IT'S A TWILIGHT THING—YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND:

A FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE TWILIGHT SERIES

by

LESLIE MICHELLE COLE

(Under the direction of Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre)

ABSTRACT

In this Foucauldian analysis of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series, I identified several discourses at work in the *Twilight* series and I discussed how and why author Stephenie Meyer might have deployed those discourses. Using Derrida's (1980) law of genre, I conclude that *Twilight* participates in several genres and perpetuates several discourses without belonging to any one genre classification. I argue that, as a gothic-romance, the series perpetuates the promise of patriarchy Janice Radway (1984/1991) associated with romance and the discourse of masochism which Masse (1992) associated with the gothic genre. Reaprropriating a term made famous by Derrida (1981/1972), I call this which conveys the inherently dual nature of patriarchy the discourse of patriarchy as a *pharmakon*. Next, I argue that Meyer's vampires and spirit wolves are written according to what Asma (2009b) called the New Testament model of monstrosity and nobility. Further, I argue that Bella Swan becomes the most abject and monstrous figure in the series during her violent and grotesque pregnancy and that through this unexpected pregnancy Meyer extends the formula of the marital gothic to write what I call a maternal gothic. In the third part of this study I examined how Stephenie Meyer used the act of

writing and her familiarity with literature as a means to both resist and reaffirm Mormon

doctrine, particularly its celebratory conceptions of patriarchy, marriage, and motherhood.

INDEX WORDS: Discourse analysis, Law of genre, Romance literature, Gothic romance literature, Marital gothic literature, Patriarchy, Pharmakon, Monstrous, Abject, Grotesque, Maternal gothic, Twilight, Stephenie Meyer

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DEDICATION

To my mother for teaching me that it is never too late to refashion one's life, to my father whose

wild renditions of nighttime stories taught me the text is never simply the text, and to Patrick for

continually challenging me to think unconventionally.

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CHAPTER 1: PHENOMENON

The word 'phenomenon' is overused in modern popular culture, but I really do believe this is what we have. –Ursula Mackenzie, CEO at Little, Brown, the publisher of *Twilight* (as cited in Ryan, 2008)

Background of the Problem

It has been several years since the first installment of the *Twilight* series hit the bookstands in 2005. With over 116 million copies sold worldwide (Erzen, 2012), and film adaptations earning over 4 billion dollars thus far (Brown and Company Publishers, 2012), the *Twilight* franchise is still going strong. When I came to the series in the fall of 2008, the four books[1] had already become, just as Mackenzie said, a popular culture phenomenon.

By now, those who have not read the books or seen one of the film adaptations probably know of the *Twilight* saga[2] but wonder, "what's all the fuss about?" (*USA Today* as cited in Krohn, 2011, p. 64). Die-hard fans of the series, known as Twihards or Twilighters (Valby, 2008), have taken up the rather cheeky mantra, "It's a *Twilight* thing—you wouldn't understand." The only way to truly grasp the popularity of this teen literature phenomenon, fans maintain, is to read the epic 2,458 page saga oneself. As a librarian accustomed to reading crossover literature marketed to a younger demographic, that's exactly what I did.

After reading the first book in the series, I felt that I knew why *Twilight* was so popular. One word: Edward—gorgeous, mysterious, brooding Edward. Many of the female *Twilight*

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[1] *Twilight* (2005), *New Moon*, (2006), *Eclipse* (2007), and *Breaking Dawn* (2008)
[2] However, a more detailed familiarity with the *Twilight* series is necessary for understanding the critiques and arguments that follow in this dissertation. Consequently, for my readers who have not read the Twilight series (or for those who might benefit from a refresher of the series' many twists in plot) I provide a brief synopsis of the series in Appendix A.

fans I knew called him the perfect man. He was attentive, nurturing, and most of the women I spoke with didn't have any objections to his incidental wealth and unfathomable good looks. Edward was a dream guy if there ever was one, and who did he seem to be falling in love with? Bella—a plain and clumsy girl of no account, the girl I'd been as a teen! I completely suspended my disbelief in the grandiosity of the romantic love depicted in *Twilight* and gave myself over to the fantasy.

I would later learn that *Twilight (1)* possessed all the narrative elements characteristic of a romance written in accordance with what Radway (1984/1991) called the discourse of "the promise of patriarchy" (p. 119). Romances written in this discourse, Radway found, were especially satisfying in that they gave women "the opportunity to project themselves into the story, to become the heroines and thus to share her surprise and slowly awakening pleasure at being so closely watched by someone who finds her valuable" (p. 67). These words described my experience of *Twilight (1)* quite accurately. However, my reading experience was also very nostalgic. Reading *Twilight (1)* took me back to my senior year in high school when I read many of the works Meyer alluded to: *Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. I began to experience a feeling of kinship with Meyer as I learned we shared a love for these classics.

My thoughts also turned to Stephenie Meyer's part in the *Twilight* phenomenon. Remembering the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2004) who wrote, "there is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made" (p. 4), I quickly became just as fascinated with the making of the *Twilight* series as its content. I was amazed to learn that Meyer, a stay-at-home mother, penned the first installment of the series while caring for her sick husband and three small sons. I began to suspect that the *Twilight* series was as much the story of a stay-at-

home mother's unexpected burst of literary creativity as it was about the life of Bella Swan, the heroine of the series.

Statement of the Problem

While preliminary investigations led me to believe the discourse of patriarchy's promise factored heavily in the appeal of the series, I was also suspicious of the notion that a single discourse could explain the *Twilight* phenomenon entirely. I wanted to explore my specific concerns with patriarchy's promise without closing off the opportunity to identify other discourses that might be at work. To that end, I designed this poststructural feminist study in which I use Foucauldian discourse analysis as a method to identify other important discourses at work in *Twilight* and to describe how those discourses were perpetuated by author Stephenie Meyer.

Bove's (1995) essay on Foucauldian discourse analysis helped me establish the questions that would guide my investigation. According to Bove, in order to properly interrogate a discourse as Foucault understood the term, one should ask the following questions: "How does discourse function? Where is it to be found? How does it get produced and regulated? What are its social effects? How does it exist as a seemingly ensuring flow of linguistic and institutional transformations?" (p. 54). I modified these questions, focusing on two areas of inquiry:

1. What are the discourses at work in the *Twilight* series?

2. How were these discourses perpetuated and transformed in the *Twilight* text?

Summary of Study

I divided my research into two sections to answer these questions. In the first section, I identified several of the discourses in the *Twilight* series. However, in this process, I found it necessary to embrace (and then trouble) literary criticism's tradition of categorizing texts by

genre. For example, I found that that the first installment of the *Twilight* series could be

categorized in the romance genre, and, as such, I suspected it perpetuated the discourse of

patriarchy's promise which Radway associated with romance novels of the twentieth century.

However, I also found that *Twilight* could be categorized as gothic which indicated that I should

look for the discourse of masochism which Masse (1992) and Modleski (1982/2008) associated

with gothic novels.

Two things came out of this part of the investigation. First, I learned that many

characteristics of the twentieth century trade romance can be traced back to eighteenth century

feminine terror, or gothic novels. Therefore, the concept of romance novel as we might think of

it today is still so laden with gothic vestiges that the two genres are, in many respects, identical.

Therefore, I found it possible, especially for the purposes of examining *Twilight*, to discard pure

romance as a category and think instead in terms of gothic/romance. Having secured the

overlapping qualities of romance and gothic into one gothic/romance category, I inadvertently

extracted some of the characteristics that were considered uniquely romantic and uniquely

gothic. Second, as I followed this trail of genres, I found evidence that led me to believe that

Twilight possessed the characteristics of several other genres and sub-genres including marital

gothic, masculine horror gothic, and even modern chick lit romance. I also explored how

Meyer's adaptation of vampire and werewolf lore might, or might not, possess the characteristics

typical of a horror narrative centered on such monsters. I found, once again, unexpected areas of

overlap. For example, I was particularly shocked to see so many commonalities among vampire

protagonists such as Bram Stoker's Dracula and the Byronic hero of gothic and gothic/romance

novels. In this experiment with différance (Derrida, 1972/1982), I learned that the more I

worked to categorize *Twilight*, the more categories I needed, and the less they meant.

As I continued the process of identifying *Twilight* in terms of genre, I looked for the specific discourses associated with each genre. Therefore, I studied how the characteristics of gothic/romance might perpetuate the gothic discourse of masochism (Masse, 1992; Modleski, 1982/2008) and the romantic discourse of patriarchy's promise (Radway, 1984/1991). Being forced to look for two very different, almost opposite, discourses in the same text prompted me to re-evaluate the existing theory I was using to understand these feminine genres. Was *Twilight* about the promise of patriarchy? Or was *Twilight* about the peril of patriarchy? I found that the answer was yes to both questions. I realized that behind every masochistic action in *Twilight*, one could see the trace of hope, of promise. Likewise, behind every promising romantic event lurked the threat of peril and the necessity of masochism. I developed the theory that, as a gothic-romance, *Twilight* perpetuates the discourse of patriarchy as *pharmakon*—patriarchy as a discourse which can mean both death and life for the heroine. Further, I found that, through this discourse, *Twilight* explores the peril and promise of patriarchy, not just for women, but for men also.

I found other discourses at work in the series as well. As I studied the characterization of Edward, the vampire, and his spirit/werewolf rival, Jacob Black, I found three things. First, I found that Edward and Jacob represent a New Testament monster/Old Testament monster binary around which *Twilight* explores various meanings of humanity, nobility, and redemption. I also found that Edward and Jacob were actually very domesticated monsters, who, by virtue of their domestication, were each given roles as different types of heroic monster slayers. Lastly, while I found that Jacob and Edward personify the hybridity and liminality typical of monsters, I will argue that they are poor examples of the abject and grotesque, which, according to Bakhtin (1968/1984), Hurley (2007), and Kristeva (1980/1982) are key components in what defines the

monstrous. In fact, on my search for a truly monstrous monster in *Twilight*, I found only one:

Mrs. Bella Cullen. Once Bella marries Edward and begins having sex with him, her already

fragile, unruly frame almost immediately transforms into what I call the monstrous maternal.

Sparing none of the details about Bella's grossly pregnant and violently begetting body, Meyer

re-invigorates and elaborates horror's trope of the "The caesarian operation [which] kills the

mother but delivers the child" (Bakhtin, p. 206), and may, in fact, be the innovator of a new sub-

genre: the maternal gothic. I will further argue that the narratives surrounding the monsters of

Twilight are centered in the discourse of a particularly Christian version of stoicism.

Second, as I explored several discourses that shaped *Twilight*, I found it impossible to

ignore the role of the most visible figure in the series' creation, author Stephenie Meyer. While

many studies (Arnaudin, 2008; Dietz, 2011; Granger, 2010; Schwartzman, 2010; Shaw, 2009;

Silverman, 2009; Toscano, 2010; Wilson, 2011b) have focused on the role Meyer's Mormon

faith played in shaping the series, I found the personal factors that directly inspired her far more

interesting. Meyer was the first to admit that when she began writing, she did so at a time when

she was unhappy with her life as a stay-at-home mother. An English major who once aspired to

go to law school, Meyer found herself pursued very aggressively by the man she would marry.

Shortly after she married him, she had the first of her three sons. Meyer's dream that inspired

the series, the one in which Edward lay in a meadow fighting his desire to drain the blood from

Bella, the girl he loved, I will argue, represents female anxieties about the threat of annihilation

within the confines of the traditional roles designated for women within patriarchy. Further, I

will argue that Meyer's subjectivity, and, therefore, her reason for writing, had changed by the

time she wrote the final installment of the series, *Breaking Dawn (4)*. I will argue that it is here

that Meyer makes a drastic shift from writing "therapeutic," "wish fulfillment" (Granger, 2010,

p. 192) literature for herself to addressing more candidly "the facts of life" (Masse, 1992, p. 20) for the girls and women in her growing literary matriarchy.

The challenge of ethical critique weighed heavily on me throughout this investigation. Feminists have collectively castigated Meyer for crafting a regressive stereotype in protagonist Bella Swan. Literary critics have faulted Meyer's writing as too simple (Granger, 2010) and repetitive (Demory, 2010; see also Grossman, 2008; Prinzi 2008, 2009; and Rice 2008). Historians have enjoyed calling attention to the series' historical inaccuracies (Brugger, 2010; Coker, 2010; Leidl, 2010). While my analysis certainly falls into the category of critique, I found that Foucault's approach to discourse analysis helped me identify the relations of power/knowledge which might produce objectionable content without dismissing or degrading these texts, their author, or their readers. As Bove (1995) asserted, discourse analysis "can turn literary studies into a full criticism….It can help us to avoid reduction" (p. 64).

Academic Conversation

In its short history, *Twilight* has generated a substantial body of academic work written from various disciplines and theoretical standpoints. I focus my review of this *Twilight*-specific scholarship to those studies that address, either directly or indirectly, my research questions. Again, I wanted to identify the discourses at work and describe how Meyer perpetuated these discourses. Feminist critiques, which make up the largest category of *Twilight* scholarship, most often identify patriarchy as the primary discourse (Averill, 2011; Kramar, 2011; Miller, 2011; Wilson, 2011b) shaping the series. A few critics have attempted to classify *Twilight* in terms of genre calling the series gothic (Branch, 2010; McElroy, J. & McElroy E. C., 2010; Parmiter, 2011; Veldman-Genz, 2011), romance (Clasen, 2010, Shachar, 2011, Wilson, 2011a), or some combination of the two (Bruner, 2009; Granger 2010). These critical essays also point out

certain noteworthy and/or troublesome characteristics of the series. Probably the second largest group of *Twilight* studies I review here examined various social, historical, literary, and even religious influences which shaped the *Twilight* texts and their author, Stephenie Meyer.

Discourse and genre.

Literary scholars who have written on the topic of *Twilight* have failed to reach a consensus about how the series might be classified in terms of genre. Some believe it self-evident that the series is gothic (Branch, 2010; McElroy & McElroy, 2010; Parmiter, 2011; Veldman-Genz, 2011). Parmiter (2011) and McElroy and McElroy (2010) based their designation on the use of setting, arguing that the wild, unbounded, pristine Olympic Peninsula served as the perfect gothic backdrop. Branch (2010), pointing to Meyer's religiously conservative twist on vampire lore, called the *Twilight* series a "uniquely American, late-capitalist, post-feminist, and post-secular Gothic phenomenon" (p. 61). On the other hand, Clasen (2010), Shachar (2011), and Wilson (2011a), focusing primarily on the love story central to the narrative, categorized the series as romance. As Clasen asserted, *Twilight* is "fundamentally a love story" (p. 119). Wilson, in fact, examined *Twilight* using Radway's (1984/1991) study, *Reading the Romance*, and found that, just as the ideal romance perpetuates the promise of patriarchy, *Twilight* "presents patriarchy as benign—a social system that allows someone like Bella to triumph" (p. 50). Wilson concluded that the vampire saga functions as a form of "compensatory literature" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 98) which acts as a "cultural release valve" allowing patriarchy to endure (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 158). Miller (2011) also asserted that *Twilight* perpetuates and normalizes patriarchal ideology. While it is easy to identify the romance in *Twilight*, one cannot dismiss the series' gothic influence. According to Bruner (2009), "The *Twilight* phenomenon marries two traditionally distinct story genres: romance and

gothic horror" (p. 15). Willis (2011b), noting the series' periodic departure from the typical romantic plot to deal with the Cullens' juridical battle with the Volturi, wisely concluded that *Twilight* suffers from "genre trouble" (p. 83).

Genre classification notwithstanding, a large portion of *Twilight*-specific essays come to the conclusion that *Twilight* is decidedly anti-feminist (e.g., Ames, 2010; Averill, 2011; Burke, 2011; Housel, 2009; Myers, 2010; Nicol, 2011; Torkelson, 2011; Zack, 2009). According to Ames (2010), several characteristics of the series have made the series an "easy target for feminist critique" (p. 51). The characterization of Bella Swan has drawn a great deal of attention from feminists who found the heroine a "regressive" (Platt, 2010, p. 72) stereotype of femininity. In fact, according to Nicol (2011), many feminists read Bella as "an anachronistic throwback to pre-feminist conceptions of a feminine ideal" (p. 113).

There are many justifications for that conclusion. Bella gives up her friends, family, college, and her life as a human to be with Edward in a pattern Jones (2009) called "self-erasure" (p. 78). Mann (2009) connected Bella's pattern of "self-sacrifice" and "self-loathing" (p. 133) to Simone De Beauvoir's (1949/1989) argument that women in patriarchy "dream of annihilation" (p. 646) so that they may gain significance through a man—"him who is represented to her as the absolute, the essential" (p. 643). According to Mann, Bella's actions epitomize the attitude of self-annihilation that de Beauvoir described, for she "has no identifiable interests or talents," is "incompetent in the face of almost every challenge," and "by page 139" concludes "that her mundane life is a small price to pay for the gift of being with Edward" (p. 133).

Ames (2010), Averill (2011), Coker (2010), Donnely (2011), Mann (2009), McGeough (2010), and Platt (2010) took exception to how, through Bella, Meyer portrayed the female body as inherently weak and unstable. As Platt noted, "much of the *Twilight* saga revolves around

Bella's physical vulnerabilities" (p. 80). McGough noted that Meyer portrays Bella as a "clumsy and injury prone girl" (p. 100). Platt pointed to several scenes in which "Bella is picked up by various characters, both male and female" (p. 75). Coker also noted that Meyer emphasized Bella's injuries from sex far more than the pleasure of the experience; however, she attributed the attention to injury over pleasure to the fact that the book was marketed for young adults. Granting that the dangers of premarital sex are a popular motif in young adult literature, Ames found it confusing that Meyer portrayed sex as dangerous for Bella, even after marriage. McGeough (2010) and Wilson (2011b) found it troubling that Bella was alienated from her bodily experience of sex.

Several critics (e.g., Ames, 2010; McCafferty, 2008; McGgeough, 2010; Platt, 2010; Rafferty, 2008; Seifert, 2009; Seiring & Spillar, 2009; Shaw, 2009; Wilson, 2011b) addressed concerns with *Twilight*'s depiction of female sexuality. Ames argued that the *Twilight* series is "hostile to female sexuality" and "overly concerned with the purity of [its] female characters" (p. 50). McCafferty agreed, asserting that, through its emphasis on abstinence, the series also overestimates the "transformative significance of losing one's virginity" (p. 19). Platt also found the manner in which the series characterizes Bella's sexuality noteworthy, arguing that Bella's uncontrollable lust and Edward's constant policing of it "overwhelmed" (p. 84) the narrative.

Others critiqued Meyer's depiction of Bella's body during her pregnancy. McGeough (2010) argued that, at this point, Bella's body reaches the "pinnacle of infirmity," and her pregnant body is "inferior and in need of constant surveillance" (p. 100). Averill argued that, in this and other ways, the series fails to honor functional female reproductive biology and instead privileges the potency of the male. For example, in Meyer's mythology, female vampires are

rendered barren upon their transformation because of the cyclic nature of their fertility, while male fertility is depicted as so stable it survives the process of vampirization (Averill, 2011).

McGeough (2010), North (2008), Seifert (2009), and Whitton (2011) found Meyer's point of view on motherhood particularly disturbing. McGeough found it troubling that, in spite of the gruesome depiction of pregnancy and delivery, the series "suggests girls should want to have children and, once pregnant, will develop and innate maternal instinct" (p. 96). Whitton noticed that the series frequently visited the theme of the tragedy of barren women and argued that this sends the message that motherhood is the "only licit objective of womanhood" (p. 125). Pointing to characters in *Twilight* such as the Third Wife (who killed herself to save her family) and Esme (who jumped from a cliff after losing her infant son), Whitton found it disturbing how frequently the series connects masochism, and even suicide, to motherhood. North and Seifert both suspected that this emphasis on motherhood, especially as seen in Bella's determination to carry her hybrid vampire baby to full term, was intended to deliver a not so subtle anti-abortion message. In fact, North called *Breaking Dawn (4)* "nothing less than an anti-abortion allegory" (p. 2).

Ames (2010), Caine (2008), Housel (2009), Myers (2009), Platt (2010), Rice (2008), and Voynar (2008) were each particularly concerned with Bella and Edward's relationship, especially Edward's controlling behavior. Citing Edward's habit of sneaking in through Bella's window to watch her sleep, tracking her every move, and discouraging her from seeing other friends, Myers argued that Bella and Edward's relationship would be "called abusive in the real world" (p. 158). Housel made a similar claim, arguing that "Edward's character fits the description of what in real life would pose a real mortal danger to women: possessive stalkers" (p. 188). Caine compared the *Twilight* series to hurt/comfort stories, with the disturbing twist

that Edward—the comforter—is also the source of a good bit of Bella's pain. Ames argued that

Bella behaves much like a victim who identifies with her victimizer. Recalling how Bella

chastises herself for tempting Edward and how she enthusiastically accepts culpability for the

injuries sustained in their sexual encounters, Ames pointed out that the protagonist has a

disturbing habit of self-blame that bears a resemblance to the behavior of rape victims.

Platt (2010) argued that Meyer emphasizes Bella's fragility because it makes readers feel

that Edward's objectionable overprotection is both necessary and desirable. She explained:

> Bella's status as "vulnerable innocent" does the ideological work of transforming the
>
> overprotective thoughts and actions of the men in her life—particularly Edward and
>
> Jacob—into perfectly reasonable, and almost endearing, impulses. (p. 81)

Voynar (2008) argued that, by guiding readers through this sort of rationalization, *Twilight* could

easily read like "a how-to manual for an abusive relationship" (p. 2). Similarly, Miller (2011)

asserted that the *Twilight* series exists as part of a larger "culture of imminent danger" (p. 166)

for women which functions to justify how Edward protects and rules over Bella. Donnely (2011)

echoed this sentiment, arguing that the characterization of "weak vulnerable women" who need

protection is made possible by perpetuating the notion of the "innate violence of men" (p. 191).

Citing multiple scenes in which Jacob forces himself on Bella, particularly the final kiss which

the heroine begins to reciprocate, Torkelson (2011) argued that the series goes so far as to

perpetuate "rape culture," that is, the troubling belief that it is "normal and acceptable for men to

claim sexual power over women and that women desire this power imbalance" (p. 212).

Behm-Morawitz et al. (2010b) objected to the fact that Edward and Bella "are not on

equal footing" owing to the fact that Edward is "older than Bella, richer than Bella, and ... more

eloquent than Bella" (p. 139). Seifert (2009) agreed, arguing that Edward "holds all the power"

(para.10) in the couple's relationship. Edward's pattern of exercising a sort of parental supervision over Bella, according to Donnely (2011), reinforces the "genius of patriarchal leadership" (p. 191). Kramar (2011), comparing Edward to the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood*, went so far as to name Edward the "patriarchal wolf" (p. 19) who "represents patriarchy's consumption of women through marriage" (p. 15). Averille (2011) argued that, unlike the typical monster misfit, Edward fails to represent the "Other" and stands instead as "a vision of patriarchy's elite" (p. 231).

