted with the new black apparel of the latest design that has become the fashion statement of the new vampires. The new vampires with pink complexion, dark brown or blonde hair mended in style, brown or black eyes and seductive smile have become the prince charming to the fashionable ladies of the cities and the metropolis. Like Count Dracula,

Stefan and Damon Salvatore do not need to mesmerise the beautiful ladies to fall in love with them or to be engaged in sexual encounters with them. Caroline Forbes (played by Candice King), daughter of the police chief of Mystic Falls and classmate of Elena felt an irresistible sexual urge for Damon Salvatore. Moreover, Elena, the heroine of *The Vampire Diaries* was willing to be turned into a vampire as she fell in love with Stefan Salvatore. The enchanter-seducer-vampire embodied in the character of Count Dracula evolved into the romantic hero Stefan, who protects the damsel in distress and those in trouble, holds heterosexual monogamy as his own sexual orientation, believes in friendship and relationship, acknowledges the value of family and laments over the extinction of the traces of humanity in the character of his brother Damon in *Season I* (2009) of the series as the latter resorted to indiscriminate carnage of the innocent mortals.

His pining for the love of Katherine Pierce, who turns out to be the doppelgänger of Elena, for centuries transform him as the hero of the romances and the sentimental movies. The willing persuasion of Elena to Stefan to turn her into a vampire renders a significant step in the development of the vampire narrative. The strange unfamiliar creature, who induced repugnance and horror in his monstrous form, and even an uneasiness and repulsion in his human form (remember Jonathan's nausea caused by the pungent foul smell of the Count) has been metamorphosed into a much-desired dream man, relentlessly pursued and wooed by beautiful women. He imparts an air of familiarity with which his acquaintances feel comfortable.

In *The Metrosexual Guide to Style*, Michael Flocker considers a unique fashion statement incongruous with convention implicates a categorical denial of and refusal to conform to the norm. What matters is the conscious choice to be different in style rather than endorsing weirdness to draw attention (Flocker 82). In *Dracula* (1897), the appearance of the Count imparts an air of unfamiliarity, a conviction to be different, distinct in his identity. In *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017), Stefan, Damon, Lexy, and even Klaus, the hybrid of the vampire and the werewolf, does the opposite. Apparently, their human form and lifestyle appear to be a strategy to masquerade their identity. But metaphorically, their style and fashion statements are endowed with an air of familiarity that Count Dracula never desired.

Unlike Count Dracula, Stefan does not want to create a vampire clan by turning humans into vampires, but prefers to live among the humans as one of them. The transformation of Stephen from a pitiless monster and promiscuous predator (recollected by Klaus and shown in retrospect

in *Season III* of *The Vampire Diaries*) into a pitiful man of restraint, humane feelings and compassion, as I think, chronicles the process of transformation of the vampire from a non-normative, subversive figure to a metrosexual icon, a representative of the hegemonic masculinity by virtue of renouncement of his unique identity as a dissident and endorsement of the traits of the latter.

In *Masculinities*, R. W. Connell observes the role of violence and ‘production of exemplary masculinities’ as “integral to the politics of hegemonic masculinity” (214). Such production of “exemplary masculinities” (Connell 214) are required to construct disciplined groups of men such as platoons of the army or the teams of corporate professionals in order to assert and sustain the dominance of hegemonic masculinity. Heteronormativity imparts a set of standardized behavioural codes and etiquette to be followed in the social space and perform accordingly. Hegemonic masculinity asserts itself in “setting standards, claiming popular assent and discrediting those who fall short” (Connell 214).

The narrative of *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017) argues for a consolidation of hegemonic masculinity by either the systematic elimination or gradual disappearance of those who failed to live up to the standards set by heteronormativity.

Stefan has been chosen to be the partner of Klaus in his mission to form an army of the hybrids over Damon because the predatory ventures of Stefan in the past demonstrate discipline, self-control and self-restraint, ability to unleash structured violence. The hybrids failed to survive because they did not show self-restraint immediately after they were turned into the hybrids. Jeremy was discredited for his inconsistency, lack of discipline and his inclination towards debauchery until he recollected his strength and regained competence to become a vampire hunter. Damon had to go through rigorous physical pains in the secret chamber in the basement of the Salvatore mansion to become a disciplined vampire.

