ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR

An analysis of Edward Cullen in Stephenie Meyer's Twilight

Våldamt beteende: En analys av Edward Cullen i Stephenie Meyer's Twilight

Anne Salmi
Abstract

Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series has reached huge popularity among young adults and as a future teacher I am concerned about what kind of a message these books send to teenagers. In this essay I argue that the main character of the book, Edward Cullen, shows signs of an abusive personality and that these signs have been romanticized and idealized by the author. I also argue that the fans of *Twilight* have romanticized Edward's behavior. I accomplish this by a close reading of the series and other relevant literature. Edward has the following signs that an abusive person has: jealousy, controlling behavior, quick involvement, isolation, sudden mood changes, threats of violence and force during an argument. These signs the author has romanticized with the imagery that can be found in the books. Also, Meyer portrays Edward as better than everyone else and by doing so she idealizes his character. Edward's abusive behavior has been interpreted as actions of true love by fans making these patterns of abusive behavior seem romantic.
Introduction

Long gone are the days when the word twilight made you think of the light coming from the sky when the sun is below the horizon. Since its release back in 2005, the *Twilight* series has become a concept of its own. The *Twilight* series, written by Stephanie Meyer, consists of four books that tell the story of Bella Swan, a seventeen-year-old girl who moves from California to the small, rainy city of Forks and falls madly in love with a vampire, Edward Cullen. The passionate love story between these two has taken the world by storm and made millions of female readers around the globe dream of their very own over-protective vampire-boyfriend.

The public reaction to *Twilight* has been remarkable and the different male characters have inspired millions of *Twilight* fans to choose their favorite characters. Though all of the characters have a strong fan base, undeniably the most popular character is the book's main male character, Edward. The character of Edward has caused a worldwide hysteria among its fans: a quick search shows that Edward has over eleven million fans only on Facebook and gets almost nine million hits on Google (3rd of January 2014). Given the popularity of the character, Meyer has without a doubt succeeded in describing Edward in ways that women find exciting. However, Edward's behavior shows signs of an abusive personality.

In this essay I will argue that Edward shows a pattern of abusive behavior and that these actions and the character of Edward Cullen have been idealized and romanticized by the author and the fans of Twilight. This I will accomplish by a closer study of the first book of the series, *Twilight*, and a description of the most severe signs that indicate that Edward's behavior has similarities to an abuser's behavior. Also, I will support my argument by taking examples from the other three books of the series, *New Moon, Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn* and by using other relevant literature that support my thesis. I am hoping that this essay will raise awareness of abusive behavior and provoke a discussion of what the consequences of the popularity of these books might be.
The character of Edward Cullen has caused a worldwide hysteria among young girls that can be hard to understand if one is not a fan of *Twilight*. There is a lot that indicates that the fans seem to find him perfect. Click, Behm-Morawitz and Aubrey write in their article that one of the most popular *Twilight* colloquialisms is that "Edward ruined it for mortal man", which suggest that that Edward is so perfect, that no human could ever live up to him and the standard he sets (138). According to Longman Dictionary "idealizing" means to imagine or represent something or someone as being perfect or better than they really are, and that is exactly what the fans have done to the character of Edward. Edward seems to be considered as the perfect boyfriend and this is something Carley Holton, an English teacher who together with her students analyzed *Twilight*, points out in her article "Dangerous Relationship Advice in the Twilight books". To Holton's surprise, she discovered that her students found Edward's character irresistible: "My students soon showed me [Holton] another side of Twilight. They considered Edward Cullen to be the perfect man." (n.pag). Also, Holton states in her article that the fans most likely feel more attracted to Edward, because of the fact that he is forbidden fruit. Edward is portrayed as the perfect man just waiting for the perfect girl to match his league: "To them [the students who read *Twilight*], Edward represents the troubled soul who is waiting to be tamed by just the right woman; it's the modern *Beauty and the Beast* (n.pag).

