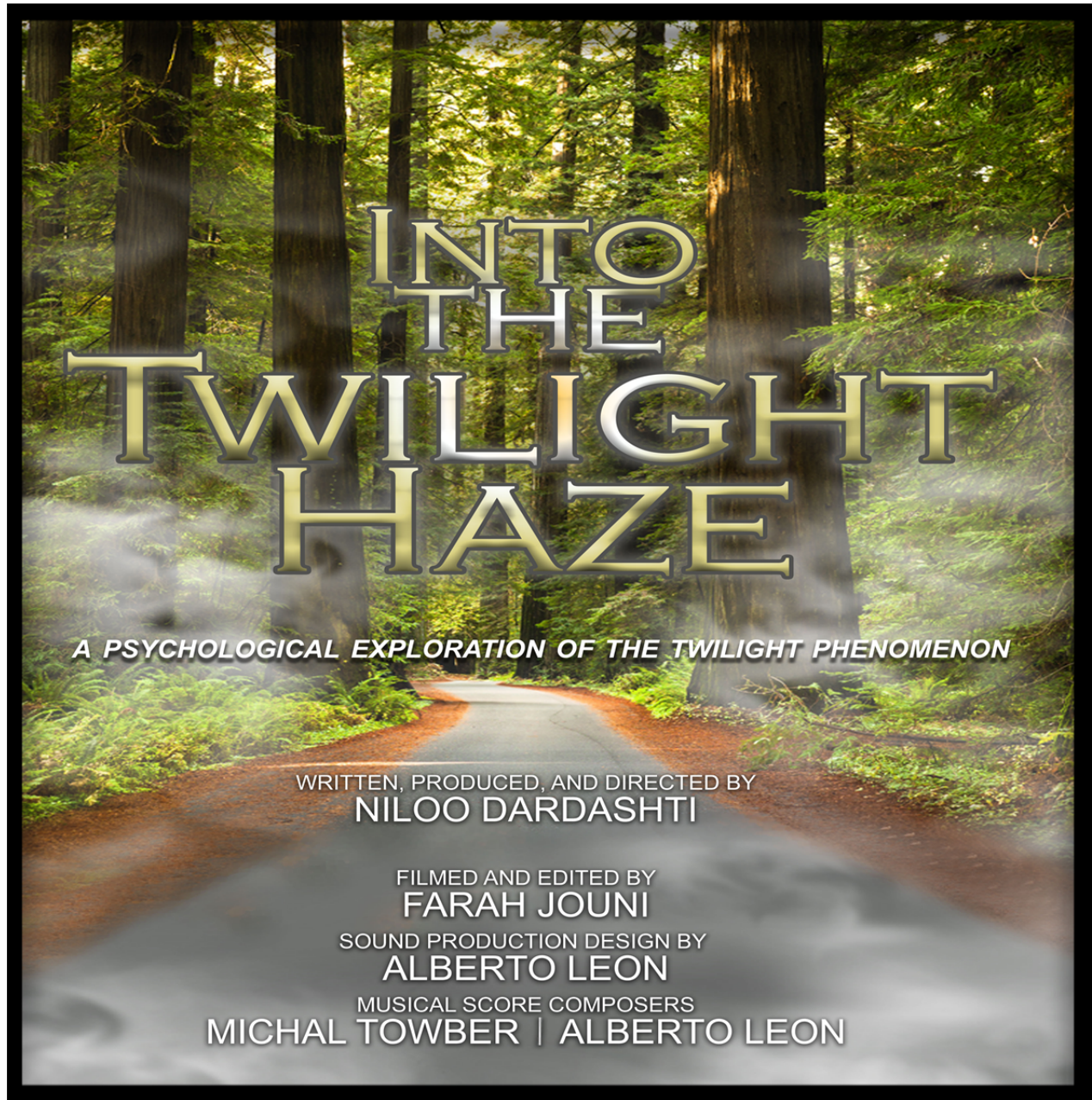


Into the Twilight Haze



A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE TWILIGHT PHENOMENON

WRITTEN, PRODUCED, AND DIRECTED BY
NILOO DARDASHTI

FILMED AND EDITED BY
FARAH JOUNI

SOUND PRODUCTION DESIGN BY
ALBERTO LEON

MUSICAL SCORE COMPOSERS
MICHAL TOWBER | ALBERTO LEON

Media and Press Guide

About the Film



Into the Twilight Haze attempts to uncover why so many are enamored with the books and films. Written, produced, and directed by a psychologist, it delves into the allure of *Twilight* as a vehicle to explore male-female dynamics today (what men want, what women want, our differences, and why it is often still so hard to understand one another). It is a journey into the human psyche with regards to our needs/desires for intimacy, love, sex, connection, self-growth, and our inter-relationship struggles. Through a series of interviews, adult psychologist Niloo Dardashti is able to facilitate a deep exploration into the hearts of several women touched immensely by *Twilight*.