Mann (2009) also found that, through her characterization of Edward, Meyer perpetuates in *Twilight* the association of masculinity with supreme significance. Mann contended that, although Meyer describes Bella as clumsy and accident-prone, she characterizes Edward as "hyperbolically capable" (p. 133). While Bella is small, weak, plain, and untalented, Edward stands as "masculine grandiosity writ large" (Mann, p. 133).

Although much of the scholarship about *Twilight* is critical of Meyer's characterization of Bella, Edward, and their relationship, many of the same scholars who critique the series also defend it. Mann (2009), who argued that Bella desires self annihilation similar to that described by De Beauvoir, also argued that one could interpret Bella's desire to become a vampire as an expression of her desire to have a relationship between two equal partners. After all, Mann explained, the parameters of the story dictate that it would be impossible for Edward to equalize their relationship by becoming human. In other words, the situation is inherently imbalanced, and Bella believes she must work within the parameters set by Edward's supernatural world (Mann, 2009). Zack (2009) argued that Bella, like many women today, believes in "attaining power in the world as it is, rather than the world as it should be" (p. 125).

McClimans and Wisnewski (2009) argued that, although Bella does allow Edward to dominate her early on, the two negotiate a more balanced adult relationship by the end of the series. Also countering the charges that through *Twilight* Meyer reinforced unhealthy relationship models and gendered stereotypes, Shaw (2009), Clare (2008), and Coker (2010) argued that *Twilight* defied some of the gendered stereotypes typical of romance. For example, Shaw noted that while romances typically emphasize the male gaze on the female, Bella and Edward share a "bidirectional gaze" (p. 235). Veldman-Genz (2011) also noticed Bella's "active and sexualizing female gaze" (p. 53), and Mukherjea (2011) credited the series for taking Bella's desires and her "scopophilia" (p. 76), her love of looking at Edward, seriously. In fact, according to Coker, Bella "objectifies" Edward as much as he admires her, and, in a reversal of patriarchal gender roles, Bella courts Edward because she views him as an object she "must win and be worthy of" (p. 79).

This substantial body of criticism notwithstanding, some *Twilight* scholars describe the series as forward-thinking. Wilson (2011b) applauded the way the series examines "changing conceptions of masculinity" (p. 13). According to Bealer (2011), Edward represents the "trials of negotiating a progressive male identity in a masculinist world" (p. 140). Sommers and Hume (2011) asserted that Edward's "queer" (p. 153) dedication to abstinence is part of his progressive masculinity. By exercising such agency over what is often depicted as the out-of-control male sex drive, Bealer argued that Edward exhibits an admirable and uncharacteristic "will over the phallic body" (p. 140). Cochran (2010) argued that Meyer reverses typical gender roles by making Edward engage in "feminine" activities performed by women in his time (the turn of the twentieth century) such as "playing the piano, spending his leisure time reading, and listening to music" (p. 13).

Others defended Meyer's characterization of Bella. For example, Branch (2010) warned that we should be careful not to condemn the decisions Bella makes according to a narrow definition of feminism which assumes "that women should postpone marriage and child bearing…in the interest of a college education, career, and economic self-sufficiency" (p. 65). While most feminists critique Bella for giving up her human life to be with Edward and have his child, Jeffers (2010) argued that Bella's decisions should be respected because "she is, in fact, an active agent in her own life who insists on redefining the terms by which others understand her" (p. 37). As Voynar (2008) quipped, "since when is motherhood and maternal impulse inherently anti-feminist?" (p. 4). Deffenbacher and Zagoria-Moffet (2011) asserted that Bella's characterization is not about masochism and self-sacrifice as much as it is a celebration of "both/and identities" (p. 40). Bella demonstrates an enviable ability to "maintain a loving, sexual relationship" while also being a "devoted mother" and "fearless …community defender" (p. 40).

Race/Class critiques.

Many of those who have studied the *Twilight* phenomenon have focused on the issues of race and class, particularly concerning Meyer's characterization of Edward's romantic rival, Jacob Black (Burke, 2011; Jensen, 2011; Kim and Anatol, 2011; Wilson 2010, 2011a). Wilson (2010, 2011a) argued that it is obvious that Jacob, a poor, disenfranchised Native American, was designed by Meyer to serve as a not-so-subtle foil to Edward who is, by virtue of his race, a symbol of wealth and privilege. Wilson (2010) explained that, through the Edward/Jacob juxtaposition, Meyer crafts a "racial allegory" in which "a white, working class human chooses between an ultra-white, ultra privileged vampire and a far less privileged wolf of color" (p. 55). Wilson explained that, in this and many other ways, Meyer reinforces a dichotomy in which

whiteness is "associated with civility, wealth, beauty, and intellect" while indigenous people are associated "with animality and primitivism and savagery" (pp. 55-56). For example, Edward is accomplished in the arts, has multiple advanced college degrees, is well-read, and well-dressed. Jacob, on the other hand, works on cars, "wears ragged, grease-smeared jeans," and "has to be reminded by Bella to do his homework" (p. 59). While Edward resides comfortably in a white, colonial estate headed by Dr. and Mrs. Cullen, Jacob lives on the Quileute reservation with just his wheel-chair bound father in a house which resembles a tiny barn. In this way, Wilson argued, Meyer "naturalizes and perpetuates" the image of "whites as civilized and indigenous people as savages" (p. 69).

Wilson (2010) added that, consistent with the Native American stereotypes documented by Van Lent (1996), Jacob often resembles an animal in that he has little or no clothing. Wilson argued that, while certain animalistic characteristics of Jacob and the Quileute's spirit wolves might be excused a necessary convention of writing about monsters, Meyer extends the animal-like descriptions to the Native Americans who are not supernatural. For example, Wilson pointed out that Emily, who is not a spirit wolf, is also associated with animals in subtle ways. For example, Meyer compares her eyelashes to feathers and her hair to the color of a crow. Wilson also noted that, although Meyer describes Jacob and other Native Americans as beautiful, she feels compelled to qualify the compliment in a manner that drives home the fact that these people are the "other." For example, she describes Leah as "beautiful," but adds, "in an exotic way" (Wilson, p. 149). According to Burke (2011), Meyer's "exotic racialization" (p. 215) of the Quileute tribe in the *Twilight* narrative "repeats the violence of genocide and colonial domination" (p. 216).

Wilson (2010) argued that, in many ways, Jacob's relationship with Bella and the Cullens "echoes older tales of conquest and imperialism" (p. 55). Here, Wilson argued, Meyer manages to deploy, not just one, but three Native American stereotypes. First, as Jacob courts Bella, he acts as the "good Indian" who takes up Western views, scoffing at Indian legends, land claims, and tribal pride. Then, as Bella and Edward revive their relationship after Edward returns in the second book, *New Moon*, Jacob acts as the "bad Indian" who is "brutal, savage, mistrusting, and gets in the way of white agendas" (p. 68). Finally, having lost hope of winning Bella's affection, in the third book, *Eclipse*, Jacob becomes the "degraded Indian" (p. 68)—petty, mean, and immature. Leggatt and Burnett (2010) made a similar argument. They claimed that the love triangle among Bella, Jacob, and Edward functions like a metaphor for European and Native land claims. Like Native Americans throughout the colonization of America, Jacob is presented with the choice of being isolated or assimilated. When Bella chooses Edward over Jacob, Jacob isolates himself with his fellow Native American members of the wolf pack. After this long period, Jacob imprints on Bella and Edward's daughter, thereby incorporating himself into the Cullen family.

Other scholars have focused their critiques on Meyer's less than sensitive reappropriation of Quileute legend. Willis-Chin (2010) asserted that Meyer's de-contextualization and revision of Quileute legends are violent practices. Kim and Anatol (2011) submitted a scathing review of Meyer's appropriation of Native American mythology, calling *Twilight* an "obscenely consumable cultural franchise that obscures the centuries long process of colonization" (p. 199). However, Willis-Chin also defended Meyer by pointing out that she created these stories for herself, and "once she realized people would read the books" she reportedly worried if her audience would find the fact that she took "rather big liberties with their fictional history

…amusing or irritating" (p. 273). Jensen (2010) and Wilson (2011a) also defended Meyer, adding that she attempted to elevate Jacob's status by portraying him as a shape-shifting spirit wolf instead of a werewolf in the traditional sense. In so doing, Meyer opted to forego the characterization of wolf-Jacob as "beastly attacker" and replaced it with the image of wolf-Jacob as a spiritual and "noble protector" (Wilson, 2011a, p. 38). However, according to Burke (2011), Jensen (2011), and Kim and Anatol (2011), this stereotype of the "noble savage"[3] is just as problematic.

Influences and enabling conditions.

Some academics view *Twilight* as part of certain general trends in society. For example, according to Ames (2010), the appeal of *Twilight* speaks "to the present state of feminism" (p. 39)—a beleaguered state she attributed to an "ideological swing to conservativism and a period of waning interest in women's rights" (p. 50). Kane (2010) put forth a similar claim, arguing that the nostalgic way Meyer represents the wholesome Cullen family is consistent with a "return of conservative virtues aligned with an imaginary past" (p. 117). Toscano (2010) likewise viewed the series as a product of "conservative morality" (p. 22).

Zack (2009), Steiber (2008), Clare (2008), and McMahon (2009) argued that the success of *Twilight* is symptomatic of a pervading sense of entitlement in readers. They argue that, as a result, vampires are increasingly becoming glamorized fantasy beings and less the abject monsters of early vampire literature. Clare explained: "Years ago, vampires and werewolves were seen merely as repulsive, evil monsters" (p. 111) but today, as Steiber noted, vampires are the new princess figures of literature. Through these new symbols of royalty, Steiber argued,

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[3] This term was coined by seventeenth-century poet John Dryden to describe "American Indians as simple people, untainted by civilization, beneficent in nature, and morally upright in their 'wild' state" (Jensen, 2010, p. 93).

readers can experience the fantasy of wealth, beauty, and entitlement. Some critics worry that

the trend of glamorizing vampires positions them as rivals with which ordinary humans cannot

compete. Not only are the key vampires in Meyer's series drawn as attractive, strong, and

wealthy, the Cullens are capable of forming a family which is more functional and supportive for

Bella than her own biological family. As McMahon pointed out, traditionally, vampire literature

"emphasizes the desperate solitude and moral corruption of vampires" (p. 205). *Twilight*, on the

other hand, "romanticizes them" and, in turn, "degrades human existence" (McMahon, p. 205).

Steiber argued that Bella's obsession with Edward mirrors "our current terror of ageing" (p. 81).

These critics argued that it is no surprise that vampires have been developed to enjoy permanent

youth. As Epstein (2009) observed, today in our culture, "youth is no longer viewed as a

transitory state...but [as] an aspiration, a vaunted condition in which, if one [could] arrange it,

[one would] settle in perpetuity" (p. 368). Bella's character, McMahon argued, is simply a

reflection of our culture's overall anxiety about aging and the aspiration to avert it at almost any

cost.

     Shea (2009) and Housel (2009) argued that the vampirism portrayed in *Twilight* is not as

attractive as some critics worry. Shea asserted that Edward's status as a vampire, particularly his

strength and immortality, render him incapable of the sort of altruistic sacrifice required for true

love. Using Baudrillard's (2001) theory of simulacra and simulations, Housel called vampirism

an image of perfection that could never exist. Therefore, Edward's appeal, Housel argued, is

purely superficial.

     Scholars have also noted the literary influences which shaped *Twilight* and the series'

many levels of "intertextuality" (Deffenbacher & Zagoria-Moffet, 2011, p. 32). Kisor (2010)

described Meyer as a master of "narrative layering" (p. 35) for the way she incorporated fairy

tales, Native American legends, vampire lore, and 'high-culture' romance, such as the works of Austen and Brontë, throughout her series. Meyer reportedly modeled *Twilight* after *Pride and Prejudice*, *New Moon (2)* after *Romeo and Juliet*, *Eclipse (3)* after *Wuthering Heights*, and *Breaking Dawn (4)* after both *The Merchant of Venice* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Kisor, 2010). In fact, several critical essays, (e.g., Granger, 2010, and Wakefield, 2011), are devoted to comparing and contrasting *Twilight* to the narratives which inspired Meyer.

Several literary critics have focused on Meyer's Byronic characterization of Edward Cullen (Bealer, 2011; Brande, 2008; Cochran, 2010; Groper, 2011; Myers, 2009; Steiber, 2008). Meyer reportedly named Edward Cullen after both Edward Ferrars of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* and Edward Rochester of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (Myers, 2009). She remarked: "Tall. Pale. Handsome. Mysterious. All of these adjectives describe Edward Cullen from *Twilight*, but these descriptives also classify the traditional Byronic hero within the literary canon" (Myers, p. 147). According to Myers, Edward is a "boldly defiant but bitterly self-tormenting outcast, proudly contemptuous of social norms but suffering for some unnamed sin," and "a complex man, and fond of describing his own complexity" (p. 148). Like Lord Byron, whose female companion famously called him "mad, bad, and dangerous to know," Edward, too, is threatening. He issues Bella a warning: "I'm dangerous, Bella—please grasp that" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 190). As Myers quipped, Byronic heroes "do not hide how messed up they are; they revel in it, talk about it, write about it, sparkle in a field about it" (p. 155). Brande (2008) made a similar argument, contending that Edward is, indeed, Byronic because he shares the "best qualities" (p. 142) of Shakespeare's Romeo, Brontë's Heathcliffe, and Austen's Mark Darcy. She goes on to argue that Edward trumps these classic romantic heroes in selflessness, protectiveness, open-heartedness, and attentiveness. Bealer (2011) argued that Edward

distinguishes himself from other Byronic heroes "by the depth and power of his self-loathing" (p. 141) and the way he challenges typical masculinity. Bealer went on to explain that Edward differs from Rochester in that he is not in need of redemption when he meets Bella. As Groper (2011) noted, Edward has already conquered his most monstrous desire, the desire for human blood, by the time Bella arrives moves to Forks, the town where he lives.

According to Tenga (2011), Meyer takes literary allusion and intertextuality to a new level, noting that "the characters 'read' their personal experiences through the lens of fiction" (p. 112). Coker (2010), Cochran (2010), and Kane (2010) discussed specifically Bella's use of literature to process her feelings about Edward's sudden marriage proposal in *Eclipse (3)* (p. 325). Bella remarks that the proposal triggered "*Anne of Green Gables* flashbacks" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 277). She says,

> I saw the same old vision of Edward and me on a porch swing, wearing clothes from another kind of world. A world where it would surprise no one if I wore a ring on my finger. A simpler place, where love was defined in simpler ways. One plus one equals two. (*Eclipse (3),* p. 227)

In this way, Bella views her relationship with Edward "through the lens of nostalgic idealized history" (Coker, 2010, p. 73). Kane echoed the argument that Bella possesses a "longing for the imaginary past" (p. 113). By picturing herself as a woman in the early 1900s, Kane argued that Bella longs to live in a world known for "its simplicity, its clarity, and its order" (p. 113). Using Beaudrillard's (2001) theory, Cochran called this imaginary past a simulacrum, explaining that Bella's "feelings of nostalgia arise from the remembering or desire for what never really was, a 'past' that seems both safe and easily understood due to its simplicity and reliance on shared values" (p. 9). Tenga called Bella a "heroine of the hyperreal" who "draws her perceptions and

values not from reality but from the represented reality found in fiction, which she uses as a model for life" (p. 104). Cochran concluded that the use of the simulacrum of history through literature imbues *Twilight* with a "sense of murkiness and unreality" (p. 9).

Several critics have focused on the specific influences which shaped author Stephenie Meyer. Arnaudin (2008), Deitz (2011), Granger (2010), Osborne (2010), Schwartzman (2010), Shaw (2009), Silverman (2009), Toscano (2010), and Wilson (2011b) attributed the moral overtone of the *Twilight* series to Meyer's adherence to the specific codes of her Mormon faith. Shaw pointed out that Meyer confessed that her religion had a "huge influence" (as cited in Shaw, p. 228) on what she wrote.

Many scholars have looked for the specific instances of religious influences. Silverman (2009) noted that, although *Twilight's* characters are not particularly religious, Meyer does make specific references to Christianity in the subtext. For example, she begins the first book in the series by quoting Genesis 2:17—God's directive to Adam and Eve forbidding them from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Shea (2009) argued that, although Meyer does not identify her characters as Christians or members of any particular faith, religious considerations factor largely in their characterizations. For example, Bella, Edward, and Carlisle have lengthy discussions about the existence of a soul which implies not necessarily a belief in Christianity, but some religion. Kane (2010) noted the conservative tone of the series, stating that *Twilight's* was decidedly heteronormative compared to most vampire tales which often explore sexual taboos and queer sexual identities. As Beahm (2009) noticed, "The hoary traditions about vampires have no place in the *Twilight* Saga" (p. 63). Unlike typical "queer" vampires, the Cullens represent "rigid heteronormativity" (Kane, 2010, p. 111). Averill (2011) argued that Meyer's monsters are not very monstrous at all in that, "like well-behaved human followers of

the Judeo-Christian worldview, they control their deviance" (p. 229). Arnaudin (2008) argued

that it is not surprising that, as a Mormon, Meyer would characterize her vampires as masters of

self-control. Arnaudin also asserted that Meyer's concept of "vegetarian" vampires (who refrain

from drinking human blood) mirrors the dietary guidelines established for Mormons.

 As a Mormon and a literary scholar, Arnaudin (2008) recognized several specific tenants

of the Mormon faith in and outlined them for his Master's thesis. One of the most noteworthy

elements of the Mormon faith is the Law of Chastity (Arnaudin, 2008). Several critics

(Grossman, 2008; Shaw, 2009; Toscano, 2010; McGeough, 2010; & Wilson, 2011) have noted

that, in an ironic twist, by following this law, Meyer's text becomes even more sexually charged

with the what Shaw (2009) and others have termed the "erotics of abstinence" (p. 233).

 Arnaudin (2008) pointed out that free will is another important tenent of Mormon

ideology that presented itself in the *Twilight* series (pp. 27-36). As Worley (2009) noted, Meyer

makes free will and the importance of making the moral choice to deny temptation a driving

theme in the story. Toscano (2010) argued that it is not surprising that free will would factor so

largely in Meyer's series, for it is a Mormon tenant that the freedom of choice is an "inalienable

feature" of humanity and "the only way humans could recognize mistakes, repent, and become

like God" (p. 23). As Terjesen and Terjesen (2009) noted, the series reinforces the notion that

the denial of temptation leads to redemption and the fulfillment of one's potential. For example,

Carlisle denies his temptation for blood and becomes an excellent doctor. Edward denies his lust

for Bella's uniquely tantalizing life force, and it is this test of his will that draws him close

enough to fall in love with her and be what he was destined to be—her husband and the father of

her child. Kane (2010) argued that, again and again, the series drives home the message that acts

of restraint lead to unfathomable rewards.

This theme of self-discipline caught the attention of several critics (Dunn, 2009; Fosl & Fosl, 2009; Platt, 2010; Shaw, 2009; Silverman, 2009; Terjesen & Terjesen, 2009; Worley, 2009). As Fosl and Fosl argued, Meyer repeatedly painted scenes in which "acts of self-overcoming" (p. 64) lead to redemption for vampires and humans. Of course, for the vampires in the series, the primary temptation is the lust for human blood. Bella's blood is particularly tempting to Edward, so by falling in love with her, "Edward truly suffers," and it is this, more than anything, Vaught (2008) agued, which "redeems him" (p. 11). Silverman (2009) echoed this argument, asserting that, while Edward is beguiling, his charm is not based solely on his superficially attractive qualities—his good looks, strength, and wealth. Rather, his ethical struggles as a vampire expose him as morally vulnerable, fallible, and thus more human (Silverman, 2009). This, Silverman argued, accounts for Edward's appeal.

Critics have also blamed the Book of Mormon's politically incorrect stories about native peoples for Meyer's insensitive portrayals of Jacob and the wolf pack. Burke (2011), Granger (2010), and Wilson (2011b) each argued that Meyer's juxtaposition of "russet"-colored natives with super-white vampires mirrored the Book of Mormon's stories of the rebellious, barbaric, dark-skinned Lamanites and the righteous, white-skinned Nephites.

Critics have also pointed to Mormon doctrine to account for the series' anti-feminist tone. Deitz (2011), a former Mormon, argued that Meyer's series mirrored the Mormon belief that "men are superior and women subordinate" (p. 100). According to Arnaudin (2008), Bella's early marriage and motherhood are consistent with Mormon beliefs in the role of family in one's salvation. Granger (2010) accounted for Jacob's imprinting on infant Renesme by interpreting it as a reflection of the Mormon belief in a pre-existent life as spirit children. He explained that,

according to Mormon belief, "our design for our loved ones is our remembering our relationship with them in pre-existence" (p. 162).

Critics have found other specific Mormon symbols in Meyer's work. Fosl and Fosl (p. 73) and Buttsworth (2010) believed the Cullens to be a veiled metaphor for the Puritans, reasoning that just as the Puritans broke away from the oppression and decadence of the Catholic church to recreate a strict, minimalist faith, the Cullens broke away from the old code of the Volturi (an ancient family of vampires located in Volterra, Italy who govern all of their kind) to live a simple, yet civilized life under a new, and in many ways stricter, code of stoic self-denial. Granger (2010) made a similar connection, arguing that the Cullens represent Mormons with their outsider faith in vampire vegetarianism while the Volturi represent the Catholic Church, the core institution of the Christian establishment. Granger went on to offer several interpretations of *Twilight*. Most notably, he argued that, if one read the series allegorically with Edward as an analog for God, the entire romance can be viewed as a story of Bella's conversion to the Mormon faith.

Sheffield and Merlo (2010) found *Twilight* to be a "an extremely polarizing text" (p. 207) and focused their study on the behaviors of different types of "anti-fans" who put forth a great deal of effort critiquing the *Twilight* texts, their author, and their fans. Sheffield and Merlo (2010) found that, for these anti-fans, "unsatisfactory gender relations" (p. 212) was one of the top three critiques of the series. They found that the most vociferous anti-fans dismissed those who enjoyed the series "in feminized terms" (p. 207), calling them "rabid" "fangirls" (p. 210). They noted that anti-fans levied the same feminized attacks at the series' author, working to "mobilize Meyer's gender identity against her credibility" (p. 211).

