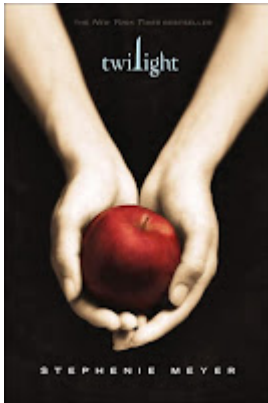


Review: Twilight



So I read it. For the same reason I read *Harry Potter* ten years ago – I need to have an opinion on it, and I can't form that opinion without reading it. I'm talking about Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* of course. It's an immensely popular, bestselling, movie-spinning mega-book. My comments below will only be about the first book in the series. I'm not planning to read any of

the others.

So what did I make of it? Like J. K. Rowling, Stephenie Meyer has been the target of the full blast of Christiosity zeal. Here, apparently, is yet another piece of worldly literature sucking us into dabbling with the occult and surrendering our souls to dark things. I discount that attack. The seduction is not attached to the occult and the darkness is attached more to the reality of the human soul than with dancing with the devil in the pale moonlight. It is not the fact that this book has vampires in it that I'd prefer my daughter to wait a little bit longer before she reads it.

If *Harry* was *Star Wars* for Generation Y – the child of destiny meeting his potential – this book is *Pretty Woman* – the forgotten girl mixing with manly power and holding her own in complete helplessness. Here is feminine weakness repulsed but attracted to dangerous masculinity. Here is feminine attractiveness drawing out both the potential and horror of the masculine conundrum. It is written well – the first person narrative drawing us into the intimacy of internal thoughts and, while avoiding being too explicit, causing us to engage with the bit-lip heart-skipping blood-rushing sensuality of near-fatal attraction. No wonder it's popular.

For those who don't know the story is simple – big town nerdy girl moves to small town and encounters mysterious boy. Boy is

vampire, caught between his blood-thirst for the girl and his surprising affection for her. Girl finds out he is a vampire yet is drawn to him, desiring both his safety and his danger.

Hear the pulse of the female psyche. The chapter where they spend their first significant time alone together is the crux of it all. She wants to be close to him, comfort him, be comforted by him. Knowing that he could kill her, almost wanting him to take her "wondering, if it would hurt very much... if it ended badly." He is like an addict and she is both his addiction and his salvation: "Common sense told me I should be terrified. Instead, I was relieved to finally understand. And I was filled with compassion for his suffering, even now, as he confessed his craving to take my life."

She both delights in her ability to confound him (she is the only mind he cannot read) and at the same time she swoons, literally, with every kiss. She is his adventure and he takes her on one. And then the action sequence encapsulates the rocky road of the reality of their relationship – how will it ever be consummated (figuratively speaking)? Should she become like him, take on his identity, become a vampire herself, despite the pain?

It's fairy tale from start to finish. But where the passion in a different era would have been wrapped up with sex – a useless gambit in this sexually desensitised generation – it is now wrapped up in blood lust. What in one era would have been an interplay between feminine wiles and passivity and the sexual drive and chivalry of the man is now explored through the concept of a vampire's addiction and honour and a girl's intellectual strength and physical dependence. How else could you get away with a main character who faints, stumbles and is always being swooped up and protected by the main man?

Where Jane Austen would have the girl battle with losing her identity in marriage, longing for a proposal, here it is about

longing for a painful but transformative venomous bite. I guess girls wanting a knight in shining armour still exist... and buy books.

As with *Harry*, so with *Twilight* – the danger of this book is not occult but fantasy. Too many people (many of which are too young) will get lost in it detrimentally. There must be more to life than this.

And there is.