Among several themes that come up consistently in her interviews, she discovers that *Twilight* triggers a deep-rooted primal desire for people to feel mirrored, heard and validated in relationships, in addition to a collective unconscious (and sometimes conscious) desire for old fashioned notions of love. Together with other experts in the field of human behavior, she explores the various implications of this paradoxical desire and other themes that the saga triggers for people. Using *Twilight* as a reference of comparison, the film touches on the balance of feeling fulfilled through an "Other," while finding inspiration and wholeness within one's own Self.

The Twilight Franchise



About 10 years ago, Stephenie Meyer had a dream in which two teenagers, one a male vampire and an ordinary human girl were arguing. The vision inspired her to write what would become chapter 13 of *Twilight*. Meyer had never written anything creative before setting out to write what would become the four part series. Of the life altering evening, she has said; "I had been bottling up who I was for so long. I needed an expression."

Twilight tells the story of a seventeen year old girl named Bella Swan who moves to the small town of Forks, Washington. Plain, clumsy, and socially awkward she is awestruck by the mysterious Edward. Her intrigue grows when he reveals himself to be a vampire. *New Moon* illustrates the perils that the couple endures as forces work to tear them apart. The book focuses on Bella's personal growth in the wake of Edward abandoning her. She develops a cathartic relationship with Jacob, who later transforms into a werewolf. *Eclipse* centers on the love triangle between Jacob, Bella, and a returned Edward. *Breaking Dawn* marks the conclusion of the Saga and focuses on the drama filled wedding reception and honeymoon of Edward and Bella, as a sullen Jacob learns of his purpose.

The Twilight Saga books have spent approximately 143 weeks on the New York Times best seller list. About 70 million copies have been sold, and counting, worldwide. They have also been translated into thirty different languages.

The *Twilight* phenomenon has not only taken the film industry by storm, it has also had a significant impact on many women on an emotional level. While the demographic associated with the film's fan base is often adolescent girls, women of all different ages have been touched by the premise of the franchise.

About the Director



Dr. Niloo Dardashti is a licensed clinical psychologist, relationship expert, and Board Certified Holistic Health Practitioner, living and practicing in New York City. She earned her Bachelor's in Science from New York University in 2000 and received additional training in Mindfulness, Meditation, and Reiki. In 2007, Niloo received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Long Island University, with training in Cognitive Behavioral, Psychodynamic, Couples, Family, and Dialectical Behavior therapies.

After her graduate training, Niloo became certified in Herbology by the East West School of Herbology and obtained training in the use of nutrition and amino acids for mental health wellness and weight management. In her private practice, Niloo combines all of her training to provide coaching and therapy primarily with adults and couples, tailoring specific treatments based on the individual challenges of her clients. She is involved in various organizations and works with a network of professionals across the greater New York City metro area.

In the last couple years, Niloo noticed that many of her clients (mostly women) felt significantly impacted by the Twilight books and movies. She became fascinated by what they shared and decided it would be interesting to create a documentary on the cross-generational reaction of women to the Twilight saga. Over the last year, she produced and directed *Into the Twilight Haze*, in which the "Twilight Phenomenon" is explored on a deep psychological and emotional level.

In addition to her psychology practice, Niloo discovered a tremendous passion for the movie-making process and is now considering making additional psychological documentaries.

Director Q&A

***Into the Twilight Haze* is your first venture into filmmaking. What compelled you to set out and make this film?**

I remember I was sitting in a restaurant exactly a year ago talking to a friend over lunch about *Twilight*. Right then, another friend called me and said that she had a friend who was having some serious marital issues and reading *Twilight* was bringing up a lot of emotions for her. Right then I thought "this is incredible. This must be the fifth time I've heard this in months." I had a flash about how interesting it would be to do some sort of investigation or study and then I thought "documentary." I practically had the whole vision of the documentary right there and then and started the process that night.

