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# Eros and Psyche from Apuleius to paranormal romance: a communication analysis of the archetype's message

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EROS AND PSYCHE FROM APULEIUS TO PARANORMAL ROMANCE:  
A COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS OF THE ARCHETYPE'S MESSAGE

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A Thesis  
Presented To  
Eastern Washington University  
Cheney, WA

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree  
Master of Science in Communications

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By Arielle Nicole Reed  
Spring 2013

Thesis of Arielle Nicole Reed approved by

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MASTER'S THESIS

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## Introduction

I was an only child with plenty of time to read, eagerly spending my allowance money on as many books I could get my hands on, from comic books and graphic novels to young adult fiction and classics. My reading appetite grew voracious and by middle school I was happily indulging myself in Greek mythology. As any avid consumer of a particular product can tell you, it becomes easy to see patterns and relationships in anything when you consume large quantities of it. For example, a dedicated horror movie fan can tell you the common tropes these films utilize, from character types to plot sequences. In my case, I grew enamored of the myth of *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998), and started seeing this myth in a lot of other books and films. This did not cease with maturity- even many books I have picked up as an adult have reflected, to my mind, the same narrative.

Initially this observation was rather annoying, as I had long thought my literary tastes were more diverse, but I began to see this as a demonstration of my personal analytical skill, rather than a fault in my taste. This divided my textual world into two sides: those books that fit the parameters of the myth, and those that did not. Of course, those that did not fit do not all belong in a single category; however they are separated in my mind from those texts I believe follow the narrative. This brought me to the first “why” question I had. Why do I keep reading the same story? Was I being fooled by book-jacket blurbs for years, or was I simply drawn to this kind of story subconsciously? There had to be a reason that this story type was not only interesting to me, but was so pervasive in literature in general.

It was not until considering this terminal research opportunity that I was inspired to transfer thought to action and perform the necessary research to get to the bottom of this phenomenon I have witnessed. There are many observable archetypes in literature, so establishing the connection between the myth and novels is not the most important aspect of my research, though it is essential for moving to the next stage. I want to figure out *if*, and if so, *why* this

particular myth recurs in literature; this is the driving force of my research. Message is an essential factor to consider, as communications is primarily concerned with the process of message delivery and reception (Berlo, 1960; Schramm, 1954; Shannon and Weaver, 1949). The myth, as a narrative archetype, must have a substantial message in order to stay relevant over thousands of years, and this message is what I want to find.

I will try to find the connection between this myth and a set of contemporary novels from the paranormal romance subgenre: *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011), *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), *Dead Until Dark* (Harris, 2001), and *The Restorer* (Stevens, 2011). This is not the only genre of novel employing the myth, simply the most obvious connection, as both the myth and these novels deal in paranormal male leads and romance. This connection must be established before I am able to comparatively analyze how the myth has been translated through this subgenre, and what underlying message may have been passed down.

I will draw on Foucault's Archeology of Knowledge (Foucault, 2010) as the theoretical framework for this thesis design. I will then use Glaser's (1965) Constant Comparative Analysis for Qualitative Research as my primary method, which is a four step process that results in the creation of a theory. Steps one and two will be dedicated solely to connecting the myth and paranormal romance texts, step three will employ literary conflict models to delve deeper into the texts and find the core message. In step four I will determine how the message functions within this new subgenre, how and why it works.

There is a conceptual framework for describing the kind of information I will present in this research, primarily language used in mythology and literature studies, as these terms are typically applied to stories and characters. The use of these terms will always be intentional, and are dependent upon the stage of the research. These terms are archetype, narrative, paranormal romance, symbol and hero or heroine.



An *archetype* is a model upon which others are patterned, and for my purposes this includes character modeling and storyline design in paranormal romance novels as they are potentially patterned after the myth of Eros and Psyche.

*Narrative* is a term that will be used frequently to describe the type of story conceptually. If the myth is proven to be the archetype for these paranormal romance novels, the term narrative may be used to describe the entire body of texts in question.

*Paranormal romance*, a subgenre of romance, was once relegated to the realms of horror, science fiction or fantasy, but has distinguished itself as stories that involve elements of any of these genres, set in “real life,” blended with an overarching romantic plot involving love between a human and a paranormal being.

*Symbol* will be used to represent the characters and plot elements that make up the narrative, or story. These characters and plot elements are symbolic because they were created in ancient mythology as representations of ideas that they still represent today.

A *Hero* or *Heroine* of a story is the main protagonist, who not only acts as a savior, but must undergo some kind of personal change, or overcome some challenge (typified in literature studies as man vs. man, man vs. self, man vs. society, man vs. nature).

With the continued rise in popularity of paranormal romance material in books, television and film, it is my hope that this research will impact readers and other researchers interested in popular culture studies. If there is indeed a message within these texts compelling readers to continue to crave more of the same story, I plan to identify this message, as it may lead to insights into the desires of consumers.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

The following literature review has been divided into five sections: Eros, Psyche, character relations in romance novels, procreation in storytelling and love. Eros and Psyche, the title characters of the myth that serves as the focus of my research, each represent a section of literature, as it was known to me that these characters exist not only in literature but as terms in the field of psychology. The following two section titles, (character relations in romance novels, procreation in storytelling) were inspired by the storytelling trope Happily Ever After, and what that idea may really mean to this narrative. The myth is romantic, and this often lends to the ideal of the couple living Happily Ever After. But this myth also extends beyond the couple's marriage to the birth of their child, their existence After "Happily Ever After." The final section is a comparative analysis of the discourse of love from two perspectives, Plato and C.S. Lewis.

### Eros

Eros, or Cupid, is the male lead of this myth. Though he does not fit the traditional role of hero in this story, he does save Psyche at the end of her journey and convince Zeus to allow her to become a Goddess. Throughout the myth he is mysterious and sensitive, and demonstrates frequently the gift of foresight, though this may be the storyteller's way of delivering foreshadowing.

Apuleius (1998) uses Eros as the name of the lead male character, whereas Hamilton (1942) has turned him into the more modern Cupid. This issue of nomenclature occurs simultaneously in *The Uses of Enchantment* (Bettelheim, 1975) in which Bruno Bettelheim delivers the myth as "Eros and Psyche" but analyzes the character of Eros by the name Cupid. These inconsistencies were amusing more than discouraging, as I also found that Eros himself is inconsistent across multiple texts. For example, there is much conflict over the nature of his birth, the myth of Eros and Psyche showing him as the son of Aphrodite, Plato's *Symposium* (1989)

detailing his creation as one of the first Gods. It is for this reason that analyses of Eros can appear uninformed or unrelated, as researchers take the version of Eros they prefer, in my case Apuleius' version for the symbol, Plato's version as a way to understand the function of the symbol.

Eros, as a symbol, represents many different ideas, his roots diverse as both symbol and function. He was created in tandem with the Earth as the God of Procreation (Plato, 1989), he represents true love (Lewis, 1960), and he is the son of Aphrodite and husband of Psyche (Apuleius, 1998). As the God of Procreation, he is a force of nature, acknowledged as the same energy required to in-form and trans-form the self, an invisible entity that when pursued and discovered results in new knowledge (Semetsky & Delpesch-Ramey, 2011). Eros also represents the erotic, between teacher and pupil, or men in general (Plato, 1989) but also in relation to many sexual acts (Apuleius, 1998; Lewis, 1960), though this is considered the lowest and perhaps least important form of Eros (Plato, 1989; Lewis, 1960).

The myth describes Eros first as a fearsome winged serpent, then once revealed as a God, to be of Godly perfection (Apuleius, 1998). It may be due to this description that through medieval fairy tales the myth of Eros and Psyche transformed into the story type of Beauty and the Beast (Bettelheim, 1975). Bruce Thornton's book *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality* (1997) clarified the connection between the myth of *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998) and fairy tales such as *Beauty and the Beast* (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011) through his description of Eros in the section titled "The Beasts of Love" in which he explains that to the Greeks, hairiness in men was an indication of lust. Books of fairy tale analysis (Bettelheim, 1975) often categorize this narrative type as "Animal Groom," in which the male character is an animal or beast, and in *Beauty and the Beast* (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011), the male character is literally a hairy beast, akin to a wolf or bear. It is argued that this is a disparity between the myth and fairy tale, because Eros is a God and not a beast (Bettelheim, 1975), though he is assumed to be a beast through a misunderstanding.

The beast has taken two turns in fiction literature: werewolves or vampires. Werewolves, or wolf men, take on an appearance typical to that of *Beauty and the Beast* (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011). Vampires, however, represent physical perfection and are immortal, though are incredibly deadly. These kinds of creatures are cast in the lead male roles in the majority of paranormal romance novels, and in most cases there is a return to Eros as erotic, rather than pure love.

Many researchers have analyzed *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) and *Dead Until Dark* (or as it is more commonly known “*True Blood*”; Harris, 2001), and there is no shortage of material on the subject, from sexual psychology to accusations of Mormon propaganda as an underlying theme of *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005). Three articles I found clearly deal with the characters of *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) or *Dead Until Dark* (Harris, 2001), or both (Nelson, 2010; Merskin, 2011; Taylor, 2011), predominantly the male vampire character.

Nelson (2010) and Taylor (2011) approach the characters as sexual beings, and discuss the nature of abstinence and indulgence, depending on the series, but also go into great depth regarding blood exchanges between characters. Elizabeth Nelson says “Jungian analysis of contemporary culture should take note. As an archetype, the vampire is alive and well in the collective psyche” (2010, p. 2). Additionally, with regard to Edward Cullen of *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), “Suppressing their natural instinct arouses the surprise and contempt of their fellow vampires” (Nelson, 2010, p. 7), much in the way Eros is scorned by his mother for marrying a mortal woman. Anthea Taylor has determined that *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) is a book about a masochistic relationship, especially when broadly assessing the story as a tale of a girl who finds pain pleasurable (2011). She also cites that *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) follows the *Liebstod* motif, “The series can therefore be linked to a broader cultural tradition of concatenating eros (love) and thanatos (death)” (Binion, 1993; Gediman, 1995; Kramer, 1997; Krimmer and Raval, 2002; cited in Taylor, 2011, p.5).

Merskin (2011) focuses on the vampire Edward from *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) as a compensated psychopathic character, hinting at the danger of his character beyond that of predatory blood consumption. Merskin (2011) says new vampires appeal to teens because they no longer “challenge us to deal with our individual and collective dark sides” (p. 5) but rather represent “a virile handsome youthful stranger” (p.5). Merskin (2011) goes on to problematize the vampire’s bad boy personality, and dissect the character of Edward as a compensated psychopath, a personality disorder amplified in *Twilight* by skewed American values and misguided desire of the heroine to affect the unreachable Edward.

## Psyche

Psyche is the heroine and main character of this myth. It is her journey that readers must endure as she transforms from frightened farm girl to pseudo-goddess, to captive and wife, to questing hero, to true Goddess and mother.

In Apuleius’ (1998) story, Psyche is portrayed as the youngest of three daughters and the most beautiful woman, comparable to if not surpassing Aphrodite. This theme is carried out continuously in *Beauty and the Beast* (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011) fairy tale types, as the female lead is often the youngest of three (or more) daughters and the most beautiful (*Beauty and the Beast*; LePrince de Beaumont, 2011; *Der Eisbarkoenig*; Solum, 1991; *The Little Mermaid*; Andersen, 1959). She has been sacrificed to a great polar bear, who turns out to be a cursed prince who is beast by day and man by night, just as Eros was rumored to be, and after winning him back from an evil witch they are married and the curse is lifted (Solum, 1991). Occasionally her sisters convince her to visit her prince in the night and kill his bride, just like Psyche’s sisters convince her to look upon her husband in the night and cut off his head. In both cases, the maid is unable to accomplish this task, and in both cases, she loses her man as a result, (*The Little Mermaid*; Andersen, 1959). Sometimes the young maid must accomplish three tasks, (sorting

grain, spinning gold from wheat and discovering Rumpelstiltskin's name, the first two tasks nearly identical to those put to Psyche by Aphrodite), in order to be free of his trickery and keep her first born child (*Rumpelstiltskin*; Grimm, 2011). She must be willing to love the beast as he is, in beast form, and cast aside allegiance to her father. Only then is his curse lifted, and he becomes a man whom she can marry (*Beauty and the Beast*; LePrince de Beaumont, 2011). Even *Little Red Riding Hood* is a cautionary tale against sexual deviance, a warning against the Big Bad Wolf, (a beast, representative of lust and rape; Perrault, 2011).

Bruno Bettelheim (1975) takes a psychological tack in explaining that the myth of Eros and Psyche, (and therefore, it can be assumed, any fairy tale stemming from it), is a tale of a woman coping with sex. She is first stolen away by a serpent, (symbolic of the male sex), and is confused about her new luxurious life with a mystery husband who comes to her only at night, and she then must overcome many challenges to earn a place at her lover's side and discover the positive side of sexual partnership.

The character of Psyche is a character of learning and transformation, in keeping with the translation of her name, which means "spirit," "soul" or "butterfly." Many prominent authors write about myth as related to psychology, literally to the psyche, and the agreement is that myths hold truths that lie in the collective unconscious of man, and so whether or not they are acknowledged, they exist, (Campbell, 1988; Jung, 1964; Henderson, 1964). These authors also agree that as generations pass, humankind is less and less connected to nature, even to its personal history, and therefore is dehumanizing itself, (Campbell, 1988; Jung, 1964; Henderson, 1964). This is ironic when one considers that Psyche becomes a god at the end of the myth (Apuleius, 1998) and therefore loses her humanity.

Both Elizabeth Nelson and Anthea Taylor refer to *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), (and Nelson to *Dead Until Dark* [Harris, 2001]), as an example of the genre *Bildungsroman* (Nelson, 2010, p.

2-3; Taylor, 2011 p.32). Nelson then cites Labovitz (1986, p.13) to describe *Bildungsroman* “the learning and growth process of the protagonist can be charted through its (...) elusiveness, alternations of insights, its sense of confusion, and inconsequentiality” (cited p. 3). While Taylor only mentions this concept in passing, Nelson (2010) delves further into the meaning of the term for female protagonists like Bella in *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), who are “choosing between conformity and rebellion” (p. 3) as they develop their identities separate from loved ones.

#### Character relations in romance novels

This section refers to the representation of relationships in romantic fiction and the exchange that occurs when the Self attempts to understand the Other. The Journal of Popular Romance Studies has several articles regarding character relations in romance novels. All four of the articles selected from this journal deal with qualitative assessments of character relations. Three specifically discussed sexual dynamics, (Allan, 2011; Pearce, 2011; Toscano, 2012).

In Jonathan Allan’s (2011) article on the depiction of male virginity, he noted that this was a previously undocumented area of popular romance studies, so he wrote what is apparently the first analysis of the subject. This is helpful because though there is only one instance of male virginity in the novels I have chosen for analysis, many of the other male characters demonstrate a desire for chastity and timing, waiting for the supposed “right moment,” a position typically taken up by female characters (Harkness, 2011; Meyer, 2005). In one case, the male character exercises this opinion even after he and the heroine have been married (Harkness, 2011). This creates an illusory virginity, as if forcing himself to wait somehow cleanses the male of his personal history and restores his virtue.

Lynne Pearce (2011) addresses the concept of romance and repetition in her article, beginning with a brief summary of the work of Freud and Lacan in which she describes the nature of repetition in relationships as they relate to Freud’s Oedipal complex, (how people replace their

parents with their spouses) and Lacan's assertion that people are never satisfied with relationships because they are seeking fantasies, and are always disillusioned by reality. In both cases, repetition is a key aspect of love, because people will always seek to repeat previous relationships (the parental relationship being the ideal), and in their dissatisfaction, will again go out and seek fulfillment. This relates directly to Lewis' (1960) writings on Need Pleasure and Need-Love, in which he points out that once a need is satisfied, it dies, and new needs arise. If these cannot be satisfied, new stimulation will be sought elsewhere. So, while a new partner may fulfill the basic requirement of being similar to the parent figure, perhaps they are unsatisfactory in the bedroom, and so the illusion is shattered, and the process begins again.

Toscano broaches the rape trope in popular romance, comparing the act to the piercing of Cupid's arrow (Toscano, 2012). It is her assertion that the rape scene is a narrative tool that enables the characters to explore the frustrations of the Self and the Other, that through rape the Self is trying to understand the Other and demonstrates the confusion and violence of love itself. She outlines three types of rape, all of which hinge on the perception of the female character by the male character, The Rape of Mistaken Identity, The Rape of Possession and The Rape of Coercion (Toscano, 2012). Dominant sexual discourse suggests that as women lose their power, men become dangerous, and this is significant as it not only leaves women vulnerable, but creates the female heroine archetype as she becomes victimized and must now overcome some obstacle, (Bottigheimer, 2004, Toscano, 2012). Toscano does conclude, however, that the act of rape in popular romance is the act of falling in love, a collision of two selves struggling with their individual identities and come together in a clash of language and violence, (Toscano, 2012), which is corroborated by the assertion that Eros is the powerful and erotic desire for self-knowledge, and that rather than connecting two opposing forces, is the new reality formed by the connection (Semetsky, 2003). This is related to Plato's (1989) creation story in Symposium, that people were once whole but through a violent act separated, seeking their other half, and through



love come together in a greater understanding, illustrated by the description of the birth of Pleasure through the union of Eros and Psyche (Apuleius, 1998).

#### Procreation in storytelling

In the myth, Eros and Psyche create the child Pleasure. In fairy tale, however, what comes after the “happily ever after” is often left to the imagination. In current paranormal romance there are unique and interesting solutions to the issue of inter-species procreation that begged an inquiry into the nature of childbearing in storytelling.