As we have seen, several academics have weighed in on the *Twilight* phenomenon. I focused on the studies which spoke to my research questions: What are the discourses at work in the *Twilight* series? How were these discourses perpetuated and transformed, specifically by author Stephenie Meyer? What are the social effects of adult readers engaging the *Twilight* texts and how might their subjectivity have been affected by reading the *Twilight* series?

Significance of Study

Addressing the first question, feminists have critiqued Meyer's characterization of Bella, Edward, and the couple's relationship. However, these critiques do not identify the underlying discursive formation shaping Bella, Edward, and their relationship. This is where my study differs. Using *apriori* theory explaining the appeal of the romance genre, I examined patriarchy's promise as the underlying discourse at work in many of the feminist critiques of *Twilight*. However, examining *Twilight* as more than an exemplary specimen of romance, I also looked for other discourses which account for the series' appeal.

As we have seen, several academics have examined the forces which influenced author Stephenie Meyer, and, by extension, *Twilight*. However, most of these studies have focused on Meyer's affiliation with the Church of Latter-Day Saints. While I acknowledge that religion shaped Meyer and *Twilight*, I found that religion was not the only, nor the most noteworthy aspect of Meyer's life which translated into *Twilight*. Meyer spent years studying English in college, and one can easily see the influence of her canonical education in her familiarity with and preference for classics. In the process of writing *Twilight*, Meyer not only incorporated allusions to the works she loved, she also developed her characters as readers who modeled how to use literary interpretation to think through challenging situations. In addition to Meyer's religious and educational background, I also looked into this first time author's experiences as a

wife and mother. I examined how that very significant part of her life influenced how she

crafted the *Twilight* series.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I review the poststructural and poststructural feminist theories that informed my view of the relationships among discourse, subjectivity, literature, and the practices of reading and writing. I first examine macro-level poststructural and poststructural feminist theories of discourse and subjectivity. I then review the feminist and critical theories that speak to how literary fiction privileges certain discourses. This leads to an overview of academic scholarship detailing the discursive characteristics and effects of reading literature classified as romance, gothic, and horror.

Discourse, Subjectivity, and Resistance

The poststructural theory from which I draw works from an assumption that the human subject is socially constructed (Althusser, 1971; De Beauvoir, 1949/1989; Derrida, 1978; Foucault 1971/1972; 1976/1978; 1982; Nietzsche, 1956). This socially constructed subject is not stable but rather a supple construct with characteristics of "subjectivity" which are continually shaped and re-shaped in one's participation in, negotiation with, and resistance to discourses and discursive practices (Butler, 1990, 1993, 1997; Ellsworth, 1992; Lather, 2007; Luke, 2003; Mansfield, 2000; Ramazanoglu, 1993; Sawicki, 1991; Weeks, 1998).

Althusser (1971) laid the ground work for this thinking when he articulated his Marxist theory of socialization. He posited that the subject cannot help but be a product of dominant ideology, which, in his theory, was the ideology of the State. He explained that socialization happens by a process of interpellation which he likened to being hailed, or called, by an authority figure such as a police officer. He argued that by answering the hail, one is made a subject of

State authority. Althusser further argued that, although an individual might actively answer the hail, she/he could not help being born into State ideology and would, therefore, "always-already" (p. 176) be a subject of it. According to Althusser, individuals could only work from within the categories and subject positions made available to them. Further, this limitation of choice was absolute in its oppressiveness. Theoretically, individuals could liberate themselves, but only by overthrowing the State in a grand Revolution.

While poststructuralists agree that subjects are socially constructed, many, such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, argued that the mechanics of socialization and the means of resistance are more complex. State authority alone, they argued, could not account for subjectivity. Rather, they envisioned an apparatus for socialization far more subtle and pervasive: discourse.

Foucault described discourse loosely as any self-sustaining multiplicity of institutionalized practices and statements which shape who human subjects can choose to become. Although Foucault (1971/1972) stressed the importance of statements, seeming at times to use the terms statements and discourse interchangeably, he argued that discourse functions as more than "a mere intersection of things and words" (p. 48). Discourse includes, he argued, institutionalized "practices" (Foucault, 1971/1972, p. 49) and a "multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc." (Foucault, 1977/1980d, p. 97) which gradually and progressively shape human subjects.

Foucault (1971/1972) argued that the relationship between human subjects and discourse is reciprocal and self-sustaining. He explained:

If a proposition, a sentence, a group of signs can be called a 'statement' it is not

…because, one day, someone happened to speak them or put them into some

concrete form of writing; it is because the position of the subject can be assigned. (p. 95)

In other words, he argued that discursive statements are born of the subject positions recognized

and legitimated by society. The relationship between subject and statement is almost symbiotic

in that certain subject positions makes statements possible. However, at the same time,

statements also "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49).

According to Foucault (1977/1980c), this discourse/subject relationship is caught up in an

economy of meaning driven by demand. A demand for legitimation, Foucault explained, can

allow certain discourses to gain a foothold in what he called the "political economy of truth" (p.

131). In this political economy, Foucault (1984/1997) argued that the subject can often feel

obligated to play certain "games of truth" (p. 297) to establish her validity. When Foucault

(1977/1980c) found a particular discourse that dominated the economy of truth becoming

established and naturalized to the point of being almost invisible, he called that discourse a

"regime of truth" (p. 132). Believing truth regimes were often too large and pervasive for one

individual alone to dismantle, Foucault made it his ethical project to help his readers identify,

and hopefully resist, these regimes in small, but meaningful, ways.

Like Foucault, Derrida argued that discourse is any system which establishes how

meaning is negotiated in a culture. Derrida (1993/1994) also troubled the "self-evidence" of

"dominant discourses" (p. 65). Although Derrida recognized that the process of cultural

negotiation is not always facilitated by language, he also argued that language is often an integral

part of it. For Derrida, the role of language was particularly troubling because, according to his

theory, language is a system of shifting, arbitrary, and oversimplified references which often privilege and legitimate certain discourses over others.

Derrida began his work with language and speech on the heels of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. It was de Saussure (1983/1972) who popularized among poststructuralists the notion that the link between signifier and sign was arbitrary. De Saussure believed that words derive their significance not from what they mean, but from what they *do not* mean. He explained, "in language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms" (pp. 121-122).

Like De Saussure, Derrida (1967/1997) found that language depends solely on binaries which play off one another to gain mutual meaning. Derrida argued that, although binaries drive language and discourse, their logic implodes. Seemingly self-evident concepts turn out to be weightless illusions. After taking on the formidable task of translating Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, Spivak (1997) commented on the ontology, "the strange 'being' of the sign," in Derrida's theory of binary logic: "half of it always 'not there' and the other half always 'not that.' The structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of that other which is forever absent" (p. xvii). Derrida called this precarious non-presence in which words and identities seem to gain meaning only by what they differ from, while at the same time always deferring the meaning of the object to which they refer, "différance" (p. 62). He argued that words are not stable representations, rather they are constructs subject to a great deal of slippage along a chain of difference. Derrida called this semantic slippage "play" (p. 50).

Having established that the statements and signs associated with a discourse are plagued by différance and play, Derrida argued that individuals nevertheless find discourse useful for

centering, or at least attempting to center, not just the meaning of objects, but also personal identity. Derrida (1997) asserted that the same différance driving all language, all discourse, and all signs is likewise "indispensable for the principle of identity itself" (p. 258). Derrida (1978) argued that the *theoretical* center of identity, although a necessary construct, holds no stable substance because the center of any structure always "has its center elsewhere" (p. 279), that is, in another language formation. It is, perhaps, counter-intuitive to imagine the self as a figment of language or as a thing without substance, but Derrida (1967/1997) declared that any "so-called 'thing itself' is always already a *representament* [representation]" (p. 49). Further, because language is "always on the move" (p. 49), the subject is in a state of continual shift. However, he explained, the notion of a centered, stable identity serves a necessary function by providing the subject a point of reference. The subject is impacted by this mythical center, but only because she/he is continually shaped by the conflict that arises from attempting to attribute her/his self to it.

Foucault (1976/1978) also troubled the stability of human subjectivity. Foucault argued that the subject is always in a state of flux because, in part, there is a great deal of conflict and contradiction even within privileged discourses. Foucault noted that even within a dominant ideology, "there can exist different and even contradictory discourses" (p. 102). This is why Foucault (1984/1997) reasoned that the self "is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself" (p. 290).

Interestingly, the instability of the human subject is the cornerstone of both Foucault and Derrida's ethics of resistance. While Althusser believed that the only option for the subject to free herself was to overthrow the State, Foucault and Derrida believed that no such grand Revolution would be effective. They pointed out that discourse is not necessarily State-

mandated—it is often self-mandated. Derrida and Foucault, therefore, placed a great deal of responsibility on (and hope in) subjugated individuals themselves.

Their beliefs about resistance, therefore, require a discussion of agency. Here, Foucault and Derrida both draw from Nietzsche, who argued that the subject's identity is inherently unstable and that actions alone constitute resistance. He famously said of the implied subject in agency, "No such agent exists, there is no 'being' behind the doing, acting, becoming … the doing is everything" (Nietzsche, 1956, pp. 178-179). In other words, Nietzsche argued that the subject is not a pre-determined being, but a "becoming" continuously shaped by the choices she/he makes. Foucault and Derrida agreed—power is not necessarily something done to the subject; subjects can also be active participants in their own oppression.

Foucault (1977/1980c) argued that subjects make themselves understandable to themselves and others by willingly participating in a "political economy" (p. 131) of truth. For Foucault, power is nothing alone; it is bound to its primary product—knowledge. The connection between power and knowledge was so important for Foucault (1977/1995) that he often used the term "power-knowledge" (p. 27) to describe the relationship. Foucault argued that the human subject willingly participates in certain, sometimes dominating, discourses by a desire for validation and self-understanding. In fact, Foucault (1984/1997) was exasperated with the extent to which the modern subject seemed driven by an "imperative" to "know" herself (p. 87). However, this very imperative explained for Foucault (1975/1980a) how even an uncomfortable, contradictive, and/or dominating discourse could reach the subject "at the level of desire" (p. 59).

Derrida (1978) also argued that the desire for stable self-knowledge drives individuals to use constructs plagued by différance to shape their subjectivity. Derrida (1967/1997) argued that, although meaning is continually deferred and presence is unattainable, the hope of attaining

meaning remains an "irrepressible desire" (p. 49) in human subjects. In other words, individual human subjects center themselves in the belief that they are stable, unified persons who must discover their truth. This allows individuals to find a sort of centeredness in the midst of deferment, or as Derrida (1978) described it, "coherence in contradiction" (p. 279). The center for Derrida, therefore, is an "essential" (p. 271) form of self-subjugation. He explained that he never said "that we could get along without the center. I believe that the center is a function, not a being—a reality, but a function. And this function is absolutely indispensable" (p. 271).

So Foucault and Derrida theorized in a similar fashion that individuals seek self-knowledge although it often means enduring or ignoring certain inevitable, irreconcilable paradoxes within the discourses that shape them. However, these ideas about the subject and subjectivity are not necessarily exclusive to poststructural theory. Long before Foucault gained notoriety for his theory of subjectification, and before the immutable presence of the subject was troubled by Derrida, first-generation feminist Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1989) made what was, at the time, a groundbreaking claim about female subjectivity. She argued that one is not "born" a woman, but "made" (p. 173) a woman by subject positions made available to her within patriarchy. Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that feminists have found Foucault and Derrida's theories on subjectivity particularly helpful in theorizing a positive ethics of resistance for women.

However, not all feminists believe that using the resistance theory of privileged, white, European males is prudent for a movement seeking to elevate and advocate on behalf of women. Who one chooses to read and cite, whose theory one choose to marry with that of women bears political weight in the academic community. So it was with great consideration that

poststructural feminists have chosen to use Foucault and Derrida. What was it about Foucault and Derrida's theories that poststructural feminists could not think without?

As Sawicki (1991) argued, Foucault's theory of resistance through desubjectification "opens up the possibility of something more than a history of constructions of victimization" (p. 26). One such common victim narrative is described in the work of Rogers and Garrett (2002). They asserted that women are constantly at the mercy of villainous men: "Their power over us always involves in principle, if not practice, their capacity to sexually embarrass, intimidate, or overpower us" (p. 37). Words like 'always' imply that the circumstance described is permanent and that resistance is pointless. This language also suggests that women are naturally vulnerable and that men are naturally overbearing. For poststructural feminists like Oliver (1998), narratives of victimization lead to a dead end. She explained that if one assumes the subject is "something static and permanent" —i.e., always the victim—it would follow that "resistance becomes problematic" (p. 118).

Feminists are also particularly attracted to Foucault and Derrida's broad definition of discourse because it allows them to emphasize the materiality and physicality of discourses which target and impact the female body. For feminists, the body is a particularly important focus of study and one that other theories have ignored. According to Scheurich and McKenzie (2005), Foucault's attention to material transformations of discourse which impact the body accounts for why feminists have found his theory of discourse and subjectivity useful. Foucault has done much to trouble, in particular, the medicalization of the female body, and it is clear that he hoped to do more[4].

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[4] Although Foucault did not live to address the conflicting and contradictory discourses that shape women's subjectivity specifically, there is evidence that, had he lived long enough to

Fortunately, feminists have continued to use Foucault and Derrida's work to challenge patriarchy and its hetronormative and gender-normative practices. Of those feminists, Judith Butler is arguably the most radical and notable. Coupling Foucault's theory of self-subjugation with Derrida's methodology of deconstructing binary logic, Butler (1993) theorized that subjects produce themselves according to the masculine/feminine gender binary through a set of "stylized repetition of acts" (p. 140) she called performativity. Butler argued that women will defend the naturalness of the discourses which subjugate them, even if they are a source of dissonance and discomfort, because the alternative is too uncertain. As Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) explained, we achieve a temporary illusion of coherence by conducting repeat performances of ourselves. In performativity, the subject maintains her status and iterability. Butler argued that (1997) performativity becomes "the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility" (p. 11). Taking a page from Nietzsche, Butler (1990) maintained that the self generally, and gender specifically, is far freer from predeterminance than we recognize because it "is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed" (p. 34). Kondo (1990) also took this more radical stance, arguing that "identity is not a fixed 'thing,' it is negotiated, open, shifting, ambiguous—the result of culturally available meanings and the open-ended, power-laden enactments of those meanings" (p. 24).

Just as Foucault and Derrida encountered those who doubted the usefulness of an ethics of resistance with an unstable subject at the center, postmodern feminists encountered critics who argued that a stable subject is necessary for resistance. However, Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) was among many poststructural feminists (e.g., Ellsworth, 1992; Luke, 2003; Ramazanoglu, 1993;

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complete his series on the history of sexuality, he would have likely done so in the volume he planned to title *Woman, Mother, Hysteric.*

Sawicki, 1991; Weeks, 1998) who have argued that there is, indeed, a great deal of hope in the notion that the subject's constitution is malleable and supple. Butler (1994) argued that subjects have some control in how they are inscribed and must always, in some way, "consent to signification" (p. 54). According to Butler (1997), if the subject is thought of as a "linguistic category, a placeholder, a structure in formation," (p. 10) it can be dismantled through subversive linguistic practices.

Butler (1990) also argued that resistance is not always conscious. A woman, she argued, may unintentionally fail to perform a consistent iteration of her subjectivity, not necessarily because she is consciously resisting subjugation, but because the illusion of a stable subjectivity is a high-maintenance fiction. Like Foucault (1976/1978), Butler pointed out that the discourses dictating feminine subjectivity are internally contradictory and thus difficult to maintain. Other poststructural feminists agree. Lather (2007) argued that in the "discursive struggle for our subjectivity," women are "constantly figured and refigured within a context of bombardment by conflicting messages" (p. 118). Flax (1993) found that, in the process of gendering, women are especially subject to "complex, overdetermined, and multiple processes" which are "historically and socially variable and are often contradictory" (p. 23). Such conflict is, Butler argued, why women will always have trouble performing the subject position of woman (p. 187).

Genre-Specific Theory

Rosenblatt (1965/1995) once wisely said, "There is no such thing as … a generic literary work" (p. 24). It stands to reason, therefore, that a generic reading theory can take one only so far. I found it necessary to supplement the preceding generic reading theory with theory which addressed issues specific to particular genres. In order to survey the appropriate genre-specific literature, I attempted the crude task of labeling *Twilight*. Fortunately, I had a number of clues to

follow. In interviews, Stephenie Meyer herself made a few (albeit contradictory) statements about how to classify her text. In those conversations she mentioned, romance, gothic, horror, or comedy as possible labels for her series (e.g., Kirschling, 2009). Many of those who have studied *Twilight* categorize the series as gothic (Branch, 2010; McElroy and McElroy, 2010; Parmiter, 2011; Veldman-Genz, 2011), romance (Clasen, 2010; Sachar, 2011; Wilson, 2011), or gothic horror (Bruner, 2009; Granger, 2010). In this section I review genre-specific studies which outline the defining discursive characteristics of gothic, romance, and horror, and how these genres function with reader subjectivity.

Romance.

In this section I explore a variety of feminist studies which describe the discursive characteristics of romance genres and their potential effects on readers. Many early academic critiques of romance came from first-wave feminists who took a mimetic view of literature. De Beauvoir (1949/1989) dismissed the genre as one which failed to accurately reflect women's situations in patriarchy. Other early feminists argued that romances were produced as part of a conspiracy-level attempt to keep women subjugated by men and patriarchal society. For example, Firestone (1970) described the romance genre as a "cultural tool of male power to keep women from knowing their real conditions" (p. 139). The fact that romances were appealing only made them more damnable to these feminists, for as Felski (2003) explained,

> aesthetic pleasure was the enemy of feminism because it helped to make sexism more palatable, even appealing, and hence reconciled women to the status quo. To lose oneself in the pleasure of reading a book or watching a film was to surrender all capacity for critical thought. It was to bow down to the insidious power of a patriarchal culture to mold women's identities, fantasies, and desires. (p. 35)

These early feminists argued that romances function as seductive diversions which as Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006) put it, "justified women's subordination to men and rendered women complicit in that subordination" (p. 490).

This blanket dismissal of romances eventually gave way to studies that looked more deeply into the psychology of the appeal and the potential effects of romances. Anne Snitow (1979/2001), Tania Modleski (1982/2008), and Janice Radway (1984/1991) were among the first feminist scholars to describe in detail the conventions of romance and how those narratives worked in the hands of readers instead of damning the genre as a font of false consciousness.

Snitow (1979/2001) documented several characteristics of mass-produced romances. She pointed out that romances are thoroughly committed to the notion of ideal love. Their tone, she argued, is sincere. They "eschew irony," "eschew realism," and "take love straight" (p. 321). While Snitow did not study the effects of these romances on readers directly, she did remark that the tone of these novels was typically very "tactful, friendly toward their audience," thereby making the "connections between writer and reader seamless" (p. 321). She also observed that romances depend on the isolation of the couple. Although romance tales are often set in exotic locales, the couple is often shut in from the outside world. She explained: "Harlequins avoid all mentions of local peculiarities beyond the merely scenic. They reduce the allure of difference, of travel, to a mere travelogue. The couple is alone. There is no society, no context, only surroundings" (p. 312). This isolation of the couple is important because it is related to the discourse of female domesticity and family togetherness Freidan (1963/1997) critiqued.

Modleski (1982/2008) was also particularly interested in mass-produced fantasies for women including trade romances. She explained that the formula for romances rarely varies:

a young, inexperienced, poor to moderately well-to-do woman encounters and becomes

involved with a handsome, strong, experienced, wealthy man, older than herself by ten to

fifteen years. The heroine is confused by the hero's behavior since, though he is

obviously interested in her, he is mocking, cynical, contemptuous, often hostile, and even

somewhat brutal. By the end, however, all misunderstandings are cleared away, and the

hero reveals his love for the heroine, who reciprocates. (p. 28)

The couple's initial antagonism is one of the many dangerous characteristics of romances in that

"male brutality comes to be seen as a manifestation not of contempt, but love" (p. 33).

As Modleski (1982/2008) explained, romances establish the heroine's virtue by

characterizing her as oblivious to sexual attraction and the social and monetary advantages of

marriage. Modleski explained, "While the novels are always about a poor girl finally marrying a

rich man, preferably of the nobility, they must be careful to show that the girl never set out to get

him and his goods" (p. 40). Therefore, romances typically feature heroines who possess a

"determination to hate the hero which absolves her of mercenary motives and becomes the very

means by which she obtains the hero's love, and, consequently, his fortune" (p. 41). The

heroine's extreme innocence also places her in situations in which she can unknowingly "work

on the male's sexual desires" (p. 43). The authors of romances deliberately speak of the hero's

sexual desire for the heroine through a shift in point of view. The heroine does not describe in

her own words how attractive she is; a third person narrator does this work for her. This move

maintains the virtue and innocence of the heroine.

In the 1980s, Radway (1984/1991) also analyzed the characteristics of mass-produced

romance, focusing specifically on the requisite narrative elements found in her participants'

favorite trade romances. Radway found that her participants preferred love stories written in the

discourse of what she called "the promise of patriarchy" (p. 134). According to Radway, romances written in this discourse are made up of 13 narrative elements:

1. The Heroine's social identity is destroyed.

2. The heroine reacts antagonistically to an aristocratic male.

3. The aristocratic male responds ambiguously to the heroine.

4. The heroine interprets the hero's behavior as evidence of a purely sexual interest in her.

5. The heroine responds to the hero's behavior with anger or coldness.

6. The hero retaliates by punishing the heroine.

7. The heroine and the hero are physically and/or emotionally separated.

8. The hero treats the heroine tenderly.

9. The heroine responds warmly to the hero's act of tenderness.

10. The heroine reinterprets the hero's ambiguous behavior as the product of a previous hurt.

11. The hero proposes/openly declares his love for/demonstrates his unwavering commitment to the heroine with a supreme act of tenderness.

12. The heroine responds sexually and emotionally.

13. The heroine's identity is restored. (p. 134)

Many of the narrative elements Modleski (1982/2008) described are recognizable in this list. However, Radway's (1984/1991) analysis of the characteristics of romance is more specific in that it gives a full account of the hero's and heroine's respective changes of heart. In other words, Radway explained the cause and effect link between her 13 narrative elements. The heroine behaves antagonistically toward the hero because she believes him to be a brute who is only interested in her physically. The hero, unaware of the heroine's interest in his motives,

reacts to her hostility ambiguously. The heroine's emotions change from playful antagonism to outright coldness, and this is why the hero punishes the heroine. Only after the two are separated by some mechanism beyond their control does the hero do something to prove how nurturing he can be. The hero's act of tenderness re-colors the heroine's perception of him so she excuses his previous behavior and the two declare their love.