I thought it was too important a topic to not do anything about it. It was clear to me that for many women *Twilight* was a vehicle, if you will, for exploring some of their own longings and questions about relationships in general. It would be too simple to say what some critics say about *Twilight* depicting some sort of societally driven desire in women for a man to be their "everything." There has to be balance for most things in life and the balance of feeling whole within one's self and feeling satisfied in a relationship is certainly a big one. Also, the process of romantic to companionate love is a wonderful yet challenging experience for countless people. Many women in long term relationships feel that *Twilight* triggers a longing for the first stages of their relationship and this is an issue that often does not come up until something triggers it. I wanted there to be a platform to talk about these matters and what better vehicle to do so than *Twilight*?

Describe the process of selecting women to appear in the film? Did you find that many of them had reservations about sharing such personal stories?

The process of selecting women was challenging. I wanted to interview women of all ages and ethnicities, but I also wanted them to be somewhat insightful about why love *Twilight* - I would ask them: Most of the time, they would say "Oh my G-d I love *Twilight* so much. I could NOT stop reading it when I started." And I'd say "Wow...so what do you think it is about *Twilight* that affected you so intensely? What did it bring up for YOU?" Once we would get to those kinds of questions it was pretty clear whether it would be an interesting enough interview! Many of them said they actually never thought about it before and even when prompted, had difficulty tapping into it. So that's pretty much how we screened women. I didn't want it to become a situation where I was pulling teeth in the interview, so I tried to select women who had some

initial insight into their love of Twilight. With practically no budget, we could not afford to have a ton of interviews that we were not going to use. I think we only had one interview that we did not end of using. In terms of the women we did interview, there were moments where it was clear that they had reservations about getting into certain issues and I respected that. But for the most part they were all pretty open about their thoughts and feelings. As you can imagine, some were more comfortable talking about deeper feelings than others, which was fine. I have tremendous respect for the women who let us interview them and talked so openly about their personal lives.

Many of the women interviewed express a desire for something more in their lives. Most have found that after reading/watching Twilight they wanted more passion and or love in their lives. Do you think that their personal realization is a positive thing or are they longing for something that is impossible to obtain?

I think on all accounts it is a positive thing; however one of the issues that the film explores is what this "desire for something more" really entails. Sometimes it is simply a desire for more connection, excitement, and/or more intimacy in a relationship, and sometimes it can be more symbolic of an underlying need for something to be fulfilled within oneself. This is something that comes up for most people at various different points in their lives (a need/seeking for "more") and often it is tricky to decipher between whether that need can be met by someone else, within one's own self, or both. Again, we explore this balance in a fresh and interesting way that most people can relate to on some level - whether they are Twilight fans or not!

One of the most striking interviews in the film is with Dawn McCay, whose marriage difficulties manifested after she read Twilight. Yet her demand for true love is not tragic but rather self-assured. Do you think that her story sends a message of empowerment?

Absolutely. For one thing, Dawn felt that she was alone in what she was experiencing. In reality, numerous women (and men) go through what she is going through. Sometimes people hold it inside and never talk about it. They may act out or just feel perpetually dissatisfied. I think Dawn was brave to speak so openly and I think one of the messages that come through with her is that it is possible to question and challenge status quo. To think that one person can give you everything or compare your partner to Edward or Jacob is certainly unrealistic; but to make a decision that something in your life needs to change is one of the most challenging and sometimes necessary moves. Whether Dawn leaves her husband or not is not as much the point as that she will no longer accept how things have been. Ideally they will go into some intensive

couples' therapy before deciding if it is "too late," as she said. I would say that her message of empowerment in a nutshell is to challenge complacency and work on the things that are making you or your relationship feel stuck.

Production Details

Niloo Dardashti
Director/Producer/Writer

Farah Jouni
Cinematographer, Editor

Alberto Leon
Sound Production, Musical Score Composer

Michal Towber
Original Music/Composer

Cast

Niloo Dardashti, PsyD
Psychologist & Coach

Stephen Snyder, MD
Psychiatrist & Sex Therapist

Morgan Stebbins, M.Div, LMSW
Certified Jungian Analyst

Laura Muggli, PsyD
Psychologist

David Ahdout
Street Interviewer

Daniel Gutierrez
Supporting

Kayla O'Keefe
Supporting

Morgan Gruer
Supporting

Pascal Yen-Pfister
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Sandra Palmeri
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