Donald Haase immediately lays out opposing viewpoints in the fairy tales and feminism debate: some authors take the position that fairy tales demonstrate strong female characters, other authors believe that women have been acculturated through fairy tales to be weak damsels in distress, (Haase, 2004; Wanning-Harries, 2004). Surrounding this debate is the nature versus nurture discussion, whereby analysts seek to determine what kind of influence fairy tales have, versus the perspective women bring to fairy tales when they read them, and what effect this has on the meaning of the fairy tales (Haase, 2004; Wanning-Harries, 2004). There is also a divide between maintaining the tradition of reading and learning fairy tales, and adapting to sociocultural change, (Haase, 2004; Wanning-Harries, 2004), which is challenged by suggesting that boys can learn just as much from female characters in fairy tales as girls, (Bettelheim, 1975; Haase, 2004). Finally, it is asserted that fairy tales with leading female roles and interests were perhaps altered by male translators like the Brothers Grimm, and when the men took the power and wrote down these tales, the power of women’s voices was lost in translation, (Haase, 2004; Bottigheimer, 2004).

It has been acknowledged historically that when women lost control of their fertility, fairy tales came into popular culture, and not only were women’s bodies redefined as easily tainted and dishonored, but men became dangerous to women, (Bottigheimer, 2004). It is said

that fairy tale characters are demonstrative of the evolution of a sense of self, that rather than one-dimensional characters, each fairy tale character is an individual, and that marriage-endings in these stories bring the journey of the individual woman full circle, but also satisfy patriarchal desire for conventional dominance, (Seifert, 2004). Through a sense of nostalgia, mythic tales have translated into fairy tales that fit the current cultural and literary environment, (Seifert, 2004; Blackwell, 2004), and were often autobiographical in nature, either to be passed down as lessons or for personal validation (Blackwell, 2004; Preston, 2004).

It has already been proven that this particular myth provides a recurrent narrative in literature, (Bettelheim, 1975). The narrative style has been adapted, (Haase, 2004; Wanning-Harries, 2004), and through a series of symbols and symbolic representations has transformed into the literary phenomena of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the paranormal romance genre. As symbols, the narrative style and archetypes have proceeded through a triangular process of concept-percept-affect, ever evolving in an almost sentient fashion that cannot be explained linearly (Semetsky & Delpuch-Ramey, 2011). Educationally, understanding of symbols is concurrent with understanding of objects, as the symbols represent objects and are both a way to acquire and explain knowledge, (Semetsky, 2003).

It is suggested that education should be based in the subjective rather than the objective, that students should be taught or seek to learn how their sense of self relates to the objects around them, rather than observing objects at a distance, (Semetsky, 2003). Education would then favor Gnosis, self-knowledge or experiential knowledge, which is intuitive, integrative and participatory rather than formalized or rigidly trained, (Semetsky, 2003). It is noted in the case of many French fairy tales that for “much of the twentieth century (...) they could not be taken seriously because they were not taught, and they could not be taught because they were not taken seriously” (Seifert, 2004). However, as autopoietic mechanisms, these stories are self-generating feedback systems that are inseparable from those who participate with them, (Semetsky &

Delpech-Ramey, 2011), which may explain the continued salience of the narrative. The narrative is the produced and the producer, so whether passed by word of mouth, text or film, since its inception it has effected and affected the participants and has been in turn effected and affected in a consensual contextual relationship, in a sort of structural coupling (Semetsky & Delpech-Ramey, 2011).

## Love

Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* (1998) is the source of the myth of Eros and Psyche and the foundation of my research. This myth is unique to Greek mythology, as a romance, and therefore I felt it necessary to delve into the nature of love, first from the Greek perspective in Plato's *Symposium*, and from a modern perspective in C.S. Lewis' *The Four Loves*. If it is possible that Eros and Psyche may have been one of the first published romance novels, it stands to reason that an analysis of the discourse of love would serve as a starting point for analyzing the nature of the narrative, and may in fact be the overarching theme. I chose Plato and Lewis because Plato lived when this myth circulated as a folk tale, and there are many mentions of Eros within the speeches of the *Symposium*. I selected Lewis as the modern voice of love based on two factors; first, Lewis had written a book that specifically outlined four kinds of love from a modern, Christian perspective, in which he refers to Plato and includes a chapter specifically titled "Eros"; second, he published his own version of *Eros and Psyche*, called *Til We Have Faces* (Lewis, 1956), which served as the foundation for his musings in *The Four Loves* (Lewis, 1960). I conducted a comparative analysis of these two books, *Symposium* (Plato, 1989) and *The Four Loves* (Lewis, 1960) as major contributing texts to the discourse of love.

Lewis (1960) begins his analysis with subhuman loves, love for that which does not have a soul, including pets, favorite foods and love of country. Lewis finds the subhuman love of nature to be a demonstration of "Dark Gods in the blood" (p.19). His scorn for other religious

pursuits is made obvious when he scoffs at “(...) people making theologies, pantheologies and antitheologies-all of which can be debunked (...)” (Lewis, 1960, p.19). He further states that, “Nature never taught me that there exists a God of glory and of infinite majesty. I had to learn that in other ways. But nature gave the word *glory* a meaning for me” (emphasis in the original, Lewis, 1960, p.20). From Lewis’ perspective, religious education occurs only in an official capacity; one cannot learn religion from nature, however, if one goes to nature with their religion, one may clarify their beliefs by observing God’s work.

Lewis (1960) cites the adage, “God is Love” (p. 126), and Plato (1989) says “Love is a Great God” (p.9). The most obvious discrepancy between these two ideas is perception based, that by Lewis’ understanding the Christian God created all things, and according to Plato (1989) the God Love was created by Chaos simultaneously with the creation of Earth, because Love was a crucial component to the circle of life, (in a procreational sense). To Lewis (1960), God’s love, the ultimate love, is the only love upon which man can fully rely, but man must not turn away from natural loves, lest man lose appreciation for God’s Love. He quotes St. Augustine, “Do not let your happiness depend on something you may lose. If love is to be a blessing, not a misery, it must be for the only Beloved who will never pass away” (Lewis, 1960, p.120). He then argues against St. Augustine’s view:

“If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one (...) the alternative to tragedy, or at least the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside of Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell. (...) We shall draw nearer to God, not by trying to avoid the sufferings inherent in all loves, but by accepting them and offering them to Him; throwing away all defensive armor. If our hearts need to be broken, and if He chooses this as the way in which they should break, so be it.” (Lewis, 1960, p. 121-122)

Lewis all but declares that those who choose not to experience natural love, (subhuman love, affection, friendship and Eros), will not be allowed to experience God's Love either. This is an interesting theological contradiction, considering that Catholic priests are not allowed to experience the natural love of Eros, and yet they are said by many to be closest to God (though, admittedly, Lewis was a Protestant, and therefore does not support Catholic practices). Similarly, for the Greeks, to be most noble was to put aside natural love in favor of more virtuous pursuits above the Self.

These authors differ when it comes to love that applies to the subhuman love of country or state. According to Aristotle (Aristotle, 2004, p.4), a pupil of Plato, love of state is virtuous, and being a good citizen is the highest earthly pursuit. Working for the greater good is virtuous and therefore a higher calling than any other form of love, save for that of nature. In the Speech of Phaedrus, Phaedrus declares, "If only there were a way to start a city or an army made up of lovers and the boys they love!" after which he further states, "Besides, no one will die for you but a lover" (Plato, 1989, p.10). This insinuates that for men to sacrifice themselves for the state they must love it. Lewis' (1960) position is that love of country is all well and good, but, "we all know now that this love becomes a demon when it becomes a God" (p.11). He does not criticize love of home or patriotism, but believes that we must not be patriotic based on false notions of the past. Every country has some level of shameful act in its past, and to educationally deceive citizens into believing that their country can do no wrong breeds a dangerous ignorance.

"What does seem to me poisonous, what breeds a type of patriotism that is pernicious if it lasts but not likely to last long in an educated adult, is the perfectly serious indoctrination of the young in knowably false or biased history- the heroic legend drably disguised as textbook fact." (Lewis, 1960, p. 26)

For Plato(1989), Love is already a God and love of country is a virtue inspired by this God, as Phaedrus quotes, “Homer says a God ‘breathes might’ into some of the heroes, this is really Love’s gift to every lover” and therefore can never be its own God, (p. 10). Pausanias states in his speech that, “Love’s value to the city as a whole and to the citizens is immeasurable, for he compels the lover and his loved one alike to make virtue their central concern” (Plato, 1989, p.19). This may be considered patriotism in Plato’s world, this love of state that inspires its citizens to act in the state’s honor, in whatever manner is appropriate at the time.

Both authors discuss two major kinds of love that apply to interpersonal human relationships. For Plato (1989), these are called Common Love and Heavenly Love, (also considered Sexual Love and Virtue). For Lewis (1960), these are Need-Love and Gift-Love. From these overarching categories stem all other loves.

Common Love and Need-love are the same in that both come from a place of seeking personal fulfillment from outside sources. That these are labeled differently demonstrates only the different times in which these books were written. For Plato, most instinctual drive could be boiled down to desire or lust, which was thought to come from the baser sexual part of the psyche, and was often vulgar in nature, “low-brow” or “common.” “Love is not in himself noble and worthy of praise, and depends on whether the sentiments he produces in us are themselves noble” (Plato, 1989, p.14). It was his idea that the energy put into sexual desires should be instead channeled into working for the greater good. In Lewis’ mind this drive is derivative of some kind of “need,” and is already applicable to more than sexual desire. Both nod to some kind of craving, to feeling as though some puzzle piece is missing and cannot be found within.

Lewis (1960) quotes Plato in saying that Need-Love is “the son of Poverty,” (p.2). He further states that, “We are born helpless. As soon as we are fully conscious we discover loneliness. We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually; we need them if we are to

know anything, even ourselves” (Lewis, 1960, p.2). This is implicative of the idea that in order to feel whole, people seek others to complete them. This is well-suited to the creation story told in *Symposium*, (Plato, 1989, p.25-30), in which all humans on Earth were once hermaphrodites, etymologically speaking, the children of Hermes and Aphrodite, (divine messenger and love). I believe this implies that mankind was born of Heavenly Love, (divine knowledge) and Common Love, (physical, natural love), and ever since the Gods struck these creatures apart, the halves have been seeking wholeness, (note: the Christian God created Eve from Adam’s rib). So for these two parts to come together there must be a return to balance within each individual’s personal Heavenly and Common Loves. In his description of this, Plato (1989) flirts with the notion of romantic love, which was an uncommon concept for the Greeks, “We used to be complete wholes in our original nature, and now ‘Love’ is the name for our pursuit of wholeness, for our desire to be complete” (p.29). The perfect combination of Heavenly and Common Loves therefore create romantic love, a new kind of love that transcends both. This may explain why in the telling of the myth of Eros and Psyche (Apuleius, 2004, p.71-110), Psyche gives birth to the child Pleasure. A meeting of the body and soul, as they figuratively represent, creates something new and otherworldly.

Where Plato uses the term Eros to represent love, sex and desire, Lewis (1960) states, “By Eros I mean of course that state which we call ‘being in love’ (...) the carnal or animally sexual element within Eros I intend [following an old usage] to call Venus” (p.91). This is in accordance with the Speech of Pausanias, in which he asserts, “It is a well-known fact that Love and Aphrodite are inseparable” (Plato, 1989, p.13) because of course conceptually they are inseparable, but they are still embodied individually. However, to Lewis, Eros representing the state of being “in love” goes against the Greeks who did not especially believe in romance. For Lewis being in love is a romantic notion, and true, pure Venus can only be experienced by those in love. He distinctly avoids discussing sexuality, whereas much of Plato’s *Symposium* deals with

the sexual love and relationships of men, a love more noble than that of love between men and women, which is important for procreation, but not necessarily for the pleasure of love. Lewis discusses the process of falling in love as being independent from sexual ardor, that the sexual desire comes after the love.

Lewis (1960) does this as a way of dividing mankind from beasts, “I am inquiring not into the sexuality which is common to us and the beasts or even common to all men but into one uniquely human variation of it which develops within ‘love’ - what I call Eros. (...) Sexuality may operate without Eros or as part of Eros” (p.92). He does clarify that when a man experiences Eros, he no longer wants just sex, which he can acquire from any woman; he wants the connection with the one woman who has his attention. He states in his chapter ‘Likings and Loves for the Sub-Human’, “the Need-Love, like the Need-Pleasure, will not last longer than the need. (...) But where Need-Love is left unaided we can hardly expect it not to ‘die on us’” (Lewis, 1960, p. 15). Since Eros is a Need-Love, this applies to his idea of “the state of being in love,” as being mutable. Once the satisfaction of a need wanes in some manner, be it physically, emotionally or intellectually, stimulation may be sought elsewhere.

The relationships between men in Plato’s writings are distinct from any single relationship Lewis writes about. These relations are pederastic, between a mentor and a pupil, and blossom through a progression of the various loves, from affection, to erotic love, to friendship. This bridges the span of all of Lewis’ categories of love in a way he never approached. Lewis (1960) does acknowledge some level of interplay between loves, but only insofar as they share a single common trait, “This blending and overlapping of the loves is well kept before us by the fact that at most times and places all three of them had in common, as their expression, the kiss” (p. 35). These views have little in common, and Lewis seems to romanticize the relationships between the loves, by boiling their commonalities down to one physical act. This may be because he believes that once two people cross a boundary, new definition of the relationship begets re-



categorization; the relationship cannot revert back to the original state, nor can it be referred to by its original name, which surely, as Platonic relationships progress, is the same.

It is a cultural reflection that Plato and Lewis value friendship differently. To Plato, the mentor/student bond is the strongest and longest lasting relationship a man has; the ultimate friendship. Lewis (1960) first acknowledges, “To the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue,” however Lewis makes his opinion known, “[in modernity] Friendship is-in a sense not at all derogatory to it-the least *natural* of loves; the least instinctive, organic, biological, gregarious and necessary” (emphasis in the original, p.57-58). Lewis has made friendship both distinct and irrelevant. It is independent from other loves because it is not necessary for the continuation of life to have friends, we choose to do so, and unlike the spiritual and chemical reactions that make us grow affection or Eros for others, we choose friends based on benign commonalities. By forming a group, we separate ourselves from the masses, “To say ‘these are my friends’ is to say ‘those are not’” (Lewis, 1960, p.60).

## Conclusion

Campbell (1988) states, “Read myths. They teach you that you can turn inward, and you begin to get the message of the symbols.” He argues that myths are not playbooks for life, but the literature of the spirit, the themes of human life, (Campbell, 1988). Jung (1964) says that nature has lost its symbolic implications and man is becoming more isolated. Henderson (1964) agrees with Jung to an extent, but counters with the optimistic assertion that man simply may not have yet identified these symbols in their modern forms.

The contributing literature is extensive, as this myth touches many fields of study, continuously relevant to culture studies, psychology, literature and feminist research. Many researchers have undertaken the task of analyzing single texts like *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) for

meaning and value, but fail to recognize the narrative's roots in mythology. Connections have been made between the myth and fairy tales, and between fairy tales and paranormal romance fiction, but I was unable to find the bridge between the three. The gap in the research is primarily in the philosophical realm of "why." Why has this myth adapted so well to changes in time and culture? What message lay hidden between the lines that enable the story to wear the façade of something new, while remaining unchanged at the core? A researcher, focused on all communication as the exchange of messages and feedback, may be able to identify the core message at work behind the scenes of this narrative, and develop understanding of the societal implications of such a message.

My research will attempt to answer these questions:

What is the underlying message of this narrative?

What are the implications of the continued use of this message in popular culture?

With the continued rise in popularity of paranormal romance material in books, television and film, it is plain that society has a hunger and a fascination with this concept. It is possible that this is due to an ever-present message within the texts, passed on through thousands of years of storytelling.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

My main interest in this research is concerned with the message of these texts, a time-tested message that has enabled the continued adaptation of the myth of *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998). Like any myth, there are many lessons to be learned through the trials of the characters, however for the narrative to maintain strength and power over thousands of years in multiple incarnations in genre and medium requires the same strength of message as possessed by few other texts, The Bible a prime example. The Bible works because it not only offers lessons of morality but also supports the mysterious notion of faith through a carefully constructed message. The messages of Greek Mythology, though no longer acknowledged religiously, are still heavily employed in popular culture. *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998) likely contains such a message, and it is through this research that I seek to uncover it. I will first describe the theoretical lens through which I will operate, explain the manner by which the texts for comparison were selected, then detail the process by which the texts will be compared.

### Theory

The theoretical underpinning that serves as the foundation for my research is Foucault's Archeology of Knowledge (2010). In accordance with this methodology "discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs" (Foucault, 2010). I have chosen to divide my research by the symbols in the narrative, and analyze them both in their historical context and in their modern use as independent discursive events. That they appear within a single narrative establishes the relation between them through unity of discourse, which is as important as the fact that they also stand alone as symbols. "Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe" (emphases in the original; Foucault, 2010).

The Archeology of Knowledge (Foucault, 2010) applies to the study of the texts, finding the unity in the discourse. The texts in this analysis contribute greatly to the discourse of love, which is deeply entwined with the discourse of religion. The myth of *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998) was initially religious folk lore, and through various adaptations has continued to promote ideals related to both interpersonal relationships, at face value, and religion, on a more philosophical level. This interplay between the discourses elevates these texts beyond their position as merely folklore or popular culture novels to a position of expression of an important ideology.

When performing an archeology of knowledge, typically one assesses texts that span a length of time, looking for historicity, a linear progression. Bruno Bettelheim (1957) already forged the link between *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998) and the *Beauty and the Beast* (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011) fairy tale type, so I have chosen to compare only the myth and the contemporary novels, rather than repeat the work of another. It is important to establish the connection between these texts, which will be addressed in the analyses, however the issues of differences between the myth, fairy tale and contemporary novels have been addressed in the literature review. It is now more important to determine what key message this narrative maintains.