Radway's (1984/1991) analysis is also more thorough in that she mentions the use of romantic rivals. In the ideal romance, she argued, rivals are never truly a threat to the success of the central couple. Rather, they are foils used to represent the worst of both sexes in patriarchy. She explained: "foils embody that which must be avoided and eradicated in both sexes for relations to exist between men and women" (p. 131). The female rival is depicted in detail as a manipulative, selfish, and guided only by the "self-interested pursuit of a comfortable social position" (p. 131). On the other hand, male rivals are used to demonstrate that the heroine's destiny lies with just one man. These male rivals "almost never prove even momentarily attractive to the heroine" and are, therefore, "described rather sparingly" (p. 131) from the heroine's point of view.

Speaking to the effects of romance reading, Radway (1984/1991) found romances particularly seductive in that they allow readers to experience a sense of "exquisite tension, anticipation, and excitement" as they "identify with the heroine as she attempts to comprehend, anticipate, and deal with the ambiguous attentions of a man" (pp. 64-65). However, Radway worried that romances actively insist on "the desirability, naturalness, and benefits" (p. 208) of patriarchy by permitting "the reader to identify with the heroine at the moment of her greatest success, that is, when she secures the attention and recognition of her culture's most powerful and essential representative, a man" (p. 84). Radway also argued that romances reinforce the

dangerous message that "a woman's attainment of legitimacy and personhood" lies exclusively in the "roles of lover, wife, and mother" (p. 84). Although romance heroines are independent to an extent, Radway argued that romances ultimately construct "a particular kind of female self, the self-in-relation demanded by patriarchal parenting relationships" (p. 147).

Radway (1984/1991) also worried about the mythic function of the romance, because it serves the same function that all myths do: to give hope in the midst of a less than ideal situation. Radway expressed concern that romances can serve as compensatory literature which might make women more complicit with situations in which they are dominated (p. 98). Pearce (2007) would later describe the problematic premise of romance this way: "the crux of each romance turns upon the hero's unkind/aggressive behaviour converted (often without a very convincing excuse) into love and tenderness" (p. 14). Pearce feared that that the narrative pattern of most romances, therefore, provided readers with a convenient justification for the bad behavior of their men.

Like Modleski, Radway (1984/1991) drew attention to the excessive, almost addictive, consumption of romance. Radway argued that, although society insists on the benefits of patriarchal relationships, these relationships inadequately serve the needs of women. The phenomenon of repeatedly consuming narratives of patriarchy's promise, she argued, "is made both possible and necessary by a culture that creates needs in women that it cannot fulfill" (p. 50). This "therapeutic value" is also dangerous, she argued, in that it is "short-lived" (p. 85) and contributes to the genre's potential to become addictive.

While Radway (1984/1991) expressed concerns with the practice of romance reading, she did not find reason to condemn it outright. Radway argued that romance heroines served in many ways as positive figures for women readers. She pointed out that in the romance novels

Radway's participants liked the most the heroine is typically intelligent, funny, assertive, and unconventional. Radway added:

> Although marriage is still the ideal goal in all of the novels they like best, that marriage is always characterized by the male partner's recognition and appreciation of the heroine's saucy assertion of her right to defy outmoded conventions and manners. (p. 102)

Modeleski (1982/2008) also noted that in many romance novels the heroine competes with the hero in domains not necessarily considered proper for women. Although Russ (1972) dismissed scenes like those Radway described as merely "good burlesque" (p. 7), Modleski argued that token acts of sex-role reversal represent significant acts of resistance for romance readers who enjoy experiencing this resistance vicariously.

Radway (1984/1991) asked her participants if reading romances changed their "perception of themselves" (p. 102), and they believed it did. Radway reported that her participants claimed that reading romance novels confirmed their hopes "that 'intelligence' and 'independence' in a woman make her more attractive to a man" and that "marriage and motherhood do not necessarily lead to a loss of independence or identity" (p. 102).

Radway (1984/1991) argued that reading romances, even for escape, can serve to alter readers' lives in worthwhile ways. Setting aside time for the practice of reading, she argued, helped her participants temporarily relieve themselves from the obligations of their positions as caregivers, and it allowed them to return to those obligations more refreshed. The content of the romances also mattered. Her participants felt revived by romances because through the romantic storyline they enjoyed the vicarious experience of being nurtured by a man which temporarily made up for a lack of nurturing in their day-to-day lives.

Pearce (2007) examined romances using Freudian analysis, finding that romance narratives function like "trauma stories" in which readers and writers alike can address the violence done to one's subjectivity upon falling in love with an "other," someone who is very different from oneself. She explained: "romantic love is the most singular, and most singularly devastating, emotion visited upon humankind" because "from that fateful moment on, who we are is defined in part by the being we love, even though s/he is no longer what s/he was either" (p. 1). Pearce also argued that the anxiety associated with finding and keeping love makes it "the most lawless of emotions," therefore, "it is hardly surprising that we should seek an explanation for it" (p. 1). Telling and retelling the mythic story of falling in love, Pearce argued, is inherently therapeutic in that it imposes order on this common experience. She explained: "we turn to narrative to make first visible (indeed, spectacular) and then causal all that is essentially irrational, contradictory, and cause-less about romantic love" (p. 17).

Modleski (1982/2008) argued that romances are also therapeutic in that they allow one to subversively express "anxieties, desires, and wishes" (p. 20) via a dual reading between an informed reader and the "necessarily innocent heroine" (p. 23). Noting the apparent masochism inherent to romances, Modleski argued that the sexual brutality endured by heroines actually serves as a "cover" (p. 20) for mixed feelings of desires and anxiety surrounding certain sexual taboos. Snitow (1979/2001) made a similar argument about romances and women's conflicted feelings about intimacy. She noted,

> Romantic sexual fantasies are contradictory. They include both the desire to be blindly ravished, to melt, and the desire to be spiritually adored, saved from the humiliation of dependence and sexual passivity through the agency of a protective male who will somehow make reparation to the woman he loves for her powerlessness. (p. 320)

Romances, she argued, allow readers to experience, via the heroine, this ideal fantasy scenario of being both reduced to and revered as a sexual object. This is why Snitow famously labeled the romance genre a type of soft pornography for women. Modeleski (1982/2008) argued that women enjoy reading about such domination because doing so helped them deal with a mixture of anxiety and masochistic desire.

Radway (1984/1991) and Modleski (1982/2008) also argued that through romance reading women can vicariously re-experience the joy of falling in love. Modleski asserted that romance authors intend for this to happen for "hardly any critical distance is established between the reader protagonist" (p. 47). With the heroine's thoughts and feelings made thus transparent, "women can freely view the fantasy as their fantasy" (Modleski, p. 47). Radway made a similar observation, noting that romances detail "not merely the events of a courtship but what it feels like to be the object of one" (p. 64). Readers, Radway observed, enjoy being privy to the hero's thoughts, especially when he realizes his love for the heroine. Ultimately, she argued, this is evidence that women "wish to see a man dependent on a woman" (Radway, p. 66). Modleski agreed. She posited that the common storyline in which a previously unappreciated heroine nearly dies or is otherwise lost to the hero, functions as a "revenge fantasy" (p. 37). This fantasy, Modleski claimed, allows female readers to relish in the hero's vulnerability as he finds himself suddenly at the mercy of his feelings of love and guilt for never fully appreciating how precious the heroine is to him.

Chick Lit.

In the 1990's, Helen Fielding's (1996) *Bridget Jones's Diary,* introduced a new sub-genre: the *chick lit* romance. According to Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006), chick lit romance is characterized by "an entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist discourses" (p. 487). Loosely

based on Jane Austin's (1813) *Pride and Prejudice*, Fielding's novel followed the traditional

romance formula, with a few notable exceptions. The heroine is not a barely post-adolescent

virgin living with family, but rather a sexually experienced thirty-something living alone.

Analyzing 20 chick lit novels published between 1997 and 2005, Gill and Herdieckerhoff found

this sub-genre of romance to be characterized by a woman's struggle to reconcile traditional

discourses of female passivity and dependence with "discourses of boldness, entitlement, and

choice (usually articulated to normative femininity and/or consumerism); and a belief in the

emotional separateness of men's and women's worlds" (p. 487). Chick lit also differs from

earlier popular romances, they argued, in that they detail women's struggles with their bodies.

Chick lit focuses particularly on women attempting to manage their weight. This engagement

with the female body's "unruly" aspects sets chick lit apart from the mass-produced romances of

the 1970s which did not address the body as problematic in this way (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p.

497). Chick lit can also be distinguished from earlier romances by its tone of disillusionment.

Instead of pairing the heroine with a hero reshaped and perfected according to a feminine ideal,

Modleski quipped that chick lit pairs its heroine with "Mr. Nearly Perfect" (p. xxv). According

to Modleski (1982/2008), chick lit novels also "present scathing portraits of dysfunctional men

and descriptions of bad sex and disastrous dates" (p. xxv). However, this is not to say that

Bridget Jones and the scores of chick lit novels that followed marked a complete departure from

earlier romances. The basic formula for the romance has remained virtually unchanged (see Gill

& Herdieckerhoff, 2006, p. 490 for a description that resembles Radway's (1984/1991) 13

elements of romance). Chick lit is remarkable in that it pays particular attention to the ways in

which female characters, as products of both feminist and anti-feminist discourses, feel

conflicted about the prospects and implications of attempting to incorporate romantic love into their lives.

Clearly, theories about the impact of romance reading on its audience vary greatly. Some early feminists dismissed the practice of romance reading as escapist, while others accused the genre of nurturing an unhealthy complicity with patriarchy. Snitow (1979/2001), Modleski (1982/2008), and Radway (1984/1991) examined more carefully the characteristics which appealed to romance readers. They found that women enjoyed narratives which allowed them to identify with a heroine who represents the best patriarchy has to offer because in their real lives patriarchy fails to deliver on its promises. Recent chick lit iterations of the romance novel treat the notion of an ideal within patriarchy with an ironic tone, making the core romantic narrative more palatable to modern women with modern sensibilities. Radway (1984/1991) summed up the range of opinions about romance reading nicely, calling it "a profoundly conflicted activity centered upon a profoundly conflicted form" (p. 14).

Gothic.

"One cannot retain the passionate intensity of romance without its darker side, nor can one tame it, order it or homogenize it: it constantly demands something in excess of habit, convention and norm, some—dark—Thing that works as limit and injunction to move on." –Fred Botting, 2008, p. 21

In many ways, the gothic aesthetic has always been the cure for the common romance. The first mass-produced love stories written by women for women had a dark, gothic edge. England's Gothic movement, which peaked in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, paved the way for popular romances in at least four ways. According to Gamer (2000), gothic novels were the first popular "bestsellers" (p. 42). Gothics also established the novel as the

preferred feminine mode of literary expression—especially as opposed to poetry which was considered at the time a higher, masculine form of literature (Gamer, 2000; Vargo, 2007). In this way, the gothic romance emerged as the first feminized genre—a genre that attracted female readers, many of whom turned writers (Vargo, 2007; Jackson, 1994). Lastly, many of the narrative characteristics of the gothic romance were extracted, refined, and transformed into what is today simply known as romance. According to Botting's (2008) poststructural analysis of the two genres, gothic and romance, have, throughout literacy history, inscribed and revitalized one another in a process he called "gothicking the romance" and "romancing the gothic" (p. 22).

Gothic characteristics.

While there is a significant overlap between "multiple, evolving… 'romances'" (Gamer, 2000, p. 51) and what might be labeled gothic, I attempt here to draw some distinctions between the two genres. Literary critics typically associate gothic with romantic love plots, but these gothic romances differ from the basic romance formula in an important way. Feminist analyses have described gothic darkness as a sinister element which invariably translates into female suffering.

Modleski (1982/2008), Masse (1992), and Wolfreys (2002) identified masochism as the central discourse shaping gothics. Although the heroine's best hope in patriarchy is to marry, in gothics the heroine is often targeted by what Roberts (1980) described as an unscrupulous "older male villain" (p. 64). To make matters worse, she finds little support from her family. Instead of defending his daughter, the patriarch of the family often uses the heroine as a way to pander to the powerful villain. The father treats the heroine as a commodity to be bartered for his own gain. As Masse explained, gothics feature a "lively trade in women" with "older generations offering their daughters to each other" to "ratify various alliances" and "consolidate blood lines,

and the bonds among men" (p. 23). For example, in the gothic classic, *Jane Eyre*, heiress Bertha Mason is given to Rochester to improve his father's fortune. In *The Castle of Otranto*, Isabella serves as the pawn in Manfred's plan to secure control over his estate. The gothic heroine is particularly vulnerable in that if she even knows her mother, she cannot rely on her to defend her against her father. When forced to choose alliances, the mother remains a subservient wife to the abusive father, or overwhelmed by her inability to change her life, goes mad. The blameless heroine is simply, as Punter (2006) put it, "abandoned by her parents and cast adrift on the mercies of a savage world" (p. 9).

Female paranoia is also a common characteristic of gothics. Gothics often feature heroines who are paranoid about "an unfortunate female's life," particularly her mother's life, "repeating itself through her" (Modleski, 1982/2008, p. 61). For example, she may fear succumbing to "hereditary madness" (Modleski, p. 24). In more supernatural manifestations of this paranoia, the gothic heroine may feel "literally possessed by the spirits of other women from out of the past" (Modleski, p. 24). According to Punter (2006), these "unspeakable terrors" (p. 1), particularly ghosts, are "finally explained away by non-supernatural means" (p. 2). However, according to Modleski, the true source of terror in these conservative gothics is no less unsettling, for the heroine's terrifying experiences turn out to be manifestations of anxiety and paranoia brought on by the heroine's perpetual isolation in the home.

Modleski (1982/2008) explained that, even under the best circumstances, marriage for women, especially in the eighteenth century (coincidentally, also the height of England's Gothic movement) meant a life of confinement. Botting (2008) agreed, arguing that gothic novels reflect a lifestyle that collapsed "inward and anxiously on an axis of privilege and shelter" (p. 17). Modleski posited that the domestic confinement associated with married life led to a level

of paranoia that both inspired the surreal tone of gothics while making even the most outlandish plots believable. Conversely, Modleski argued that gothics that accounted for the seemingly supernatural with rational explanations served "to warn women against indulging in paranoid fantasies and to exhort them to keep busy in their solitude" (p. 55). The heroine realizes, Masse (1992) explained, that "the 'real' world can only offer her renewed trauma" (p. 35). The gothic heroine, therefore, often comes to the conclusion that "madness is her only freedom" (Hedges, 1972, p. 131).

The heroine is not only haunted by a legacy of female suffering, she is also tormented by patriarchy's requirement that she remain a passive figure in her own life. Sadly, there is little room for the gothic heroine to maneuver within the (sometimes literal) confinement of patriarchy, and she has no choice but to use her cunning to target and enlist the aid of a man to help her. In this way, the gothic heroine is forced to exercise what Hoeveler (1998) called "wise passiveness" (p. 7).

Gothic literature is also characterized, according to Punter (1996), by "a prominent use of the supernatural" (p. 1). As Hogle (2004) noted, gothic narratives typically play out in an "antiquated or haunted setting" (p. 22) such as an old, ruinous manor plagued by unexplained phenomena. Gothic characters not only believe there to be truth in superstition, according to Roberts (1980) they use omens, dreams, and visions to navigate what they believe to be a supernatural world. For example, in Horace Walpole's (1764) *The Castle of Otranto*, Manfred learns of prophesy foretelling the loss of his castle and takes this supernatural knowledge very seriously, and with good cause, for it proves futile to escape his destiny. In Brontë's (1847) *Jane Eyre,* the title gothic heroine hears Rochester's supernaturally amplified voice crying out for her. Punter (1996) added that early gothics also incorporated supernatural beings such as "ghosts,

vampires, monsters, and werewolves" (p. 1). Punter argued that these outlandish beings are made to seem ever more real by the heroine conceding their implausibility. This is what Punter called gothic's "self conscious un-realism" (p. 4). Sometimes the gothic supernatural is very subtle. For example, according to Spurgeon (1923), weather conditions might mysteriously change to reflect the current mood, or they might supernaturally foreshadow human events (p. xx). Gothic literature used the supernatural to imbue mundane reality with a sense of mystery. For this reason, Foucault (1977/1980b) described gothic as a "negative of the transparency and visibility" (p. 154) that the Enlightenment hoped to establish.

Gothic literature takes liberty not only with the laws of nature but also with historical detail as well. According to Punter (1996), gothic literature often reflects a particular "attitude towards the recapture of history" (p. 4) which is concerned more with historical artifice and ambiance than historical accuracy. As Punter explained, in gothic narratives there is often "very little attempt at real historical distancing beyond, perhaps, occasional vocabulary and sometimes the interpolation of references to actual historical events" (p. 2). *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) epitomized this "pseudo-historical" (Mighall, 1999, p. xv) treatment of the past. Walpole attempted to pass off his fictional novel as a true story based on a translation of an ancient Italian manuscript establishing gothic's reputation for using fraud to effect a "strange mingling of history and fantasy" (Clery, 2000, p. 2).

Regardless of its historical accuracy, history serves an important purpose in the gothic. Like Walpole's eighteenth-century retrospective on Italian feudalism and life in a Catholic state, many gothics explore what it might have been like to live in an antiquated social system in which the aristocracy rule (Punter, 1996). These antiquated social systems present unique challenges for the characters in gothic literature, particularly in gothic romances where there is a "dominant

love plot" (Punter, 1996, p. 2). Gothic plots set in feudalism often revolve around conflicting

land claims (Hogle, 2004) and the problem of "establishing correct inheritance" (Hogle, p. 220).

While women in these situations are, as previously discussed, often bartered like property, men

are also disciplined by this social system in that it limits who they can marry. If the hero is what

Birkhead (1921) called, an "interesting peasant" (p. 22), summoned to rescue the heroine from

the older male villain, he can do so expecting nothing but the heroine's happiness as his reward.

However, without fail, the hero falls in love with the high-born lady and is tormented by the

knowledge that social convention dictates they can never marry. It is only through a convoluted

turn of events, what Roberts (1980) called the "true heir plot" (p. 217), that the peasant discovers

that he is, by blood right, entitled to a substantial fortune and, therefore, eligible to marry his

love.

Although the other primary hero type of the gothic, the Byronic aristocrat[5], seems to have

every advantage in this type of society, he casts himself as an antisocial outsider (McEvoy,

2007). He often carries a "dark secret or secrets from the past hidden in the depths" (Hogle,

2004, p. 22) which renders him brooding and self-loathing. This secret is often tied to his

inability to reconcile his desires with social expectations. For example, readers of Charlotte

Brontë's *Jane Eyre* learn that Edward Rochester's glum was largely contributable to the fact that,

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[5] Not surprisingly, most literary scholars attribute the Byronic hero to Lord George Gordon
Byron, the writer who embodied the figure of the magnetic, brooding aristocrat and immortalized
the figure in his epic Don Juan poems. However, according to Spurgeon (1923), Byron was
influenced by early gothic heroes. She claimed that, according to Sir Walter Raleigh, "the man
that Lord Byron tried to be" was, in fact, "the invention of Mrs. Radcliffe" who was herself
influenced by Walpole (p. xx). Spurgeon continued this argument, adding "surely we must go
back a little further, and give Walpole credit for the first sketch of the dark, handsome,
melancholy, passionate, mysterious, hero of the Byronic poems" (p. xx). In other words,
Spurgeon, through Sir Walter Raleigh's critique, attributed the Byronic hero to Walpole.

as a young man, he was forced into an arranged marriage with a woman who suffered from a severe mental illness.

It is through this tormented Byronic aristocrat that the gothic explores man's potential for "vice and violence" (Punter, 1996, p. 8). For example, in *Wuthering Heights*, constantly reminded of his lowly rank in class, a bitter Heathcliffe hangs a dog. When confronted with unpleasant news that his childhood love, Catherine, has married Edgar, he makes a threatening remark about the couple: "Had I been born where laws are less strict, and tastes less dainty, I should treat myself to a slow vivisection of these two as an evening amusement" (Brontë, 1847/2009, p. 340). However, in spite of his violent tendencies and perpetually foul mood, the Byronic hero of gothic is irresistible to the opposite sex (Cochran, 2010). Gilbert and Gubar (1978) compared the Byronic hero to Satan, explaining "he is in most ways the incarnation of male sexuality, fierce, powerful, experienced, simultaneously brutal and seductive, devilish enough to overwhelm the body and yet enough of a fallen angel to charm the soul" (p. 14).

Gothic effects.

According to Roberts (1980), one of the gothic's primary functions is to preach "the rewards of virtuous behavior" (p. 3). Literary scholars read many gothic stories as cautionary tales about religious rebellion. For example, Beaty (1996) argued that Charlotte Brontë intended her title heroine in *Jane Eyre* to stand as a symbol of pride and religious rebellion (p. 77). Beaty explained that, as a young girl, Jane refuses religious indoctrination at boarding school, stating matter-of-factly that she dislikes psalms. He argued that it is only when Jane seeks divine comfort in those previously discounted psalms that her fortune changes. According to Killeen (2009) and Gilbert and Gubar (1978), *Wuthering Heights* can also be read as an allegory of religious rebellion. Gilbert and Gubar compared Heathcliffe and Catherine to Adam and Eve

and their love story to a heretical version of the Book of Genesis. According to Killeen's analysis, Catherine and Heathcliffe represent Original Sin, savagery, primitivism, and carnality. This carnality is perhaps best demonstrated, according to Killeen, when Catherine wakes terrified from a nightmare in which she dies. This in itself is not unusual, however, what makes this nightmare remarkable is that the idea that going to heaven is the source of the dreamer's terror. Catherine recalls, "Heaven didn't seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy" (p. 100). Catherine never repents of her earthly perspective, and, fitting to the moral function of the narrative, she is taken from her earthly home by an early death[6].

According to Botting (2008), the gothic element of literature serves another vital function, especially when used in the context of romance. Put simply, gothic prolongs the story. Botting argued that in an ideal romance "nothing is allowed to settle," and so the author must "devise fresh obstructions" (p. 21) between the couple to keep their desire for one another alive. Citing de Rougemeont, Botting argued that "romance is not, despite repeated and insistent representations to the contrary, the 'satisfaction of love' or the 'fruitful contentment of the settled couple,'" but rather stems from passion and arises "where love is fatal, frowned upon and doomed by life itself" (p. 20). Gothic conventions supply the couple with a wealth of dark, often supernatural, forces which keep the closure and passionless stability of marriage just out of their

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[6] Death in gothic romance is often glamorized. Although Catherine dies young, her death is the "ideal" death typical of Gothic romance—"a death that means transfiguration, and is in no way the result of some violent chance" (De Rougemont, 1940/1983, p. 45). The tragic end of young people is, according to Pearce (2004), an expression of the desire to "manage" death (p. 84). Bronfren (1993) makes a similar argument.

reach. It prolongs the enjoyment of readers and ensures the success of the narrative. He argued that we should not be surprised that the fulfillment of romance is ultimately unsatisfying.