The non—normative promiscuous women in the narrative - Caroline and Vicki Donovan had to be eliminated from the human world because of their inability to perform according to the expectations of heteronormativity. Even in their new identities as vampire and ghost respectively, they failed to achieve recognition and remained as peripheral characters. *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017) sets up the unfinished project of *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) a vampire family consisting of two brothers, who were also siblings in their life as humans. Later, Klaus compelled Stefan to be in the alliance with him in his pursuit of the mission of forming an army of the hybrids. In her discussion of homosocial bonding/male

bonding in *Between Men*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick identifies the emergence of “obligatory heterosexuality” (3) as the by-product of “male dominated kinship system” (3). In fact, since the eighteenth century, male bonding began to be included in the adventure narratives and crime thrillers as the key to success in any ambitious and perilous adventure project.

Male bonding is believed to have built up immunity to resist homosexuality in the social as well as in the cultural domain. *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017) produces a new variety of the vampire narrative that employs the most powerful heteronormative trope – family to endorse sibling love and rivalry, male bonding, and heterosexual monogamy to restore the ideological, socio-cultural and sexual codes of heteronormativity renounced and subverted by its predecessors in the last century. The yearning and love of the new vampire for family and relationship with humans appear to be the key factor behind his familiarisation with and incorporation into the world of heteronormativity. The birth of the new suave, heterosexual, monogamous, caring, romantic, moral and disciplined vampire, in fact, symbolises the fall of the old subversive, promiscuous, unruly, non-normative, dissident un-dead of the Victorian literary imagination.

#### **4.8. *The Twilight Saga***

In his essay “How to Domesticate a Vampire: Gender, Blood Relations and Sexuality in Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight*” (2010), Pramod Nayar refers to the critical observation of Terry L. Spaise in “Necrophilia and SM: The Deviant Side of *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*” (2005), to suggest the “domestication” of the vampire” (61) legend in the twenty first century (61). According to Pramod Nayar:

We see the emergence of the suave form of the vampire in the 20th century, as opposed to the 19th century versions, where the vampire is a sex object, and a monster *who looks like us*. This modern vampire disturbs the distinction between humans and vampires, Spaise suggests, and marks “domestication of the vampire”. (Nayar 61)

This process of domestication, as observed by Terry Spaise in “Necrophilia and SM: The Deviant Side of *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*” (2005) and endorsed by Pramod Nayar, has been grounded on, as I have already shown, the strategy of accustomedness of the so long unaccustomed creature, the vampire. The habituation is part of the strategy of

heteronormativity to appropriate one of the most popular cultural icons of non-normative sexuality by transforming his awe-inspiring image into a pleasing sight, a desired one to promote hegemonic masculinity and the cultural codes associated with the heteronormativity. The transformation, which seems to have begun with Louis in *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) culminated in the character of Edward Cullen, the chocolate cream hero and the teen heartthrob of *The Twilight Saga* (2005-08) of Stephenie Meyers.

The *Twilight Saga* by Stephenie Meyers is a compendium of four novels – *Twilight* (2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007) and *Breaking Dawn* (2008). The novels present a love triangle between the vampire protagonist Edward Cullen, the human girl Bella Swan and the werewolf Jacob Black. The stories are primarily told by Bella Swan, while the last section of *Breaking Dawn* was written from the perspective of Jacob Black. The novels gained huge popularity following their adaptations on the silver screen by Summit Entertainment in the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively. The movie version of *The Breaking Dawn* (2008) had been divided into two parts; the *Part I* was released in movie theatres in November 2011 and the *Part II* was released in cinemas in November 2012. Meyers published two more novels namely, *Life and Death* (2015) and *Midnight Sun* (2020). The former reworked the role of the protagonists Edward Cullen and Bella Swan, and the latter retold the tales from the perspective of Edward Cullen.

The narrative is set in Forks, a small town in ‘Northwest Washington State,’ which “exists under a near-constant cover of clouds. It rains on this inconsequential town more than any other place in the United States of America.” (Meyers, *Twilight* 3). The story primarily revolves around the romantic love story of Edward Cullen, more than a century old handsome vampire, and the teenage girl Isabella Swan, referred as Bella in the series. Bella Swan, the estranged child of the divorced couple Charlie, the police chief of Forks and Renee. Renee lived in Phoenix with her new boyfriend, a basketball player Phil. Bella was not very comfortable with Charlie, who seemed to be indifferent to his family because of his preoccupation with his work. However, she came to stay with him in order to let her mother have her own time with her boyfriend. She befriended with and initially developed a teenage affection for Jacob Black, the teenage boy of his father’s friend Billy Black, who turned to be a werewolf.

