



## **Man is a Wolf to Man: Human and Nonhuman Animality in *Twilight's* Werewolves**

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### **Abstract**

The *Twilight* Saga novels (2005-2010) by Stephenie Meyer have rejuvenated the popularity and interest in the modern day vampire and have also ensured a certain renaissance for his werewolf counterpart. As a result, the werewolf characters of this multi-volume, multi-format vampire story have become as wellknown and as popular as their revenant rivals.

It is for this reason that this paper will concentrate on the dual figure of the werewolf as represented in the *Twilight* series of Young Adult novels using Michael Lundblad's discourse of the jungle from his book *The Birth of a Jungle: Animality in Progressive-Era U.S. Literature and Culture* (2013). Lundblad's theoretical methodology is based in animality studies and uses Freudian-Darwinism from the turn of the century to interpret representations of animals and animality as featured in literary texts. He pays particular attention to the figure of the wolf and his readings of this creature both as a "real" animal and as a metaphor for human masculinity will be used in this paper to shed light upon the pack of werewolves in the *Twilight* Saga. In a discussion of the animalised traits of the wolf-men in human form and the humanity in the wolves in animal form, this paper will seek to question the blurring of the beast/human divide of these post-humans and to investigate Meyerist hyper masculinity in this gendered teen body.

### **Keywords**

masculinity, gender, animality studies, werewolf, duality

The Twilight Saga novels (2005-2011) have rejuvenated the popularity and interest in modern day vampires. They have, arguably, brought the revenant into the contemporary consciousness in a new guise and cemented the concept that for each new era there emerges a vampire uniquely suited to that cultural environment. It could be argued that the lesser featured werewolf has also enjoyed a certain renaissance alongside his vampiric counterpart.

The relationship between the vampire and werewolf goes back to shared roots in folklore. In *The Vampire, his Kith and Kin* originally published in 1928, Montague Summers notes that according to Serbian traditions, a werewolf who died would turn into a vampire (21). The next evolution of the supernatural pairing found popularity in Universal Studio's monster rally movies of the 1940s, which featured a host of movie "monsters" drawn from other films and placed in ensemble productions such as *House of Frankenstein* (1944) and *House of Dracula* (1945). The modern day equivalent of the vampire/werewolf pairing reappeared in films like the *Underworld* series (2003-present), the *Vampire Diaries* books and television series (1991-2017) and the Southern Vampire Mysteries/*True Blood* series (2001-2014). In common with Stephenie Meyer's work which was to follow, each of these recent episodic recreations of the pairing sees the werewolf "play second fiddle to vampires...in terms of pop culture man-monsters" (Radford np). The vampire is not only the superior force on a preternatural level, but also the focus of the narrative from a storytelling point of view. Thus the werewolf is superseded by the vampire as a figure of narrative importance and he is also upstaged by his supernatural counterpart in terms of the abilities as granted to him by the author. For example, the vampires in *Twilight* are immortal, they each have a gift personal to themselves such as mind reading (*Twilight* 153) or mood control (*New Moon* 306) and they can physically repair severe injuries including the loss of limbs (*The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner* 29). On the other hand, the werewolves are strong (*New Moon* 273), have accelerated healing (*Eclipse* 196), improved hearing (*Eclipse* 198), a heightened sense of smell (*Eclipse* 188), can read each other's thoughts (*New Moon* 279), do not age (*Eclipse* 106) and are impervious to the cold (*Eclipse* 434). All of these exemplary bodily traits are fine attributes to exhibit as a species and would mark any individual out as physically superior, however, the vampires within the narrative are granted these traits individually or as a species in addition to their own abilities. The ability to shape-shift is the only characteristic that is uniquely given to the Meyerist wolves. This weighting in favour of the vampire continues with his current, almost universal, popularity outside of the novels.

In a remarkable move, fans of the novels and films began changing this weighting in favour of the werewolf with the creation of two sides of a division, one favouring *Twilight*'s vampires and the other favouring its werewolves. As a result the werewolf characters of this multi-volume, multi-format vampire story became as well-known and popular as their revenant rivals. And with fans of the franchise split as to whether "Team Edward" or "Team Jacob" (Lemire np) and their respective vampire and wolf factions are more popular and deserve more attention, a reading of this werewolf from an academic standpoint is certainly warranted, if not merely because research on the vampire figure within the texts and films has proliferated and the werewolf as featured in *Twilight* has been largely ignored.