The theoretical framework of Foucault's Archeology of Knowledge (2010) includes key terms for consideration when conducting research, all of which will be addressed more specifically in the discussion chapter. These terms are archive, enunciation, material repeatability and threshold.

- The *archive* in this case is the set of collected texts in which the narrative appears throughout history, though in unrelated historical periods and unrelated genres of writing. Despite differences in historical context these texts are related by use of key symbols in a

specific pattern, which identifies them as parts of the greater narrative. Though these parts can be identified individually in many different narrative forms, the combination of symbols is required for the narrative to be associated and therefore part of the archive.

- The *enunciation* of the signifying statements regarding the signified symbols indicates the discursive condition under which the statements may have been written and therefore make the symbol significant.
- *Material repeatability* comes into play with the statements made about the symbols, as of course the texts vary in time period and genre, though the statements made may ‘mean’ the same thing.
- *Threshold* is the point at which the discourse is transformed, which there is much evidence of, especially considering the significant length of time it has been since the myth was created.

#### Justification of text selection

I chose paranormal romance fiction because these novels reflect the most obvious connections to the myth and this subgenre is en vogue in popular culture right now. By obvious connections to the myth I mean that the lead male character is paranormal or supernatural in nature, just as Eros is a God. This creates an exaggeration of the gender roles and relationship dynamics that unfold; including the events that occur after the couple becomes romantically entangled. Additionally, in this kind of dynamic, where the couple is comprised of two individuals from different species, the act of falling in love, making the decision to love one another despite certain boundaries, designates a higher level of risk, one of risking life itself, rather than just risking ending up heartbroken.

I have also limited the selection to books involving male characters that are “vampiric.” I say “vampiric” as opposed to “vampires” because there is one instance of a male character that is

human, but is described as an “emotional vampire.” I make this distinction because I am excluding male characters that are werewolves, or other kinds of supernatural beings. The fairy tale of *Beauty and the Beast* is (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011) adapted from *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998; Bettelheim, 1975), and in that tale the male character is portrayed as a wolf or bear-like man. I believe this to be a second divergence of the myth into popular culture, as there has also been an influx of werewolf stories, including in the novel *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), which I am using for my vampiric research. However, I wanted to simplify my research as much as possible, and believe the werewolf side of the issue could be addressed in full separately.

It is not imperative for the narrative to be repeated in its entirety, only that the symbols remain intact and together within the same text, which sets these texts apart from others that may only carry through partial symbolism (*enunciation, material repeatability*; Foucault, 2010). It is in no way detrimental to the function of the narrative that other plots elements have been changed, only evidence of the power of these symbols that they work in multiple settings and under the influence of multiple authors (*threshold*; Foucault, 2010). However, in order to maintain cohesion and continuity, it was best to limit the amount of material used in analysis.

The novels I selected for this research are mostly bestsellers, and are all easily accessible to the majority of readers; these are not independent, obscure novels. The novels are Stephanie Meyer’s *Twilight* (2005), Deborah Harkness’s *A Discovery of Witches* (2011), Charlaine Harris’s *Dead Until Dark* (2001), and Amanda Stevens’s *The Restorer* (2011). I chose these easily accessible novels because they get a lot of public exposure and in at least two cases have been adapted for television or film, further solidifying their place in popular culture. I believe that since these novels represent the same genre, have high public exposure and are all twenty-first century creations demonstrates the acceptance of this kind of story.

I chose a qualitative design because I require a level of interpretative freedom when analyzing the texts, and though I have tried to maintain the same level of organization one might expect from a quantitative study, I found that qualitative design allowed the texts to be more open to the researcher's interpretation.

#### Research Method and Process

Once the connection is established, the narrative will be a whole, without boundaries of genre or context, and then a theory can be developed that applies to the general concept of the narrative, rather than a single text. I will first explain the method I will employ for establishing the connection between the myth and the paranormal romance novels, Glaser's Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis (1965). I will also explain how I intend to use literary conflict models to delve into the meaning of the narrative as a conceptual whole in tandem with Glaser's method.

The constant comparative method narrows the scope of the research by categorizing and codifying the material, until theory develops through constant comparison and synthesis. "The constant comparative method is concerned with generating and plausibly suggesting (not provisionally testing) many properties and hypotheses about a *general* phenomenon" (emphasis in the original; Glaser, 1965).

In my thesis, I follow the following four steps outlined by Glaser (1965):

1. Comparing incidents applicable to each category
  - a. Divide material into coded categories.
  - b. Codes must be present or applicable to all texts in comparison.
  - c. If code is not present, new code must be added.
  - d. When theories begin to present themselves, stop coding and memo reflections.
2. Integrating categories and their properties

- a. Within the narrative these symbols intertwine, through many narratives these symbols become clearer or are manipulated beyond recognition.
  - b. Through reflective memos, incidents will transform into properties that can be analyzed.
  - c. Properties readily become integrated and result in a unified whole.
3. Delimiting the theory
- a. Reduction of material into a high level, smaller set of concepts from the original, larger set of categories.
  - b. Reduction of terminology, generalization of language.
  - c. Consideration for creating a theory that is parsimonious and widely applicable.
  - d. Researcher will become committed to the categories, and categories will become saturated with theory.
4. Writing the theory

With such a wide gap in time between the myth and the contemporary texts, this method is best suited to accommodating variances within the structure and presentation of the codes and categories. “This theoretical delimiting of the universe economizes research resources since it forces the analyst to spend his time and effort on data relevant only to his categories” (Glaser, 1965). Categorizing and codifying the material allows for higher level of credibility on the part of the researcher, as the process can be followed entirely, though this does not mean that the process could be replicated exactly. “Depending as it still does on the skills and sensitivities of the analyst, the constant comparative method is *not* designed (as methods of quantitative analysis are) to guarantee that two analysts working independently with the same data will achieve the same results; it *is* designed to allow, with discipline, for some of the vagueness and flexibility which aid the creative generation of theory” (emphasis in the original; Glaser, 1965).



Instead of categories, I will refer to these as symbols. In focusing on specific symbols within these texts as designated by step one, (comparing incidents applicable to each [symbol]), I will first identify them within the myth, and then determine that they are in fact present in the other texts I selected; identify the symbols (signified) and statements made about them (signifiers). This will enable me to put aside differences in the plots and other details that are irrelevant. I will read and color code the passages and descriptions that are related to the symbols found in the myth. By color coding and comparing statements I will be able to determine relational value between statements made about symbols and the significance of the symbols themselves. I will also be able to identify changes made to the symbols. Eventually, I will be able to identify the underlying message of the narrative, which is my primary goal.

Through this comparison disparities may surface, where the symbols are changed within one or more text, which will move me forward to step two, (integrating [symbols] and their properties). When a symbol has been changed, considerations will need to be made regarding whether this change affects the other symbols, and what this change means to the narrative. Is this a reflection of change occurring in the environment in which the text occurred? Is this strictly relative to the format? Is this authorial preference? Some questions are not able to be answered, but still arise. It is merely important to the delimitation of the text that questions arise in general, so that theories can begin to form. More important may be aspects of the texts that are unchanged despite time and environment, which may represent universal value and importance.

Steps one and two should establish the connection between the texts, after which I will then be able to view the texts as a single narrative. I can then begin to peel back layers of meaning for the narrative as a whole, rather than having to look at these as separate documents. Through reflection and interpretation, a key theme or high level concept should emerge. In step three of the analysis, (delimiting the theory), I will step back from the details of the texts and observe the big picture, the overall narrative, always with the goal of determining the core

message. The use of literary conflict models will serve to illustrate the layers of meaning within the text in a comprehensive manner.

The literary conflict models I will employ in step three of the analysis are Man against Self, Man against Man, Man against Society, Man against Nature and Man against God. Self is an internal conflict, in which the character has a personal problem they must overcome. Antagonists Man, Society, and Nature are all external conflicts, those which take place outside the body and mind of the character. It could be said that God is both an internal and external conflict. A crisis of faith is internal, whereas in the myth, Psyche directly conflicts with Aphrodite, which is external, and a dual example of Man against Man or Man against Nature, depending on how you interpret the Greek gods.

In the discussion, these will instead be labeled Self against Self, Self against Other, Self against Society, Self against Nature and Self against God. The literary conflict models address issues of identity and conflict with the Other, and allow for deeper analysis of the levels of identity shaping that occurs through conflict within texts. This change in the titles will allow for more generalized, gender-neutral character identifiers of “Self” and “Other,” rather than the constant use of the term “Man” to encompass all characters. Considering that the main character is female, this term does not seem appropriate or socially sensitive.

Through the analysis and discussion I will establish the connection between the selected texts using steps one and two of Glaser’s Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis, which will unify the texts as one narrative. I will then employ literary conflict models in step three to illustrate the function of the high level concept or key theme. As a theory develops from the findings in these three steps, I will arrive at the core message of the narrative.

### Chapter 3: Analysis

The following analysis is divided into four sections, and through those four sections seeks to bridge the connection between the myth and the selected paranormal romance novels. Each section is named for the symbol from the text it represents. Eros and Psyche were clear choices, choices also made in the literature review. The other symbols were derived from the “And they lived Happily Ever After” and “After ‘Happily Ever After’” portions of the literature review, and have been renamed. The former terms applied to the connection between the myth and fairy tale, but moving forward into contemporary texts called for new names for these symbolic concepts. These symbols are now referred to as “Unity” and “Creation.” These simplify the importance of the symbols, and remove prior connotations.

Within each analysis section, one symbol at a time will be analyzed. This analysis will demonstrate comparison of statements made and information given about the symbols in the selected texts. Each symbol has been treated individually, with respect to the symbol as a stand-alone concept but there is often overlap of symbols as characters interact with one another..

To better focus the analyses, I formulated questions about each symbol:

- Since the Eros symbol compares Eros the god to vampires, does this mean that Eros could be the archetype for the paranormal romance vampire?
- Has the character of Psyche changed?
- Does every couple experience the same process of unity?
- What comes of the unity of each couple?

### Chapter 3.1: EROS Analysis

This portion of the analysis is dedicated to the characterization of Eros, and the modern vampire depictions of this character. It is my hypothesis that these descriptions of appearance and behaviors are shared by modern vampires in paranormal romance fiction, which makes the Eros of this myth the archetype of the modern romantic vampire. There are many recurring plot devices, including sculptural and angelic imagery, a beast-like nature, existing in darkness, rescuing the heroine, hypnotizing the heroine, and he eventually draws the heroine out of her world. From this analysis I conclude that through use of these seven plot devices there is evidence that Eros is the archetype for the paranormal romance vampire.

#### Sculptural References

There are substantial references made to these male characters sharing more physical traits with marble statues than human men, often poetically described as classical works of art, emphasizing their perfection, but also objectifying them. Even vampire fiction master Anne Rice makes reference to sculptures in her vampire works, stating that when a vampire reaches a certain age they lose their will to drink and become living statues. In the myth, Psyche's beauty is established early on as both a blessing and a curse, "The loveliness of the youngest, however, was so perfect that human speech was too poor to describe or even praise it satisfactorily" (Apuleius, 1998, p.71). The townspeople had limited ability to describe her beauty, so they compare Psyche to a statue:

Psyche meanwhile, for all her striking beauty, had no joy of it. Everyone feasted their eyes on her, everyone praised her, but no one, king, prince, or even commoner, came as a suitor to ask her in marriage. Though they admired her divine loveliness, they did so merely as one admires a statue finished to perfection. (Apuleius, 1998, p.74)

This statuesque quality is applied to the vampire in paranormal romance, as they possess indescribable beauty, alluding to a godlike appearance. In *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005):

Edward in the sunlight was shocking. I couldn't get used to it, though I'd been staring at him all afternoon. His skin, white despite the faint flush from yesterday's hunting trip, literally sparkled, like thousands of tiny diamonds were embedded in the surface. He lay perfectly still in the grass, his shirt open over his sculpted, incandescent chest, his scintillating arms bare. His glistening, pale lavender lids were shut, though of course he didn't sleep. A perfect statue, carved in some unknown stone, smooth like marble, glittering like crystal. (p.260)

Edward is further described as being "cool as stone" (Meyer, 2005, p.261) and later when he touches heroine Bella "Softly he brushed my cheek, then held my face between his marble hands." (Meyer, 2005, p.275) Statue references continue in *Dead Until Dark*, as heroine Sookie describes vampire Bill, "Anyway, his lips were lovely, sharply sculpted and he had arched, dark brows. His nose swooped down right out of that arch, like a prince's in a Byzantine mosaic" (Harris, 2001, p.2). In *A Discovery of Witches*, Diana discusses the general nature and appearance of vampires, "Their bone structures are so well honed that they seem chiseled by an expert sculptor" (Harkness, 2011, p.18), and more specifically pertaining to Matthew in her later observation "In profile he looked like a medieval knight lying atop a tomb in Westminster Abbey: long legs, long torso, long arms, and a remarkably strong face. There was something ancient about his looks, even though he appeared to be only a few years older than I was," (Harkness, 2011, p. 81).

Establishing vampires as ancient serves the purpose of instilling their immortality and wisdom. Another potential purpose is for his age to signify his mental prowess and dominance over the heroine, though, since the majority of these vampires are changed by their unusual relationship to the heroine, it is perhaps to show how extra-long life does not guarantee omniscience or omnipotence.

Another potential purpose for this could be establishing a level of control that the vampire possesses. Most vampire authors write about the recklessness of newborn vampires, and that with age vampires become more disciplined. Marcus, Matthew's son in *A Discovery of Witches*, tells of his rebirth and recalls, "Women were off limits. Too confusing for newly reborn vampires, Matthew explained, as the lines between sex and death courtship and hunting, were too finely drawn" (Harkness, 2011, p.201). Conceptualizing vampires as statues verifies their consistency and aged wisdom, dividing these vampires from wild, unpredictable newborns. Referring to vampires as statues also turns them into idols, to be worshipped as gods.

#### Angels and Beasts

In this myth, Eros is represented initially as a winged serpent. Apollo told Psyche's father of a prophecy that seemed to condemn Psyche to a beastly marriage:

On mountain peak, O King, expose the maid  
 For funeral wedlock ritually arrayed;  
 No human son-in-law (hope not) is thine,  
 something cruel and fierce and serpentine;  
 that plagues the world, as, born aloft on wings,  
 with fire and steel it persecutes all things;  
 That Jove himself, he whom the gods revere,  
 That Styx's darkling stream regards with fear." (Apuleius, 1998, p.74)

Psyche becomes wed to Eros, who is not human, and is often depicted as a winged youth, "On the shoulders of the flying god there sparkled wings, dewy-white and glistening sheen" (Apuleius, 1998, p.88). Fire and steel likely represent the two types of arrows at Eros' disposal, the golden arrow for love and the lead arrow for hate or revenge. Fire easily represents the passion of love, as Psyche says, "rash and reckless lamp, lowly instrument of love, to burn the lord of universal fire himself" (Apuleius, 1998, p.89). Jove is Zeus, often tricked into having affairs when pricked

by a golden arrow. Essentially, this prophecy speaks of a force that is plague-like, inescapable-referring to the nature of love.

This prophetic description is reflected twofold in paranormal romance: in descriptions of angelic qualities in vampire appearance and in their beastly nature. References to the angelic not only coincide with the physical appearance of winged youth Eros, but lend further credence to the concept of vampires as ethereal beings. Just as with statuesque comparisons, use of angelic terms are often an easy way to put to words that which is incomprehensible, as there have been no proven sightings of such beings, however the majority of Western civilization can relate to the idea of an angel, and what that *may* look like. Angels have long been part of Western culture, specifically Christian culture, which uses angelic imagery in the Bible as well as in explanation of the soul in the afterlife.

Every heroine in turn describes the angelic nature of her vampire, as she attempts to put words to indescribable beauty. Diana, when protected by her vampire Matthew uses many metaphors for his behavior, including when he protects her from an assailant “Clairmont straightened to his full height but kept his back to the witch and his body angled between us like an avenging angel” (Harkness, 2011, p. 37). Bella, digesting her first glance of Edward in the school cafeteria, observes that he appeared to have been “painted by an old master as the face of an angel” (Meyer, 2005, p.19). In a chapter titled *The Angel*, Bella suffers an elaborate hallucination that Edward *is* an angel (Meyer, 2005, p. 452-453). Amelia observes police officer Devlin, “Earlier, I’d thought his dark good looks had an almost fallen angel quality, but now he appeared merely tough and persistent” (Stevens, 2011, p. 24).

But it must not be forgotten that the vampire is dangerous to the heroine. Clearly, prophecy foretold that Psyche’s husband would be a winged serpent, information that her sisters use against her to incite her betrayal of Eros. Her sisters tell her, “it is an immense serpent, writhing its knotted coils, its bloody jaws dripping deadly poison, its maw gaping deep, if only

you knew it, that sleeps with you each night” (Apuleius, 1998, p. 85). Greek Gods are amoral, and therefore dual nature as good and evil is recognized; Gods can be glorious and vengeful. So too, can vampires; vampires can seem to be wonderful partners but are by nature predatory, lusting as much for the heroine’s love as her blood. This predatory nature is often indicated through comparison to animals such as snakes, wolves and other generic beast references, depending on scenario.

The difference between these vampires and traditional vampires or other predators is that because they love the heroine they try not to act on their instincts. This makes their status as predators forgivable, that they would forgo their innermost desire for the sake of a human woman, even if that means they cannot expect a long life together, as she will inevitably pass away from old age or ailment. This also lends struggle to the seeming ease with which the vampire lives life- up to this point the vampire has been in full control of his circumstances, has had *carte blanche* to behave as he saw fit. Now he is responsible to the moral compass of another, because he cares about the heroine and her opinion of him, which makes him think twice before following his predatory instincts.