The story gained momentum with the strange boy of seventeen, whom Bella met on the lunch table on her first day at Forks High School. She felt an irresistible inquisitiveness for him, who turned out to be Edward Cullen, the son of the doctor Carlisle and Esme Cullen, living with his

siblings Alice and Emmett Cullen as well as with Jasper Hale and Rosalie. The strange family, as Bella got to know from her friends, lived in isolation from the other classmates in school and thereby became the cynosure of public attraction because of their extremely beautiful appearance. Following her initial disappointment with the repulsive behaviour of Edward, she finally acquired a restlessness to know this strange boy after Edward miraculously saved her from an accident. Such a miraculous act propelled Bella's inquisitiveness, which metamorphosed into a deep romantic love for him. *Twilight* (2005) displays the initiation of the love affair between Edward and Bella and the latter's confrontation with the two predatory vampires James and Victoria and the final rescue by Edward.

*New Moon* (2006) narrates the development of their relationship and their confrontation with Volturi, the supreme institution of the vampire clan, which feared that the relationship with Edward might endanger the secrecy of the vampire clan. The novel ends with a temporary truce with Volturi as Alice, the visionary sister of Edward, assured Aro that Bella would be turned into a vampire. *Eclipse* (2007) dramatizes the return of Victoria and her revengeful act of the formation of a dreadful army of the malicious new-born vampires to avenge the assassination of her minion James by the Cullen family.

The novel *Eclipse* (2007) demonstrates a tactical alliance between the vampires and the werewolves as Edward and Jacob joined hands to protect Bella. Following a bloody strife between Victoria's army and the vampire-werewolf alliance the latter finally achieved victory over the former and the threat looming on Bella had been liquidated. The last part *Breaking Dawn* (2008) shows the culmination of the love between Edward and Bella into marriage despite Jacob's consistent opposition. The marriage resulted in a brief rupture in the bond between Bella and Jacob. The marriage entered into a stage of extreme crisis as Bella became pregnant with the child of Edward and went almost to the brink of death as it was impossible for a human to give birth to a half-human, half-vampire baby. Edward was finally left with no other option but to transform Bella into a vampire. The birth of the daughter of Edward and Bella, Renesmee propelled the final conflict with the Cullen family and Volturi, as the latter speculated a grave threat to vampirism following the birth of a half-human, half-vampire child for the first time in the history of the vampires. As Volturi prepared for a lethal attack on the Cullen family, The Cullen clan and the werewolves, along with a few opponents of Volturi, again came together to resist the attack. Finally, the alliance achieved victory over Volturi without violence as Aro had a vision of their defeat by reading the thoughts of Alice, the visionary and convinced that the new-born child would not pose a threat to the order of the

vampires. Such resolution of the crisis liberated the Cullen family from the threat of Volturi. The end appears to be that of a conventional love story: “And then we continued blissfully into this small but perfect piece of our forever” (Meyers, *Breaking Dawn* 699).

#### **4.8.1. Volturi**

*Twilight Saga* (2005-2008), I think, appears to be the culmination of the retreat of the vampire narratives to the domain of heteronormativity. The process, which began with *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) finds a perfect finale in the *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008). The *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) valorises family, formed on the foundation of heterosexual monogamy, natural procreation, hegemonic masculinity and femininity endorsed by heteronormativity. The *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) presents the Cullen family, a group of vegetarian and decent vampires, who have renounced the practice of feeding on human blood by hunting them and survive on animal blood. The tension evident in the characters of Louis in the *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) and Damon Salvatore in the *Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017) and their occasional resort to human blood out of compulsion, seems to have lessened in Edward Cullen, who achieved restraint over the conventional predatory nature of the vampire. Even Carlisle carried on the occupation of a doctor with least temptation, as the profession is vulnerable to exposure of human blood and open wounds. Carlisle symbolises complete transformation of the vampire as he follows an ‘ascetic life’ in comparison with a conventional vampire.

Jovially referred by Jessica, the classmate of Bella in the film *Twilight* (2008) as an adoptive father and a competent matchmaker, Carlisle has a wife Esme and adopted children Emmett, Edward and Alice Cullen as well as Jasper and Rosalie Hale. He turned Esme and Edward at their deathbed into vampires to have a family of his own. Emmett is the partner vis a vis the supposed husband of Rosalie and Jasper is the partner as well as the assumed husband of Alice. Thus, I think that the Cullen family consisted of the parents, siblings and in-laws symbolises the heteronormative family in a state of perfection.