As seen in the examples above, Edward is considered as the perfect boyfriend. In a study made in 2009, where thirty-three women and twenty-four teen girls participated in a total of fourteen groups in different states around the USA, it was shown that the participants favored Edward's and Bella's relationship above all the other relationships presented in the book series. The participants were asked which one of the seven different romantic relationship that are presented in *Twilight* they would like to have and approximately 55 % of the adults and 49% of the teens answered Edward and Bella's relationship (Click et al. 143-144). The popularity of this relationship was explained with fans finding Edward the perfect partner:

> Focus group participants also expressed preferences for this romantic model and particularly with the idea of Edward as the ideal mate. Felicia, an adult fan, explained *Twilight*'s popularity as being tied to fans' romantic feelings for Edward: 'It's the idea of Edward... That's what it is.. We want that'. " (Click et al. 144)

A closer look at Edward's over protectiveness and other characteristics that the female readers seem to find charming and even heroic, exposes many qualities that one can find in a battering personality. According to Dutton, the term “battering” is "frequently used to describe the actions of anyone charged with assault, even if they never 'battered' anyone" (16). The term "domestic violence", often referred to as "abuse" in this essay, according to Dutton refers to any violence that occurs between intimate
partners. Though this essay focuses on abuse that is happening between a male and a female, domestic violence is not gender related and can happen between same sex and opposite sex. This kind of abuse can occur in physical, sexual or emotional form. (Rethinking Domestic Violence 16). "Abuser" is a term used about the person committing the crime.

Lydia D. Walker, a psychologist who has been working with victims of domestic violence for several years, has gathered a list of qualities and behaviors that are commonly seen in an abuser. I compared behaviors and qualities listed on this list to Edward's behavior to see how many of those qualities Edward has. I have excluded qualities that exist in Edward only because he is a vampire. On Walker's list is mentioned "violence against animals" and Edward is considered as a vegetarian vampire, meaning that animals instead of human beings, are food for Edward. This is a quality that I have not taken into account. Other qualities that I have not taken into account are "threats of violence", because this quality also exists because he is a vampire and constantly fighting his genetic urge to kill human beings. Also, "force during sex" is a pattern of behavior that can be found in Edward against his own will. Edward cannot control his vampire-powers during sex no matter how he tries. Also, "battering past" is excluded since this quality exists only because of Edward's vampire-powers. In the past Edward killed human beings as he was not able to control his vampire-desires back then. Excluding all these behaviors, there are thirteen behaviors and qualities listed on Walker's list. Walker explains that if one finds more than three of these qualities in a partner, there is a reason to get concerned. Edwards has six behaviors listed on Linda Walker's list: jealousy, isolation, controlling behavior, push for quick involvement, sudden mood changes and force during an argument. Walker clarifies in her article that sometimes one or two of the qualities from her list may be quite strong and that these qualities have the tendency to escalate and become more extreme as time goes by (Walker n.pag).

First, jealousy and isolation are mentioned as typical behavior patterns for an abuser (Walker n.pag). Also Donald G. Dutton, a psychologist, researcher and a well-known expert of domestic violence, states in his book The Abusive Personality, Second Edition: Violence and Control in Intimate Relationships that jealousy is one of the most important precursors to intimate violence (30). Edward is definitely jealous, in fact, he is so jealous that one might say that this is one of the characteristics that dominate his personality. Edward's jealousy is so extreme that even the people around Bella cannot help but notice it. On one occasion Jacob, Bella's friend whom Edward is jealous of, confronts Edward and states that Edward is so jealous that his jealousy must be eating him. Edward admits that he is very jealous and agrees with Jacob. Edward explains that his jealousy gets worse when Bella is away from her and he can't see her (Eclipse 496).

Edward's jealousy quickly becomes extreme and escalates from being expressed in words to desperate attempts to control who Bella sees when they are apart. In the third book of the series,
Eclipse, Edward's growing jealousy pushes him to remove the engine from Bella's car. This is an attempt to make sure that she stays home and cannot meet Jacob. It does not take long for Bella to realize that it was Edward who had removed the engine from her car to stop her from seeing Jacob. Bella confronts Edward, but he does not really offer an explanation, only defends his action by explaining to Bella that he would have "put the car back together in time for school" (Eclipse 63), suggesting that his actions would not have stopped Bella from going to school in the morning.