For this reason, this paper will concentrate on the dual figure of the werewolf as represented in the *Twilight* series of novels using Michael Lundblad's discourse of the jungle from his book *The Birth of A Jungle: Animality in Progressive-Era U.S. Literature and Culture* (2013). Lundblad's theoretical methodology is based in animality studies and uses Freudian-Darwinism from the turn of the century to interpret representations of animals and animality as featured in literary texts. He pays particular attention to the figure of the wolf and his readings of this creature both as a 'real' animal and as a metaphor for human masculinity, or more particularly, masculinity, will be used in this paper to shed light upon the pack of werewolves in *Twilight* and the Meyerist use of masculinity they represent.

In Lundblad's reading of texts featuring the jungle, such as Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), his overarching analytical concept revolves around the fundamental division between "'real' wolves and 'wolf-like' men" (sic 49). Lundblad envisions a world where theories of animalisation are prominent in depictions of men; in conjunction with this he considers the human-like emotions found in real animals, specifically of the canine and lupine varieties, as allegories of the human condition in animal guise. Therefore, focusing Lundblad's jungle discourse on the *Twilight* Saga produces a fascinating reading of the werewolves featured within the storyverse as both men and as wolves. It further highlights the narrative importance of these part-lupine/part-human characters who exist on the margins of this fictive society both from a physical perspective and from an analytical standpoint.

## Animalised Men

Lundblad utilises his unique theoretical perspective to question and interrogate representations of humans in texts as animalised men; the same theory can be applied to the Meyerist Quileute wolf pack in Forks. The people of Forks are singularly located within the discourse of the jungle because their town is surrounded by the encroaching and somewhat alien forest of the Pacific Northwest, which is creepy and full of life (*New Moon* 25). The Native American Quileute tribe as constructed in the Twilight Saga has even closer physical links to that jungle discourse and its animality due to both the siting of their reservation within the forest and to the tribal myth that they are descended from wolves (*Twilight* 107). The animality present within their heritage, which werewolf Jacob Black describes as “part of who I am, who my family is, who we all are as a tribe” (*Eclipse* 99) is further intensified by the fact that select members of the tribe actually have the ability to turn into werewolves. Thus the discourse of the jungle is fostered within their mythic heritage, it is a constant in the confines of the forest in which they live, and in the confines of their very physicalities.

Lundblad categorises man as a wolf as not just masculine, but as hyper masculine (38). He brings forth turn of the century gay slang where the term “wolf” describes a man who is “the penetrator, rather than the penetrated, in queer anal sex” (38) to add a further dimension to the discussion and to broaden the sense that this masculinity covers the range of possible sexualities. Other adjectives used to describe this definition include “brutal” and “dominant” (38). He combines these notions of the predatory wolf figure with George Chauncey’s idea of the wolf as a man who dominates other males and seduces females (Lundblad 39) and with Freud’s “Homo homini lupus [man is a wolf to man]” (*Civilization and its Discontents* 682) where aggression is key. Freud’s definition of man is of one who would use his aggression towards his neighbour: “to exploit his labour without recompense, to use him sexually without his consent, to take possession of his goods, to humiliate him and cause him pain, to torture and kill him” (*Civilization and its Discontents* 682). This classification links back to Montague Summers’ accounts of folkloric beliefs about the werewolf as being a wicked man (21).