Unlike the thwarted dream of Louis and the unstable bonds of Salvatore brothers, the Cullen family in the *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008), as I think, appears to be consolidated on the foundations of commitment, familial values, fidelity to the partner, and above all, heterosexual

monogamy sustained through all the four novels and triumphed over all adversities and antagonism. The Cullen family establishes a parallel institution not only to promote hegemonic masculinity and the heteronormative codes, but also to challenge the supremacy of Volturi, the supreme order of the vampire clan. They consciously deviated from the codes of conduct set by Volturi implicating the establishment of an alternative order of the vampire. The deviation was initiated by the treaty between the Cullens and the werewolves, which imposed a restriction on the former to enter into the territory of the werewolves. During Bella's visit to the beach at La Push with her schoolmates, Sam, the companion of Jacob asserted it with great conviction: "The Cullens don't come here" (Meyers, *Twilight* 105). As Jacob told Bella about the Quileute legend that tells the stories of the un-dead and the treaty between the vampires and the werewolves. I think that it is significant to note that Jacob called the Cullens "civilized" (Meyers, *Twilight* 108) as they stopped preying on humans. Such recourse to 'civilization' suggests affinity with the normative structure as the Cullens seem to have resorted more to the human world rather than the that of vampire.

Such a retreat to the human values, I think, suggests a domestication of the vampire, which also implicates conformity with the codes of heteronormativity. The narratives render superiority and sustainability of the relationships grounded in heterosexual monogamy. The promiscuous Victoria in the *Twilight* (2005), who formed the vampire army and seduced the new-borns to keep them under her control, had to face defeat. James, who forced Bella to feed on his contaminated blood, had to be killed by Edward, the dedicated lover of Bella. The act of the sucking out of the contaminated blood from Bella's body by Edward symbolically suggests the redemption of Bella from the contaminating influence of the 'bad vampire.' As Bella's intimacy with Edward grew deeper, she deliberately tried to transmute her fascination for Jacob into a sisterly affection, which culminated into Jacob's responsibility to protect Renesmee, as the supposed brother of Bella in the *Breaking Dawn* (2008).

As Bella assumes before the final strife with Volturi: "There was a good chance that my daughter was going to survive what was coming, and Jacob too. If they had a future, then that was a kind of victory, wasn't it?" (Meyers, *Breaking Dawn* 606). The survival of Renesmee and Jacob and the supposed nurturing of their daughter by Jacob, as Bella assumed, would symbolise the moral victory of the values inculcated by the Cullens into the vampire clan and the elevation of the vampire to the human plane as the werewolves had become.



The romantic love between Bella and Edward, its culmination into marriage and finally birth of a daughter by the natural process of procreation, as I think, complete the metamorphosis of the sexual dissident vampires into ideal heteronormative couple united by the 'holy matrimonial bond.' The birth of a child by natural process of procreation, which has been conceived as the desired end and fulfilment of a nuptial bond, has been conceived by Volturi as an existential threat to the vampire clan.

Volturi represents the conventional traits of vampirism. The headquarter of Volturi is situated in the town Volterra, a city in the Tuscany of Italy. The Chiefs of the 'Order of Volturi', the protector and law-enforcing agency of the vampire clan: Aro, Caius and Marcus reside there in secrecy. The inhabitants of the city are unaware of the existence of Volturi in the city and they celebrate 19<sup>th</sup> March as St. Marcus' Day when St. Marcus was believed to drive the vampires out of the city (Ironically Edward was about to make a public appearance in broad daylight by revealing his shining body before a congregation gathered in front of the clock tower of the city on St. Marcus' Day).