In *Dead Until Dark*, after Sookie saves Bill from vampire drainers, he makes a joke about drinking her blood, “‘But there’s a juicy artery in your groin,’ he said after a pause to regroup, his voice as slithery as a snake on a slide” (Harris, 2001, p.13). However, eventually Sookie becomes a willing donor for Bill, allowing him to drink from her whenever he needs, both to prevent him from feeding on others and to supply him with a more satisfying diet than mainstream synthetic blood. Synthetic blood was developed for vampires in this novel as a way of allowing them to be among the living again and not be perceived as so much of a threat to humans. This of course does not always work, as human blood is a more natural food source. A culture of blood donors develops, comprised of people who desire the experience of being fed on, which vampires



welcome as an alternative to the synthetic blood. Bill wants to be as mainstream as possible, but given the opportunity to feed on Sookie, willingly puts this ambition aside.

*Twilight's* Edward is constantly struggling with his urge to feed on heroine Bella, "He'd never been less human... or more beautiful. Face ashen, eyes wide, I sat like a bird locked in the eyes of a snake" (Meyer, 2005, p.264). In the second installment of the series he calls her his *La Tua Cantante*, (his singer), because the chemical makeup of her blood is more appealing to him than most other humans, (sings to him), which makes his plight more difficult. He claims that having consumed much of her blood after she suffered severe injuries has to some degree inoculated him from this desire, that the knowledge that he almost lost her took some of the edge off his cravings.

In *A Discovery of Witches* the portrayal of the vampire is always tied closely to their affiliation with predatory instinct, immediately evidenced by Diana's introductory description of vampires "their eyes are arresting, which is precisely how they catch their prey" (Harkness, 2011, p.18). And again, with reference to snakelike behavior: "He made a soft hissing sound that ruffled the hair on my own neck" (Harkness, 2011, p. 36). But snake references are outnumbered by bird and wolf references. In the same instance where Diana refers to Matthew as an angel she says "His broad shoulders were curved around me like the wings of a falcon shielding his prey" (Harkness, 2011, p.37). She observes his demeanor is like that of a feral panther (Harkness, 2011, p. 19), and later refers to him as "the beast" (Harkness, 2011, p.30). Matthew is, like many vampires in the world of this novel, a scientist, and is mostly concerned with evolution and DNA research. Much of his work revolves around wolves, and once the heroine discovers this, she observes that he displays similar behaviors, so wolf references abound, especially with regard to mating rituals, familial relations, hunting and protective instincts.

*The Restorer* takes a different approach to the beastly nature of Devlin. There is of course reference to his primal side when the two are physically engaged, such as "he devoured me

hungrily” (Stevens, 2011, p.330). But Devlin is primarily dangerous to Amelia because he is haunted, and for a woman who sees ghosts, haunted people are nothing but trouble. She should avoid him, but due to circumstance she finds this impossible, and so she tries to figure out how to incorporate him into her life. However, she notices that whenever he is around, she feels drained of energy, and wonders why this might be. She visits her friend Dr. Shaw, and the following exchange takes place:

“I’m wondering if it’s possible for one human being to unconsciously siphon the energy of another. I’m not talking about emotional energy. I mean physical energy.”

“I’m not sure the two can be separated (...) You’re familiar with the concept of a psychic vampire?(...) There are two schools of thought regarding the psy-vamp. One- there is a paranormal entity within such a person that feeds off the psychic energy of others. And two- social parasitism.” (Stevens, 2011, p. 271)

Essentially, Devlin’s ghosts are drawing on his life force, and since Amelia is sensitive to their presence, her energy is drained as well. So being in his presence is all the more dangerous, because her ability comes with certain limitations and she must be on alert.

This duality creates much of the sexual tension in these novels. It is the classic bad-boy with a heart character trait that captures the attention of the heroine. Since the vampire loves his heroine and does not wish to kill her, the majority of his bestial side comes out in the bedroom.

#### Creatures of the Night

A key aspect of vampire lore is that they are creatures of the night. This has in the majority of myth been qualified by their status as undead, that the sun would burn them up, which is likely attributed to the classic symbolism of the light of good versus the darkness of evil,

consigning vampires to the shadows. This play on light and dark continues in paranormal romance, however in all but one text the concept of vampires as nightwalkers has been dismissed as myth to sooth humanity. It is easier for vampires to live in a world that is unaware of their existence, easier to live in the shadows than risk exposure and attack from humans who outnumber them. So, rather than stick to the antiquated notion of nightwalkers, contemporary authors play up the dark side of vampires through their physical appearance.

Eros hides his identity by only visiting his bride in the dark of night, and does not allow any lamps or fires to burn in his presence:

Then, all alone as she was and fearing for her virginity, Psyche quailed and trembled, dreading, more than any possible harm, the unknown. Now there entered her unknown husband; he had mounted the bed, made her his wife, and departed in haste before sunrise.” (Apuleius, 1998, p.78)

Their relationship grows from one of fear to one of real love, despite the obstacle of interacting entirely in the dark. It is said that, “the novelty of her situation became pleasurable to her by force of habit” (Apuleius, 1998, p.79). His marriage to a human would be unacceptable to the gods, to his mother Aphrodite especially, and therefore he conspires to hide his love for as long as he can. By visiting his bride only at night he hides his identity so well that naïve Psyche exclaims, “Cupid himself cannot compare with you” (Apuleius, 1998, p.80). When Eros warned her of her sisters’ plot “their one aim is to persuade you to try to know my face- but if you do see it, as I have constantly told you, you will not see it” (Apuleius, 1998, p.83) it is possible that he means she will not see the real Eros, the man, but only Godly Eros, and be unable to reconcile the two in her simple mind (he does at one point refer to her as “simple-minded Psyche” [Apuleius, 1998, p.89]).

Eros represents a level of physical perfection and so is described as having “a rich head of golden hair dripping with ambrosia, a milk-white neck, and rosy cheeks (...) the rest of the god’s body was smooth and shining and such as Venus need not be ashamed of in her son” (Apuleius, 1998, p.88). He lives the majority of his life in the light and is concerned with matters of love or desire, and therefore need not be physically darkened. Psyche was told he might be a monster, but revealing him instead as a gold and white beauty creates higher contrast between his assumed identity and his real identity.

Edward of *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) does not have dark features aside from his eyes, and his eyes are only dark when he has not recently fed. Bella narrates, “I’d noticed that his eyes were black- coal black” (Meyer, 2005, p.22). As Edward feeds his eyes change “Butterscotch today, lighter, warmer after hunting” (Meyer, 2005, p. 261). In this way, the heroine can always tell what kind of mood the vampire will be in, and when she can and cannot push physical boundaries.

In *The Restorer* (Stevens, 2011), heroine Amelia typically only encounters Devlin in the dark or in a cemetery. He is also constantly illustrated darkly, “Tall, broad shouldered and dressed in all black, he might have stepped from the dreamy hinterland of some childhood fable. I could barely make out his features, but I knew instinctively that he was handsome and brooding” (Stevens, 2011, p.19). “He leaned a shoulder against the wall, folded his arms and watched me with the darkest eyes I’d ever looked into. Sorcerer’s eyes, I thought. Numinous and mesmerizing” (Stevens, 2011, p.133). This darkness is perpetuated by the fact that he is haunted, which the heroine explains has a draining effect that can become physically apparent over time. Devlin goes through phases where his appearance is strong and striking and others where he is sunken and aged, depending on the proximity of his ghosts.

Matthew is the epitome of tall, dark and handsome.

As my eyes swept over him, his own were fixed on me. From across the room, they seemed black as night, staring up under thick, equally black eyebrows, one of them lifted in a curve that suggested a question mark. His face was indeed striking- all distinct planes and surfaces, with high angled cheekbones meeting brows that shielded and shadowed his eyes. (Harkness, 2011, p.19)

The heroine acknowledges his dark features, but also the dark attitude radiating from his presence. This is interesting because his raised brow indicates that he is curious, not threatening, and yet because she knows he is a vampire she automatically imagines him to be a threat.

Sookie's Bill is also dark, "I saw his eyes were even darker than his hair, and the whites were incredibly white" (Harris, 2001, p. 2). Although, Sookie is excited to meet Bill and so this darkness is not threatening or terrifying to her, it is interesting.

The clear common thread is that the darkness in these men manifests in their eyes. If one believes the adage that "the eyes are the windows to the soul," then perhaps this is the best physical feature through which to elucidate the potential evil within a vampire.

### Hypnotizing the Heroine

Vampire lore often describes different powers a vampire may have, from transforming into a bat, to mind reading, to hypnotism, to super speed, to flying. Aside from transforming into a bat, the vampires of these novels share these traits, and use them to their advantage whether hunting prey or a mistress.

Since Psyche could not see the glory of Eros, she was safe from becoming mesmerized by his Godly beauty, and Eros never pierced Psyche with his golden arrow, so the love that she felt for him was genuine. It is not until she attempted to look upon him by candlelight that she was struck by his beauty, "Psyche, unnerved by the vision, was no longer the mistress of herself"

(Apuleius, 1998, p.88) after which she accidentally pierced her thumb on one of his arrows, “then ever more on fire with desire for Desire she hung over him gazing in distraction and devoured him with quick sensuous kisses” (Apuleius, 1998, p.88). This action emphasized the genuinely developed love she already felt, but also dispelled any doubts she had that lead her to this point.

Two of the paranormal romance heroines experience this accidental hypnotism, and it is typically a result of the vampires stunning beauty becoming a distraction.

Amelia of *The Restorer* (Stevens, 2011) also cites feeling entranced in the presence of Devlin. She narrates, “He was handsome, charismatic and intensely focused, and he intrigued me almost as much as he disturbed me (...) I drew a breath of moist air and tried to shake off his strange spell” (Stevens, 2011, p.37). She experiences this zoned-out sensation frequently throughout the novel. Usually, this occurs when she allows herself to become lost in thought observing his appearance:

Yet I stood, enthralled by his very nearness. He turned to look out over the cemetery, so lost in concentration for a moment that he seemed to have forgotten my presence. I took the opportunity to study his profile, following the line of his jaw and chin, lingering in that shadowy, sensual place beneath his full bottom lip where that indented scar marred an otherwise flawless profile. For some reason, that one imperfection mesmerized me. The harder I tried to avert my eyes, the stronger I felt its pull.” (Stevens, 2011, p. 93)

However, Amelia does not ever get caught in a daze, and is quickly able to rejoin conversation, unlike Bella from *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005).

Edward and Bella discuss this on their first date, and she refers to this power as “dazzling”:

“Oh come on,” I said dubiously, “You *have* to know the effect you have on people.”

He tilted his head to one side, and his eyes were curious. “I dazzle people?”

“You haven’t noticed? Do you think everybody gets their way so easily?”

He ignored my questions. “Do I dazzle you?”

“Frequently,” I admitted. (Meyer, 2005, p.168)

Often Edward teases Bella for falling into trances in his presence, during which time she is usually commenting on his beauty or his intoxicating smell, likely a weaponized pheromone. “I just couldn’t seem to look away from his face. I made myself look now, focusing. He was removing a light beige leather jacket now; underneath he wore an ivory turtleneck sweater. It fit him snugly, emphasizing how muscular his chest was (...) I inhaled, trying to identify the delicious scent” (Meyer, 2005, p.170).

The other two paranormal romance heroines do not experience this hypnotism. Diana from *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011) is often curious about her mate but does not find herself lost in his beauty. Sookie of *Dead Until Dark* (Harris, 2001) is unique in that she is incapable of being hypnotized because of her telepathic abilities, though she also cannot hear her vampire’s thoughts.

It is possible that the former two heroines most susceptible to the overwhelming beauty of the vampire are indicative of the target audiences the novels were intended for. Of the latter, the writing and content in *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011) is meant for a more sophisticated audience, where *Dead Until Dark* (Harris, 2001) is considered by most to be an adult novel, in the X-rated sense, and having an easily distracted heroine would be inappropriate for these kinds of novels. The concept of hypnotism or being glamoured by a vampire is typical of vampire lore, and so it is also possible that these two authors are straying from the vampire formula in this regard.

In fact, there are many other vampire tropes that are disregarded or explained away, including avoidance of garlic, crosses and religious places and sleeping in the ground. Most vampires in these texts explain in some way that garlic is simply offensive to their sensitive sense of smell. Avoiding religious artifacts and places like churches are cited as rumors meant to convince superstitious humans that religion would save them from vampires. Bill is the only vampire that sleeps in the ground.

#### Rescuing the Heroine

This particular narrative relies on the classic damsel in distress motif most of the time, but in modern paranormal romance literature it is highly likely that the heroine will also save her vampire lover, which will be addressed in other sections of the analysis.

One character rescuing another can be both literal and figurative. In the myth, Eros rescues Psyche from being sacrificed, and later rescues her when Proserpine's beauty puts her into a coma. Despite the fact that Psyche is the hero in this myth and takes on a hero's journey, she would never have succeeded were it not for Eros. When applied to the vampire, this often means the character is going against their nature, saving the heroine rather than feasting on her or allowing her to fail.

In the case of *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), Edward notes early on that Bella is extremely clumsy, remarking "Don't be offended, but you seem to be one of those people who just attract accidents like a magnet. So... try not to fall into the ocean or get run over or anything, all right?" (Meyer, 2005, p. 107). He rescues her first from getting hit by a van at school, a very public demonstration of his superhuman speed and strength, which she must then pretend didn't happen. This is the beginning of the true bond between them, because this entices Bella to solve the mystery of what Edward is, and he must rely on her discretion. Later, well after their relationship is established, he saves her from a savage vampire, even sucking the venom from her wounds despite the risk that he may be tempted to drain her completely.



Devlin of *The Restorer* (Stevens, 2011) is a police officer, and in this capacity rescues Amelia twice. Amelia is in the cemetery alone when a shadowy being begins to pursue and chase her. Fearing for her life she goes on a mad dash, and conveniently Devlin is patrolling the cemetery, just in time for her to rush into his arms. Later, a killer they have collaborated to find takes Amelia and Devlin rescues her from sure doom.

The first time Sookie tries to meet with Bill, she is attacked by the vampire drainers that she rescued Bill from the night before, and Bill comes to her rescue, heals her wounds with his blood and dispatches with the drainers. Bill also rescues Sookie from a serial killer that has been targeting women who enjoy the company of vampires, and who was also responsible for the death of her grandmother.

When Diana and Matthew enter her apartment one night, she finds an envelope containing a picture of her slaughtered parents with the word “remember” on the back, a clear threat, and goes catatonic. Matthew rushes to her aid, caring for her and taking her away to safety. Diana is then rescued by Matthew when she is kidnapped from his home, tortured and trapped in an Oubliette, a deep dungeon only escapable through the top.

This two part rescue is a definite plot device utilized to intensify the relationships and add tension. Complications unite characters against common enemies, reveal important personality traits of the characters and provide a catalyst for change in the relationship dynamic. The first rescue is like the practice run, in which the vampire finalizes his decision to partner with the heroine, or at least not to kill her. He decides he wants her to be happy, to be safe, and generally to live. The second rescue is a rescue of love; he truly loves her and will sacrifice anything to save her. This is the turning point in which he really proves himself and the fate of the couple is sealed. He will now guard her fiercely and his beastly nature will serve the higher purpose of her protection, and so the beast is tamed, to a degree.

There are also figurative rescues, rescues that are emotional and mental, that help a character overcome some karmic burden or personal struggle. This type of rescue is typically

performed by the heroine, as she must convince her vampire that he has the capacity for good. Paranormal romance vampires share the trait of self-hatred; they very much regret the actions of their past and must overcome this to move forward with their lives.

This is not obvious in the myth, though can be interpreted. Eros is not only boyish in appearance but a known troublemaker, so much so that his own mother begs him to cause trouble for beautiful Psyche by forcing her to fall in love with someone disgusting. Instead, he takes matters into his own hands, marries Psyche and eventually convinces Zeus to accept her, as long as he promises to quit messing around with Zeus's love life. This is representative of Eros becoming a responsible man, so perhaps it could be said that Psyche saved him from himself. This is purely speculation, because figurative rescues are best conveyed when they are subtle and typically occur over time.

Diana saves Matthew by allowing him to drink her blood when he is badly injured in battle, despite the knowledge that he may not be able to stop himself from killing her. Also, Matthew feels immense guilt over the death of a former lover for which he was responsible. He was fighting with another man when she intervened and he accidentally lashed out and killed her. This is explained as part of the nature of a vampire; they run on instinct when in a rage and are not in control of their faculties at that time. Still, despite this knowledge he carries his guilt around his neck in the form of a necklace, the coffin of Lazarus. It is not until he believes Diana truly loves him that he throws the necklace into the fireplace to symbolically let go of his grief.

Edward, by vampire standards, is quite young, only about 100 years old. His level of control is still always on the edge, especially with how strongly he desires Bella for her particular body chemistry as explained before. Since he is living in a coven of vampires who feed only on animals, desire for human blood and urges to feed are natural but shameful, as they seek to overcome this primal drive. This is represented by the color of their eyes as golden, where vampires existing on a diet of human blood have red eyes. Edward continues to feel unsure of himself and shameful of his urges until the end of the series, when Bella becomes a vampire and

he no longer has to worry that he will kill her. In a way, she proves to him that he can be loved, which is an emotional rescue, but in the end, she sacrifices her humanity to solidify this fact once and for all (which will be addressed in the Psyche analysis).

Sookie offers a similar emotional rescue, showing Bill that he can love again, as he suffered greatly when he was changed into a vampire and lost his family, and again suffered at the hands of his maker and lover Lorena.

*The Restorer* (Stevens, 2011) offers both a romantic rescue, in which Amelia helps Devlin learn to love again and get over his wife, but this process is slow, and a more physical rescue of vanquishing the ghosts of his dead wife and child. Again, this does not happen until the end of the series.