The Meyerist wolf-men can be viewed as a reflection of this hyper masculinity. When pack leader Sam Ulley’s anger at his sweetheart Emily erupts and becomes too much for his human form to cope with during an argument, he turns into a wolf in front of her and the result is that her beautiful face is:

scarred from hairline to chin by three thick, red lines, livid in colour...One line pulled down the corner of her dark, almond-shaped right eye, another twisted her mouth into a permanent grimace. (*New Moon* 291)

Similarly, when wolf-man Paul Lahote is slapped by female protagonist Bella Swan he is unable to control his temper and turns into a wolf right in front of her, even though sharing the secret with outsiders is prohibited. It is significant that firstly, the wolf transformation is brought about by anger and secondly, that both of these outbursts occur as a result of incidents of overblown aggression towards women. It is almost as if the traits of aggression and dominance as personified in Lundblad, Chauncey and Freud's wolf are written into the characters of Meyer's wolf-men and at the moment these characteristics are most overt, the wolf is summoned primarily as a personification of those traits but also as a way of allowing those emotions to be vented.

In a similar act of aggression towards women, this time of a sexual nature, wolf-man Jacob forces Bella to kiss him against her will as:

His lips crushed mine, stopping my protest. He kissed me angrily, roughly, his other hand gripping tight around the back of my neck making escape impossible. I shoved against his chest with all my strength, but he didn't even seem to notice...I grabbed at his face, trying to push him away, failing again. (*Eclipse* 293)

This reveals the negative side of the earlier used term "seduction", one that is a coercion rather than a courtship. It references the notion of the predator in sexual terms and the idea of the Freudian-Darwinist competition for a mate. Critic Heather Schell explains:

Popular proponents of evolutionary psychology insist that, if we accept Darwin's theory of evolution, we must acknowledge today's gender role behaviour as a relic from the days when men were hunters. Trouble arises when these predatory men get confused about the difference between women and prey. (110)

This difference is hinted at in the pages of *Twilight*, as referenced above, within the allowable and acceptable boundaries of the Young Adult novel. Once outside of these bounds, in the realms of fan fiction, the narrative takes a more disturbing turn and correlates more closely with Freud's notion of the wolf-man's humiliation and rape of his fellow

(*Civilization and its Discontents* 682), as man being a wolf to woman. Amongst the reams of fan fiction online dedicated to the Twilight series, there proliferates a body of work which sees the men of the pack rape female characters from the novels, often as a gang. These scenarios depict the women very much as objects of prey<sup>1</sup> and patently reveal and affirm the aforementioned atavistic characteristics as highlighted by Schell:

Every time someone jokes about a man "marking his territory" with urine, or discusses the "pack mentality" of gangs, or refers to a seducer or rapist as a "sexual predator," we see an instance of how our culture has internalized the man-wolf analogy. (114)

The wolf-men in the novels appear as the epitome of hyper masculinity, they posture amongst themselves and metaphorically "mark their territory" (Schell 114) by offering up evidence of their fearlessness, from volunteering to kill vampires to jumping from dangerously high cliffs as a show of competitiveness (*New Moon* 150). They also walk around in states of undress to reveal their muscular torsos. What this actually equates to is a Darwinian display of sexual selection, "a struggle between the males for possession of the females" (Darwin 73), a symbol to other lesser males and sexual rivals of their physical supremacy and an attractant to females. In one such display, Bella notes of Jacob's revealed physique: "I wondered if he was so proud of his new muscles that he couldn't stand to cover them up" (*Eclipse* 162). Lundblad describes this kind of Freudian-Darwinist animality as the assumption "that animals must be driven essentially, if not exclusively, by heterosexual and violent instincts" (47).

Such heterosexual instincts can plainly be seen in Jacob's aforementioned seduction of Bella. This manipulation of her is displayed when he attempts to play on her guilt to avoid going into battle in his insistence that "There's a pretty serious fight brewing down there. I don't think it will be that difficult to take myself out of the picture" (*Eclipse* 464), unless she admits that she wants him to kiss her. This act of forcing her to ask for his kiss mirrors the earlier incident where he forces his kisses upon her. In both scenarios she is controlled by him, firstly by his vast physical strength and secondly by his emotional blackmail. This in

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<sup>1</sup> Fan fiction websites like <[www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)>, <[www.wattpad.com](http://www.wattpad.com)> and the dedicated <[www.twilightarchives.com](http://www.twilightarchives.com)> all feature stories about the Quileute wolf-men raping young women, particularly protagonist Bella, and stories number in their thousands.

turn reflects Darwinian sexual survival of the male vying for the possession of the female where the “victor” (Darwin 73) will breed. Without this “victory” Jacob’s genes will not be passed on and his genetic legacy will come to an end, thus equating to the death of his line.