The headquarter of Volturi is ironically situated beneath the premise of the church in a secret chamber. The "low arched tunnel" (Meyers, *New Moon* 406) steeped in darkness leads to "a brightly lit, unremarkable hallway. The walls were off-white, the floor carpeted in industrial gray. Common rectangular fluorescent lights were spaced evenly along the ceiling" (Meyers, *New Moon* 407). The grand hall appears to be "benign" (Meyers, *New Moon* 407) to Bella, who was initially perturbed by the horrible dungeon to reach the hall. In its formation, role and appearance, Volturi seems to present an inverted image of the Church of the Vatican, which also functions as the supreme law enforcing agency of the Catholic community. As I think, the *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) inverted the conventional theme of the nineteenth century vampire narratives: dissidence, interrogation, subversion of the heteronormative codes of sexuality. The revolt of the Cullens against the Order of Volturi, as I see it, suggests inversion of their subversive ideology, which ironically implies a re-assertion of the codes of heteronormativity once subverted by their vampire predecessors. As Bella feels that the "Volturi had never been seriously challenged in millennia before" (Meyers, *Breaking Dawn* 606). The final triumph of the Cullens and the acceptance of defeat by Volturi in the *Breaking Dawn* (2008) suggests the fall of the old tradition and the establishment of a new tradition of vampirism bordering on civilization, humanity, heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity. Bella describes the final defeat of Volturi in the *Breaking Dawn* (2008): "Aro bowed his head, the picture of remorse,

and drifted backward for a moment before he turned around. We watched in silence as the last four Volturi disappeared into the trees” (Meyers 686).

The image of the receding army of Volturi, as I think, symbolises the withering of the tradition and their final disappearance implicates the decline and extinction of the Victorian vampires. In fact, the birth of the new-born daughter of Edward and Bella, Renesmee implies the end of the rule of Volturi.

#### **4.8.2. Heteronormative Approach to Sexuality in *The Twilight Saga***

The love between Edward and Bella demonstrates more affinity with Victorian conservatism than the vampiric libertinism. In his essay “How to Domesticate a Vampire: Gender, Blood Relations and Sexuality in Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight*,” (2010) Pramod Nayar observes:

Edward whose constant refrain is that he might hurt her, is always on the verge of making love – they have progressed to a kiss – but refuses to make love. In what is an interesting shift within the horror/Gothic genre, Meyer’s saga refrains from anything more than foreplay until Edward and Isabella are married. (70)

The restraint of Edward to have sexual intimacy with Bella, apart from an affectionate kiss and occasional soft foreplay has two implications: the prohibition of premarital sex and as Pramod Nayar suggests, prevention of necrophilia and sadomasochism evident in Gothic romances (Nayar 70). In an intimate scene at Bella’s bedroom in the film adaptation of the *Twilight* (2008), Edward suddenly restrained himself and released Bella in a state of arousal. To Bella’s utter bewilderment, Edward explained that he was a man from the last century and therefore, could not be comfortable with the idea of sexual intercourse without getting married. Such a clarification appears to be self-explanatory. It suggests, I think that Edward’s, so to say, the new vampire’s affiliation to the idea of heterosexual monogamy and marital sex, legitimised by the Victorian society as the norm. Such notion is also demonstrated by the other members of the Cullen family, although Edward emphatically articulated it. What we witness in the premarital encounter of Edward and Bella, I think, is only a romantic courtship and spending time together as usually happens in the contemporary ‘coffee dates’.

His refusal to respond to Bella's passionate desire to have sexual intercourse seems to be a renouncement of necrophilia, a non-normative form of sexuality typically associated with and symbolically suggested by a vampiric bite. What Edward repeatedly emphasized was that he could not afford to lose control during a sexual encounter. His trembled retreat at the moment of his passionate encounter with Bella and his concern about self-control and self-restraint suggests his perception of sexuality as a calculated, restrained and carefully coded construction. I think that his sexuality resembles Victorian construction of that as a constrained normative structure integrally connected with procreation. Edward's endorsement of Victorian sexuality appears to be an opposition to the subversive sexuality more akin to pleasure and ironically it displays a renouncement of Victorian vampirism, one of the principal domains of non-normative sexuality.

#### **4.8.3. Hegemonic Masculinity in *The Twilight Saga***

In her book *Masculinities*, R. W. Connell observes: "Men's interest in patriarchy is condensed in hegemonic masculinity and is defended by all the cultural machinery that exalts hegemonic masculinity" (241). Hegemonic masculinity is institutionalized by the state and it involves enforcement of "violence, intimidation and ridicule in the lives of straight men" (Connell 241) and the exercise of violence on women and non-masculine and gay men (Connell 241). The *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008), manifests hegemonic masculinity in multiple forms ranging from aggressive masculinity resorting to violence to metrosexuality, a sophisticated form of hegemonic masculinity. Jacob and the werewolf clan demonstrated aggressive masculinity, while Edward appears to conform with the traits of metrosexuality in orientation and features, more explicitly in the cinematic adaptation of the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012). However, the metrosexual appearance of Edward (played by Robert Pattinson in the film) makes him more popular among the American teens than the wild Jacob Black (played by Taylor Lautner in the film).