#### Drawing the Heroine into His World

An important tool for developing the relationship between the characters is for the heroine to be pulled into the man's world, either by circumstance or by influence. The previous discussion of how the heroine makes a choice is often motivated by the manner in which they have been brought into this different world. Eros had an especially easy time of drawing Psyche out of her world and into his, since her family was already sacrificing her to a monster, and his mother wanted Psyche out of the picture. All Eros had to do was hide her away for himself. It is a common vampire trope that since they live for so long they possess remarkable intelligence and that this stimulates the minds of women who are drawn in to their lives. It takes a different kind of woman to spark the vampire's interest and this will be explored more thoroughly in other sections of this analysis.

In the cases of Bill and Matthew, the heroines they seek already know of the existence of vampires, so though there is some level of curiosity the vampires must employ other methods of acquisition, in Bill's case sex and in Matthew's case knowledge. Bill and Sookie develop a sexual relationship after the murder of her grandmother, and Bill teaches virgin Sookie everything she

never knew about physical pleasure. Matthew literally leads Diana away from England to his home in France by taunting her with a book she would love to use for her research. So, these women were fueled by intellectual motive primarily, though different in substance.

Edward has had to keep his nature a secret, living strategically by moving frequently and only living in dark and rainy environments where he would not as easily be spotted by humans. Bella becomes intrigued by him and takes to research, investigating native legends and other vampire folklore to figure out what Edward might be. She confronts him with this information, and they become bonded by this secret. Later, Bella realizes that she will continue to age and Edward will not, so she begins her campaign to convince Edward to change her into a vampire. So, Bella utilized knowledge to discover the truth about her love, and in turn find a way for that love to last forever.

Amelia does not have a vampire to contend with in the traditional sense, however she sees ghosts and her man is haunted, which makes him off limits. This does not stop her from breaking all of her rules and interacting with Devlin and his ghosts, even seeing his ghosts without his presence. In a way, it was his physicality that got her attention, and the mystery and interference of his ghosts that drew her away from her morals and into his world. Devlin does not share information about his past easily, so Amelia finds herself researching and investigating the deaths of his wife and daughter, even getting wrapped up in the mystery of their potential murder, mostly without his knowledge, in an attempt to better understand him.

### Chapter 3.2: PSYCHE Analysis

This analysis is dedicated to the characterization of Psyche and the representations of this character in the four selected paranormal romance novels. It is my hypothesis that the character of Psyche has remained a constant presence, but unlike the Eros character, has been altered. This is revealed in her appearance and aspirations, coping with the various physical aspects of her new relationship, including feeding practices and sexuality, how the heroine is rescued and rescues in turn, and the unique qualities afforded the heroine that complicate her and enable her to partner with a paranormal male.

One substantial change to the character type of Psyche is that the majority of heroines are now supernatural, though they are still not comparable to godlike vampires. These supernatural abilities appear to raise the heroine to an equal plane with her male counterpart, however, as I established in the Eros analysis, being a vampire is (in description) akin to being a god, and therefore no amount of supernatural power will completely equalize the characters. Only in one of my examples does the heroine become a vampire (and therefore a god by the Eros analysis rationale) but she was still required to marry and bear a child first. Although, the two novels in which the heroine is capable of bearing a vampire's child harken back to Psyche most strongly, and may be equally indicative of patriarchal order and/or women's return to power, depending on perspective.

#### Appearance/Aspirations

Psyche's ultimate flaw was her beauty. That Apuleius describes the inability of the townspeople to grasp her beauty, and thus decide she is divine, coincides with Carl Jung's (1964) assertion that, "man is unable to define a 'divine' being" (p.4), citing this as the reason so many religions rely on symbolism. In becoming a symbol, she was deprived of her humanity. Psyche proves that this is not true, that she is entirely human, through her typical human responses

throughout the story. Her humanity shines through as she demonstrates fear, gullibility, curiosity and vanity, very “ungodlike” behaviors. It is not until the end of the myth, when she becomes a goddess, that she truly loses her humanity.

Psyche’s beauty is established as her defining factor early on, “The loveliness of the youngest, however, was so perfect that human speech was too poor to describe or even praise it satisfactorily” (Apuleius, 1998, p.71). So it was natural for the townspeople, in lacking proper language to describe what appears to be divine, to assume that she was a goddess, “the goddess born of the blue depths of the sea and fostered by its foaming waves had made public the grace of her godhead by mingling with mortal men,” or that, “earth had grown another Venus in the flower of her virginity” (Apuleius, 1998, p.72).

The assumption that she must be Venus incarnate problematized her beauty by inciting the wrath of Aphrodite who did not like competitors, and found that the worship of Psyche had diminished her adoring crowds. Raising Psyche on this pedestal also made her unfit to wed a mortal man,

Psyche meanwhile, for all her striking beauty, had no joy of it. Everyone feasted their eyes on her, everyone praised her, but no one, king, prince, or even commoner, came as a suitor to ask her in marriage. Though they admired her divine loveliness, they did so merely as one admires a statue finished to perfection. (Apuleius, 1998, p.74)

It was the grandness of her appearance that banished her to the realm of, “an unmarried virgin” (Apuleius, 1998, p.74).

Bella’s description of her appearance demonstrates a level of insecurity, and she often plays down the aspects of herself that could be attractive. “I was ivory-skinned, without even the excuse of blue eyes or red hair, despite the constant sunshine. I had always been slender, but soft

somehow, obviously not an athlete (...) My skin could be pretty- it was very clear, almost translucent-looking-but it all depended on color. I had no color here,” (Meyer, 2005, p.10-11). It is when she describes academic achievement that she shows pride, having been in advanced placement at her previous school, and noting that the assigned reading at her new school was “fairly basic: Bronte, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Faulkner. I’d already read everything. That was comforting... and boring,” (Meyer, 2005, p.15). In biology class and again later with classical music, Bella surprises Edward with her intelligence and range of interests.

Amelia is slightly self-deprecating when discussing her personal beauty, mostly because she is comparing herself to someone else, “I’m what people call a quiet pretty. Blond hair, blue eyes, a nice complexion and a generous mouth. I’m thin but my muscles are strong and taut from all those years of working in cemeteries. I enjoy my share of admiring glances, but in no way would I ever be considered exotic or sultry, like the woman who haunted Devlin,” (Stevens, 2011, p. 66).

Amelia redeems herself in her career, cemetery restoration, “My work consists of many hours of manual labor for modest pay (...) But I love what I do,” (Stevens, 2011, p. 13). She is a second generation restorer, taking after her father, with whom she also shares the ability to see ghosts. Hallowed ground is a safe zone for people like them, so it is natural that they would seek work in places where they could be at peace. She is gaining renown for her work, along with her taphophile blog *Digging Graves*, and takes pride in the fact that her work eventually aids in the arrest of a serial killer.

For Diana, appearance is directly related to power, “It was straw blonde and unruly, despite the ministrations of a hairbrush. Like most witches, I had a problem getting the shoulder-length strands to stay put. Sarah blamed it on pent-up magic and promised that the regular use of my power would keep the static electricity from building and make my hair more obedient,”

(Harkness, 2011, p. 31). So the continued use of magic would change her appearance, perhaps make her more attractive. She often compares herself to her mother, who used magic frequently, “When my mother was lit up with magic, you couldn’t tear your eyes away from her,” (Harkness, 2011, p.6). She describes a period of her life in which she participated in theater and inadvertently used magic, which altered her appearance to suit whatever character she was playing, and “attracted a string of devoted suitors,” (Harkness, 2011, p.8).

Diana, however, is a brilliant researcher. “What got me away from Madison was my intellect,” she cites, adding, “my life was now my own,” (Harkness, 2011, p. 8-10). She is a PhD with tenure at Yale, with many publications and prizes to her name. Her intellectual ambitions overshadow her physical appearance, and it is in fact research that brings her closer to Matthew, and farther from her family:

“Even at a safe distance, this manuscript was challenging me- threatening the walls I’d erected to separate my career as a scholar from my birthright as the last of the Bishop witches. Here, with my hard-earned doctorate, tenure, and promotions in hand and my career beginning to blossom, I’d renounced my family’s heritage and created a life that depended on reason and scholarly abilities, not inexplicable hunches and spells. I was in Oxford to complete a research project. Upon its conclusion, my findings would be published, substantiated with extensive analysis and footnotes, and presented to human colleagues, leaving no room for mysteries and no place in my work for what could be known only through a witch’s sixth sense.” (Harkness, 2011, p.3)

Diana uses her education and career to strike a divide between the magic she wishes to avoid and the research she is so devoted to. What she does not realize is that her magic has worked in her



favor the whole time she has been a researcher, but she chalked the majority of this up to her intellectual prowess and skilled analytical abilities.

Sookie is much more confident in her appearance, “You can tell I don’t get out much. And it’s not because I’m not pretty. I am. I’m blonde and blue eyed and twenty-five, and my legs are strong and my bosom is substantial, and I have a waspy waistline,” (Harris, 2001, p.1). The more vampire exposure she gets, the more her beauty is amplified, “I’d had Longshadow’s blood by accident. The next morning, looking in the mirror, my teeth were whiter and sharper. My hair looked lighter and livelier, and my eyes were brighter. I looked like a poster girl for good hygiene, or some healthy cause like taking vitamins or drinking milk,” (Harris, 2001, p.210-211). Sookie does not have any hefty ambitions in life, partially due to her telepathy, which has also prevented close personal relationships. Hearing what your boss is thinking all the time, especially as a pretty girl, can be a problem. She is a waitress at Merlotte’s because she has not had any unpleasant experiences with the owner Sam, and she takes some amount of pride in her work. Whenever Bill asks “What are you?” (referring to her identity as a fairy, which she is unaware of) she replies, “I’m a waitress,” (Harris, 2001, p. 13 and p.27).

It would go against the grain to feature an ugly heroine, especially when looking to adapt the material to film or television, which most of these have. However, for the most part beauty is now downplayed in favor of intellect. The only case in which the heroine takes pride in her appearance but has no intellectual ambition is Sookie of *Dead Until Dark*, which is a series primarily focused on sexuality and therefore perhaps in need of a beautiful heroine to ramp up the sex factor.

### Coping with Sex

Sex is foundational for the characters of these novels, taking their relationships to new levels depending on whether the couple chooses to have sex right away or wait until marriage.

There is only one instance of a couple having extramarital sex right away, not just heavy petting, (*Dead Until Dark*, Harris, 2001), and the relationship between this couple is the least stable, eventually falling apart late in the series. There is also only one instance of a couple forgoing the courting process, (*The Restorer*, Stevens, 2011).

In these novels, sex is approached both in the traditional sense and on a different level with respect to vampirism. Feeding is a form of penetration, and is often expressed as a sensual act when shared with a partner rather than employed as a weapon. There is a combination of bonding and sexuality involved in the act of feeding from another person's body, similar to the experience of breast feeding from a mother as a child, receiving nourishment and life from the supplier.

Sex for Psyche is traditional, despite not knowing the identity of her husband. She goes to her marriage bed a virgin, and her husband swoops in to take what is his. There isn't exactly a courtship, because she never properly meets him, but nonetheless there is propriety to the situation, which she accepts because she would have been barren and unmarried otherwise, and a burden to her family.

Two of the heroines from the novels are sexually experienced, and two are virgins, whereas three of the men are experienced and one is a virgin, which leads to interesting dynamics between the couples. In most cases, crossing the line into sex changes the path the couple is on and solidifies their status, but also demonstrates a true turn away from previous family obligations, which is discussed in the Unity analysis.

Amelia is experienced, even sleeping with another man in the second novel of the series as she tries to forget about Devlin. Devlin is obviously experienced, as he had previously been married and fathered a child. When the two come together, there are few inhibitions related to physicality, their boundaries are primarily mental. Amelia is overwhelmed by the presence of the

ghosts he is haunted by, and forces herself to run away before things get too serious. They do not come back together until the third installment in the series.

Diana is sexually experienced prior to Matthew, and he turns out to be truly ancient and more than experienced. Matthew however believes in courting and wants to wait to be with Diana until they are married. The guilt that he carries forces him into a state of chastity. Diana is ravenous with lust and often finds it difficult to adhere to his wishes to take things slowly.

“We have time, Diana. You’ve known me for only a few weeks. There’s no need to rush.”

Spoken like a vampire.

He saw my dejection and drew me closer for another lingering kiss. “A promise,” he said, when he was finished, “of what’s to come. In time.”

*It was time.* (Harkness, 2011, p. 264)

Bella is a hormonal teenager and a virgin, and partially due to Edwards hypnotic presence, finds that she is overly eager to get physical, which he declines. Edward points out that as a virgin himself he does not know what to expect, and therefore may lose control and kill her, “I don’t think... that... *that*... would be possible for us,” (Meyer, 2005, p. 310). She claims that she cannot help but feel a surge of desire in his presence, and he feels the same toward her, both in lust for her body and her blood, which could lead to disaster should he forget himself for a moment. Being caught in this limbo between lust and death builds tension and anticipation, as if two teenagers needed more of that.

Sookie is a virgin because she has been unable to get too close to men without reading their minds and has been disgusted by what she hears. Having sex with Bill, whose mind she cannot read and who is quite experienced, is a relief for her, and he eagerly assumes the role of

sexual educator. Bill regularly feeds on Sookie for nourishment, and she in turn has consumed his blood and the blood of others for healing purposes. This occurs often in combination with sex, and he prefers to feed from intimate areas like the throat and groin.

Edward and Matthew only feed on their heroines in life and death situations. Edward strives to never bite Bella but when she is attacked by another vampire he has no choice but to suck out the venom to prevent her from becoming a vampire. Matthew is outraged when Diana asks him what he thinks she would taste like, but when he loses a battle she feeds him from herself to save him.

Devlin unknowingly feeds on Amelia whenever they are in close proximity. This is a result of being drained by his ghosts- that in order to recharge his spirit he inadvertently draws strength from receptive donors, Amelia in this case.

#### The Heroine's Choice

The heroine often makes deliberate choices to be with her vampire mate that require leaving behind her previous existence and declaring loyalty to her vampire's interests above her own.

When Psyche despairs that her family is unaware that she lives, and lives well, Cupid placates her "Sweetest Psyche, my dear wife," and gives in to her grief, allowing that she may see them and give them gifts, so long as she not let them convince her to betray him, "never be induced by the evil advice of her sisters to discover what her husband looks like" (Apuleius, 1998, p.79-80). He uses either his godly knowledge or some power of insight to tell her several times exactly what her sisters intend to do, both to convince her not to listen but also in an attempt to divide her loyalties between her former life and her new life. Should she betray him, she will lose him, so she must make her choice.

Diana discovers that there is an ancient covenant stipulating that interspecies relations are forbidden, but chooses to be with Matthew anyway, and even forms a Conventicle against the Congregation responsible for upholding the covenant. She does this both because she loves him and because she learns that her own people (witches) murdered her parents, which breaks her allegiance to tradition.

Amelia flouts the rules laid down by her father regarding the avoidance of those who are haunted in order to explore her curiosity for Devlin. This is partially because she must work with him and partially because she feels drawn to him and is already emotionally invested.

Sookie has always been different, and knew of the existence of vampires, but as a result of deciding to be with Bill she risks her own life and discovers that the world is far more complicated than she imagined. For the most part she gives up her old life when her grandmother dies, and embraces a lifestyle filled with mysterious creatures, one that she was meant to be part of when later in the series she discovers she is Fae (fairy).

### Unique Qualities

It could be said that beauty was Psyche's gift, her unique quality, especially since she was so beautiful she was looked upon as a goddess. However, there was more to this character. Etymologically, Psyche represents butterfly or spirit, and is a rare example of a female hero in Greek mythology. This hero status is tempered by the interference of nature as she tackles tasks set forth by Venus, insinuating that Psyche could not have succeeded if not for assistance. She is helped first by an ant, then by an eagle, rescued by her love Eros, and raised to immortality by Zeus. Despite her determination to prove herself, she is a mortal woman, not special in any way beyond her main identifier of being beautiful. This is demonstrative of the difference in the strength of women, that rather than rely on physical prowess, she must inspire sympathy and allegiance in outsiders to accomplish her goals, a feat more mental than physical.

It seems from the creatures and forces that work to aid her in her journey that Psyche has a connection to nature, and therefore a direct line to the gods. This connectivity with nature bonds her to the Earth, Earth a symbol of life, but also that of accommodation. Earth is manipulated by other elements, water, air, and fire, but despite changes made to the surface by these forces, Earth remains comprised of the same amount of material as before. In Greek mythology, as told in Plato's *Symposium* (1989), Earth (Gaia or the Roman Terra) and Eros were created in tandem, (which could also be referred to as Mother Earth and Procreation, so creating them in tandem enables Earth to sustain life through various means of procreation). In one version of the Grecian creation story, the Earth and Heavens are created in tandem (Hamilton, 1942), not the Earth and Eros as Plato writes it, which supports this connection between earthly and heavenly beings. By Plato's account, Earth and Eros having been created together leaves Eros, (meaning procreation in this sense), earthbound. This may be why the gods must take the form of a man or animal in order to copulate with humans, though this is not the case with Cupid and Psyche. He is a god the whole time. This is potentially a significant difference when attempting to decipher the true meaning of Psyche's symbolism, and perhaps the reason Hamilton's retelling of the myth leaves out so many details. From a different perspective, in a different time, the translation of the myth may have suffered due to lack of genealogical consistency, though this is true for many myths. Since we have no way of knowing the true origins of the gods, this is simply a problem we must work around.