The wolf-man is, through its association with Lundblad and Freud’s articulation of it, gendered as male. As the only female wolf-woman in the pack and in the history of the Quileute tribal legends in the story, Leah Clearwater cannot bear children whereas the males can still father them. They are left with their fertility as a badge of their masculinity but in creating a creature gendered as male in the feminine form, something is taken from the female and she forfeits her ability to give birth as “a genetic dead end” (*Breaking Dawn* 291). However, this can be seen as negating the werewolf’s links with the feminine in the form of its relationship to the lunar cycle. Traditionally, the werewolf is said to turn into his wolf form at the full moon. This trope has been abandoned in *Twilight* as the men turn into wolves at will after a given point during puberty, or according to some of the beliefs in the novels, when there are vampires in the vicinity. With the abandonment of the “curse” of the full moon turning, which according to Schell is associated with the monthly “curse” of menstruation (112), comes the abandonment of the feminine and the association of the werewolf with women and more specifically with female sexuality. This abandonment brings further separation between Leah and her fecundity as she is denied the ability to turn at the full moon and as such loses her ability to menstruate. Consequently she is unable to become pregnant. Her infertility tallies with Chantal Bourgault Du Coudray’s assessment of the female werewolf in nineteenth century literature as “unnatural mothers” and the “devourers of children” as described in her article “Upright Citizens on All Fours: Nineteenth-Century Identity and the Image of the Werewolf” (6). Once Leah becomes werewolf, her condition devours her feracity and therefore also devours any future offspring. As such, hyper masculinity is at the forefront of the werewolf condition, even if the subject of that condition is female.

### **Humanised Wolves**

As actual wolves, the werewolves also fit the model critics have attributed to Jack London’s animal companions as representations of man in disguise. Lundblad visualises Jack London’s Buck and White Fang characters in this way and it offers a fascinating insight into the Forks’ wolf to view him in the same manner. One of the key traits or abilities the



Meyerist wolf displays in the Twilight Saga, which is typically associated with humans, is the killing of vampires. Traditionally in folklore and popular culture people (or more accurately, men) kill vampires, however in the Twilight universe werewolves are the only natural predators of vampires. They kill vampires in their wolf form as a display of their natural predatory wolf nature. However, this act is not the savage, violent act of a beast revelling in the torture of its foe. The kills are military in fashion and demonstrate Lundblad's discussion on the insistence of the humane as a marker of man's ability to restrain his animal instincts in situations where violence is called for, but is meted out as a punishment rather as an act of violence *per se*. It is interesting to note that the wolves do admit to killing any vampires that cross their territory, however, the only kills which take place within the bounds of the narrative are ones which are justified as issues of prevention or protection and are a reaction against a tangible and imminent vampire threat. In *New Moon*, the wolf pack kills vampire Laurent just as he is about to kill Bella and they attempt to kill vampire Victoria for the same reason. Similarly in the later novels, the pack joins the fight against the newborn vampire army and again against the Volturi ostensibly as a matter of protecting their town and the humans within it from vampires. The fact that the wolves perform their brand of humane violence in the service and protection of humans imbues a greater feeling of the human to their nonhuman selves.

Another telling angle on the reading of the "real" wolves as men comes in the form of their ability to hear each other's thoughts once they are in wolf form. As animalised humans, the wolf-men are macho, "showing off how tough they are" (*New Moon* 151), yet conversely once their pack mind is engaged they automatically and unconsciously share the deepest, most personal and most anguished desires, fears and regrets of each member. This flipping of an invisible emotional switch means that the wolves each understand and innately feel Sam's sorrow for disfiguring his fiancée and for abandoning his previous girlfriend and current pack member Leah, they share Jacob's torturous vacillations over his love for Bella and recognise Leah's pain and anger at being supplanted in Sam's affection. With this device of the pack mind, Meyer allows the wolves to have something in their animal form not present in their human lives; they have the ability to show and share emotions at a highly personal and totally transparent level. Whilst they experience these feelings as humans, the novels do not allow them to fully demonstrate, comprehend or realise them until they leave that hyper masculine personality behind and enter the realm of the humanised wolf.