In addition to their moral and romantic function, gothics also help their female writers and readers deal with the "claustrophobic nature of their existence" (Modleski, 1982/2008, p. 10). Modleski explained that the "exotic settings" of gothics "radically displace reality by putting the action in distant times and strange and ghostly lands," making gothic settings "uniquely equipped to become a site for the displacement of repressed wishes and fears" (p. 10). As Mussell (1983) explained, it was easy for housewives and adolescent girls to suspend their disbelief in even the most outlandish gothic plots, for in them "excitement, mystery, danger, and action occur side by side with domestic activities and social roles that women have traditionally performed" (p. 58).

Masse (1992), using Freudian analysis, argued that gothics function to address the "repeated trauma" (p. 19) patriarchy inflicts upon its female subjects. Although the supernatural is often prominent in gothics, Masse argued that, more than anything else, gothic's "structure and function" is to address "horror's existence in the real world," often in the form of "encapsulating social systems that engender repeated trauma" (p. 19) for women. According to Hogle (2004), the supernatural which so often inhabits the gothic also addresses the problems of patriarchy in one of two ways. She argued that the supernatural can be read either "as symbolic of unresolved cultural anomalies still needing our attention" or readers can use gothic's "overtly fictional surfaces, including its ghosts and monsters, as ways to keep concealing, avoiding, and 'othering' the multiple problems we have abjected into them" (Hogle, p. 231).

Similarly, Masse (1992) argued that gothics can address the pattern of masochism in different ways. She explained that, although masochism is a ubiquitous discourse, "the

representation of masochism's function for protagonists" (p. 4) differs from novel to novel. She

outlined three ways masochism can function in gothic texts. It can "identify and resist

masochism's intangible, ubiquitous pattern," "highlight its use as a strategy for survival," or

"internalize and replicate the dynamics of oppression" (Masse, p. 4). Masse noted that gothic

heroines often contribute to their own subjugation and that of others. Throughout her trials,

Masse argued, the gothic heroine "carefully monitors herself, finds her virtue in her renunciation,

and teaches other women to do so as well" (p. 3). Just as Radway argued that the act of reading

romance can be liberating even if the content is not, Vargo (2004) made a similar argument

about that the practice of reading gothics. While reading in itself provides an escape for the

gothic reader, reading about heroines who internalize masochism may not help readers look at

their own situations within patriarchy any differently. In this way, Vargo argued that "women's

gothic romance performs the difficult maneuver of inscribing social roles for women while also

affording an escape from those roles" (p. 233).

Although many gothics ask readers to accept patriarchy as inescapable, there are several

examples of novels that identify the problems with patriarchy and resist the pattern of masochism

for women living in this seemingly natural social system. Modelski (1982/2008) argued that

gothics frequently identify patriarchy's tendency to produce dysfunctional families and deny the

heroine autonomy. In many gothics, the protagonist emerges triumphant by defying her abusive

father and escaping her family. Marriage proves to be the means by which the heroine improves

her situation in patriarchy without escaping it, for through this patriarchal intuition of marriage

the heroine makes "the transition from unjust to just authority, by the move from father's house

to husband's " (Masse, 1992, p. 11). In gothics the heroine symbolically breaks the cycle of

silent suffering perpetuated by their mothers. For example, children are often introduced in

gothics for no other reason than to be despised inexplicably by the hero and defended bravely by the heroine. Although the heroine acquiesces to the authority of the hero in most instances, she becomes uncharacteristically brave when the hero attempts to abuse a child. The heroine's ability to resist the hero's unjust authority functions to give readers hope, convincing them "that they are not their mothers" (Modleski, p. 63).

Other novels point out that, although the heroine improves her situation by finding a hero to protect her from her father and the older male villain, the heroine is still mired in a patriarchal system in which she is denied autonomy. According to Modleski (1982/2008), gothic heroines do not express this frustration directly, rather it is expressed by a plot development beyond the heroine's control in which the hero is harmed, what Modleski called the "mutilation of the male" (p. 13) Modleski explained that this is "a device which allows the heroine to lead a more active life than would be possible if she had a whole and healthy male to protect her" (p. 15). She argued that male mutilation "represents female passive aggression against a system that limits them" (p. 15). This is a terrible accusation against women, but Modleski argued that when "feminine rage" is "blocked in direct expression," it becomes "submerged, subterranean, devious" (p. 16). This feminine rage against the hero is also seen in the marital gothic.

Marital gothic.

Gothic romance is but one, very early, iteration of the gothic genre. Marital gothics follow the story of a heroine for whom courtship and marriage prove only the beginning of her problems. Masse (1992) explained:

> The Gothic genre can be viewed historically as a serial writ large. Part 1, the earliest
> form of the genre, concerns itself with courtship and closes with a wedding, the
> restoration of order and the return to reality. Marital gothic begins with, or shortly after,

a marriage—the same marriage that sacramental expulsion of horror in Part 1. Yet horror

returns in the new home of the couple, conjured by renewed denial of the heroine's

identity and autonomy. The marriage that she thought would give her voice (because she

would be listened to), movement (because her status would be that of an adult), and not

just a room of her own, but a house, proves to have none of these attributes. The husband

who was originally defined by his opposition to the unjust father figure slowly merges

with that figure. The heroine finds herself mute, paralyzed, enclosed... (p. 20)

According to Masse, once married, the gothic heroine learns that she has vanquished nothing in

marriage because her "husband becomes the revenant of the very horror his presence was

supposed to banish" (p. 7). For example, in Gilman's (1892) short story, "The Yellow

Wallpaper," a man attempts to cure his wife's postpartum depression by locking her in an

upstairs bedroom with nothing to read or otherwise occupy her mind. As a result, the heroine's

mental state worsens. She begins reading the wallpaper and imagines figures crawling around

trapped in it. She eventually sinks into a state of total madness.

Modleski (1982/2008) described another variation of marital gothic in which a newly

married heroine who finds reason to believe her new husband may be a lunatic and/or murderer.

As a result, she feels a "simultaneous attraction/repulsion, love/fear" (p. 31) toward her husband.

She then investigates her husband or lover until she can establish "beyond any doubt the fact that

the lover/husband is not guilty" (p. 68). As long as the husband or lover is under suspicion, the

heroine feels the need to engage in a "continual deciphering of the motives for the hero's

behaviors" (p. 24). Not only that, she, "in classic paranoid manner, broods over the slightest

fluctuation of the hero's emotional temperature or facial expression, quick to detect in these

alterations possible threats to her very life" (pp. 24-25). An example of this pattern in marital

gothic can be found in Daphne DuMaurier's (1938) *Rebecca*. In this oft-cited marital gothic, the heroine, who goes unnamed, tells the story of her whirlwind courtship and marriage to an aristocratic widower, Maximilian. Over the course of the novel, a number of cryptic clues lead the perceiving protagonist to suspect Maximilian of murdering his first wife, Rebecca. Ultimately, more sleuthing by the heroine uncovers a web of deception that exonerates Maximillan to an extent. Rebecca, the narrator learns, had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and intentionally provoked her husband's anger by flaunting her many extramarital affairs. Although the narrator finds her husband is, in fact, guilty of murder, she feels that his first wife's extreme provocation exonerates him, and she chooses to stay with him, living in self-imposed exile.

According to Masse (1992), marital gothics help women deal with the pressure and fear associated with living in a society that expects them to enter into a binding social contract with someone who may or may not prove trustworthy and who may or may not grant her the autonomy she hopes to gain. As Masse explained,

> The heroines of Gothic, inculcated by education, religion, and bourgeois familial values, have the same expectations as those around them for what is normal. Their social contract tenders their passivity and disavowal of public power in exchange for the love that will let them reign in the interpersonal and domestic sphere. Courtship is the heroine's first adult testing of that pact and marriage the second. (p. 18)

Yet women in real life are "surrounded by couples who testify to the transaction's failure" and, as a result, "they are haunted by the discrepancy" (Masse, p. 18). The marital gothic, then, allows women to face the fear of entering into a marriage that might fail to improve their situation, or make it worse.

The other prevailing theory about the use of marital gothic is that it helps women deal with the paranoia they might experience once married. Russ (as cited in Modleski, 1982/2008) argued that it is common for newlywed women to "begin to realize that their husbands are strangers" (p. 31). Modleski (1982/2008) argued that marital gothics help newly wed women deal directly with doubt about their husbands, confinement, isolation, disorientation, and a sense of estrangement "consequent upon what is usually considered the most momentous change in their lives" (p. 56). Marital gothics, Modleski argued, help women play out their paranoid fantasies to their limit, returning them finally to a place of renewed faith in their husbands.

Monster lore and gothic horror.

In this section I summarize the characteristics of gothic horror, specifically horror which integrates vampire and werewolf lore. Stories of vampires go back to medieval times. Before disease and decomposition were understood in medical terms, people looked for explanations of how whole villages of healthy people began to waste away when a particularly virulent disease took hold of their community. As the death toll in these towns mounted and the unsavory practice of grave sharing became a necessity, rotting bodies of the freshly dead appeared engorged with blood. Some believed this to be evidence that the dead were returning to take others to the grave with them by gradually draining their life force. The French called these undead monsters, *revenants*, that is, those who return. Similar stories came out of the Balkans after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the late seventeenth century (Cohen, 2012). Austrian soldiers passed along these border stories, called *grenzeliteratur*; they were eventually collected and published in the early eighteenth century. In 1731, an outbreak of mysterious attacks in Austria sparked the first vampire craze. A doctor, informed by the folk lore of the Balkans, examined the victims of these mysterious attacks and published his findings, mentioning his

suspicions of a "wampyre" (Cohen, p. 28). Within a year, there were over 20 more books

published about these monsters.[7]

Werewolf lore goes back perhaps even further to Greek mythology (Asma, 2009b). The

werewolf comes from a story that explained the establishment of an Arcadian rite of passage

festival held for the young men of their clan. The story goes that the ancient Arcadians were

cannibals and, at the first Lykaia festival, served Zeus meat from a human sacrifice. Zeus

punished the Arcadains by requiring a test of their ability to deny the desire to eat human flesh.

In a ceremony to be held every nine years, the male adolescents of the tribe would gather and eat

from a common plate of meat which included one morsel of human flesh. Pliny (as cited in

Asma, 2009b) gave an account of this story: He who ate the human morsel would be led to a

marsh where he "hangs his clothes on an oak tree and swims naked through a swamp to a

deserted territory," and there he "is turned into a wolf and associates with other wolves for nine

years" (p. 34). If he can withstand the test of not eating human flesh, he can return to the same

marsh and return as a human "with nine years' age added to his former appearance" (Pliny as

cited in Asma, p. 34).

This Greek myth evolved through the centuries, and in the Middle Ages, werewolves

became a convenient way to explain naturally occurring wolf attacks. When medieval villagers

began noticing missing livestock, and even children, wolves were often the culprit. When

hunting parties failed to capture the beast, once again, supernatural forces were blamed.

Institoris(as cited in Asma, 2009b), a German monster hunter and inquisitor of the fifteenth

century, described wolves that "snatch adults and children out of their homes and eat them,"

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[7] In 1734, the German writer Michael Ranft, having been at the Easter book fair in Leipzig
wrote, "it was impossible to enter a bookstore without seeing something about bloodsuckers." (as
cited in Cohen, 2012, p. 28)

adding that these beasts "run all over the place with great cunning; and cannot be hurt or captured by any skill, or body of men" (p. 114). Institoris concluded that these wolves were, in fact, "evil spirits" (p. 114) sent to punish the village for moral indiscretions (p. 115). Medieval legends also spoke of giant, barbaric, dog-headed human figures called *cynocephali*. One particularly famous legend about these creatures tells the story of Saint Christopher who began his life as a cynocephalus, but repented of his abominable animalistic behavior and became a follower of Christ. His spiritual transformation led to a physical transformation as he received a human form. As Asma (2009b) explained, "The legend speaks a lesson of possible redemption for even the most vile of creatures. Not only is the Cynocephalus saved, but he is sainted and celebrated for his "evangelism, devotion, and courage" (pp. 82-3).

Although stories of vampires and werewolves can be traced back to antiquity, these monsters received a gothic makeover in the late eighteenth century. In order to understand how gothic romance came to incorporate the undead, we must trace gothic back to an important split. According to Vargo (2004), as the gothic style grew in popularity among women in the late eighteenth century, reviewers felt the need to distinguish gothic love stories from the presumably more important work of male authors who also embraced the gothic aesthetic (e.g., Coleridge, Byron, and Keats). This resulted in the division of gothic between what late eighteenth century Englanders called "feminine terror" gothics and "masculine horror" (Vargo, p. 234) gothics.

Feminine terror gothics gave us the Byronic prototype which would morph into the sexy, vampire aristocrat many of us are familiar with today. However, the masculine horror gothic also shaped vampire lore in important ways. Masculine horror gothics, unlike their feminine counterparts, explored the inner conflict of men living with the tension caused by the repression of unconscious, often primitive, barbaric, and otherwise taboo, desires (Punter, 1996, p. 4).

According to Morris (1985), the increasing pressure of "desires long suppressed, deeply hidden, forced into silence" results in an uncontrollable "release from restraint" (Morris, p. 306) that causes the protagonist to delve into the unruly depths of "sexual excess and perversion" (Clery, 2000, p. 2), exposing what Baker (2007) called the "monstrous masculine" (p. 168). For example, in one of the first masculine horror gothics, Lewis' *The Monk,* Satan targets the title character—someone called to live the most holy and pure life. While working to maintain the appearance of piousness, Satan plagues the monk with an insatiable lust which drives the holy man to rape and murder a woman who, in a terrifying twist, turns out to be his own sister.

As Baker (2007) noted, masculine horror gothics were also known for a "preoccupation with destabilized subjectivities" (p. 168). He argued that "gothic masculinity" particularly is often "split between the binary opposites of reason and passion (p. 165). For example, in Robert Lewis Stevenson's (1886) *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the doctor works to maximize his virtue by eradicating all evil from his personality. However, instead of destroying that evil, he simply distills that evil into an uncontrollable and murderous alter ego, resulting in the reasonable Dr. Jekyll and the murderous Mr. Hyde.

Modern monsters combine ancient stories of shape-shifting tormentors with the unstable, sexually deviant subjectivity of masculine horror with the charming Byronic hero-victim-villains of gothic romances. This formula has been helping the vampire's image for quite some time. These early vampires were the utmost of abjection: undead hungry corpses feeding on the blood of the dearly departed. These first vampires were a far cry from the sexy, Byronic "vampire-aristocrat" (Botting, 2008, p. 3) image that would emerge at the end of England's Gothic era.

If we cannot attribute the Byronic character to Lord Byron himself, we can at least thank him for the hand he had in creating the sexy, vampire-aristocrat. Literary legend has it that,

while living in Switzerland, Byron invited friends, including Mary and Percy Shelley, to visit him. Kept indoors by inclement weather, they entertained each other by reading from *Tales of the Dead*, a collection of French horror stories. Lord Byron challenged his guests to write a story that would rival those in the French volume. In response to the challenge, Byron's personal physician, Polidori, penned a short story called *The Vampyre*. It featured Lord Ruthven, a character that bore a striking resemblance to the charismatic persona of Lord Byron. In this "first English vampire novel" (Cohen, 2012, p. 29), Lord Ruthven seduces and kills several women before his traveling acquaintance, Aubrey, figures out the connection between the murders and Ruthven. Sadly, Aubrey's epiphany does not come in time to save his sister. Lord Ruthven seduces her like the others, and kills her on their wedding night. As Brugger (2009) noted, in Polidori's Lord Ruthven, the image of vampire as a "dark seducer" and "sinister, haughty aristocrat of remarkable intelligence, charm, and physical beauty" (p. 235) is fully developed. Steiber (2008) noted that Polidori's characterization of the vampire aristocrat has served as a basic "blueprint for all of the romantic vampires who've followed" (p. 67).

Monster characteristics.

Vampires are particularly heretical figures. They possess immortality, but only through an inversion of the sacrament of blood associated with the Christian religion. As Mishra (1994) argued, the vampire's immortality functions as a "ghastly/ghostly parody, a monstrous subversion that mocks a fundamental tenet of Christianity: that Christ alone returned from the dead" (p. 99). Their damnable state leaves vampires with a unique opportunity to fashion rules that have little to do with the afterlife or spirituality. For example, ostracized by religion, Anne Rice's (1995) vampire, Lestat, "settles" for an "earthly morality" (McDonald, 2004, p.165).

When a quest for knowing more about the possibility of an afterlife for vampires leads Lestat to meet God and the Devil, he tells them both "we have conceived better rules" (Rice, p. 331).

Although they defy religious and moral code, the monsters of horror gothic are often painted sympathetically. As Asma (2009b) argued, modern monsters embody the human condition as understood by the Christian ethos. Born fallen, they must work for their salvation. They could not easily be described as noble or virtuous, and yet, they are not purely to blame for their own situations. Take, for example, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Rejected by his own creator, the wretch is left to civilize himself in isolation. Although the monster strives for the life of an Enlightenment era gentleman, his feelings of resentment drive him to murder. The same could be said of Gaston Laroux's title gentleman/murderer in *The Phantom of the Opera*. The monsters of these early horror novels were what McEvoy (2007) called "hero-villain-victims" (p. 23). In this way, there is a good deal of similarity between the Byronic heroes of feminine terror novels (gothic romances) and the monsters of horror. Both can trace some of their villainy to a moment of victimization. They both become tortured souls and experience some moment of redemption before the narrative concludes.

As a monster, the vampire is unique in its overt and potent sexuality. Since Polidori, vampire attacks, the giving and receiving of blood, is almost always sexualized (Doerksen, 2002). While romances entertain certain "erotic fantasies," they are "domesticated or enjoined with matrimony" (Nyberg, 2002, p. 46). Vampire sex, on the other hand, is utterly outside what bourgeois Englishmen might consider civil. Take, for example, Bram Stoker's (1897) *Dracula*. In this classic vampire novel, the protagonist, Jonathan Harker, "a man hedged round by Victorian morality" (Nyberg, 2002, p. 46), is confronted by three voluptuous vampires. One licks her lips "like an animal" (Stoker, p. 48) at the thought of taking Harker in. This connection

between vampire and sexual taboo has endured. As Brugger (2010) argued, with *Dracula*, "the Victorian obsession with the mesmerizing combination of sex, blood, and death has been kept alive...until the present" (p. 236).

Although vampires are driven by a sexualized lust for blood, they are also often plagued with a conscience that makes them seem human. Written a few years after Polidori's (1819) *Vampyre*, Rymer's (1845-1847) *Varney the Vampire* series continued the tradition of the seductive and hypnotic villain. However, Varney was unique in that he was plagued by a conscience that rendered him self-loathing. This thoughtful, brooding quality of the vampire carried into the 21st century. Take, for example, Anne Rice's (1973-2003) series, *The Vampire Chronicles*. Rice's protagonist, Lestat, is not only an aristocratic gentleman indulging in earthly pleasures, he is a tortured loner on a quest to learn about his soul, the meaning of existence, and his status with God (Botting, 2008). This modern vampire is very much a gentleman reminiscent of a bygone era. As Botting argued, the modern vampire's "alienation and disquieted solitude, his love of beauty and knowledge, along with his humane concerns endow him the qualities of a Romantic self, tortured by self-consciousness and a questioning spirit" (p. 77). Since the publication of Polidori's Vampyre in 1819, there has been an ongoing "cultural negotiation of the vampire theme" (Botting, p. 3). From the "trashy gothic tales" (Brugger, 2010 p. 235) that follow the escapades of Varney the Vampire (1845-1847) to the most grotesque figures of Bram Stoker's (1897) sexually charged *Dracula*, the image of the vampire as a self-loathing monster, but also a "sinister, haughty aristocrat of remarkable intelligence, charm, and physical beauty," (Brugger, p. 235) has endured, indeed, to the 21st century.

Monsters of all types are often associated with at three (overlapping) characteristics: the liminal, the abject, and the grotesque. As Hurley (2007) explained, monsters exist "at the limen

or threshold between two opposing conceptual categories, and so can be defined by both neither and both of them" (p. 138). For example, vampires and zombies exist somewhere between the plane of the dead and the living; werewolves exist on the threshold of human and animal. Dr. Frankenstein's monster provides yet another example of liminal existence. As Hurley explained, "as a animate corpse capable of speech and complex thought, the monster blurs the boundary between death and life, between mere matter and matter infuse with sentience and spirit" (p. 138).

Monsters are also described with the term *abject*, which can have two meanings according to Kristeva (1980/1982). In one sense, the abject can refer to "composite" beings (p. 4). For example, Frankenstein's monster is composed of a conglomeration of body parts. In another sense, the abject is that which is "cast off " or "cast away" because "debased, degraded, humiliated, or despicable" (Hurley, 2007, p. 138). Once again, Frankenstein's monster, rejected by his creator and sent to live alone, serves as an apt example. Bakhtin (1968/1984) described the abject as that which "seeks to go out beyond" its own "confines" and connect "to other bodies or to the world outside" (p. 320). Here again, Frankenstein's monster provides a good example. Confined by his inability to speak or control his misplaced rage for his maker, the monster watches humans from afar, desperately longing to join society.

Grotesque is yet another descriptor commonly used for monsters. Monsters, by definition, are a mix of animal and man, grotesque beings "characterized by their hybridity" (Hurley, 2007, p. 137). The word grotesque, Hurley explained, comes from the Italian word for caves, or grottas. On these walls, ancient man painted figures of hybrid creatures made of various combinations of human, plant, and animal. Monsters, Hurley explained, "violate categories, most notably (and alarmingly) breaking down the distinction between human and

inhuman, human and animal" (p. 137). This definition is nearly indistinguishable from the related notion of the liminal. However, according to Bakhtin (1968/1984), grotesque can take on another meaning involving degradation, specifically "the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal" to the "material level" (p.19). In other words, as Hurley (2007) explained, Bakhtin associates the grotesque with "the human body in all its course, clumsy earthiness and changeful mortality, focusing on the material thingness of the human subject rather than the intellect or spirit" (p. 138). Grotesque, according to Bakhtin also gestures to the "comic body," which "not attempting to transcend the flesh, it is invigorated and renewed by its embrace of the earthly" (Hurley, p. 138). It is interesting to note that the grotesque as expressed in literature refers also to a comedic, self-reflexive style of writing which "tends to call attention to its own conventions" (Hurley, p. 142), making it an easy target for parody.

Monstrous effects.