Also rare in mythology, Psyche is eventually granted immortality, that she may be more equal with her love Eros, an uncommonly romantic notion. Apuleius (1998) describes Eros and Psyche bearing a child called Pleasure, (left out of Edith Hamilton's translation). Bettelheim (1975) refers to this as a satisfaction of Psyche's sexual anxieties, that her initial encounters with Eros were terrifying, but once true love was achieved, the act became less of a bestial courting, evolving into something more sensual. Since children come after the "Happily Ever After" they

are often left out of fairy tale, effectively cutting women off from their most natural power. This is being countered in many paranormal romance novels, including *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) and a *Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011), explained as a phenomenon that has simply never been experienced before this particular couple conceives, or that this particular couple is different from any before, distinguishing their love as something more powerful than any before.

Perhaps in the time the story was created, it was simply as Bruno Bettelheim (1975) cites, “an allegory, which, according to Robert Graves, symbolizes the progress of the rational soul toward intellectual love” or the message is as Bettelheim himself suggests, “Despite all warnings about the dire consequences if she tries to find out, woman is not satisfied with remaining ignorant about sex and life. (...) For the happiness of both partners they must have a full life in the world, and with each other as equals” (Bettelheim, 1975, p.295). Both Graves and Bettelheim are likely correct. Psyche is a spirit seeking knowledge, as is demonstrated in the Unity section, but she can also represent sexual power for women.

Diana is a powerful witch, descendent of two prominent witch families, but there is more to her magic that is only discovered through research, or information seeking. Matthew brings Diana to his lab to show her the DNA research he has been working on in an attempt to solve the mystery of how paranormal beings evolved, and she offers him her blood. When the analysis comes back, not only is her power evident, it is off the charts. This is because she comes from two powerful lines, but also because she is a chimera, “a person with cells that possess two or more genetic profiles,” (Harkness, 2011, p. 470). Essentially, she absorbed her twin in the womb, a male witch whose powers would have been equal but mirrored of her own. So instead of two opposite witches, Diana was born with the capacity to wield all the different kinds of magic, which is extremely rare, if not completely unique.

This duality of female and male energy and magic within her apparently make her a prime candidate for copulation with a vampire. It is generally agreed that vampires do not have reproductive capabilities, but part of Matthew's DNA research seeks to prove whether or not vampires are evolving, as he has noticed a decline in the making of new vampires. If he could breed with Diana, this might prove that an evolution of the species is occurring.

Sookie is a telepath, which is the only power she has known of up until she gets involved with other paranormal creatures. She discovers later that she has the ability to wield defensive energy, and eventually confirms that she is part fairy. This is good because it makes her feel like less of a freak to have answers for why she has always been different, but is bad because being a fairy makes her a target for vampires who seek to harness fairy blood so that they may walk in the light. When she comes into the creature world, she notices that her previous life is falling behind her, ("Life had sure been simpler when I hadn't dated" [Harris, 2001, p.211]) and this upsets her. She does not want to be an outsider anymore, so joining the ranks of the paranormal would give her a sense of belonging, but she grew up in a small town and has a lingering sense of community. When she defeats the serial killer who has been murdering women who sleep with vampires, she is badly injured, and Bill visits her in the hospital:

"I'll heal you," he offered. "Let me give you some blood."

I remembered the way my hair had lightened, remembered that I was almost twice as strong as I'd ever been. I shook my head.

"Why not?" he said, as if he'd offered me a drink of water when I was thirsty and I'd said no. I thought maybe I'd hurt his feelings.

I took his hand and guided it to my mouth. I kissed the palm gently. I held the hand to my better cheek.



“People notice I am changing,” I wrote, after a moment. “I notice I am changing.”(Harris, 2001, p.289-290)

Though her change continues and she embraces her new lifestyle more and more throughout the series, she still tries to maintain the human part of herself and the relationships she had before her knowledge of the world changed her.

Bella is unique in Edward’s experience in two ways. First, as noted in the Eros and Unity sections, she is *La Tua Cantante*, his singer, so her blood is very rare and appeals to him indescribably, making him more dangerous to her, and making her existence dangerous to the lifestyle he has tried to maintain as a vegetarian vampire. Edward is a mind reader, and her other surprise for him was that he cannot read her mind:

“OK then.” I glared at him, and continued slowly. “Let’s say, hypothetically of course, that... someone... could know what people are thinking, read minds, you know- with a few exceptions.”

“Just one exception,” he corrected, “hypothetically.” (Meyer, 2005, p.172)

This has kept a boundary between them, but the slight difference in her may have always affected her relationships in the past:

I didn’t relate well to people my age. Maybe the truth was that I didn’t relate well to people, period. Even my mother, who I was closer to than anyone else on the planet, was never in harmony with me, never exactly on the same page.

Sometimes I wondered if I was seeing the same things through my eyes that the rest of the world was seeing through theirs. Maybe there was a glitch in my brain. (Meyer, 2005, p.10-11)

She notices this glitch far before she and Edward address the issue of her closed-off mind. However, it is discussed later than when people have abilities, such as Edward's mind reading, as humans, the abilities are accentuated when they become vampires. So, when Bella becomes a vampire, her ability becomes something more magnified that she learns to control, eventually to the extent that she can protect those outside her body and allow Edward into her mind, which is the final step in their bonding.

Amelia of *The Restorer* (Stevens, 2011) has always been able to see ghosts, just like her father. It is explained later that this is due to the fact that she was born after her mother died, and so was born in death, which makes her capable of walking the veil between worlds. When she discovers this, she also learns that her family is not her birth family and that she did not inherit this trait but acquired it. This does not change the love she feels for her family, but certainly makes it easier for her to step into Devlin's world.

### Chapter 3.3: UNITY Analysis

Unity is the name I have given to symbolize the process of becoming a couple. This occurs in its entirety in the myth, but stretches across each series of paranormal romance novels. Where the myth is a single story, the adaptations are written as trilogies, sagas or extended series, adding complication to the exact structure of Unity. However, through analysis of the myth and comparison to the other four texts, I have found five consistent steps toward Unity that appear in every instance. These are the meeting, acceptance, separation, reunification, and the final decision. From this process comes Creation, which is addressed in the next section.

#### The Meeting

The meeting of the couple is vital to establishing the development of their relationship. In all but one text, the heroines are apprehensive about their paranormal counterpart upon first encounter. In every case, the meeting is followed quickly by a period of information seeking on the part of the heroine, as she tries to understand the nature of the new man in her life.

Psyche is taken by Eros. Psyche is sacrificed to a winged serpent to appease the gods, but is taken by Eros and whisked away to his secret hideout. She does not know his identity, and believes him to be a monster. There is a period of adjustment during which she tries to live happily in her luxurious prison, only encountering her mystery husband at night.

Psyche begins information seeking first through conversation with her husband, who will not reveal his identity. Then through conversations with her sisters she comes to believe that she may have married a terrible monster, and seeks to find out the truth by using a lamp to look at him while he sleeps, and if he turns out to be a monster, murder him.

Sookie works in a bar, which is where she first sees Bill. He comes in as a customer, the first vampire to do so since vampires “came out of the coffin.” She knows what he is immediately

and is overcome with fascination. He is taken aback by her advances, as he is used to humans being afraid of him or treating him poorly. Her information seeking period is continuous, as she learns all about vampires, but also the many other paranormal creatures that exist in the world that she was unaware of, herself among them.

Vampires often comment that Sookie is different from other humans, mostly because they can smell her fairy blood, but since she is not a pureblood it is not strong enough to be identified right away. Vampires are apparently like sharks when it comes to fairy blood- once they get a taste they can easily become addicted to the potency of power in the blood.

Diana does not practice magic often, but she uses a little to retrieve a book from a high shelf in the library, thinking that she is alone. It is then that she discovers a vampire has been watching her, and she instantly fears for her life because of what she has been taught about vampires. She declines his dinner invitation, thinking it is a double entendre.

Her information seeking time consists of figuring out everything she can about Matthew on the internet, primarily his scholarly research. After they come together she learns more about the vampire way of life and his experiences.

Another reason that these two are drawn together is Diana's smell. Matthew reveals his keen sense of smell, and often comments on Diana's particular scent, which is attributed to:

"Adrenaline poisoning," one of my doctors had called these surges of anxiety that had troubled me since childhood. The doctors explained that, for reasons they could not understand, my body seemed to think it was in a constant state of danger. One of the specialists my aunt consulted explained earnestly that it was a biochemical leftover from hunter-gatherer days. I'd be all right so long as I rid my bloodstream of the adrenaline load by running, just as a frightened ibex would run from a lion. (Harkness, 2011, p.38)

In this scenario, Matthew is the lion, and Diana is the ibex. He is drawn to her because he smells her adrenaline, which kicks his hunting instinct into gear. This is why he tells her she should never move too quickly in his presence, or he may strike out. Matthew's vampire mother also notes that "her witch's blood sings in her veins," (Harkness, 2011, p. 262). In this way, vampires can tell witches from humans, witch blood something they desire greatly.

Bella sees Edward at school, and he reacts to her so badly that she is greatly offended and perplexed. He acts as though she is completely repulsive, even gesturing as though she smells bad. She catches him trying to change classes, and eventually he is absent from school for several days, which she attributes to his apparent but mysterious hatred of her. Her anger increases until he finally returns to class and properly introduces himself, no longer acting like he hates her. Confused, she responds awkwardly to his questions about herself and wonders what she missed.

When Bella seeks information it comes unexpectedly at first in the form of a native legend told to her by a friend. She thinks the legend pertains to Edward, and starts looking on the internet for key terms, even purchasing a book of the legends of the local tribe. When her suspicions are confirmed, she eventually hears the life stories and experiences of each of his vampire family members and puts together the full scope of the situation.

Edward is also fiercely attracted to Bella's scent, citing that "Yes, you are exactly my brand of heroine," (Meyer, 2005, p.268). As previously mentioned, he refers to Bella as *Lu Tua Cantante*, which means singer, meaning in this case that her blood sings for him, it has a specific chemical makeup that is rare and draws him in.

Amelia meets Devlin when she takes a walk after dinner in the city. He approaches her to ask about a cemetery she is working in, and she is wary and curious because of the presence of the ghosts that haunt him. According to her father's rules, she should never associate with those

who are haunted, so right away she is concerned about getting involved with Devlin, even if it is related to her work and a murder investigation.

Her information-seeking is mostly social, as she gathers stories and details from mutual acquaintances until she finds a lead to follow. She looks up news articles about the accident Devlin's family was in, lies to a coworker to get the autopsy report and even visits the graves of his wife and child. She meets more and more people who offer insight and information into Devlin's situation, which eventually helps him piece together what really happened and overcome his misery by doing so, even though he told her to stay out of it. He catches her snooping at one point, and is offended that she didn't just ask him, rather than poke around in his business behind his back.

#### Acceptance

The heroine must accept the conditions of the relationship. She must accept that he is a dark being, that there are boundaries to their relationship and that being together is likely dangerous. There is a turning point in the relationships of the characters where the heroine actively acknowledges her acceptance of her vampire. This usually occurs before the conclusion of the information-seeking period, so she still does not fully understand her man nor the consequences or implications of carrying on a relationship with him. This is merely the acknowledgment of a bond, spoken or unspoken, which pushes the relationship forward.

Psyche lives with Eros. Psyche succumbs to the situation and grows to love her mysterious husband, obeying his wishes and complying with his rules. She accepts, until her sisters plant seeds of doubt, that she should be content with her situation in order to maintain her relationship.

Sookie accepts Bill's vampirism for a couple of reasons. Firstly, she cannot hear his thoughts, which has been the factor preventing her from having close male relationships in the

past. Also, with a serial killer in town, she welcomes Bill's protection. It is also a comfort to her to not be so much of a "freak" now that she knows of the existence of many kinds of paranormal creatures. She is willing to move beyond their paranormal differences:

"I love you," I said. "I don't know why, but I do. I want to call you all those gooshy words you use when you love someone, no matter how stupid it sounds since you are a vampire. I want to tell you you're my baby, that I'll love you til we're old and gray- though that's not gonna happen. (Harris, 2001, p. 167)

At some point the heroine acknowledges that there are biological limitations to the potential relationship, that can only be overcome by death or being transformed. However, in Sookie's world, the vampires have spread word that vampirism is a virus, that vampires are not undead, simply afflicted. So it was probably easier to accept man who may simply have a virus that keeps him from dying.

Diana accepts Matthew more and more over time. They become friends quickly, attending paranormal yoga and dining together, but there is always a spark. Eventually, she gives in to the idea of being with him, even knowing this goes against the beliefs of her people. Her acceptance is based on her love of Matthew as a person, and being willing to overlook his vampirism and the boundaries this creates between them, "Somewhere in the center of my soul, a rusty chain began to unwind. It freed itself, link by link, from where it had rested unobserved, waiting for him," (Harkness, 2011, p. 196).

Bella accepts Edward from the beginning. She doesn't run away or hide when she discovers his true nature, despite the fact that vampires are not a normal part of her world. She instead falls completely in love with him. "About three things I was absolutely positive. First, Edward was a vampire. Second, there was part of him- and I didn't know how potent that part

might be- that thirsted for my blood. And third, I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him,” (Meyer, 2005, p. 195).

Amelia accepts Devlin, partially because they have to work together so she cannot avoid him, but also because she cannot explain why she is drawn to him. She wants to find out if it is because she is curious about his ghosts, or if it’s the man.

It occurred to me in that moment that no matter what I did, Devlin and I were already irrevocably bound by circumstances. If the clues to the killer were hidden within the gravestone imagery, I might be the only person who could interpret them. He needed me, and that knowledge thrilled me far more than it should have. (Stevens, 2011, p.133)

Serving a purpose thrills her, and having a unique skill that she can utilize thrills her because he would have no option but to turn to her. He is dependent on her for her skill as well as the energy on which he feeds.

### Separation

There is always a separation of the lovers, usually in the form of a betrayal or a test. Both betrayal and testing occurs in the myth, but these fluctuate within the other narratives.

Psyche betrays Eros when she allows her sisters to convince her to look upon him while he sleeps, which he warned her they would do. He leaves her as punishment, and she is banished from her sanctuary.

After Sookie’s aforementioned pronouncement that she loves Bill, she takes a break from him.

“I have to have a little time.”



“Before...?”

“Before I decide if the love is worth the misery.” (Harris, 2001, p. 167)

Matthew leaves Diana because he feels he is a danger to her, and he understands the ramifications of their union. He believes that some distance between them will clarify the situation for both of them, and when he is called to Oxford, he tells her she should stay behind, which she argues against. He claims it is better for her to stay where she is safe, so she sends him off with words of warning:

“Decide how you feel about me- not because of what the covenant forbids, or the Congregation wants, or even what Peter Knox and Domenico Michele make you afraid of.”

My beloved vampire, with a face that would make an angel envious, looked at me with sorrow. “You know how I feel about you.”

I shook my head. “No, I don’t. When you’re ready, you’ll tell me.” (Harkness, 2011, p. 287)

Their period of separation is filled with more information seeking on Diana’s part, as Matthew’s mother fills her in on some of the uglier aspects of being a vampire and some bits about Matthew’s life. This whole period is a test to see if Diana will ultimately decide to go against the covenant.

Edward tells Bella constantly that she shouldn’t be with him because her life is in danger. Sure that this is true, Edward leaves Bella in the second installment of the series. He says awful things to her to try and make her believe he does not love her. She goes catatonic, and essentially stops living until she finds that giving herself surges of adrenaline inspire vivid images of him to

appear. She becomes an adrenaline junkie, seeking thrills everywhere to call up his memory reminding her to stay safe.

Because he is haunted, Amelia refuses to be with Devlin and runs away. She almost casts aside all fear and allows herself to fall in with him, until his ghosts and many others are drawn to the energy of their passion and encircle them. Terrified, she believes that her moment of weakness may have released darkness into the world, so she avoids Devlin as much as possible. She even takes a job out of town for the second novel to escape his presence and try to get over him.

### Reunification

Inevitably the couple comes back together after this period of estrangement. There is often a catalyst for this event, likely some kind of trouble.

Psyche wanders in search of Eros or someone to help her find him, and enters a temple where she is confronted by Aphrodite. She must prove herself to Aphrodite by accomplishing a series of tasks including sorting seeds, gathering golden fleece and retrieving a bit of Proserpine's beauty from the underworld and bringing it to Aphrodite. She fails in this final task, and Eros rescues her from a cursed sleep.

Sookie reunites with Bill after thinking he'd been burned alive. A group of vampires of Bill's acquaintance were torched in a hate crime, and Sookie, having no idea where he goes to ground at night, immediately assumes the worst. When she discovers he was not a victim of this hate crime, they come together with renewed passion, "together again, my doubts at least temporarily drenched by the fear I'd felt when I'd thought I might have lost him, Bill and I settled into an uneasy routine," (Harris, 2001, p. 185).

While Matthew is still away, he calls to check on the situation with Diana, and they make their choice:

“And Diana?” he hesitated. “I love you.”

It was what I most wanted to hear. The forgotten chain inside me started to sing, quietly, in the dark.

“Come here and tell me that,” I said softly, my eyes filling with tears of relief.

“You haven’t changed your mind?”

“Never,” I said fiercely.

“You’ll be in danger, and your family, too. Are you willing to risk that, for my sake?”

“I made my choice.” (Harkness, 2011, p. 328)

In a way, the catalyst was the knowledge that they were already inextricably entwined by circumstance. They both knew of the existence of the missing text the Congregation seeks, and it is known by outsiders that they have already been involved on some inappropriate level. Basically, they are already in too deep to go back and pretend they never met.

When Bella becomes an adrenaline junkie, she makes poor judgment calls. On one occasion, she goes cliff diving, and when Edward learns of this he thinks Bella has committed suicide. He calls her house to check, but gets a mixed message about a different funeral and is sure she has died. He goes to the leaders of the vampire world, the Volturi, to beg to be put out of his misery. Edward’s sister knows that the only way to keep him from getting himself killed is to prove to him beyond a doubt that Bella lives, so she convinces Bella to run away from home and go to Italy to get Edward back.