It is perhaps not surprising in view of this that Bella finds it easier to yield to and bond with Jacob in his wolf form as opposed to his animalised and potentially threatening human form. In this guise he does not pose a threat to her in a direct sexual sense or to her relationship with her vampire boyfriend. Thus she can stroke and pet him in what Lundblad describes as a “folding” (71), which is the mixing of bodies of two different animal types resulting in a “conceptualization of pleasure experienced by nonhuman animals” (70). In general terms, and more specifically for this scenario, this means “the possibility of interspecies pleasure or eroticism” (71) between a human and a wolf who are in love with each other. Lundblad cites several categories of mutual foldings (71), including the point of two entities folding together in a passionate fashion and interestingly the notion of one party giving in or surrendering to the other in terms of “folding” in a card game, which would link back to the idea of Bella’s enforced loss of control to the Jacob wolf-man, now viewed in her voluntary loss of control to the Jacob wolf.

## Conclusion

Freud had previously made the connection between the wolf as a transposition of man in the case of his patient the “Wolf Man” in the early 1900s. Here Freud deciphers his patient’s fear of wolves and its manifestations in dreams about them as representations of the patient’s parents. Thus the wolf became a man (and woman) through representation. Significantly, Freud says: “The wolf that he was afraid of was undoubtedly his father; but his fear of the wolf was conditional upon the creature being in an upright posture” (272). Hence this particular patient, Sergei Pankejeff, feared the wolf, but only as represented in a wolf-man-like state.

Whether the denizens of *Twilight* are seen as being in wolf-man-like or man-wolf-like states, both readings of the werewolf are ultimately redundant because he is by very definition, to use Lundblad’s terms, both a human animal and a nonhuman animal. This fusion figure carries both readings as an animalised man and a humanised animal because he is, by virtue of his nature, both man and animal. These natures can be read as separate entities but are two inseparable halves of the same whole. As such, it is fully expected that the human half of the werewolf would exhibit and offer readings of animality. It is however surprising, that the nonhuman aspect of the creature would carry such human characteristics if the history of the human-turned-wolf as “so intensely Other that it no longer even resembled a

human being, embodying instead the slavery to instinctive drives” and “the contrast between the sculpted, civilised human form and the hairy, slaving beast” (Du Coudray 7) is taken into consideration. It can be seen then, that this overt humanisation of the wolf side of the werewolf is a particular trait of the Meyerist imagining of “creatures who are never much in control of themselves” (*Breaking Dawn* 691) and offers balance to the hyper masculinity of her wolf-men. At the end of the series it is revealed that the werewolves are not actually “true Children of the Moon” at all, “The more accurate name for them would be shape-shifters. The choice of wolf form was purely chance” (*Breaking Dawn* 654). Whatever the origins of Meyer’s wolves, it appears that the traditional human and wolf characteristics have been transmuted to add a new dimension to the werewolf legend in terms of (non)human animality. To quote film *Blood and Chocolate* (2007), which also features wolves as the wolf-man’s alter-ego rather than the contorted humanoid wolf creatures of popular horror films, these werewolves of legend weren’t monsters but “were the best of man, the best of beast”. Reading man as animalised results in a creature which is far from the best of men, however, the Meyerist wolf could well be described as the best of beasts.

The werewolf, rather than the vampire, becomes the central figure in the Twilight universe in terms of the discourse of the jungle as both doubly representative of animal and man. With this reading comes the question of the position of the vampire in terms of the werewolf/vampire binary. If the werewolf is both man and animal personified, then the position open to the vampire is unclear. Looking at the matter from its folkloric origins brings a different end result. If the folklore as advocated by Summers is to be believed, then any werewolf will turn into a vampire on its death (21) so the werewolf always has the vampire buried deep inside waiting to rise. Therefore all vampires stem from werewolf stock. So the vampire’s status as the primary supernatural figure within the text is forfeit to the werewolf’s; hence Twilight becomes a franchise about the duality of the masculine werewolf nature as opposed to a vehicle for the reprisal of the vampire myth.

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