There are a number of theories about out attraction to monsters and how readers are shaped by reading such monstrous horror narratives. The monstrous protagonists associated with the horror genre are designed to evoke a wide range of emotions in readers. According to Asma (2009a), monster stories can serve a number of functions which vary according to how the reader positions herself. If the reader identifies with the victim of the monster, Asma argued that horror narratives can function as speculative fiction allowing readers to contemplate how they might respond to any unimaginable threat. However, as we have seen, many horror tales are told through the point of view of the monster. This encourages readers to identify with the monsters as much as the monster's victims. According to Asma (2009b), our modern monsters are designed to evoke an empathy consistent with the "Judeo-Christian humility culture" (p. 100). He explained:

> True Christianity seeks to embrace the outcast, not fight him. Christianity celebrates the
>
> downtrodden, the loser, the misshapen.... According to this charity paradigm, the monster
>
> is simply misunderstood rather than evil. Perhaps God has created the monsters in order
>
> to teach us to love the ugly, the repulsive, the outcast. (p. 100)

Monsters, then, become parables designed to teach human forgiveness. In this new Christian

paradigm, the adversary is within us—it is our human nature to hunt and destroy that which blurs

borders and threatens our worldview. Asma concluded, "The only, real monsters, in this now

dominant tradition, are pride and prejudice." (p. 101)

There are a number of perspectives on why readers might identify with monsters.

According to Hanson (2007), monsters give those readers who feel like outsiders "queer

pleasure" in the form of "positive identification, consolation, and belonging" (p. 179). Marxist

theorists argue that readers identify with monsters because post-Industrial men feel estranged

from that which makes them human. For example, Mishra (1994) argued that modernization and

industrialization separated men from nature and the tangible fruit of working in it. As a result,

Mishra explained, they lost their "sense of human-ness" (p. 10) and turned to monsters as an

expression of their own alienation. Freudian theorists argue that readers identify with monsters

because, in their subconscious, they harbor repressed desires. For example, vampires, zombies,

and other undead creatures allow the reader to indulge in the otherwise repressed desire to live

forever (Asma, 2009b). According to Nyberg (2002), vampire tales are especially well designed

to address sexual repression. Nyberg argued the figure of the deadly vampire served as the

perfect expression of Victorian sensibilities, for the vampire and his powers of seduction,

personifies the message that "sexuality is always threatening, never comfortable" (p. 45). Not

only did Victorians identify with the message of sex as danger, vampire tales also provided,

Nyberg argued, an erotic catharsis for those submerged in a culture of restraint. Nyberg argued

that, "for a man hedged round by Victorian morality, the supernatural offered a mask to disguise

sexual fantasies" (p. 46). Mishra (2004) went further, noting that much of vampire literature is

overtly "queer," that is, "overtly sexual and deviant, an abomination to nature, mortality" (p. 99).

For example, in Stoker's (1897) *Dracula,* three female vampires proposition Jonathan Harker.

This Victorian gentleman teeters perilously on the edge of a would-be deadly sexual act. Morris

(1985) explained that such scenes "allowed male readers the opportunity to experience taboo

sexual practices, including multiple partners and women who initiate sex" (p. 306).

However, vampires have also been associated with queerness in the homoerotic sense.

For example, there is an implied lesbian attraction in Le Fanu's (1870) vampire tale, *Carmilla*.

Readers could, presumably, live this taboo experience vicariously without actually violating the

taboo itself. As Nyberg (2002) argued, "the supernatural served as a veil for elaborating a scene

that was otherwise considered taboo; repressed desire found representation through a vampire"

(p. 46). According to Botting (1996), vampires have also served more generally in our culture as

a symbol of counter culture. They are aristocrats who parody high culture. As "figures of

liminality, monstrosity and difference," vampires challenge "bourgeois notions of normality and

identity" (Botting, p. 3). Reading vampire fiction, according to Asma (2009a), allows the reader

a safe space in which to play with subversive, heretical thoughts and, afterward, return to "lives

of quiet repression" (para. 4).

Some literary theorists believe the draw for readers toward monster-centered horror is

simply morbid titillation—a kind of desire that is never fully satisfied nor is intended to be.

Hurley (2007) argued that one cannot help but respond to the pull of the monster's abject,

grotesque, human/non-human hybridity. Although the monster is designed to inspire fear in

readers, this fear is always tempered with fascination (Hurley, p.138). Hurley likened the horror

reader's enthrallment with grotesque monsters to that of Dr. Frankenstein when he first beheld

his creation: "One cannot bear to look upon it, but cannot bring oneself to look away from it,

either" (p. 138). The abject personified by monsters, according to Kristeva (1980/1982) creates a

"vortex of summons and repulsion" (p. 5). She argued that monsters are personifications of what

Freud called the *unheimlic* , that is, the uncanny, the familiar but also foreign feeling generated

by a near imitation of something (p. 5). As Asma (2009b) pointed out, some of the most

terrifying and thought-provoking monsters have born an uncanny resemblance to humans, for to

be "almost human is more creepy and unsettling" (p. 191). The "cognitive slippage invoked by

monsters," Asma argued, "explains why we are both repelled by and drawn to horror films and

novels" (p. 184). He explained: "The fascination produced by categorical mismatches is the

solution to the paradox of why we seek out an experience that is at least partly unpleasant" (p.

184).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

As we saw in the previous chapter, the reading and writing of literary fiction takes place as a game of meaning set within a forum established by discourse and generic conventions. In literature, as in life, discourse establishes the rules by which individuals live. It creates cultural institutions, positions of subjectivity, and economies of meaning. Much of the existing *Twilight* scholarship levels critique at the manifestations of a single familiar enemy discourse (for example, patriarchy) without addressing the mechanics of that discourse and without entertaining the possibility that this four-volume series deploys multiple discourses. Sprague (2005) defined discourse analyses as a way to "examine the connections among cultural texts, who produces them, and the ways people use them in their lives" (p. 120). In this analysis, I looked for previously unexplored discursive connections among the four volumes of the *Twilight* series and the body of literature with which author Stephenie Meyer, an English major, is reported to be familiar, for the purposes of describing how those discourses shaped Meyer, her characters, and the readers who engaged those characters while reading the *Twilight* series.

Research Questions

Bove's (1995) essay on Foucauldian discourse analysis helped me establish the questions that would guide my investigation. According to Bove, in order to properly interrogate a discourse as Foucault understood the term, one should ask the following questions: "How does discourse function? Where is it to be found? How does it get produced and regulated? What are its social effects? How does it exist as a seemingly ensuring flow of linguistic and institutional transformations?" (p. 54). I modified these questions to better address the problem of discourse in the context of literature, focusing on two areas of inquiry:

1. What are the discourses at work in the *Twilight* series?

2. How were these discourses perpetuated and transformed in the *Twilight* text?

To identify the discourses in *Twilight*, I read in the comparative literature tradition, contrasting the individual volumes of the *Twilight* series against each other and against the conventions of the gothic, horror, and romance genres. I was particularly attuned to the metaphor of the monster and what that might represent in the context of romance. As Derrida (1972/1982) argued, literary critique should not involve simply "listen[ing] to the source itself in order to learn what it is or what it means, but rather to the turns of speech, the allegories, figures, metaphors, as you will, into which the source has deviated, in order to lose it or to rediscover it-- which always amounts to the same" (p. 280). As I read, I looked for contradiction and inconsistencies which might point to strategies deployed by the author to produce certain effects in readers. However, taking cues from Modleski (1982/2008), I also read the *Twilight* series "symptomatically" (p. xix), looking for discursive patterns in characterization, plot, and setting as identified in the genre-specific scholarship with which I became familiar.

Before I could proceed in describing Stephenie Meyer's entrée into the world of literary writing for the second part of my investigation, I found that I had to deploy feminist perspectives on the agency to counter a popular poststructural notion that the author is dead, displaced by discourse and its anonymity. Having countered this "death of the author," I proceeded with a document analysis in which I read and watched interviews with author Stephenie Meyer, vigilantly looking for clues which might help me identify the enabling conditions which lead to Meyer's decision to take up the authority of authorship and the effects on her subjectivity of doing so.

Topic Selection

I began my study before many of the academic publications about *Twilight* had made it to press. I worried that selecting a popular feminine text as an object of intense analysis would seem absurd to those in the academic community. From being ignored outright by male scholars (Regis, 2003), to being dismissed as a dangerous product of a false conscience by early feminists (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, 2006), historically, popular romances and gothics have historically suffered at the hands of academics.

Fortunately, in the last few years, several feminist scholars have countered this dismissive attitude toward feminine texts and those who read them. In an effort to challenge what Modleski (1982/2008) called the long-standing "double standard according to which women's entertainment is judged to be trivial compared to men's pursuits" (p. xxvii), she conducted a thorough analysis of a wide range of feminine texts—romance novels, gothic novels, and soap operas—and the psychology of their appeal. Janice Radway (1984/1991) followed Modleski with her study of popular romance novels and the practice of romance reading. In the decades since, feminist scholars have continued "to 'rescue' feminine forms as worthy of attention" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff , 2006, p. 491).

For years, academics have also shied away from studying popular texts. As Shusterman (2000) commented, there has been for some time a "lamentable cultural dichotomy between genuine high art and illegitimate popular culture" (p. 168). However, on this front, postmodern scholars have made great strides. The postmodern movement saw the erosion of the older distinction between high culture and so-called mass or popular cultural. Theorists such as Dewey made strides toward widening "art's borders to forms of popular culture" (Shusterman, p. 59) by deconstructing the high/low binary applied to forms of art, including literature. Granger

(2010), defending academic Twihards for taking the series themes seriously, argued that it is "intellectually lazy" for critics to dismiss such a popular culture phenomenon and "to assume that millions of readers are wrong, stupid, and have no taste" (p. 7).

Although efforts have been made to legitimize popular feminine texts and the practices of reading associated with them, those who have chosen to study the *Twilight* phenomenon have been critiqued by their fellow academics for doing so. As we have seen, in the last three years, several academic essays have been published on the topic of *Twilight*. However, the stigma of applying academic rigor to popular and feminine texts remains. For example, Golden (2010) mocked academics who have published work on the series by calling them "the new 'Twihards.'" This term, "Twihard" could be considered offensive in itself, as it the term was coined by anti-fans (Click, 2007) who use the term to stigmatize *Twilight* fandom "as hyperfeminine: uncontrollable, silly, irrational" (Sheffield & Merlo, 2010, p. 211). Golden went on to suggest that there might be "something trivializing and possibly embarrassing in the notion of the ivory tower's brightest minds embracing some of the more frivolous ephemeral of popular culture. (two words: sparkly vampires)" (para. 13). In spite of the progress made in the last 30 years, it seems as though *Twilight* might not have escaped the stigma associated with studying mass-market texts for women. Just as literary scholars and early feminists dismissed the importance of romance, according to Click, Aubrey, and Behm-Morawitz (2010a) the mainstream press has likewise ridiculed "*Twilight*'s story, characters and relationships instead of taking these elements seriously" (p. 5). They argue that there is a cultural "pattern of degrading media …women find appealing," while ignoring what makes these texts "so engaging" (p. 5). Granger (2010) attributed the dismissal of *Twilight* to "genre revulsion" and "institutional misogyny" (p. 111). In this study I, therefore, name joining my fellow academic Twihards in

embracing popular feminine texts as legitimate objects of academic study and consider their study a postmodern/poststructural and feminist method.

Timeline

Having used Paul Bove's (1995) questions to devise a set of research questions, I built my timeline around the premise that I would inquire into each area of this investigation separately and chronologically. The hierarchy of the questions almost necessitated that I do so. I could not, after all, look into the role of discourse in shaping the author or her readers if I had not yet identified some of the discourses at work. Therefore, the cumulative and interdependent nature of my research questions, coupled with my determination to listen to that which interrupted my project, made it nearly impossible to maintain the linearity of a chronological timeline.

Although I set out with a tidy timeline in which I outlined each step in my procedure and its expected date of completion, almost immediately circumstances led me to feel that my research was shamefully out of control. I hesitate to even speak of the missteps that delayed my project. As Shope (2006) remarked, "researchers rarely share their beginning tales" (p. 165). We cling to the hope that set procedures are a guaranteed way to control our work and ultimately to yield an air of what Foucault (1972) called "scientificity" (p. 38) to our work. However, as Shope maintained, there are no such guarantees. Shope went on to argue that if "the story we tell about our research" shows only a "coherent, well-planned research strategy" (p. 165), it is only because researchers are afraid to submit anything but a tidied-up fictional fabrication of what actually happened.

With trepidation, I now give an account of my "beginning tale"— the missteps and struggles I faced in as a researcher. Let me first say that, although I strived to design a

comprehensive research plan, I began my study knowing (with an equal mixture of hope and dread) that I would find some evidence that surprised me and sent me on one or more "creepy detours" (Britzman, 1995, p. 55). Much to my terror, the first detour occurred earlier than I anticipated—at the outset of my research. In the original time line I presented to my research committee, I afforded myself the five months between December of 2009 and April of 2010 to complete the text analysis. However, early findings made it absolutely necessary to revise my research objective, throwing my timeline off almost immediately. The idea of taking a detour in my plans so early was frightening to me. However, as Spivak (1990) advises, "You have to say yes to that which interrupts your project" (p. 47), even if, I soon learned, that involves turning one's clear cut goals and deadlines into a loose, nebulous list of priorities.

As I first attempted to describe *Twilight* in terms of discourse, I found it necessary to question one of my initial assumptions about the series. When I began my research, I did so assuming that *Twilight* was a romance series. I would later learn that I was not alone in this assumption. As Behm-Morawitz, Click, and Aubrey (2010b) argued, "Edward and Bella's relationship fits comfortably in the romance genre" (p. 151). Clasen echoed this sentiment, calling *Twilight* "fundamentally a love story" (Clasen, p. 2010, p. 119). Wilson (2011a) and Shachar (2011) also examined the series as a romance.

With the connection between *Twilight* and romance firmly established, I felt comfortable—too comfortable—in believing that this series perpetuated the discourse Janice Radway identified in her study of romances and their readers: the discourse of patriarchy's promise. In fact, my first research question initially read: "How does the *Twilight* book series exist as a linguistic transformation of the discourse of patriarchy's promise?"

As Charmaz and Mitchell (1997) mused, research often involves "infatuation," "confusion," and "quandary" (p. 212). In the early months of my research, I was infatuated with Janice Radway's study and her theory that the ideal romances her participants enjoyed were written in a discourse which emphasized the potential advantages for women living in patriarchy. So much of what I saw in Radway's study of romances and romance readers seemed to fit with my preliminary findings about *Twilight* and *Twilight* readers. I reasoned that, because *Twilight* exhibited many of the characteristics of a text written in the discourse of patriarchy's promise, it was an exemplary specimen of the romance genre and, presumably, nothing else.

However, as I began to analyze the *Twilight* texts with this assumption in place, my efforts were quickly frustrated. Although the discourse of patriarchy's promise helped explain some of my findings, it also proved inadequate in explaining much of what I was seeing in the *Twilight* texts. I eventually realized that my infatuation with Radway's study had led me to oversimplify *Twilight* with the label romance.

I blame my own near-sightedness and a theory-free approach to genre for this schedule-wrecking detour. Working under the assumption that *Twilight* was a clear-cut example of a romance governed by the discourse of patriarchy's promise, I proposed a study in which I completed the analysis swiftly and concisely in a matter of months. However, my text analysis revealed that *Twilight* fell in line just as much with the conventions of gothic and horror genres. I, therefore, found it necessary to rewrite my leading research question which originally read "How does *Twilight* function as a linguistic transformation of the discourse of patriarchy's promise?" That question became "What discourses are at work in the *Twilight* series?"

Having expanded the study to include information about gothic and horror literature, the portion of my timeline devoted to the text analysis tripled. I began in December, 2009 with a

study that was small, tight, and in-control. By March 2010, it was abysmally large, open ended, and frighteningly out-of-control—a monster in its own right. Taking courage from Dika (1996) who said, "love your monster" (p. 196), I embraced that which was most uncertain and terrifying and continued on, far behind schedule. I have tried to represent both the ideal of a timeline with the reality of my investigation below:

- December-February 2009: Begin reading academic literature to identify discursive characteristics of reading romance.

- March 2010-July 2010: Analyze *Twilight* texts, looking evidence of the discourse of patriarchy's promise.

- July 2010: Begin reading theory and criticism related to the gothic and horror genres

- August 2010-April 2011: Collect and read Meyer interview data.

- May 2011-January 2012: Use Meyer interview data to revisit text analysis. Use feminist critiques of gothic and romance to analyze Meyer interviews.

- June, 2011- June 2012: Write as method of analysis. Read preliminary finding against a-priori theory.

- June-2012 to present: Write for the purpose of representation

Identifying Discourse

Methods and analysis.

Although I set out with the goal of conducting a rather straightforward analysis, I found my efforts preempted by a necessary deconstruction of genre. Rather than reading *Twilight* against the characteristics of a single pure genre, I read deconstructively, open to the possibility of finding in *Twilight* the influence of multiple genres. As Scholes (2001) remarked, unlike traditional literary criticism which "involves a claim that a certain literary work fails to achieve

the purely literary norms of its mode or genre" (p. 23), deconstruction assumes that a text is

attempting (and necessarily failing) to achieve that impossible essence. The task of

deconstruction is to find out how, through narrative convention and characterization, the text

works—and fails—to achieve the literary norms of a genre. This is why Spivak (1989) asserted

that "deconstruction is neither essentialist or anti-essentialist" (p. 135). I abandoned searching

for the one true essence of *Twilight*, and found in its stead multiple literary influences.

As I explain in detail later, my feminist leanings obliged me to hold firmly to the belief

that one can learn a great deal about a work of literature by listening to its author. When I first

began to question my original assumption that *Twilight* was a pure romance, I thought it

reasonable to consult published interviews with author Stephenie Meyer for clarification.

However, as the person most intimately involved in *Twilight*'s creation, I found Meyer

remarkably ambivalent in her interviews about how to label the series in terms of genre.

According to an interview with Kirschling (2009), Meyer pitched the first three novels of the

series to prospective publishers as "suspense romance horror comedy" (para. 2). Romance is

clearly central, and elements of horror became more evident as the series progressed and Meyer

fleshed out the grotesque, cruel, and terrifying potential of her vampires. As for suspense and

comedy, I learned that suspense and comedy are, indeed, associated with the gothic genre.

However, I found it interesting that Meyer never called her work gothic, and within the same

interview Meyer denounced both the labels romance and horror. In the same interview given to

Kirschling (2009), she narrowed the categorization down, calling *Twilight* "really a romance

more than anything else" (para. 6). However, she felt compelled to add this self-contradictory

qualifier:

…but it's just not that romance-y. It's hard to nail down, but romance tends to be my

favorite part in any book or movie, because that's really the strongest emotion. Orson

Scott Card is my favorite: The romances are a small part of his books, but they bring his

people to life. (para. 6)

Meyer contradicted herself again about *Twilight*'s status as a horror novel. Although she pitched

the books (in Kirshling, 2009) as at least partially horror, when asked by Changing Hands (2006)

about whether she had ever read the horror novels of Anne Rice or Stephen King, Meyer

confessed that she had not and that she was "not all that informed about the horror genre" (para.

10), adding "I've never considered *Twilight* a horror novel" (para. 10). In an interview with

Kirschling she confessed that she sold the book as partially horror; however, when faced with

endless inquiries about other vampire books, Meyer suddenly decided *Twilight* must not be

horror. She asserted, "it's so not like the other vampire books out there—Anne Rice's and the

few that I've read. It isn't that kind of dark and dreary and blood-thirsty world" (in Margolis,

2005, para. 2).

Meyer's interviews seemed to prove that De Saussure's (1916/1959) argument that the

meaning of words is assigned only in negative terms. In interview after interview, Meyer

worked to define her books by what they are not. She struggled to label *Twilight* just as I did.

She did her best to circle in on meaning in the hopes of arriving at one central term that

epitomized *Twilight*. Meyer's ambivalence about how to identify *Twilight* in terms of genre

gestured to the inherently ambiguity of those labels.

Using Derridian theory of language, I began to deconstruct the notion of pure genre. Any

genre label, I reasoned, must be plagued with the same *différance* (Derrida, 1974/1997, p. 63)

from which all language systems suffer. The parameters for genre, therefore, must be based on

the same exclusion and relativity. In other words, what genres are, I reasoned, must be based almost entirely of what they are not. Derrida (1974/1997) argued that, through a process of deferral, the meaning assigned to words continually shifts. I, therefore, continued my deconstruction of genre by looking at the use of genre labels across history. As I read literary critiques of romances throughout history for my literature review, I learned that Radway's use of the word "romance" was not necessarily how the term has always been used by literary critics.

To complicate matters, as I re-read the series, I saw in it specific characteristics of romance, but also gothic, and even horror. Fortunately, I found a theory that allowed me to entertain the notion that *Twilight* fell into multiple, impure genre categories. I found what Derrida (1980) called his Law of Genre. In it, he postulated that a "text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without or less a genre" (p. 65). He explained, "every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging" (Derrida, p. 65). In other words, according to Derrida, a text can possess the characteristics of several genres without being reducible to any of them. Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series proved an interesting test site for Derrida's hypothesis. To say that *Twilight*—a vampire love saga set against the dreary *Wuthering Heights*-esque backdrop of Forks, Washington—participated in "one or several genres" seemed a gross understatement. My deconstruction of genre required abandoning what Burr (1995) called the empirical "logic of either/or" and adopting instead a poststructural "logic of both/and" (p. 107). I began to entertain the frightening proposition that *Twilight* might exist as a romance, gothic, and horror—without being reducible to any one of them.

According to Bové (1995), genre is itself is a discourse used to mark categorize and establish hierarchies of literature. He explained that, for New Critics particularly, discourse

"marked differences and established identities" (p. 50). This practice of assigning literature to genre has been institutionalized as a method. In other words, it has become normal and natural to identify literary fiction in terms of genre. Derrida's (1980) Law of Genre helped me deconstruct the notion of genre as a means of marking clear differences and establishing pure identities. However, my deconstruction of the discourse of genre and my abandonment of the project of finding the essence of *Twilight* in terms of one pure genre in no way liberated me from the language of genre. As one might expect, many of the critical essays I read in preparation for this study were written in the discourse of genre and used the language of genre. Only a few ethnographic studies (e.g, Masse, 1992; Modleski, 1982/2008; Radway, 1984/1991) used the Foucauldian concept of discourse to describe certain patterns in literary plots and characters. However, even these academics connected specific discourses to specific genres. For example, Modleski (1982/2008) and Masse (1992) tied the gothic genre to the discourse of masochism. Radway connected the romance genre, particularly mass-produced romance novels like Harlequins, to the discourse of patriarchy's promise. As Bové (1995) suggested, in order to work with a discourse we have to "position it, to see it in its own terms" (p. 54). I, therefore, used genre identifiers in my analysis, however, I also include a brief genealogical analysis of these genre labels. As Spivak (1989) reminded me, deconstruction is not a dismissal of language or a concept such as genre, but a critique of "something which is so useful to you that you cannot speak another way" (p.151). I, therefore, set out to codify the discursive characteristics of these three genres. I reread the *Twilight* series, looking for the discursive signatures of each genre in as determined by each genre's essential narrative elements expressed in the terms used by literary critics: theme, setting, plot, and characterization.