The movie *The Twilight* (2008) valorises metrosexuality in its presentation of Edward Cullen. Edward and his brothers embodied the traits associated with metrosexuality. The High School of Forks has been described in the movie adaptation of the novel as "The Home of the Spartans". The allusion of Sparta, I think, implicates the ideology of hegemonic masculinity

endorsed by the institution like any typical contemporary American school.<sup>97</sup> The school promotes sports culture, one of the chief constituents of metrosexuality. In *The Metrosexual: Gender, Sexuality and Sport*, David Coad points out the advertising strategy of Armani to employ sports personalities as models in order to display their preferences of clothes and fashionable apparel, which appear as the ideal sartorial choice of metrosexual males to satisfy their sensuous pleasure and the brand of masculinity promoted and endorsed by metrosexuality (56). In the movie *The Twilight* (2008) Edward's passion for and competence in baseball, the favourite American pastime proves his allegiance to metrosexuality. The affinity of the Cullen family with baseball and sports resembles the integral relationship between metrosexuality and sports culture.

In his *Metrosexual Guide to Style*, Michael Flocker stresses on the need to develop a personal style in congruence with the body type (83). In the movie adaptations of the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012), the appearance of Robert Pattinson as Edward Cullen, as I think, in blue overcoat, loose casual shirt, slim-fit, straight-legged trouser, dark lensed sunglasses seem to be in perfect harmony with his tall and lean body adorned with flat abdomen, flawless muscles, pale white skin glaring like diamonds in sunlight, sharp facial structure, broken jaw, large eyes, thin pointed nose and blonde wavy hair carefully dishevelled, resembles any show stopper in a fashion show featuring in the front cover of any famous fashion magazine like *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Cosmopolitan* etc. In fact, black, navy blue or grey suit the style of metrosexual men (Flocker 91).

Such a careful selection of style is in consonance of metrosexual care concerning self-appearance in public-space to avoid ridicule (Flocker 83). Such concern corresponds with the performance in public-spaces in accordance with one's own gender role. The huge popularity of Edward Cullen among American teens and couples owes much to his style and perfect physique suitable for a metrosexual male.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, his mastery and taste in music (Bella was surprised to see the rich collection of music CDs<sup>99</sup> in Edward's room) evident in his playing

---

<sup>97</sup>Sparta was the ancient Greek city state known for its military power. The chief objective of Sparta was the expansion of his military power over the other city states by virtue of its valorous army built on the principles of self-discipline, self-control and unlimited courage. A spartan, as the Merriam Webster Dictionary has defined, is 'marked by strict self-discipline or self-denial. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Spartan>. Accessed 10 December 2022.

<sup>98</sup> In the article "A Name for Newborns Thanks to the Vampires" published in *The New York Times* on May 07, 2010, Jesse McKinley states the growing popularity of Edward as the chosen name of the male child. <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/08/us/08names.html>. Accessed 10 December 2022.

<sup>99</sup> Compact Disk used in computer.

soft romantic tune on piano (Flocker 70-72), his love for books (Flocker 76) and meticulous designing of home décor (one should remember the Lighted airy room of Edward comprising a wooden floor, wide French windows, tribal masks, open racks seen by Bella while visiting the house of the Cullens in the film *Twilight*) manifest his metrosexuality (Flocker 146-155). Michael Flocker stresses on positive thinking and self-confidence as essential components of the metrosexual mindset (Flocker 160-163). However, the confidence in one's own self is not supposed to be confused with arrogance (Flocker 162). Throughout the narrative, Edward, unlike Jacob, demonstrates politeness coupled with unyielding determination and self-assertion. However, his aggression is evident whenever he encountered any threat to Bella. As Bella was surrounded by the goons at Port Angeles and saved by Edward, his "furious voice" (Meyers, *The Twilight* 140) made her scared initially. In his essay "How to Domesticate a Vampire: Gender, Blood Relations and Sexuality in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*" (Nebula: 2010) Pramod Nayar points out that "In the traditional Gothic the virgin was always under threat" (70) and the coincidental resemblance in the names of the heroines of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Meyer's *The Twilight Saga* (2005-2008): Isabella (70). Such resemblance ironically determines the role of Edward as the protector hero of the damsel in distress, a characteristic trait of the hero in American Mythology as Michael A. Solis observes (3) in his Masters' Dissertation entitled *The Damsel in Distress: Rescuing Women from American Mythology* (2016). In fact, *The Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) presents Bella always in melancholy, vulnerable to threats and dangers and Edward as the protector hero. Such transformation of a vampire from a dangerous seductor to a rescuer of a damsel in distress, I think, symbolises his domestication and appropriation in conformity with the codes of heteronormativity.