Valerie N. Chang, the author of *I Just Lost Myself - Psychological Abuse of Women in Marriage*, says in her book that in abusive relationships social isolation gradually grows and turns in to a pattern and explains that the abuser often isolates the partner due to jealousy (68). Jealousy seems also to be the reason why also Edward isolates Bella, who becomes so isolated from her peers, that it worries not only her friends but also her father. In the second book of the series, *New Moon*, Edward leaves Bella and she becomes depressed and lonely. Bella's destructive behavior during this time makes her father very concerned. Afterwards in *Eclipse* Bella's father mentions this difficult time when he expresses his concern on how Bella's life has only been revolving around Edward:

'I don't think you should dump all your friends for your boyfriend Bella,' he said in a stern voice. 'It's not nice and I think your life would have been better balanced if you kept some other people in it. What happened last September..' I flinched. 'Well,' he said defensively. 'If you'd had more of a life outside of Edward Cullen, it might not have been like that.' (*Eclipse* 12)

As the book series continues, Bella loses contact almost completely also with her father (*Breaking Dawn*).

Moreover, according to Chang, it is common that the abuser is monitoring the partner's social contacts (86). Edward's jealousy drives him to read the minds of Bella's male friends whenever given the opportunity. In *Twilight*, Edward admits that he read the mind of every single male in the school when it was Bella's first day at Forks High School (*Twilight* 210). It is obvious that Edward pays special attention to those he sees as a threat. Edward reads Jacob's and Mike's thoughts on a regular basis, because he knows that these two find Bella attractive. On one occasion after reading Mike's thoughts, Edward snaps at Bella and says to her that "your boyfriend [Mike] seems to think I'm being unpleasant to you" (*Twilight* 90), being clearly upset and jealous of Mike as he refers to him as Bella's boyfriend though they are only friends.

Secondly, according to Walker, to push for quick involvement is typical for an abuser. Edward might not be the only one pushing for quick involvement in this book series, but he definitely does his share of pushing the relationship forward as fast as possible. From very early on, Edward
expresses his deep devotion and strong feeling towards Bella. Edward expresses emotion so strong that life without Bella would not be worth living. Tricia Clasen writes in her essay "Taking a Bite Out of Love: The myth of Romantic Love in the Twilight Series", that very early in their relationship "Edward states that he has no desire to live if Bella died" (126). Bella quickly responds to his feelings and falls in love with him so deeply that she wants to become a vampire herself. At first, Edward refuses to turn her into a vampire but in New Moon he finally agrees to turn Bella into a vampire, on one condition. The condition is that Bella marries him (Twilight), but Bella is very much against marriage at such a young age. Anna Silver points out in her article that it is Bella, not Edward, who is shy of marriage (131). Even though Bella is making very clear to Edward that it would be too soon for the two of them to get married, he keeps on insisting Bella marries him and in Eclipse, Edward uses Bella's awakening sexuality as a way to push her into marriage. Bella wants to make love to Edward and he makes sure to get Bella aroused before drawing back and explaining to her that he will only make love to her if they get married. In this scene, Edward admits himself to Bella that "your impatient human hormones are my most powerful ally at this point" and the same night he proposes to her officially and she says yes (Eclipse 455).

Walker explains in her article that "the abuser will often pressure the woman to commit to the relationship in such a way that she may later feel very guilty or feel she is letting him down" (Walker n.pag.) and it is obvious that Edward is pushing Bella into marrying him. Wind Goodfriend, a psychologist who has specialized in social psychology and has research expertise on romantic relationships, states in her article that this push for marriage is undeniable: "He [Edward] proposes to her [Bella] when he knows she is not ready and refuses to listen to her reasons for delaying the marriage" (n.pag.). Their relationship moves very fast considering Bella's young age: when Bella and Edward meet in the first book Twilight, she is only seventeen and by the end of the fourth and final book, Breaking Dawn, Bella turns nineteen and has by that time married him and given birth to their first child. However, the book series ends very shortly after Bella and Edward get married, so it is only possible to speculate on whether Bella will later feel regret for their quick involvement.

An equally significant sign on Walker's list of the signs to look for in a battering personality are strong mood changes. Mood changes are something that also Dutton describes as typical features to find in an abuser in his book Rethinking Domestic Violence (224). Explosiveness and mood changes are described as typical signs for an abuser and these mood changes may leave the other partner in the relationship feeling confused. Walker refers to this kind of behavior as "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (Walker n.pag.). The motive for this kind of behavior is often to scare and manipulate, to establish and maintain power and control and the mood changes can be so extreme that they may leave the partner wondering if the abuser suffers from a mental illness (Walker n.pag). Just like Walker, Dutton claims that an abuser has qualities in him or her that are alike the qualities in those who suffer from mental
illness. Dutton explains further that "a variety of researchers have found an extremely high incidence of personality disorders in assaultive populations. Studies have found incidence rates of personality disorders to be 80–90 percent in both court-referred and self-referred wife assaulters" (198). Edward's mood changes in the book series leave Bella often feeling confused and already during the very first book of the series, Twilight, she questions whether Edward suffers from "a multiple personality disorder" (New Moon 82) and refers to Edward's mood as "unpredictable" (Twilight 211). Bella often struggles to understand what Edward wants, but seems to realize that Edward is trying to maintain power over her as she says to him: "I can't imagine why that would be frustrating at all- just because someone refuses to tell you what they're thinking, even if all the while they're making cryptic little remarks specifically designed to keep you up at night wondering what they could possibly mean" (New Moon 90).