I deconstructed the text on two levels. First, I looked for inconsistencies within the text itself. I attempted to identify and analyze what internal inconsistencies in characterization and point of view. Spivak (1997) called this "taking apart and opening the textuality of the text" (p. xlix). According to Derrida (1982), any text is "a verbal fabric" (p. 172), "a weave of differences" (p. 12). Literary devices simultaneously mask and hold together the textuality of the text. According to Spivak, deconstructive reading involves locating "the point where a text covers up its grammatological structures" (p. lxxiii). According to MaClure (2003), to deconstruct a text is to make it so that it is no longer deceptively smooth, but rather, "unsettled— shaken up, breached, disturbed, torn" (p. 81) or to simply look for places where the text points to its own fabricated nature, thereby deconstructing itself.

I also performed a deconstructive analysis of the series by looking for instances of internal contradiction. For example, Modleski (1982/2008) performed a deconstructive reading of romance texts and noticed inconsistencies in point of view. She noted that romances are largely written in the first person of the heroine. However, when the heroine is under the gaze of the hero, Modleski noticed the point of view always shifts from first person to third person impersonal. She explained that this shift in the point of view is made necessary by one of the conventions of characterization in the romance novel: the heroine must be virtuous, and to be virtuous she cannot be aware of her attractiveness or her potential effect on men. This shift in point of view is in itself barely noticeable, however, it draws attention to the sort of subject position made available to the heroines of romance. The shift in point of view, then, is important: it points to the text's stitched-togetherness and serves as a marker for where the text sacrifices mechanics to adhere to one of the conventions of romance. Shifting point of view in a romance from first person to third person when speaking about the heroine's sexual appeal is

specifically designed to maintain the notion that the heroine must be sexually innocent and naïve. While reading *Twilight,* I read for such useful internal inconsistencies. In order to identify how the *Twilight* texts accommodate the discourses particular to genre, I looked for possible inconsistencies in theme, dialog, plot, and characterization.

Discourse identification data.

I used several sources of data to identify several discourses at work in *Twilight*. I began with what I call literary criticism data. Having read ethnographic feminist literary critiques of romance and gothic romance texts, I came to *Twilight* with certain expectations as a starting point. For example, informed by Radway's (1984/1991) study, I was able to anticipate finding certain manifestations of the discourse of patriarchy's promise in *Twilight*. Having read Masse's (1992) work, I looked for evidence of the discourse of masochism. Other genre-specific literary critiques informed how I studied the narrative structure, setting, theme, and development of main characters in *Twilight*. In an effort to systematize this process, I created a chart of genre-specific characteristics against which I read *Twilight*. I created a chart of characteristics for the following genres and sub-genres: romance, chick lit romance, gothic romance, marital gothic, and gothic horror featuring monster lore. I include these charts in Appendix B.

Textuality and intertextuality provided additional data for my text analysis. Intertextuality refers to the relationship texts have among themselves. As Foucault (1972/1982) explained, the "frontiers of a book are never clear-cut," rather they are "caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network" (p. 23). Derrida (1979/1991) described textuality as the ontology of texts existing in a system of différance. He argued that a text cannot be considered "a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring

endlessly to something other that itself, to other differential traces" (p. 257). Derrida concluded, therefore, that "the accredited concept, the dominant notion of a 'text' has to be extended and expanded" (p. 257). I, therefore, considered any text that bordered the four books in the *Twilight* series as a source of data that might help me situate the series in terms of genre. So while I looked directly at *Twilight*, I also considered the following types of texts sources of data: the texts to which Meyer alludes, academic essays about the texts to which Meyer alludes, published academic essays about *Twilight*, fan responses to the series, published interviews with author Stephenie Meyer, the film interpretations of the first two books, and their corresponding soundtracks. I would, however, like to explain one type of fan response in detail: satirical response.

I found satires and parodies of the *Twilight* franchise produced by anti-fans a helpful source of data. According to Gray (2003), anti-fans are those who "strongly dislike a given text or genre, considering it inane, stupid, morally bankrupt, and/or aesthetic drivel" (p. 209). While I deconstructed *Twilight* by looking for contradiction, I found that much of this work had already been done in published satires. I found that satire writers were not only resistant readers but skilled deconstructionists. As Wolfreys (1998) noted, "deconstruction transforms the text by imitating its every move, its every contour, doing so in a fashion that, through the closeness of the reading, the alogical is unveiled" (p. 14). Those who have published critical parodies of *Twilight* have been very articulate about the methods used by Meyer that they found objectionable or alogical. Part of my deconstructive analysis of *Twilight*, therefore, involved reading satire.

Ethics of representation: discourse.

As I identified several discourses at work in *Twilight*, I was particularly concerned about the manner in which I represented those identified discourses in my writing. As Gamer (2000) and Regis (2003) noted, far too often literary scholars ground their critiques entirely in a work's adherence to the conventions of a genre. For example, Gamer observed that critics of turn of the century gothic literature evaluated this new genre using a logic which damned it from the outset. He explained that in those early critiques the "various genric delimiters" of gothic conveniently doubled as the genre's "terms of abuse" (p. 4). In other words, critics faulted gothics for exhibiting the very characteristics which made them gothic. As Regis observed, the same has happened time and again in critiques of romances (p. xii). Granger (2010) called this phenomenon "genre revulsion" (p. 111). As I wrote my analysis of *Twilight*, I remained wary about falling into the logic of critique by definition. I identified discourses at work in the *Twilight* series so that I might better understand how they shaped the series' author and her readers. In other words, I reminded myself throughout the writing process that the act of naming discourse served merely as a means to an end—it was not an end in itself.

Determining the Means of Discourse Perpetuation

Methods and analysis.

I approached this question by first setting aside certain esoteric arguments about the "death of the author" so that I could take the singular subjectivity of *Twilight* author, Stephenie Meyer, into account. As poststructuralists challenged what Fay (1987) called "the metaphysics of human agency" (p. 26), the death of the subject also heralded the death of the author. In his 1977 essay, "The Death of the Author" Barthes (1977) declared the author a negligible factor in analyzing a literary text. Any given book, Barthes reasoned, is a combination of previously said

sayings, merely a "a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost" attributed to a source that is "infinitely deferred" (Barthes, p. 147).

To many, it seemed as if the preeminence of discourse in poststructural theories had undermined, even displaced, the author. As Derrida (1978) reflected, poststructural theory reached a point in which "everything became discourse" (p. 280). Derrida (1982) argued that "names of authors" are "only indices" (p. 21) within discourse because, as Spivak (1997) explained, Derrida believed "the text belongs to language, not to the sovereign and generating author" (p. lxxiv). Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2004) explained their view of the ontology of the author with the figuration of the rhizome:

> There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author). Rather, an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from these orders, so that a book has no sequel—not the world as object not one of several authorities as its subject.

> In short, we think that one cannot write sufficiently in the name of an outside. (p. 23)

Foucault (1972) levied a similar argument. Given the ubiquitous nature of discourse and power relations, he reasoned that the author "is not, in fact the cause, origin, or starting point of the phenomenon of the written or spoken articulation of a sentence" (p. 95). Therefore, it is useless, according to Foucault, to ask "questions like: 'Who is the author?'" (p. 171). As a product of discourse, Foucault (1977) argued that the author cannot reveal her "most profound self in [her] language" (p. 138). Therefore, Foucault famously asked, "What matters who is speaking"? (p. 138). After researching the history of the author concept, Foucault found that assigning proper names to literature is a relatively new phenomenon designed to perform particular functions in

marketing literature. The "author-function" (p. 127) he explained, was designed to lend "description and designation" (p. 121) to a work, and not to claim the work's originality.

The news of the author's death has spread beyond poststructural theorists. Popular culture theorist Jenkins (2006a, 2006b) has based much of his work with fan communities on the premise of challenging the subject/object binaries associated with popular texts, particularly author/reader, producer/spectator, creator/interpreter. As Lévy (1997) explained, global networking has enabled everyone, not just certain elite sanctioned legitimized published producers, to contribute to shared texts. Lévy pointed out that in this global collective, consumers take liberties with art, and artists are inseparably shaped by works before them. Thus, the notion of a "work of art, envisaged as a microterritory attributed to an author, is fading" (p. 121).

For early feminist literary scholars, the so-called death of the author demonstrated incredible insensitivity to the history of discrimination and to the ongoing plight of female authors who still struggle for legitimacy and recognition. Keeping in mind years of exclusion and discrimination, feminists are all too aware that it does matter who is speaking. It matters most obviously because, as Felski points out, "Until recently, women were close to invisible in most of the institutions that help to shape and cement literary reputation" (p. 140). This caused women to have a great deal of anxiety about authorship (Gilbert & Gubar, 1978). Consequently, women tend to write privately, anonymously, and with a good deal of guilt (Cixous 1975/2009).

Female authorship, on the other hand, is a relatively new phenomenon—something that cannot be taken for granted. As Felski (2003) reminded me, there were many hurdles and obstacles faced by women who wanted to write: economic dependency, lack of time and space, the relentless infusion of everyday life in the form

of squalling infants or testy husbands, the disparagement faced by women who chose to

remain single or childless to devote themselves more fully to writing. (p. 58)

 Women's literature, Felski (2003) argued, records those "crucial yet unnoticed aspects of

women's lives" (p. 39). While careful to avoid what Showalter (1977/199) called over

feminizing literature, that is, claiming that "everything in women's writing can be explained by

gender" (p. 18), many feminists believe that it is important to honor, or at the very least

recognize, the unique attributes of works written by women. To ignore the author's contribution

would be to ignore how the author has herself been inscribed by the texts she has read in her life

and the discourses in which she has functioned. As Felski explained:

> We can recognize that female authors have themselves been authored—that is to say,
>
> shaped by a multiplicity of social and cultural forces that exceed their grasp—without
>
> thereby denying their ability to act and create. (p. 91)

Felski (2003) also pointed out that many feminists suspected a vein of maliciousness

lurked behind the death of the author movement. She remarked, "It is no coincidence, [women]

claimed, that at the very moment they were gaining prominence in the academy, male scholars

began to disparage all talk of authorship as passé" (p. 58). Suddenly, as Cixous (1975/2009)

quipped, when women began writing, it became "silly" (p. 423). As Cixous (1975/2009) noted,

for most of literary history, creativity was viewed as an inherently male quality, something

"reserved for the great—that is—for "great men" (p. 423). However, according to Butler,

(1992), poststructural thought about the subject is not does not dismiss the subject. She

explained that "to take the construction of the subject as a political problematic is not the same as

doing away with it" (p. 15). In fact, troubling the subject involves remembering such exclusion.

In fact, Butler argued that "subjects are constituted *through* [emphasis added] exclusion" (p. 13).

However, there is a difference in the political strategies behind these different conceptions of the subject. While Cixous and Felski might like to see women accepted into male-dominated economies of literary legitimation, Butler might ask, "do women want to become subjects in the model which requires and produces an anterior region of abjection…?" (p. 14). So, although there is what Gallagher (1980) called a "distinctly female literary tradition" (p. 236), we must still recognized that there is work to be done (structures to undo) as long as women write within a "domain of deauthorized subjects" (Butler, 1992, pp. 13).

So, as I examined the life of Stephenie Meyer, I did so with the a few assumptions. First, I assume that, as a woman, Stephenie writes as a deauthorized subject. That is, for her, the very act of writing, if not also the content of that writing, subverts an injunction to silence. Stephenie's subjectivity was shaped by discourse dictates the subjectivity of authors and the statements they will produce, or re-produce. Even if authors use recycled elements of thought that have been a part of the most entrenched truth regimes, it is not impossible to imagine that they can combine them in unique ways. As Attridge (2004) argued, we should respect that singularity of the work which the author created. Derrida (1992) also credited "literary production" as an act of "performativity" (p. 51). Lastly, Foucault (1972) argued that, although authors are, like all subjects, positioned "in a web of which they are not the masters," some still manage to "intersect their unique discourses" (p. 126) into this web. I worked from the position that an author is first a reader of, that is, a subject of, discourse, who then re-inscribes what she has read in a singularly unique way.

I also agree with Foucault's argument that, based on a text, we cannot access the author's 'true self' any more than we can any other human subject. According to Foucault (1972), "it is in the nature of literature that the author should appear to be absent, conceal himself within it,

delegate his authority, or divide himself up" (p. 93). A literary narrative, therefore, is told in

"that anonymous voice that passes for that of the author" (Foucault, p. 103). In other words, part

of the text's textuality, part of the convention of storytelling through text, is the invisibility of the

author. Out of a desire to expose the author's invisibility in discourse as a type of textuality, I

performed a deconstructive reading of the text that exposes its textuality *via* the author.

Influence data.

I went about deconstructing the text via the author much as I would any human subject or

construct. As Spivak (1989) explained, "deconstruction considers that the subject is always

centered and looks at the mechanisms of centering" (p. 135). I began gathering evidence for how

Stephenie Meyer was centered at the beginning of her life as a writer. I collected biographical

and first hand interview data about Meyer, looking for the discourses in which she might be

centered. As Attridge (2004) reminded me, "invention is…as much an event that happens to the

inventor (and the culture) as an act arising out of a set of intentions, as much an occurrence in the

domain of the community as in that of the individual" (pp. 101-102). I analyzed the various

interviews with Stephenie Meyer, keeping in mind the assumption that Meyer is a subject of the

discourse she is responsible for redistributing, reappropriating and resisting.

I also looked for documentation that spoke to Meyer's writing and editing process,

specifically, to what discursive statements she silenced and what she fought to include in the

text. Foucault (1972) asked,

> Should one also include all his sketches, and first drafts, with all their corrections and
>
> crossings out? Should one include sketches that he himself abandoned? And what status
>
> should be given to letters, notes, reported conversations, transcription of what he said

made by those present at the time, in short, to that mass of verbal traces left by an

individual at his death? (p. 24)

While Foucault asked these questions to make the point that a so-called work is never complete, I used this very type of data, comparing Meyer's comments and other reports about abandoned versions to the final version to help describe a more complete picture of the power relations at work in Meyer's creative process. Using that data, I was able to see, for instance, that Meyer intended to make Bella's already graphic birthing of Renesme even more so. Facts such as this aided in my overall analysis of the means by which Meyer perpetuated the discourses found in *Twilight*.

Ethics of representation: Stephenie Meyer.

As I examined the discursive forces that shaped Meyer, I worried about the ethics of representing those findings in a way that was fair to Meyer. Just as I remained vigilant to avoid demonizing discourses in *Twilight*, I was careful not to fault Meyer for the ways she has negotiated her life within those discourses. As I wrote about Meyer, I represented her not as a woman who cherished her chains, but a woman who negotiated and resisted in intelligent and admirable ways.

Non-linearity.

Throughout the research process, I found it impossible to proceed in a linear fashion. I found myself continually doubling back and revising my research aims based on incoming information. I found that throughout the research process I continued to generate questions as more data were generated. As Bogdan and Biklen (1992) contended, "finding the questions should be one of the products of data collection" (p. 58). This messy simultaneity, however, did provide helpful moments of synergistic data generation and analysis. Interview data, especially

points of reader resistance informed deconstructive text analysis. Likewise, how Meyer identified *Twilight* in terms of genre also informed my text analysis. Throughout the text analysis and reader response analysis, I attempted to catch overflow of the data generated in these non-linear moments of connection by keeping a researcher log. There I was able to capture what St.Pierre called "accidental and fortuitous connections" that one "could not foresee or control" (St. Pierre, p. 970). In this way I used "writing as a method of data collection" (p. 970). I wrote in a non-linear manner, but only in an attempt to chronicle, contain, and, in some instances, release thoughts that impeded and distracted me from my task.

Validities

The process of determining validity in poststructural qualitative work is inextricably connected to theory. As Kvale (1996) said, "to validate is to theorize" (p. 244). Lather (1993) modeled this approach to validity. She presented four frameworks to validity, which rested on very specific theories. In this study, as with any study, there are different levels of theory at work. There are theories about how discourse shapes subjectivity and, more specifically, how discourses in literature shape the subjectivity of readers. The validity of my analyses will depend on how well they work with poststructural theories of discourse and subjectivity to generate new theory. Geertz (1973) suggested that this sort of study-produced theory should "hover so low over the interpretations they govern that they don't make that much sense or hold that much interest apart from them" (p. 25). If my data interpretations generate theory about discourse, reading, and subjectivity which seem less abstract, this will serve as further evidence that I crafted a valid study.

There is one last notable consideration to take into account regarding research validity. Foucault (1977) argued that it is the researcher's duty to implicitly model how to resist certain

specific instances of discursive subjugation and that, in this sense, "theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice" (p. 208). If validity is theory, and theory is practice, then it stands to reason that validity can be measured by the degree to which those who read the research will be moved to question or change their practices. Richardson (2005) called this "impact" (p. 964) validity. If, for example, readers of this research find themselves thinking about the discourse of patriarchy, if they find themselves questioning how their identities are problematized by the discourses deployed in literature and in life, I will consider this research valid.

CHAPTER 4: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Texts and discourses that provoke at the outset reactions of rejection, that are announced precisely as anomalies or monstrosities are often texts that…transform the nature of the field of reception…. All of history has shown that each time an event has been produced…it took the form of the unacceptable, or even the intolerable. Of the incomprehensible, that is, of a certain monstrosity. (Derrida, 1995, p. 387).

Introduction

Literary scholars who have written on the topic of *Twilight* have failed to reach a consensus about how the series might be classified in terms of genre, and for good reason. The series is truly a literary monstrosity. Some (e.g., Branch, 2010; McElroy & McElroy, 2010; Parmiter, 2011; Veldman-Genz, 2011) classified the series as gothic. On the other hand, Clasen (2010), Shachar (2011), and Wilson (2011a), argued that the central love story qualify the series as a romance. According to Bruner (2009), the series "marries" two "traditionally distinct story genres: romance and gothic horror" (p. 15). As Willis (2011) concluded, *Twilight* suffers from "genre trouble" (p. 83). According to Derrida's (1980) law of genre, a literary work can participate in more than one generally recognizable category without belonging to any of them. The *Twilight* series serves as a perfect example of this principle. In this chapter, I identify multiple discourses deployed by author Stephenie Meyer in the *Twilight* series. I used several sources of data for this discourse analysis.

I began the following discourse analysis by reading "symptomatically" (Modleski, p. xix) for evidence that *Twilight* participated in different variations and subgenres of romance, gothic,

and grotesque-horror literature. I also looked at the features of the series which produced the

most resistance from academics and satirists. Foucault (1982) reasoned that "taking the forms of

resistance against different forms of power as a starting point" one might better and more

"empirically… bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of

application and the methods used" (p. 211). I began by reading academic critiques of the series

which are summarized in Chapter 2. I also read satires of the series, for these satires, as I

discussed in Chapter 3, can offer deconstructive readings which indicate where the text is forced,

alogical. In this way, I also used academic and satirical responses to challenge, supplement, and

validate my analysis of the text.

After identifying several genres in the *Twilight* series and reviewing the narrative

elements and discourses which literary critics have often associated with those discourses, two

things happened. I found it increasingly difficult to make clear distinctions among even the

major genre categories, and I found it nearly impossible to make clear distinctions among their

respective discourses. For example, I was particularly intrigued by the combination of gothic

and romance influences in the series. Gothic is, according to Masse (1992), written in

accordance with the discourse of masochism, but the implication is that masochism is required

by the institutions of patriarchy. Romance, on the contrary, is written in the discourse of

patriarchy's promise. The two discourses, at first, seem at odds with romance highlighting the

promise of patriarchy and gothic highlighting the *peril* of that social system. However, a

promise/peril binary did not hold up in my analysis.

As I compared the pattern of gothics and the discourse of masochism to the pattern of the

romance and the discourse of patriarchy's promise, I realized that the two discourses, and the

two narrative patterns, were, in fact, almost the same. Both turn the potential peril of patriarchy

into promise. If you recall, romances begin with initial antagonism between the heroine and hero and then allow that antagonism to develop mysteriously into love in the narrative's resolution. Gothics challenge the promise of patriarchy perhaps more aggressively by featuring a hero who may, in fact, be a murderer. However, as in the romance, this threat is resolved by narrative's closure. Just as the heroine reinterprets the romance hero, the gothic heroine exonerates her husband and restores his identity as the embodiment of patriarchy's promise.

While both narrative patterns end with the restoration of patriarchy's promise, it is insufficient to say that both genres deploy that discourse alone, for they both give substantial time to exploring how patriarchy fails to meet women's needs. I found it necessary to abandon the logic of either/or, that is, *either* promise *or* peril, and adopt instead the logic of both/and. This enabled me to conclude that *both* romance *and* gothic deploy the discourses of patriarchy's peril *and* patriarchy's promise. I needed a way to express this idea that behind each event in a romance which shows the promise of patriarchy, there existed a trace of that social system's peril. And, conversely, in front of each gothic heroine's act of masochistic suffering stands the eventual promise that such suffering would all be worth it. Why else would it be so easy to combine the two into one genre, the gothic-romance?

To communicate the complicated ontology of so-called romances, gothics, and gothic-romances, I used a concept made popular by Derrida's (1972/1981) critique of Plato's binary logic, the *pharmakon*. A pharmakon is an inherently ambiguous Greek term which describes a substance which could be used as both a poison and a remedy. Just as Derrida used the term to complicate Plato's use of binary logic, I use the concept of pharmakon to complicate the good/bad, promise/peril binary used by literary critics to describe the discourses deployed in gothic, romance, and gothic-romance literature.

While *Twilight* closely aligns with the standards and structures of several categories of narratives, it also deviates and exceeds the boundaries established by those standards to create something which defies categorization, a monstrosity. Many have tried to capitalize on the popularity of the series by producing imitations, but none have managed to replicate the unique combination of literary influences which went into *Twilight*. The outcast, the rejected, has, in fact, changed the "nature of the field of reception" (Derrida, 1995, p. 387).

