

Why TWILIGHT?

by Karen Kim and Emily Carlson

Do you know anyone in love with *Twilight*? Stephenie Meyer's series, now being made into films, has been a huge hit. *Twilight* is the story of Edward Cullen, a vampire, in love with Bella, a human. *Twilight* is a love story between a vampire and a human. Why is this subject considered to be interesting?



Twilight, the movie and novels, is a sensation. The book is translated into 20 languages, and was on the *New York Times* Best Seller list. The movie was released on November 21st, 2008 in the United States, and just three days later, November 24th, *Twilight* broke a box office record for a female director, Melissa Rosenberg, bringing in \$70.6 million in its first weekend. Despite the great success, according to Yahoo!Movies (movies.yahoo.com), *Twilight* the movie has earned B+ average grade from Yahoo! users, and a C from the critics (data collected Dec. 9). In spite of the great success, then, the film and books do not receive great reviews. Even some of those who answered on the survey that they DO like *Twilight*, said the story is interesting, but it is NOT particularly well-written.

On November 25th, 2008, *Nichols News* ran a *Twilight* survey. The one of the questions on the survey was “do you like *Twilight*?” and the results, neglecting undecided votes, are as followed:

	Female	Male
Yes	79	14
No	42	90

There were about 5 times more women than men who said that they like *Twilight*, indicating that *Twilight* is more appealing to women than to men. In fact, many people said they like *Twilight* because of Edward Cullen, the main vampire character and love interest. Robert Pattison, a handsome young actor, plays Edward in the movie. An earlier vampire movie, *Interview with the*

Vampire starred Tom Cruise, a role was originally offered to Johnny Depp,) and Brad Pitt. Vampire roles tend to go to attractive actors or actresses because vampires have been considered sexually attractive characters for a long time. Vampires are depicted as flawless so they can seduce others. Edward Cullen is not an exception. Many girls are not in love with Robert Pattison, but Edward Cullen the character itself. There is a thing that makes Edward Cullen distinctive: he actually loves like humans. He tries to protect his love Bella from getting hurt by other vampires. *Twilight*, with Edward Cullen's sensitivity and seductiveness, can appeal more to women than to men.

Men do not seem to be fond of *Twilight*, and there are few reasons. One of the reasons is that it is focused more on love than supernatural behavior unlike other fantasy works. A freshmen male student wrote on the survey that "it is a little to [sic] romantic for a guy." Its genre is somewhat ambiguous. Two students, one male and one female, expressed their opinions on the genre of *Twilight*. One student said they do not like *Twilight* because "it's not romance, sci-fi, horror... What is it?" and another student said she likes it because "it is a cool sci-fi / romantic book." Many males did not like *Twilight's* romantic contents, but females are satisfied to read something that combines science fiction and romance.

Harry Potter was postponed by *Twilight*; *Harry Potter* was supposed to come out on November 21st, instead of *Twilight*. *Harry Potter* is going to be released in July 2009 as a summer blockbuster. Duration of *Harry Potter* angered *Harry Potter* fans. *Harry Potter*, written by J.K. Rowling, is fictional just as *Twilight* is; it is a story about adventures that Harry experiences while he lives in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. But *Harry Potter* attracted both male and female. *Harry Potter* does not focus on romance as much as *Twilight* does.

A member of Nichols faculty said *Twilight* "is most obviously a 'chick book' from the general reaction. Vampires as sex objects is necrophilia." This teacher, especially angered by one of his female students not reading her assignments because she was reading *Twilight* instead, expresses an opinion representative of the men who responded to the survey, but surprisingly, he has not read or seen *Twilight*. In fact, most of the 'anti-*Twilight*' people have not read the books or seen the movie. Thus, it seems we can conclude that the main cause of anti-*Twilight* feelings is not the work itself, but rather an anti-female—even a misogynist sentiment. The general female readers' reaction

toward *Twilight*, expressing endless attraction for Edward Cullen and treating him as a real person, seems to have convinced others not to take the movie and books seriously.

Twilight will continue being successful as both a movie and a book. To gain support from both male and female, however, *Twilight* should be understood as a combination of romance and horror, and talked about critically at the point of value of work as a literature.