Walker writes in her article that mood swings may be so intense that they scare the partner involved. Also Radford and Lynne, the authors of Tackling Domestic Violence-Theories Policies and Practice, state that the partner involved may often feel intimidated by the abuser. According to them, intimidation can be achieved for example by frightening the partner with looks or gestures (8). Bella often feels intimidated and scared by Edward's behavior as his mood swings escalate as the book series goes on and their relationship grows. In New Moon Edward all of a sudden decides to leave her, only a month after he had sworn to never leave her. Just minutes before Edward leaves Bella, she describes her fear when she yet again cannot understand his mood change: "There was something buried in his eyes that I couldn't be sure of- and it scared me" (New Moon 53). Another time Bella feels "impatient and frightened" as she goes to school, because she desperately wants to meet Edward to see how his mood would be. Bella wants to know whether Edward is in a good mood or "if he'd gone back to the cold, indifferent person" (Twilight 86).

Another significant factor on Walker's list, that matches Edward's behavior, is controlling behavior. Also Chang, among other psychologists, agree that controlling and dominating behavior by the abuser plays an important part in abusive relationships. Chang also explains that his domination is maintained in many different ways (49-50). Edward's controlling behavior can be seen throughout all of the books in this series and is one of the central themes in the books. Edward deliberately takes Bella's free will away from her. Already during the very beginning of their relationship Edward is starting to control Bella by demanding her to eat whenever he feels she should:

Edward's voice was low, but full of authority. He looked up at Jessica and spoke louder. 'Do you mind if I drive Bella home tonight? That way you won't have to wait while she eats'. 'Honestly I'm not hungry'. I insisted looking up to scrutinize his face. His expression was unreadable. 'Humor me.' He walked on to the door of the restaurant and held it open with a
obstinate expression. Obviously, there would be no further discussion. I walked past him into the restaurant with a resigned sigh (Twilight 166).

On several occasions throughout all of the four books of the series, Edward is controlling Bella by making decisions on her behalf. In the first book of the series, Twilight, Edward decides that he is the one taking Bella to the prom even though she has already agreed to be someone else's date. Edward takes action into his own hands and calls Bella's date to let him know that Bella will not be available that night: "Edward's tone changed, and the threat in his voice was suddenly much more evident as he continued. 'To be perfectly honest, she'll be unavailable every night, as far as anyone besides myself is concerned" (Twilight 483).

Also, Edward tries to make bigger, life changing decisions for her. In the fourth and last book of the series, Breaking Dawn, Bella finds out on their honeymoon that she is pregnant and tells Edward what has happened. Without even consulting with Bella about whether she wants to keep the baby or not, he starts preparing an abortion for her. At first, Bella does not even understand what is going on and why they have to leave for home in a hurry:

'Don't be afraid. We'll be home in sixteen hours. Carlisle will be ready when we get there. We'll take care of this, and you'll be fine.'
'Take care of this? What do you mean?'
He leaned away and looked me in the eye. 'We are going to get that thing out before it can hurt any part of you. Don't be scared. I won't let it hurt you.
'That thing?' I gasped. He looked sharply away from me, toward the front door. I clutched the counter for support. My knees were wobbly, Edward had just called my little nudger a thing. He said Carlisle would get it out. (Breaking Dawn 120-121)

As can be seen from the examples above, Edward's behavior is not occasional. Controlling behavior and making decisions on Bella's behalf are central to his characteristics. Carrie Anne Platt writes in her article that Elisabeth Hand wrote in a book review for The Washington Times that Edward "talks and acts like an obsessively controlling adult male" (Hand qtd. in Platt 71).