Amelia gives up running away and allows herself to admit that she loves Devlin. This gives her the push she needs to go to the gray, the world between the living and the dead, and help his daughter cross over so that he can move on.

#### Final Decision

The heroine determines the course of her life, based on her relationship to her partner. This most often results in marriage and a transformation, either figuratively or literally, in which she completely commits to becoming part of his world.

Psyche will be a goddess. Eros makes a deal with Zeus to make Psyche a goddess so that they can truly be married, because apparently their initial marriage was illegitimate since she was a human and he was a god. She willingly gives up her humanity to be with Eros.

Diana marries Matthew, which goes against the covenant, and therefore challenges the Congregation. She discovers that she actually marries him a couple of times. First they are married as lions or wolves are joined, through the selection of the female and the acknowledgement of the community. Then, they are married in seventeenth century London by Matthew's father at their family home, in proper tradition.

Bella marries Edward and become a vampire. They make an arrangement that they will marry while she is still human, so that her family can attend, because it is assumed that when she is transformed she will be incapable of seeing her family ever again. She also desires to experience her honeymoon as a human, to know what sex is in her current state before changing and experiencing everything differently.

Amelia breaks the hold Devlin's ghosts have over him to attempt to be with him. At the end of the third book, Devlin is injured and hospitalized and though there is a sense they can now

be together, the ending is ambiguous. So, as this series may not yet be complete, it is uncertain if the couple completes the fifth step and gets married, though it is insinuated.

Sookie chooses to continue to be with Bill despite the danger from both him and other humans who disagree with women that get involved with vampires, (for which there is the derogatory term “fang-bangers”). Since she is a fairy, which she does not discover until later, being with a vampire also goes against her species, because fairies are sought after by vampires for the power in their blood that enables vampires to walk in the light. There has been a quiet genocide of her people for centuries, and this is something that she chooses to look past to continue her lifestyle.

### Chapter 3.4: CREATION Analysis

The symbol of Creation is the final piece in this analysis, and is primarily concerned with the result of the Unity of the symbols of Eros and Psyche. Creation pertains to the literal and the figurative, but both version of creation manifest in the same manner in the texts. Either the couple literally creates a child, or they figuratively create or discover new knowledge, or both. Much of this section extends into the final installments of the various series.

#### Psyche and Eros

Upon the Unity of Eros and Psyche, their daughter Pleasure is born. Pleasure was conceived when the couple was first married illegitimately, but is born after they legitimize their relationship and Psyche becomes a goddess, ensuring god status for the child.

Pleasure, birthed of desire and spirit, is indicative of greater change. Achieving higher consciousness results in something pleasurable, in this case, Psyche overcoming sexual barriers and becoming a goddess. Since the gods and their mythologies were representations of the functions of the world, and explanations of otherwise unexplainable phenomena, a woman bringing Pleasure into the world is a nod to female sexuality, especially since the child is also female.

#### Sookie and Bill

Sookie acknowledges that she cannot conceive by Bill, so creation represents her experience and empowerment.

Through her relationship with Bill she experiences physical love, which she was unable to do with human men because of her telepathy, and so learns much about her capacity for desire.

She becomes empowered through her discovery that she is fairy, not just a human with telepathy, and uses her gifts to fight darkness and help others. She learns much about herself, piecing together the puzzle of her past and finding a sense of belonging among the paranormal creatures of the world.

#### Diana and Matthew

Diana gains much from her relationship with Matthew, but mostly she finds in him a chemical partnership. This novel takes a very scientific look at the mysteries of creatures and attempts to find concrete answers to the creation aspect of the narrative.

Diana conceives one child, which she miscarries, but at the end of the second novel she has conceived again and survival is promising. It is unknown as of yet what the result will be, as the third and final book in the trilogy has not been released.

However, by creating this life she is also uncovering a key aspect of alchemy that had not been discovered yet. As a seventeenth century alchemical manuscript researcher, her life's work revolves around texts that allude to a marriage between science and magic. One specific text in question is new to Diana, and is apparently a palimpsest that masquerades as an alchemical manuscript, but may in fact hide secrets to the origins of paranormal creatures. This text would be essential knowledge for all paranormals and is highly sought after. But the alchemical text on the pages is unique as well, as the images are slightly different from any Diana has studied before, and hold many symbolic references to her own life with Matthew. It is possible that this text is prophetic in nature, and that the chemical wedding described in the text is in fact the union between vampire and witch, resulting in the creation of something new, whatever their child turns out to be.

### Bella and Edward

Bella conceives a child when she and Edward are on their honeymoon, before she becomes a vampire. This was something previously thought impossible. She is transformed into a vampire when she goes into labor. She was supposed to be turned after the wedding anyway, but was unable to when she got pregnant, and now changing her is the only way to save her from the sure death of delivering a vampire child.

In the story there are myths about incubi and other creatures seducing or raping human women and getting them pregnant, but these are unconfirmed, so when Bella gets pregnant after a single sexual encounter with Edward, there is much confusion and fear. No one knows what the baby will turn out to be, but its rapid growth terrifies Edward, and naturally Bella's body has such difficulty coping with the foreign being that she begins to look like death, which upsets everyone.

The child she delivers turns out to be a hybrid, a child that can be nourished on both blood and human food, that is strong and beautiful like her father. She will reach fully maturity within seven years, and then her growth will slow to a near standstill, but there is no way to know how long she will live, so she is partially immortal.

### Amelia and Devlin

Amelia has to rearrange her perspective on life to be with Devlin. She also gains knowledge of her ability to travel through death from the hoodoo man, expanding her powers. Since she learns that she walks the veil already, it is a matter of harnessing the gift that is already there. She uses this knowledge to walk into death and help Devlin's family move on, freeing him up to be with her guiltlessly.



## Chapter 4: Discussion

### Review of steps one and two

The previous analyses completed steps one and two of the Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis (Glaser, 1965). The first step was to develop coded categories from the myth (Eros, Psyche, Unity, and Creation) and determine that all categories were present in the other four texts. All categories were present, so it was not necessary to develop new categories. I called these categories symbols, and chose to break the main four symbols from the texts into several subcategories to more accurately determine the function of the symbols within the texts. Step two required comparison of these symbols and subcategories and reflection on their similarities, disparities and any other symbols that came forward. At the end of step two, through interpretation and reflection, the symbols were distilled to a single common theme.

The texts in the analyses, *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998), *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011), *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), *Dead Until Dark* (Harris, 2001) and *The Restorer* (Stevens, 2011), are a small part of a great *archive* (Foucault, 2010), a collection of texts that utilize the same narrative despite differences in historical periods, genre and purpose. The greater archive includes a vast number of fairy tales, such as *Beauty and the Beast* (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011), and the many incarnations of the myth that stem from fairy tales. As noted in my text justification in the method chapter, through fairy tales such as *Beauty and the Beast* (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011) other variations of the myth have branched off, including the example of werewolf stories, which would no doubt reveal a wealth of additional meaning this myth has to offer. However, I focused on the vampiric branch of this mythology's tree of influence.

In order to fully comprehend the nuances of meaning within the texts, I incorporated my knowledge of history, vampire lore and literature studies. When faced with challenges of

*enunciation*, statements that are influenced by discursive conditions, I applied this knowledge actively, careful not to infuse the texts with the discursive conditions of my experience, but looking for the statements that were discursively meaningful. Through a balance of interpretation, historical consideration and reflection, I observed statements organically, seeing past the differences in language to their meanings, for comparison. This *material repeatability*, that two statements may differ, but may still possess the same meaning, is especially important when analyzing texts from different time periods, most especially when seeking an overarching theme, shared meaning or core message. In many cases in the analysis, the physical description of a character in the myth was met by an equivalent set of modern terms that describe the same imagery to modern readers. For example, descriptions of Eros as a beautiful, winged youth, gold of skin and hair, are often descriptions summed up today by referring to a character as “angelic.”

Most importantly, the concept of the *threshold* was taken into account, the point at which the discourse is transformed. Initially I assumed the narrative had transformed over time, altered to suit shifting desires of society. What I found was quite the opposite- that though the characters had been changed in various ways, the narrative maintained its original structure. In fact, the changes made to the characters were of equal weight for both male and female characters, so the dynamic between the two has also stayed on the same level, not altering the fabric of the original narrative at all. What has changed is the purpose and overall discursive situation in which these texts resonate. *Where religion once stood as a social bastion, popular culture has gained prominence and encourages a new kind of idolatry.* Despite these changes, the message of the narrative has remained the same over time.

Steps three and four will be reported in this discussion. These steps require assessing material in consideration of creating a theory, through reduction and creation of a single high level concept. I would like to clarify before moving forward that though the method states that theory is created, this theory only applies to the set of circumstances available in this particular

archive. It is likely that exploration of other branches of the myth would result in a different theory. Through these steps I will first discuss my findings from the previous analyses, then illustrate the layers of meaning in the narrative through literary conflict models, and finally offer an interpretive explanation of how the symbols contribute to the message, what the message is, and how the message is delivered.

### Dualities as *Bildungsroman*

In this section I discuss findings from the four analyses of symbols. This portion of the discussion is concerned with determining the single high level concept, or key theme, within the narrative. The myth *Eros and Psyche* (Apuleius, 1998) has made an impact on modern paranormal romance fiction, just as it once influenced fairy tales, and is now a narrative archetype.

One reason for this is the interplay of dualities and the trinity as they apply to characters and circumstances. This duality, followed by the achievement of the trinity, also places these novels in the genre of the *Bildungsroman* (Nelson, 2010; Taylor, 2012), in which the protagonist follows a progression from adolescence to adulthood through a process of struggle and education. This is a journey of self-cultivation in which psychological and moral development is stimulated by the *Liebstdod* motif (Taylor, 2012), which ultimately determines the course of the heroine's life from the instant she decides that this vampire male is her mate. General examples of dualities include more symbolic concepts such as male and female dynamics and issues of life and death. Every couple must overcome gender differences, and often the heroine and her man exercise these roles interchangeably. Life and death is always present in a vampire love story, where the heroine is risking her life to get close to death, especially in scenarios in which the vampire feeds on the heroine. Life and death are also present in the source myth, as Psyche must travel to the Underworld and return, but fails, is saved by Eros, and taken to the heavens. It is possible that

rather than interpret this romantically, it could be said that Psyche dies before she is taken to the heavens.

Specifically, dualities are present in the lives of these heroines, who often straddle two worlds. This duality may have existed prior to the introduction of the male character, and is significant of impending change. Once the male is introduced, however, the course of that change is altered. Where she was once coming into her own and experiencing relatively normal aspects of human development, she now enters into a life or death scenario. The heroine is changed by her newfound desire to be with this man, and her education now turns to a process of painful separation from her previous life and undoubtedly a painful entrance into the world of vampirism.

There is a turn occurring in this narrative in which the heroine's choice is getting easier. Rather than giving up her prior life altogether for love, she is able to maintain all versions of herself simultaneously. This was not the case for Psyche, who was caught between her family life and her married life, eventually giving up her former life to join Eros in the heavens and fully embrace her godly marriage. Psyche could never resume her human life; she could only observe what she left behind from above, which frankly, considering her family sacrificed her to a monster, was probably a preferable alternative.

Bella lives between the known human world and the newly discovered vampire world. She must keep secrets from those she values, for their safety as much as for the protection of her vampire love. Sookie's world changes when vampires "come out of the coffin," however this does not affect her human existence personally until Bill enters her life. Once Bill is in the picture, she discovers that the creature world Bill knows is far vaster than she imagined, and that she (part fairy) may have been living in the wrong world all along. Amelia must toe the line between her father's world, the rules of interacting with ghosts and her growing love of Devlin, who is haunted. Diana lives divided before Matthew enters the picture, struggling to reconcile her

witch upbringing with her desire to perform magic-free hard-earned human research, and live a normal life. Once she reconciles these two sides she is faced with the new circumstantial divide of uniting with a vampire against her own kind and the authorities that would keep them apart.

The heroine is the one who must make the choice. The two worlds are either fully divided or merged dependent on Creation, which is satisfied most completely when a trinity occurs. Psyche's child fulfills the trinity in this text, father-mother-child, Love-Spirit-Pleasure. Two other texts in this analysis offer a trinity completed by the birth of a child, and therefore stay closest to the source myth, *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) and *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011). *This physical manifestation of the couples' love is not only important to their growing relationship, but represents a new stage of evolution.*

This evolution begets a new danger, as the ignorance of those not directly involved may result in the destruction of this new trinity. The couples must educate themselves in preparation for the birth of this mysterious being, and then they face the task of educating the authorities questioning their actions. As change, as an unpredictable outcome, this child represents a threat in the minds of the authorities, who charge themselves with the task of maintaining order and secrecy of the non-human world.

In *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), vampire children have historically been human children than were taken and sired, never biologically born. These immortal children are forbidden, because they cannot age and therefore cannot fend for themselves, and are forever subject to childish impulse and destruction, now aided by strength and bloodlust. In *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011), it is not thought to be possible for a vampire to breed any way other than turning a victim, so there is no precedent, however, there are rules against interspecies fraternization.

*To overcome these obstacles these couples must instigate a paradigm shift among the species. Bella's father lives in the human world and knows nothing of the existence of vampires. She does not want to lose her human family when she is turned, so she must merge her two worlds and slowly bring her human family into her new vampire family. She uses her daughter to bridge the gap, playing on her father's desire for family. Bella and her vampire family must unite and bring as many other vampires as they can find to their side as witnesses for the authorities that their child is not undead but a misunderstood hybrid. There is an involved process of learning among vampires leading up to the final confrontation, during which the authorities, the oldest and wisest of the vampires, are educated as well. Diana and Matthew must educate their families about each other, because in their world the species are separated by rules that prevent even casual friendship in most cases. Their families must accept them as a couple, and typically do because they bear witness to the couples' sincerity, in order for them to gain the strength to challenge the covenant and prove that interspecies divisions are unnecessary. The fruit of their union will prove not only that the species are already evolving, but that something once thought impossible may be possible. Therefore, the paradigm shift is bringing forward knowledge of the previously unknown, which will change circumstances for the entire community. *So this child, this creation brought about by this unique couple, is an evolutionary advance and a catalyst for revolutionary thinking.**

*This is where knowledge became obvious as the key theme that unifies the whole. Not only was knowledge present in the previous analyses through the heroines' information seeking, and through their eventual change through understanding, but knowledge is perpetuated through this creation that others outside the couple must accept and understand. It is bigger than this couple and their problems; it affects the world they live in.*

## Knowledge

Knowledge is the high level concept, the key theme, connecting the four symbols of Eros, Psyche, Unity and Creation, but it is not knowledge gained simply by being told some information, true understanding comes from a combination of knowledge and heart, (as in emotion, not the organ). Gnosis, an “(intuitive knowledge that) is democratic in that it symbolizes reciprocity expressed in the capacity ‘to affect and be affected,’” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 in Semetsky, 2003) is creatively utilized in this myth and modern adaptations, portrayed in the form of love. It can be argued that Gnosis and love are related, because if Gnosis is the capacity to affect and be affected, and love is an affected state, sometimes referred to as affection, then love may be the result of intuitive knowledge.

Gnosis as intuitive knowledge is knowledge based on looking inside one’s self, not utilizing reason. Love is knowledge that is present all along, but dormant, not yet tapped into or discovered, and often does not follow reason either. Intuitively the characters of these narratives come together, remarking on having found their complementary halves that they didn’t know they were missing, just as in the Greek creation story told in Plato’s *Symposium* (Plato, 1989). This love they feel, this affection that has come over them, was something previously undiscovered, overshadowing any perception of affection they had before this point, but was fated, predetermined.

The Christian idea that God made man in His image, and then pulled Eve from Adam’s rib, brings to the table some interesting questions when compared to this creation story, in which hermaphrodites were struck in half, and spend their lives seeking wholeness. I discuss this in the literature review, however this idea kept returning to my mind whenever I read interactions between the Eros and Psyche type characters and they mentioned feeling complete, finding their missing half, or finally feeling alive thanks to their partner (despite the undead status of the male).

It is this wholeness that is achieved that tears down the walls between the individuals' lives, and rebuilds them as one. From this unity comes creation of knowledge, a new state of existence previously unknown.

Eros is representative of love and desire, but also of a force of nature, and possesses some level of omniscience. He creates something from nothing, but he creates the intangible, the idea of love, which is affective in that it results in affection of one individual toward another, but he also sees what will be, and constantly warns Psyche against the truth he knows is already fated. In Christendom, creation also comes of God, it is God's realm; God is the omniscient being who, in His perfection, created all things, even made man in His image. In this capacity as "all-knowing" it is by His standards others are measured and decidedly fit for Heaven, just as Eros and Zeus decide Psyche can join Eros in the heavens.

The interesting thing about this is that, again taking the creation story into account, Eros and Psyche must have been cut from the same cloth if they were meant to be together, which implies that the division between god and mortal has no bearing on the fate of two souls seeking wholeness. Often there is a moment where the couple must look inside themselves, look inside their hearts, to decide what they want or what is best, rather than rely on old knowledge or rules. This comes back around to Gnosis, looking inside the self for the truth.

Essentially there is a connection between the concepts of knowledge, Gnosis, love, Eros and the Christian God today. These concepts are related if not synonymous to a degree, and therefore highly adaptable to a variety of social constructs, which contributes to the success of the continued influence of this myth.

### Finding God

What is the message of this narrative? To answer this question, I have broken the narrative down into three categories, always with the key theme of knowledge in mind. I chose to



utilize literary conflict models to demonstrate the different layers of message at work in the narrative. As stated in the method chapter, the literary conflict models are typically Man against Self, Man against Man, Man against Society, Man against Nature and Man against God. In this discussion, these will instead be labeled Self against Self, Self against Other, Self against Society, Self against Nature and Self against God.