In *Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research and Social Practice* (Open University Press: 2003), Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill trace the symbolic significance of manual work as a marker of masculinity (21-22). In fact, the image of a workman involved in manual labour evokes an image of masculinity. Such an image is complemented by an element of rudeness and symbolic violence. In the movie *The Twilight* (2008) Jacob Black, I think, characterises working class masculinity by virtue with his skill in the field of machinery. His appearance in the garage clad in the uniform of a mechanic soiled with grease and machine oil drilling, welding, fitting the parts with force enhances his masculinity characterised by ruggedness, anger, a short-tempered impulsive mind, arrogance, and violence, which contribute to the formation of hegemonic masculinity. Jacob's werewolf self seems to be a

metaphor of his rugged masculinity attributed to the manual workers. The muscled body of Jacob with a brown complexion, bare to display a tattoo depicting a symbol of the tribe, appears to be a contrast to the pale white and sophisticated figure of Edward. Together they represent, I think, the variety of forms in which hegemonic masculinity asserts itself.

Jacob's arrogance towards Mike aka Michael Newton, the flirtatious boy who tried to woo Bella, evidences his impulsive character. I think that his dismissal of Mike as a "marshmallow" in the film *The Twilight* (2008), can be regarded as the triviality demonstrated by hegemonic masculinity towards men, not capable of possessing ruggedness. The classmates of Bella, Eric, Mike and Tyler remain in the margin as they failed to approximate the characteristics of masculinity valorised in Forks High School. Jacob's rugged masculinity finally transformed into a werewolf to join the league of Cullens in their final strife against Volturi. Instead of the prioritisation of metrosexual masculinity in the novels and the films, the rugged, violent masculinity of the inter-war period<sup>100</sup> has not been denounced, but kept as a backup to strengthen metrosexual masculinity endorsed and promoted by heteronormativity in the twenty first century America.

#### **4.9. Conclusion**

Vampire narratives produced in the United States of America in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, as I think, have transformed the bizarre, monstrous, polygamous, non-normative seductive predator-enchanted vampires of the nineteenth century British narratives into the suave, sophisticated, charming, heterosexual, monogamous, vegetarian vampires as protector-hero. This, as I think, appears to be one of the most interesting phenomena in the realm of the popular culture.

The shift in gender politics in the milieu of multinational corporations, new media, the inception and titanic growth of social media and unprecedented expansion of fashion and cosmetics industries has reoriented the structure of masculinity. The growing pressure of Feminist challenges and LGBT movement have compelled heteronormativity to appropriate them by incorporating traits in conformity with their expectations.

The vampire, a favourite icon of the non-normative population as well as a popular figure among the new American teens appears to be, as I think, the perfect choice to exert the politics of appropriation and domestication. However, the apparent concession manifested in the trend

---

<sup>100</sup> The period between the First and the Second World War (1914-1945)

of metrosexuality re-asserted the principles of hegemonic masculinity. The affiliation of the new suave vampire with family, heterosexual monogamy, fidelity, protective heroism has only established heteronormativity on a stronger foundation than before. The vampire narratives in print and silver screen discussed in the present chapter have shown, I think, a culmination of the process of metamorphosis began in the 1980s. Such transformations, I think, opened up new vistas in the realm of vampire narratives.

The new approach to the vampire narrative entails an endeavour to look at the nineteenth century vampire narratives such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) from a historical point of view. At the same time, the new trend produces a host of cyber age vampires in video games, cartoons and toys. Instead of the inducement of horror and sizzling charm mixed with fear and anxiety, the new age American vampires make the American teenagers fall in love with them. They impart a sense of protection and care, of compassionate companionship and of responsible partnership. The new vampire is more suitable as a responsible husband than a seductive and irresistible threat. In its endorsement of heteronormativity, the new vampire narratives present before us the convention in a new form following a careful and crafty makeover. The charm of the new vampire is therefore, familiar, yet irresistible.