Furthermore, in the books Edward has the tendency to spy on Bella. Edward follows her when she travels from Forks to Port Angeles and makes a practice of dropping by unexpectedly and sneaking in to Bella's room while she is asleep. It is by coincidence that Bella finds out that Edward has been spying on her. Edward cannot offer an explanation as to why he has been doing this and is clearly "unrepentant" (Twilight 293) about his behavior but admits to Bella that he has been spying on her "almost every night" (Twilight 293). Edward's spying is yet another clear sign of controlling behavior that has gone too far. He obviously has a compulsive need to watch and control Bella's moves. Given the fact that Edward admitted that his jealousy grows when he and Bella are not with each other and he
cannot see her, it may be assumed that this is the reason why he has the urge to spy and control her when they are apart. (Twilight 496). In a study made in 2005 Shackelford and Goetz showed that men who drop by unexpectedly to see what their partner is doing, are most likely to use serious violence against their partners (66).

Finally, on Walker's list is mentioned "any force during an argument". Though most of the abuse that is directed towards Bella is mental, also physical contact is being used. Already in the first book, shortly after Bella and Edward have met, he insists on driving Bella home against her own will. Bella wants to be alone and drive home herself, so Edward physically grabs her and forces her in to his car leaving her no other choice but letting him drive her home:

He was towing me toward his car now, pulling me by my jacket. It was all I could do to keep from falling backward. He'd probably just drag me along anyway if I did. 'Let go!' I insisted. He ignored me. I staggered along sideways across the wet sidewalk until we reached the Volvo. Then he finally freed me - I stumbled against the passenger door. 'You are so pushy!' I grumbled. 'It's open,' was all he responded (Twilight 103-104).

There are many signs that indicate that Edward is abusive and that he is the main reason why the power relations in Bella's and Edward's relationship are unbalanced. Click et al. write in their article "Relating to Twilight" that Holton has pointed out that "Edward and Bella actually show many signs of being in an abusive relationship. Some of these signs include: acting jealous or possessive, encouraging isolation and the dissolution of friendships" (Holton qtd in Click et al. 139).

These patterns of abusive behavior are so obvious that they are impossible not to notice - even by the fans. However, these patterns of abusive behavior are not interpreted as signs of a battering personality but as acts of love. Edward’s controlling behavior is not only seen as acceptable by the fans, but even heroic, as the fans seem to interpret this behavior as a need to keep Bella safe. Bore and Williams, who studied the Norwegian Twilight fan sites in a study made in 2010, noticed that many of the Twilight fans were defending Edwards controlling behavior by pointing out that it is "cute that he looks after her so well" (199). Bore and Williams claim that often the fan posts that were justifying Edward's behavior, were pointing out that Edward is a powerful vampire and it is only natural for him to feel like he has to protect the helpless woman (199). On fanpop.com fans are discussing whether Edward is "a little overprotective" and pseudonym Teamedward4evr supports Bore's and William's claim by saying that "I do think he is overprotective with good reason, she is human fragile"("Who Thinks Edward Can Be a Little bit too Overprotective?").

As mentioned earlier, in New Moon, Edward ends the relationship with Bella. This scene takes place in a forest, where Edward brutally leaves Bella wandering after dumping her. Holton struggled to understand
how Edward could leave Bella in the woods, but Edward's behavior was justified by the students: "They[the students] thought that the fact that Edward left Bella in the woods to die was selfless and romantic" (Holton, n.pag.). Also, the students were quick to justify the fact that Bella is isolated from her family and her friends when Holton felt that it was not a sign of a healthy relationship:

Desperate to understand, I asked if no one thought it strange that Bella was willing to give up her friends and entire family to join Edward's vampire life. She admits that she will miss her father but is willing to give up her mother entirely, and she admits that she is "thankful for the gradual distancing of their relationship" (Breaking Dawn). I was assured that this was acceptable because the two main characters were in love. (Holton, n.pag.)

The most common strategy to defend Edward's abusive behavior seems to be to justify his actions with love. On fanpop.com pseudonym Mommy2Kalila writes that Edward "just loves her and knows how fragile life can be. I would love to have a guy do anything to protect me like that". On the same page, pseudonym Edward4evr also points out that Edward's controlling is only a sign of true love. Also Edward himself uses love and concern for Bella's safety as a motive for his actions. However, Walker points out in her article that it is common for the abuser to excuse their controlling behavior as acts of love and concern. She explains further that "as time goes on, these behaviors become more extreme and serve to establish, keep, and strengthen power and control over the victim"(Walker n.pag.). Edward admits already very shortly after Bella and Edward has met, that his need to keep her safe "is beginning to feel like a fulltime occupation that requires my constant presence" (Twilight 211).