The first layer of this narrative fulfills the internal literary conflict of Self against Self, and is as Bruno Bettelheim (1975) suggests: a story about a girl dealing with her sexuality. So, the conflict is Psyche against her Self, she is her Self and the Other, going on a journey after which she will ultimately gain knowledge of herself by gaining knowledge of her sexual nature (*Bildungsroman*; Nelson 2010; Taylor, 2012). She learns many other lessons about herself, mostly reflective of her humanity as she struggles to cope with her insecurities. She is told she is the most beautiful mortal woman, but doesn't feel she is beautiful enough for Eros and steals Proserpine's beauty. She is told by Eros that her sisters will lead her to betray him, but she allows them to plant the seeds of doubt that result in Eros leaving her. She never has to overcome these obstacles directly, as she is assisted by outsiders and ultimately casts aside her old life in favor of eternity with Eros. This is perhaps because she discovers her true identity through Eros and so leaving her old life behind was actually walking away from a false reality.

The second layer is a story about a girl and a paranormal romance, which may sound the same, but does add a level of complication. This fulfills the external literary conflict model of Self against Man, but also potentially Self against Nature, as the Greek gods were of course based in natural phenomena and vampires are dead, changing the dynamic from a human to human interaction to a complex and unequal paranormal relationship. Psyche must not only understand her man as a man, but as a god, or vampire, and therefore does not simply have to decide to love him, but must decide how she feels about being with someone she is not equal to. Especially with vampires, there is always that moment where the characters must decide if they will ever unite as

vampires or if she will remain human, in which case he will surely outlive her, and she will grow old while he remains young, so nature again strikes a blow to the couples' happiness.

The third layer, the most important, fulfills the internal and external literary conflict model of Man against God. Initially Psyche fails in this, betrays Eros, and must redeem herself. She must cast aside all others in his favor, she must be willing to give herself completely to his mercy, and she must demonstrate contrition. The tasks set upon her by Aphrodite are acts of contrition, earning her way back into good graces; though in the end the god Eros takes pity on her and saves her from herself, carrying her with him to the heavens.

Essentially, the message of this myth can be summarized with this statement, inspired by the word choice of Plato (1989):

*Love is a god, and if you demonstrate your love for him, you may join him in the heavens.*

It should be plain that this sentiment is echoed in Western Christian society, and is perhaps as simple as my comparison of Plato and C.S. Lewis, where Plato says "Love is a great god," Lewis says, "God is Love," a difference of religion-based perception. If interpreted from a Western Christian perspective, the previous statement could in fact read:

*God is love, and if you demonstrate love of God, you may join Him in Heaven.*

It is reflected in Western Christian society that sinners must be forgiven by God, but only if they approach Him in the spirit of contrition. Psyche, etymologically representative of spirit, goes through a journey of contrition, demonstrating her devotion to her god and giving herself completely to his judgment. He saves her from herself and brings her with him to the heavens, where he marries her. This is reflected in the lives of Christian nuns, who say they are married to God. Little pieces of this myth can be found throughout Christendom.

*This is the best answer to the question of this myth's prevalence.* This myth worked and continues to work because there is a powerful educational message; this myth represents a socially constructed idea of what life is about, which is reaching enlightenment through a higher power.

The Greek version of the statement carries a twofold meaning. The first meaning plainly depicts Psyche's relationship with Eros as a model for how to appease a god and be welcome to the heavens. But Eros represents procreation, desire and physical love, so the second meaning is that to demonstrate love, that is, to experience physical acts, is to know the god, and therefore to be worthy of the heavens. This is the route the other texts in this analysis have followed, proven by the creation of new knowledge in the form of a child, the ultimate goal. Sex then becomes the key to reaching enlightenment, the vehicle for knowledge.

#### Knowledge, sex and enlightenment

I have narrowed the various categories within the texts down to the high level concept of knowledge, as it is related to spiritual enlightenment, and have found that according to this myth enlightenment is achieved through the physical act of love. I will now further explore this theoretical standpoint and discuss the implications of sex as a literary model of education of the Self, and the role of transformation and creation as they key to enlightenment.

I call sex the vehicle for knowledge because it is the medium through which knowledge is pursued. This narrative deals with women coming to terms with sexuality (Bettelheim, 1975), and the greater message that through sexuality enlightenment can be reached. This is a message directed at women- that only through sexuality and the act of creation can they achieve enlightenment, or prove that they are worthy of their god.

The vehicle for knowledge in these texts harkens back to the true Eros: desire and sexuality. These heroines learn much about themselves from embracing their desires and

exploring their sexualities, literally coming to know the Self through a relationship with the Other. The Other is the male, the unknown, which the heroine unites with via this sexual relationship. Eros, the force between the heroine and the unknown, is generative in that by pursuing him she is changed, he is changed, and something new is created.

Sex is the most natural way to literally and figuratively unite two individuals. It is noted in my literature review that rape in literature is said to be the act of falling in love (Toscano, 2012), and makes a valid point about sex as a power act and an act of discovery. Two individuals clash and literally become one, as closely as two people can, in an effort to better understand one another, or create some new reality in which they can both reside, through a shared experience. C.S. Lewis states, “We shall draw nearer to God, not by trying to avoid the sufferings inherent in all loves, but by accepting them and offering them to Him; throwing away all defensive armor” (1960, p. 122). *This intersection of vulnerability and intimacy is the ultimate platform for discovery.*

In these texts, the males’ experiences change because as they are studied by the heroines through the sex act, they are changed as she is changed. It is the responsive hermeneutic process of learning, as though the male is a text from which the heroine learns, but as she learns her knowledge impacts the message of the text, and so on. This cyclical relationship is to affect and be affected; the embodiment of Gnosis. It is this intuitive knowledge that is expressed through physical love in these texts.

That humans are defined by different sexes draws a divide in understanding, though humans can strive to learn about the world around them and can be educated on the same materials, there can never be true understanding of the experience of a different sex. A woman will never fully understand the male experience, or vice versa, and considering the growing

number of sexual identities, it is possible that the sexes are becoming more fluid as a result of this divide, but are evidence of continued desire to overcome and understand.

Knowledge emerged as a key concept through information seeking in the process of Unity. In every instance, the Psyche character had to rationalize her prior knowledge with new knowledge gained through the confrontation of meeting the Eros character. In the majority this resulted in new understanding and creation of new knowledge from overcoming boundaries, setting aside preconceived notions and Psyche's perspective shift as her character is changed by Eros.

Comparison is the basis of this knowledge gain, as it is natural to compare that which we know to that which we seek to comprehend, so Psyche begins by comparing Eros to her expectations of a man, a lover, a god, a vampire, usually finding no comparable experiences from her past. The experience of being with the Eros character is then unique, certainly aided by his paranormal status, but also in the nature of his love. He is love incarnate, his love is perfect and unmatched. Though he feels the same about her, because she is subject to typical human traits like low self-esteem and doubt, she continuously proves herself to him, but is mostly convincing herself that she is worthy of him. Once she achieves self-worth, she is prepared for transformation and transcendence.

The Psyche character archetype is a *trans* character, she moves beyond or across boundaries. It is only natural then that her journey results in a child that transcends all previous knowledge of the possible, and is also classifiable as a *trans* individual. The difference is that Psyche had to earn her place, where the child is inherently beyond nature and understanding. This child is a hybrid, but is beyond the abilities of both of her parents, a combination of desire and spirit, human and vampire, alive and dead, and stronger than both. This child represents new knowledge in its physical form.

That which is created, in the myth and the two texts that result in a child, is something that never existed before. Pleasure, for Psyche, was born of her transformation and brought this child representative of a new concept into the world. In the cases of both *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011) and *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), the creation of a child between a woman and a vampire has never been documented and is therefore unpredictable. What these couples create is something new and hybridized. These heroines go through a transformative process that enables them to create trans-species children.

Specific to *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011), in order for Diana to be suited to birth this hybrid child, she was first a chimera, one person with the biological makeup of two, and she then had to overcome the boundaries between witches and vampires in order to be close enough to Matthew to conceive. Bella of *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005) also has to overcome the barrier between being Edward's food and Edward's wife, and just as she brings her daughter into the world she is transformed into a vampire. The act of birth both transformed her and brought forth this hybrid being.

These hybridized children exist across species boundaries, straddling the line between human and vampire, alive and dead. Not one or the other, but stronger than both. Bella and Edward's daughter, for example, can walk in the light, has super strength and fast healing, drinks blood and consumes human food, will live a much longer life than any human, and will age extremely slowly upon maturation. Her abilities make her more powerful than her parents.

Achieving the trinity allows the heroine to officially enter her man's realm. It is currently unknown what becomes of Diana from *A Discovery of Witches* (Harkness, 2011), but both Psyche and Bella birthed a child and were transformed so as to be with their men forever in his world. There are two potential messages here: women must birth children to be accepted by patriarchal

society, or that achieving the trinity makes women sacred. In both texts featuring children, the heroine births a daughter, which is not ideal in a patriarchal society that favors sons.

Participating in the sex act, which is by nature a demonstration of subordination, and birthing a child, are two crowning aspects of patriarchy, solidifying women's positions as wives and mothers. That the heroines must go through this process to join the man in his world, cement the notion that this is the path to happiness or enlightenment. This is the way women should behave if they want to experience true love- and in the end they must sacrifice their humanity to do so, as Psyche did when she ate the ambrosia, and as Bella did when she became a vampire.

However the birth of a daughter is an important sign for women considering the power of this trans-species child. The unique and unpredictable nature of the offspring from these two species signifies that something new can come of a union in which the woman is self-aware and satisfied. These are never rape scenarios, never practices of dominance, but a shared venture into exploring each other's physical and emotional being, and ultimately, discovery.

## Conclusion

Through this discussion I have shown that every heroine faces an issue with duality, and that this issue is best resolved through a trinity, as the myth purports that enlightenment is achieved through the act of physical love. The heroine, and in fact the potential relationship, is flawed without the final step of creation, of knowledge, a child, or both, though creation of both leads to a more solidified relationship. Creation of both enables the heroine to join her male counterpart on his level, as Psyche and Bella demonstrate by becoming a goddess and a vampire, respectively.

The theory however goes back to the core message, which was my primary pursuit from the beginning. This surprisingly religious message (*Love is a god, and if you demonstrate your love for him, you may join him in the heavens/ God is love, and if you demonstrate love of God,*

*you may join Him in Heaven*) has lasted the test of time, perhaps because it *is* religious in nature, and in its simplicity is easily integrated into various popular culture mediums. Through constant comparative analysis the message became clear beneath the layers of meaning in the text.

I have uncovered three conceptual layers that support the myth's message:

- Representation of the four key symbols of Eros, Psyche, Unity and Creation.
  - In this layer, the symbols must all be present and function in the same manner.
  - Results in creation.
- Representation of the problem of inner duality, resolved through the trinity.
  - In this layer, personal identity is either merged or redefined altogether, relative to the strength of the relationship.
  - Characters play out their romance in a predetermined plot style that encourages change in the characters in order for harmony to be achieved.
  - Happy ending; results in creation.
- Representation of knowledge seeking through the Other, acquisition and creation through the physical act of love.
  - Results in creation.

All three of these layers are interdependent. They feed off of one another and reinforce shared meanings that contribute to the core message.

This message is parsimonious and easily relatable to most human beings who seek both love and answers to the question of the afterlife. It is affective and effective, a duality achieved through a narrative archetype that is sensitive to human nature but promises more to the dedicated. The Greek gods may no longer be actively worshipped, but at least one message is living on in the most modern religion of all: popular culture.



## Conclusion

I will never forget the first time I read this myth, nor the “A-HA” moment I had when I started seeing the myth in other books I read. Through this research I was able to verify this connection, but more than that, I was able to follow that connection through to the bigger picture, the core message of the narrative.

Part of the bigger picture is answering the difficult questions of why and how this myth and its message have recurred in various genres for thousands of years. While the answers can be approached philosophically and I could give a series of speculative non-answers, I am attempting to offer a more concrete response. The key theme for this particular narrative is knowledge, and the illustrative use of sex as a vehicle for knowledge; this is how the message is transferred from genre to genre. Sex is a common denominator of human existence, and is an effective and relatable scenario-based manner to relay information from person to person, and for people to get to know one another and themselves.

This message (*Love is a god, and if you demonstrate your love for him, you may join him in the heavens/ God is love, and if you demonstrate love of God, you may join Him in Heaven*) is maintained through a complex system of layered concepts that carry minor supporting messages. This message works because it insinuates itself into the available religious climate. Though western society does not practice worship of the Greek gods, through idolatry of popular culture the gods live on, taking the form of the newer Christian God.

I thought that this research would conclude years of observation, but what I found are many more potential avenues of research. Most of the paranormal romance texts I selected have been or will be adapted into film. In order to take this research an extra step further, analyzing the translation of the narrative into film or other mediums would triangulate the findings. If the

message can be effectively translated into other mediums, it is likely that it will reach a broader audience.

In the literature review I mention that there are pieces of this myth throughout fairy tales, not strictly within the *Beauty and the Beast* (LePrince de Beaumont, 2011) tale type. Research into the permeation of this specific myth throughout fairy tales would likely reveal a wide variety of potential research paths. This can serve as triangulated research as well, if looking at fairy tales that have been adapted to film or animation. Depending on whether the film is intended for children or adults may also change the manner in which the message is delivered, if it exists in these incarnations.

Some opportunities include investigating the use of the myth in other types of paranormal romance fiction, or other types of fiction in general, which may result in an entirely different message. This would likely require creation of a very basic blueprint for text selection, outlining the fundamental details a text should include to be considered. I propose either the presence of the symbols I have designated here, (Eros, Psyche, Unity and Creation) or the five steps to Unity outlined in the analysis.

The religious tone of the message reinforces a specific set of values. This is high level social conditioning; rather than leave the pursuit of identity to the individual, a particular set of values that contribute to social identity for readers is being perpetuated through this narrative. Future critically-based research could investigate the pervasive nature of religious material in popular culture, using this research as a platform.

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### EDUCATION

- MS Communications**, Eastern Washington University June 2013  
*Emphases in Technology and Culture*
- Leadership Certificate**, Eastern Washington University June 2013
- BA Interactive Media Design**, Alverno College May 2010  
*Emphasis in Visual Communication Theory*
- Foundational Studies**, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design 2005-2006  
*Emphasis in Integrated Fine Art: Printmaking & Sculpture*

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- Graduate Student Instructor & Assistant**, Eastern Washington University 2012- 2013
- Instructor of Introduction to Speech Communication.
  - Assisted professors of Intercultural Communication and Introduction to Leadership.
  - Developed and edited departmental distributable materials using Adobe InDesign.
- Order Processor/ Photo Editor**, Dorian Studios, Spokane, WA 2011- 2012
- Promoted from order processing to photo editing within one month of employment.
  - Invited to assist the photo editing team in spring 2012.
  - Edited photos using Adobe Creative Suite, including Lightroom and Photoshop.
- Freelance Writer**, Demand Media Studios Inc., Spokane, WA 2010- 2012
- 70+ articles published in a variety of subject areas; samples and links available.
- Sales Associate**, Electronics, Target, Milwaukee, WI 2008- 2010
- Maintained a high level of technical product knowledge and coordinated inventory.
  - Established and maintained effective relationships with customers and colleagues resulting in increased customer satisfaction, sales and productive collegial interactions.
- Circulation Clerk**, Alverno Library, Milwaukee, WI 2007
- Recruited by staff to organize and maintain catalogue of art slides.
  - Responded to students and other patrons' needs though comprehensive knowledge of library resources and research strategies.
- Internet Marketing Assistant**, Alverno Presents, Milwaukee, WI 2007- 2008
- Created and monitored online advertising campaign including weekly emails disbursed to patrons, students and community members.
  - Implemented social media strategy to engage and increase student interest and participation.



**Crowd Management**, Milwaukee World Festival Inc., Milwaukee, WI 2006- 2009

- Trained in crowd management strategies including customer service, crisis management, damage control, emergency protocol and response.
- Maintained high level of professionalism while enforcing private property regulations, ensuring safety for customers, performers, vendors and fellow staff members.
- Exercised caution and discretion in high sensitivity situations.

**Merchandise Sales**, Pabst Theater Foundation, Milwaukee, WI 2006- 2008

- Managed inventory and transactions with band managers.
- Trained newly hired staff as foundation acquired new venues.
- Maintained professionalism while interacting with diverse audiences in frenetic venues.

## MEMBERSHIPS

Northwest Communication Association 2013

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Northwest Communication Association Conference April 2013

- *Plato and Lewis: The Discourse of Love*

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**Winner**, National Novel Writing Month 2010

- Wrote 50,000+ word novel in 30 days

**Redline Permanent Print Collection** 2010

**Alverno College Institute for Educational Outreach International Gift Collection** 2010

**Alverno College Permanent Art Collection** 2010

**Volunteer Assistant Baker**, Nona's Café, South Milwaukee, WI 2008-2010

- Assisted café owner by baking several times a week, which included learning Italian baking techniques, maintenance of stock and health code standards.
- Implemented new products when ahead of schedule and executed custom orders.

**Volunteer Event Manager**, Milwaukee Pride Festival 2006- 2009

- **Merchandise Manager**: managed inventory and financial transactions with band managers.
  - Trained youth volunteers in all aspects of merchandise sales.
- **Hospitality Manager** (as needed): managed lodging, dining and other needs of performers, (up to 36 acts throughout the event).

**Big Sister**, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Milwaukee, WI 2005

**Art Gallery Assistant**, Rainbow Regional Community Center, Spokane, WA 2004

**Volunteer Event Staff**, The Detour, Spokane, WA 2003

**Volunteer**, Odyssey Youth Center, Spokane, WA 2001-2004