Platt writes in her article that according to Seifert et al. many critics have accused Stephenie Meyer of idealizing a relationship that is controlling and borderline abusive (Seifert & Seltzer gtd in Platt 71). Given how Twilight fans seem to find Edward perfect, it is undeniable that Meyer has succeeded in idealizing the character of Edward Cullen. This Meyer has accomplished by repeatedly placing Edward on a pedestal, portraying him as surrealistically handsome and in so many ways better than the rest of the characters in the books, especially Bella. Click et al. suggest that "fans would likely agree that Edward and Bella are not on equal footing, in part due to the fact that Bella is human and Edward is a vampire. The series repeatedly positions Edward as good at everything he does. He is older than Bella, richer than Bella" (139).

Throughout the series Edward is portrayed as better than Bella, especially appearance wise. In the books Bella is described as average looking where as Edward is described as "beautiful" (Twilight 20), "breathtaking" (Twilight 88) and, "a Greek god" (Twilight 206) "absolutely surreal" (Twilight 482). It is obvious that out of these two characters, Edward is the more attractive one. "The contrast between the two of us was painful. He looked like a god. I looked very average, even for a human, almost shamefully plain (New Moon 65). This contrast that Bella is talking about, has even been
noticed by her fellow students, who seem to have a hard time believing that Edward has chosen Bella out of all the women in Forks. This can be clearly seen a scene in Twilight where Edward wants Bella to join his company, and her fellow-student Jessica asks "with insulting astonishment in her voice" if it is really Bella that Edward wants to talk to (Twilight 87).

It is obvious, that Edward is not only considered gorgeous by Bella, but also the rest of the school. Edward's looks is a common topic among the female students of Fork's High School and on one occasion Jessica praises his looks to Bella: "He's [Edward] gorgeous, of course, but don't waste your time. He doesn't date. Apparently none of the girls here are good looking enough for him" (Twilight 22). One can sense a certain bitterness in what Jessica is saying, and this makes Bella wonder if Edward "had turned her down" (Twilight 22), but nonetheless, by saying this Jessica suggests that perhaps Edward is too good for the girls of Forks.

Aubrey, Walus and Click point out that Edward is not set apart from everyone else only though his looks, but also by his various talents such as superior intellect, physical strength and speed and musicality (227). All of the talents mentioned allow him to be "good at everything" as is stated in Twilight (301). Aubrey et al. also state that Meyer does not only present Edward as superior to Bella but even to all the other characters in the books, both human and vampire characters (227).

Meyer has definitely succeeded in idealizing the character of Edward Cullen but she also uses imagery that romanticizes Edward's abusive behavior. According to Longman dictionary romanticize means to "talk or think about things in a way that makes them seem more romantic or attractive than they really are". As I have stated before, Edward shows a pattern of behavior that is commonly seen in an abuser. However, these signs that are commonly seen in an abuser, are romanticized by Meyer through a careful choice of imagery that gives a positive image of the situations where Edward behaves in a way that is common for an abuser.

From the very moment that Edward and Bella meet, there is a special tension between the two of them: "He[Edward] stared at me again, meeting eyes with the strangest expression on his face- it was hostile, furious" (Twilight 23). If someone looks at a person with a hostile expression, it is fair to assume that a common response to a look like that would be the feeling of fear. However, Meyer writes that Bella is "bewildered by the antagonistic stare" (Twilight 23). As Edward's hostile behavior continues, Bella feels "a thrill of genuine fear" as he glares at her with his "piercing hate-filled eyes" (Twilight 27). By using the phrase "a thrill of genuine fear" Meyer romanticizes the feeling of fear. According to Longman Dictionary, the word "thrill" means "to feel excited and happy about something". Meyer suggests that fear is something exciting and undeniably makes this scene, which should feel scary, feel romantic.
Meyer had an option to turn the scene in *Twilight*, where Bella finds out that Edward has been spying on her, into a fight between the two main characters since after all Edward has intruded on Bella’s privacy. However, in the book this behavior is interpreted as something romantic. Bella’s reaction is not anger or frustration, instead she feels "flattered" (*Twilight* 292). Also, when Bella finds out that Edward had spied on Bella all the way from Forks to Port Angeles, Meyer describes how Bella feels "a strange surge for pleasure" (*Twilight* 174) and that Bella’s lips curve "into an involuntary smile" (*Twilight* 174). By making these choices of words, Meyer makes Edward's controlling behavior, such as spying, seem romantic and something that one should feel flattered and excited about.

Bella states repeatedly that she should stay away from Edward because he is dangerous, but still millions of readers fall in love with Edward's dangerous character and interpret his abusive behavior as signs of love. This has a lot to do with the fact that Meyer uses imagery that makes Edward’s behavior seem mysterious instead of scary. It is clear, that Bella is not only drawn to Edward because of his looks, but even his characteristics make Edward hard, almost impossible, to resist. In the books it is described that Edward's personality's "magnetic force" (*Twilight* 139) is one of the reasons Bella cannot stay away from him. In fact, it is Edward's "mysterious" behavior that makes Bella completely obsessed with him: "I [Bella] was consumed by the mystery Edward presented. And more than a little obsessed by Edward himself. Stupid, stupid, stupid. I wasn't eager to escape Forks as I should be" (*Twilight* 67). It happens repeatedly that Meyer refers to Edward's behavior as mysterious: "He was interesting... and brilliant... and mysterious... and perfect" (*Twilight* 79). It is no coincidence that Meyer refers to Edward's behavior as something "mysterious" instead of for example referring to his behavior as "frightening". It is a well-known cliché that women have a tendency to find mysterious men fascinating and, by using this imagery, Meyer romanticizes Edward's behavior instead of making his behavior seem scary for the reader. On Yahoo's fan site it is clear that one of the reasons the fans find Edward perfect is the fact that he is a dangerous, hard-to-get vampire that one should stay away from. A pseudonym calling herself "Lydia" states that she loves Edward because of "the fact that being with him is so dangerous, like you never know what's gonna happen next, also, everybody disapproves of [Bella] being with him, so he is kinda forbidden" (107 reasons you love Edward Cullen). Click et al. argue that "*Twilight* might have reinforced the idea that possessiveness and over-protectiveness are romantic, and thus desirable in a potential mate (150).
The *Twilight* series has seduced the minds of its female readers with its mysterious vampire character Edward Cullen. Fans all over the globe adore this dangerous character for his deep devotion to the character of Bella Swan, though his behavior shows some serious signs of an abusive personality. The following characteristics can be found in the character of Edward Cullen: jealousy, controlling behavior, quick involvement, isolation, sudden mood changes and using force during an argument. However, as I have documented, all of the behaviors mentioned are also signs to look for in a battering personality (Walker n. pag.). After I had excluded all the behaviors that exist in Edward only because he is a vampire, Edward's personality matches with six out of thirteen qualities and behaviors commonly seen in battering personalities. Walker explains that if one can find more than three of the behaviors listed, there is a reason to get concerned. There is no denying that the character of Edward matches the description of an abuser. The behaviors listed are not unfortunate accidents but patterns of abusive behavior that can be seen in this character from the first book of the series to the final pages of *Breaking Dawn*, which is the last book of the series. Given the popularity of the character, it is obvious that these patterns of abusive behavior have been successfully romanticized and idealized by the author of the books, Stephenie Meyer.

Meyer uses imagery that romanticizes Edward's controlling behavior by describing his behavior with words such as "mysterious" or "thrilling". By doing so, Meyer suggests that fear is something exciting and worth striving for. Also, Meyer repeatedly puts Edward on a pedestal in making him seem better than the rest of the population of Forks. Meyer is idealizing Edward and his actions. The readers of *Twilight* have followed the footsteps of Meyer by seeing Edward as the ideal partner, praising both his looks and personality and defending his abusive behavior as romantic signs of true love.

The *Twilight* series has reached huge popularity especially among young adults. I am convinced that many of the *Twilight* fans who enjoy reading these books, understand that real life and fantasy are not meant to be mixed together. I am sure that there are teenagers who see the *Twilight* series only as great entertainment and are aware that, as Colton puts it, "things that look ideal on the page do not always translate to real life" (n.pag.). However, I have noted that the popularity of Edward Cullen as the ideal partner has reached such a high level, that I fear that the dividing line between real life and fantasy has become blurry for many of the fans.