Then, in the second section, I describe how Stephenie Meyer was shaped by the discourses I identified in the first and second parts of my analysis and how she used her extensive knowledge about literature to redeploy, reinscribe, and resist the discourses which had shaped, and continued to shape her subjectivity. I begin with a brief overview of Meyer's childhood, early reading practices, education and religion, and how those factors shaped the text. I then use interview data to describe how Meyer's believed marriage and motherhood had shaped her subjectivity when she began writing the *Twilight* series. Finally, I carefully examine Meyer's use of graphic and grotesque imagery during Bella's pregnancy and delivery in *Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*. I describe how I believe Meyer resisted her Mormon faith's celebratory images of female reproductivity by using the maternal gothic to make a vicarious spectacle of her own, very real and very unpleasant experiences carrying and mothering her three children, thereby educating her growing female fan base, what gothic authors have called their "literary matriarchy" (Jackson, p. 172), in the maternal aspects of the facts of life. I conclude by offering the theory that Meyer used her intimate familiarity with the conventions of several genres of literature to write a multi-genred text that allowed her to explore a wide range of conflicting emotions about patriarchy as a pharmakon.

Locating Discourse in a Literary Monstrosity

"Genres are not to be mixed.

I will not mix genres.

I repeat: genres are not to be mixed. I will not mix them." (Derrida, 1980, p. 55)

 Romance.

"I think that it's romance more than anything else…" Stephenie Meyer (Interview with

Kirshling, 2009, para. 6)

  Meyer is correct—it is not untrue to say that *Twilight* series is a romance. Together,

Twilight (1) and *Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)* serve as romantic bookends to the series, fulfilling

most of the essential narrative elements of an ideal romance as defined by Radway (1984/1991).

Radway found that the unifying discourse in the ideal romance is the discourse of patriarchy's

promise and that novels written according to this discourse follow a familiar pattern with 13

essential narrative elements:

1. The heroine's social identity is destroyed.

2. The heroine reacts antagonistically to an aristocratic male.

3. The aristocratic male responds ambiguously to the heroine.

4. The heroine interprets the hero's behavior as evidence of a purely sexual interest in her.

5. The heroine responds to the hero's behavior with anger or coldness.

6. The hero retaliates by punishing the heroine.

7. The heroine and the hero are physically and/or emotionally separated.

8. The hero treats the heroine tenderly.

9. The heroine responds warmly to the hero's act of tenderness.

10. The heroine reinterprets the hero's ambiguous behavior as the product of a previous hurt.

11. The hero proposes/openly declares his love for/demonstrates his unwavering commitment to the heroine with a supreme act of tenderness.

12. The heroine responds sexually and emotionally.

13. The heroine's identity is restored. (p. 134)

The first book in the *Twilight* series fulfills a majority of these essential narrative elements. The first is the destruction of the heroine's "social identity," especially as she is "stripped of her family supports" (Radway,1984/1991, p. 134). Bella has lived with her mother in Phoenix since her parents divorced when she was just months old. The disruptive transition from living with her mother in Arizona to living with her father in Forks, Washington is the enabling condition for the events which transpire in the series. The reader learns that Bella's family was recently disrupted when her mother, Renee, remarried. Renee's new husband, Phil, is a traveling minor league baseball player recently signed to a team in Florida. Although Bella loves Phoenix, calling it a "vigorous, sprawling city" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 4), she volunteers to live with her father in Forks because she wants to give her mother a fresh start with her new husband. As she explains to Edward later, Renee "stayed with me at first, but she missed him. It made her unhappy…so I decided to spend some quality time with Charlie" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 49). Bella knows she is an unwanted burden, a relic of her mother's old, failed marriage, so she vows to endure her "self-imposed sentence" in Forks (*Twilight (1)*, p. 79).

On the first day of school, Bella's first inexplicably hostile encounter with Edward quickly fulfills several items on Radway's (1984/1991) list of essential narrative elements. Bella faces what Radway called the problem of the "male gaze," of "what the fact of male presence and attention means for her, a woman" (p. 139). After being accosted with "overly friendly" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 31) boys such as Mike Newton, Edward's very negative reception of Bella

comes as a surprise. Typically, according to Modleski (1982/2008), the heroes of romance

assess the heroine, "as an object" (p. 32), and the heroine becomes offended as she accurately

interprets the hero's attention as purely sexual.

This is one important way *Twilight (1)* deviates from the romance formula. Instead of

objectifying Bella sexually, Edward objectifies her in terms of his more powerful lust—his lust

for blood. Little does Bella know that her blood is infused with an aroma that is nearly

irresistible to all vampires, especially to Edward. He retaliates against Bella's enticing scent by

behaving rudely and secretly contemplating ways he could lure her away to kill her. Although

Bella does not know any of this at the time, Edward's outward reaction is hard to ignore: "Just as

I passed, he suddenly went rigid in his seat. He stared at me again, meeting my eyes with the

strangest expression on his face—it was hostile, furious" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 23). Bella observes

Edward "leaning away" and "sitting on the extreme edge of his chair and averting his face like

he smelled something bad" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 23). Understandably, Bella is "bewildered" by

Edward's "antagonistic stare" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 23). She spends the next hour with Edward

staring at her in revulsion, body tight, fists clenched, and he bolts for the door as soon as the bell

rings.

What happens next fulfills another convention of the romance: "the heroine and the hero

are physically and/or emotionally separated" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 134). After a failed

attempt to switch his biology class to another period, Edward skips school for several days.

Although Bella reasons that she should be happy about the rude boy's absence, she cannot deny

the fact that she feels hurt by it, too: "I was relieved that I had the desk to myself, that Edward

was absent. I told myself that repeatedly. But I couldn't get rid of the nagging suspicion that I

was the reason he wasn't there" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 31).

In the meantime, Bella has plenty of other suitors to whom she might turn her attention. Mike, Eric, and Tyler each make attempts to befriend Bella. True to the romance formula, she is indifferent toward them. As Radway (1984/1991) noted, in the most ideal romance novels, romantic foils are "described rather sparingly" and "almost never prove even momentarily attractive to the heroine" (p. 131). This essential romantic element is best exhibited by Bella's reaction to her most aggressive pursuer, Mike. Although Mike is a real presence as he follows Bella around during her first days at school, she can barely tolerate his presence, and her descriptions of him are accordingly scant. She thinks to herself after one of his many attempts to break the ice, "I couldn't concentrate on Mike's chatter" (p. 51). Foils like Mike, according to Radway, appear to deserve the heroine's ill treatment, for they are drawn to represent the worst characteristics and everything that is to be avoided in their sex. Mike talks too much, fails to recognize Bella's cues that she is not interested in dating him, and he lacks the intellect and/or discipline to take school very seriously. Consider this exchange between him and Bella:

"What'd you do yesterday?" His tone was just a bit too proprietary.

"Mostly worked on my essay." I didn't add that I was finished with it—no need to sound smug.

He hit his forehead with the heel of his hand. "Oh yeah—that's due Thursday—right?"

"Um, Wednesday, I think."

"Wednesday?" He frowned. "That's not good. What did you write yours on?

"Whether Shakespeare's treatment of the female characters is misogynistic."

He looked at me like I had just spoken Pig Latin. (*Twilight (1)*, pp. 143-144)

Fortunately for Bella, she will not have to settle for the boy who represents the worst of his gender, because Edward, who will come to embody the masculine ideal for Bella, has had a

change of heart during his absence from school. When Edward returns, he suddenly and

inexplicably "treats the heroine tenderly" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 134). Sated with animal blood

and mentally prepared for the sensory onslaught of Bella's aroma, Edward introduces himself as

he might have under normal circumstances, politely and properly. When they begin their lab

assignment, he gives Bella a dazzlingly handsome smile and says, "Ladies first, partner?"

(*Twilight (1)*, p. 44). Thanks to his ability to read the minds of everyone around Bella, Edward

knows just enough about her to ask very sensitive and relevant questions about her recent move

to Forks. The fact that Edward cannot, for reasons he does not understand, read Bella's mind,

ensures that he is truly interested in the answers she can give him. Bella, at this point, is

spinning with confusion. After this, their first real conversation, she muses, "I'd just explained

my dreary life to this bizarre, beautiful boy who may or may not despise me" (*Twilight (1)*, p.

50).

Per conventions of the romance (Modleski, 1982/2008, p. 37), circumstances jeopardize

Bella's life, and Edward rescues her. However, in the *Twilight* series, the endangerment and

rescue scenario plays out several times. In the first book alone, Edward rescues Bella from

being struck by a van, an unpleasant blood typing experiment in biology lab, rapists, and a

murderous vampire. With each rescue, Bella is swept away by Edward's renewed interest in her.

She cannot help but respond, as per convention, "warmly to the hero's act of tenderness"

(Radway, 1984/1991, p. 134).

However, all is not mended between Bella and Edward after his first rescue. Edward's

behavior is still unpredictable, and the couple also repeat the cycle of antagonism and

reconciliation several times. For example, Edward rescues Bella from the van, but he behaves

rudely and defensively when Bella questions how he did it. Edward later catches Bella in the

cafeteria just to tell her that his rude behavior has been intentional, explaining "It's better if we're not friends" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 74). However, the very next day, he invites her to eat with him at lunch.

Although Edward is still behaving ambiguously and erratically, Bella cannot write him off as an impossible cause. She is now too invested in decoding the mystery that is Edward Cullen. As heroines of romance (and gothic) often do, Bella begins the important work of trying to "read" (Modleski, 1982/2008, pp. 24-25), that is, decipher, her hero[8]. She investigates and develops a theory which enables her to reinterpret Edward's antagonistic behavior "as a product of a previous hurt" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 134). After interviewing a local Native American, consulting a few books, and conducting online research, Bella begins to suspect that Edward Cullen is a vampire. She can then reinterpret Edward's bad behavior as the result of his having lost his humanity.

Before the romance concludes, the hero "openly declares his love for/demonstrates his unwavering commitment to the heroine with a supreme act of tenderness" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 134). Edward's first supreme act of love comes when he reveals his true identity to Bella in what is, per convention, an isolated and "enchanted space" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, 2006, p. 490), a secluded mountain meadow. When director Catherine Harwicke was given the task of recreating this enchanted setting, she focused on a location which she described with the phrase, "moss, mist, [and] magic" (Hardwicke, 2009, p. 78). In this magical meadow scene, Edward dazzles Bella with a demonstration of his iridescent skin sparkling in the sun. It is here, alone,

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[8] It is interesting to note that the soundtrack for the movie, *Twilight*, which author Stephenie Meyer had a hand in producing (Shapiro, 2009), includes a track by Paramour (2008) titled "Decode" (track 2). Its lyrics speak to this theme of deciphering male motives: "you think that I can't see /what kind of man that you are/if you're a man at all /well I will figure this one out/on my own" (Paramour, 2008, track 2).

that he tells her how much he loves her and how much he's fought to keep from killing her. In a turn of events Modleski (1982/2008) might have predicted, Edward finally explains that, even when he appeared "most indifferent" toward Bella, "the thought of her," in fact, "obsessed him" (pp. 6-7). From that moment on, Bella knows she is "irrevocably in love" with Edward Cullen (*Twilight (1)*, p. 195).

Bella is now free to respond more "sexually and emotionally" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 134) to Edward. When he makes his first risky attempt to kiss Bella, she returns his affection so passionately he must pull away. Finally, in a supreme act of devotion, Edward saves Bella from a sadistic vampire named James. Before Edward can reach her, though, James delivers a venomous bite that, if allowed to spread, will threaten to stop Bella's heart and turn her into a vampire. Edward, thinking only of Bella losing her humanity, knows he must remove the venomous blood from just the affected area—an act which calls for incredible self-restraint. Edward's ability to stop himself from taking all of her life force proves that his love is, indeed, greater than his lust for her blood. After the incident with James, Edward is more sure of his affection for Bella. He tells her, "It was impossible… to stop. Impossible. But I did. I must love you" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 460). Bella returns this expression of commitment not only with words of love, but by sharing with Edward her willingness forfeit her humanity to be with him.

Typically, a romance such as *Twilight* might conclude with the hero declaring his commitment to the heroine through a marriage proposal, thereby allowing the heroine to realize her "full potential and identity as the partner of a man and as the implied mother of a child" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 134). However, Meyer chose to prolong the passionate intensity of the narrative by postponing Bella and Edward's union for some time. Throughout *New Moon (2)* and *Eclipse (3)*, Meyer worked to, as Botting (2008) phrased it, "devise fresh obstructions" (p.

21) to the couple's happiness. As De Rougemont (1940/1983) argued, romance is not the

"satisfaction of love" or the "fruitful contentment of the settled couple," but stems from a

perpetually deferred passion where "love is fatal, frowned upon, and doomed by life itself" (p.

15). Meyer quickly worked to establish Bella's mortality, her very life itself, as the primary

obstacle keeping the couple apart. For the remainder of the series, Bella is targeted by a series of

villains, both supernatural and natural, who prove her mortal life is too fragile, too incompatible,

for a life with Edward and the dangerous company he keeps. Bella fights to forfeit her mortal

life so that she can embrace life as an immortal, as Edward's equal. Until she does, as Botting

(2008) explained, "nothing is allowed to settle" (p. 21). It takes some time for Bella's identity to

receive its complete makeover in *Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)* as Edward's vampire wife and the

mother of his child, however the trajectory of their relationship is established by the end of the

first book in the series.

Discourse: the promise of patriarchy.

Having established that *Twilight* participates in the genre we often call romance, I looked

for evidence that the series also perpetuates the romantic discourse of patriarchy's promise.

According to Radway (1984/1991), patriarchy's promise is a discourse built around the notion

that, although "men possess and regularly exercise power over" women, patriarchal "institutions

and structures," such as marriage and the family, are "protective of a woman's interests" (p. 75)

and a woman's participation in those structures is virtually inevitable.

For patriarchy to offer promise to a woman, it must first establish that a woman needs

patriarchy's protective institutions. In other words, the discourse of patriarchy's promise must

establish what Modleski (1982/2008) called the "insufficiency of female selfhood" (p. 23).

Romances like *Twilight (1)*, therefore, characterize the heroine's social identity as fundamentally

incomplete. This "self-in-relation" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 139) is a common feature of romances. As Masse (1992) explained, romances and gothics are built around the idea that "woman can exist only in relation to another—usually as daughter in the beginning, a bride at the end" (p. 11).

The series begins with an event which disrupts Bella's identity as daughter. Bella's identity is so wrapped up in serving as caretaker to her mother that she has trouble imagining herself as anything else. This is evident when Bella moves in with her father. She immediately begins reasserting her role as caregiver by performing the domestic tasks he'd been capably handling for over a decade. She settles into a routine which involves "familiar tasks" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 250), such as planning meals, shopping for groceries, cooking dinner, cleaning up after dinner, and doing laundry. Bella has trouble finding anything unique or noteworthy about herself. In fact, she details all the ways she is ordinary: I was a good student, but never top of the class….I could be counted out of anything athletic. Not artistic or musical, no particular talents to brag of. Nobody ever gave away a trophy for reading books" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3),* p. 523).

Meyer also worked to establish Bella's insufficient financial means. Although Bella is, like typical heroines of gothic and romance, admirably "resourceful and self-reliant" (Modleski, 1982/2008, p. 70), she is unable to provide for herself financially. First, Meyer worked to establish the fact that Bella comes from a relatively poor family. Bella describes saving money for new clothes for the weather in Forks: "My mom and I had pooled our resources to supplement my winter wardrobe, but it was still scanty" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 6). When Bella arrives at her new home with her father, she is reminded that she'll be sharing bathrooms and that her father's second-hand computer still relies on a dial-up modem connection. Although Charlie is

able to purchase Bella a vehicle, it is an embarrassingly slow, ancient truck. When graduation approaches, the text establishes that, although Bella is a good student, college tuition is going to present a challenge, for neither of her parents have money saved for her college education. Although Bella works part-time in an attempt to provide for herself, without help, her future appears bleak.

Bella is in the throes of trying to re-imagine and re-fashion her identity when Edward, the discourse of patriarchy's promise incarnate, enters the narrative. Edward's subjectivity is shaped almost exclusively by his ability to provide Bella with those things she lacks. Although Edward is not aristocratic in the traditional sense, as a member of the centuries-old Cullen clan, he is a member of a sort of New World aristocracy[9], and as such, he can provide Bella with unlimited wealth. Bella explains:

"Edward had a *lot* of money—I didn't even want to think about how much. Money meant next to nothing to the Cullens. It was just something that accumulated when you had unlimited time on your hands and a sister who had an uncanny ability to predict trends in the stock market. (*New Moon (2)*, p. 13)

Edward and all of his adopted siblings live in a stately mansion, drive an assortment of high-status vehicles, and wear stylish, expensive clothes. When Bella joins the family she enjoys these same perks and more. In the last installment of the series, Bella and Edward honeymoon on the island Carlisle owns in South America.

Edward also proves he can address the problem of "imminent danger" (Miller, 2011, p. 166) constantly threatening fragile Bella's life. Throughout the series, the text highlights the

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[9] In *Twilight,* the reader learns that Edward's father, Carlisle, broke from the Volturi of Italy to start a new life in the New World. When Dr. Cullen learned that he could turn humans on the brink of death into vampires, he built a family and raised them in his genteel image.

dangers of being a woman, and Bella's particular susceptibility to them. She describes herself as "an accident-prone klutz" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 12) and "so clumsy" that she is "almost disabled" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 210). While Bella is physically inept, Edward proves he has the strength and financial means to protect her. Not only is Edward able to "to lift full-sized vans with one hand" (*Twilight (1)*, p.79), he can read the minds of Bella's enemies, anticipating their every move. Edward even addresses Bella's mysterious ability to "attract accidents like a magnet" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 109). With natural and supernatural threats everywhere, Edward finally forces Bella to trade her old truck for an exclusive model of Mercedes equipped with "missile-proof glass and four thousand pounds of body armor" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, p. 7).

Edward also provides Bella with the nurturing she needed. Bella reveals that she'd never really been taken care of by her, now totally absent, mother, and, although Charlie does take care of Bella with small gestures of "unspoken concern" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 55), such as putting snow chains on her tires, he is accustomed to being a relatively hands-off parent. Edward, on the other hand, considers it his honor to attend to Bella's every need. In addition to rescuing her from danger, he also enjoys attending to more mundane concerns such as making sure Bella is warm enough and that she is eating and sleeping properly. He even composes Bella a lullaby.

Edward also addresses Bella's poor self-image. He does this in two ways. First, he alerts her to the fact that she is already beautiful. By convention of the romance, the heroine must be modest and humble; she cannot come into the narrative with any suspicion that she is attractive (Modleski, 1982/2008). It becomes the hero's job to inform her. Although Bella imagines herself as plain, ordinary, and utterly forgettable, in reality, she is like many romance heroines in that she falls "into a category that might be described as 'effortlessly beautiful'—that is, they are blessed by a particularly attractive appearance, but are also entirely unselfconscious about this"

(Gill & Herdieckerhoff, 2006, p. 497). Meyer worked quickly to establish Bella as the sort of girl who, as the convention of the romance genre dictates, takes "no care whatsoever with her appearance" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 491) and, yet, manages to catch the eye of the most handsome man in town. Instead of primping as adolescents might, in the first pages of *Twilight (1)*, Meyer describes her 17 year-old heroine perfunctorily combing her damp hair and morosely contemplating her "pallid reflection in the mirror" (p. 10). Later, during the first of many nights when Edward visits Bella's room, she greets her dream guy in a "holey t-shirt and gray sweatpants" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 298).

It is common for romance authors to go to even further lengths to keep the heroine unaware of how attractive she is to men. Although romances are told primarily through the first-person view of the heroine, authors shift to a third-person point of view at "precisely those points at which the woman's appearance is noticed" (Modleski, 1982/2008, p. 47) to preserve the innocence and naiveté of the heroine. Meyer attempts to keeps her heroine humble, too, although not with a shift point of view. Instead, Meyer shapes her heroine as someone with incredibly low self-esteem. For example, Bella dismisses the inordinate amount of attention she receives from Eric, Mike, and Tyler, chocking her allure up to the novelty of being the new girl. Weeks of dating the most eligible teen bachelor in Forks only serve to make Bella more insecure.

Meyer assigns Edward the task of dispelling Bella's fears that she falls short of the beauty standard. Edward, having accessed the collective gaze of Forks High School's male population using his mind-reading capabilities, tells Bella, "you don't see yourself very clearly, you know…. you didn't hear what every human male in this school was thinking on your first day" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 210). Bella's reaction to this revelation is pure shock: "I blinked, astonished. 'I don't believe it…,' I mumbled" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 210). Edward must bestow upon

Bella the ability to see her own beauty in what Cixous (1975/2009) called the "the old fool's game: each one will love the other sex. I'll give you your body and you'll give me mine" (p. 424).

Edward also represents for Bella the opportunity for travel, adventure, and intellectual development. While Bella's life experiences have been confined to mundane domestic tasks at home, high school, and a part-time job at a sporting goods store, Edward, in his weekly hunting trips and nomadic travels with the Cullens, has seen the world. By virtue of his age and financial means, Edward has also had the opportunity to develop his talents. He is well read, a classically trained pianist, and he has finished college and medical school. Edward offers Bella many of the opportunities he has been afforded. He secures her admission to Dartmouth, and he offers to pay her tuition. For a girl confined to an ordinary, mundane domestic existence, Edward represents mobility and opportunity.

The discourse of patriarchy's promise also reflects a "desire to realize some of the benefits of feminism within traditional institutions and relationships" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 79), for in the "utopia of romance fiction, 'independence' and a secure individual 'identity' are never compromised by the paternalistic care and protection of the male" (p. 79). Although Edward wants to follow tradition and marry Bella, he does not want her to have to change her uniquely human identity for that to be possible. He agonizes, "to never see you blush scarlet again, to never see that flash of intuition in your eyes when you see through my pretenses… it would be unendurable" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 274). He also worries about the human experiences Bella will have to give up to be with him. Later in the series he even assures her, "If you outgrew *me* — if you wanted something more — I would understand that, Bella. I promise I wouldn't stand in your way if you wanted to leave me" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 519).

In order to be considered worthy of Edward and the promise of patriarchy that he represents, Meyer shaped her heroine to embody the romantic ideal of feminine virtue. According to Radway, the ideal romantic heroine is fiery, independent, young, sexually naïve, modest, and unique in some way. In this regard, Meyer has some hits and misses. Meyer first attempts to emphasize Bella's independence by characterizing her as introverted and self-sacrificing, which are not the same thing. While Bella hints at some acts of self-sufficiency (such as working and saving up for clothes), she quickly becomes thoroughly dependent on Edward almost from the instant they meet.

Meyer also attempts to instill in her 21st century woman some 21st century feminist ideas, such as the idea that one should delay marrying and starting a family until one finishes college. Meyer has Bella make a showy performance of her fear of and resistance to the institution of marriage. Meyer also characterizes Bella as indifferent about motherhood. However, typical of both traditional romances (Radway, 1984/1991) and more modern chick-lit romances (Gill &Herdieckerhoff , 2006), Bella ultimately dismisses her earlier reluctance about marriage and motherhood, reinforcing the notion that the goals of feminism do not reflect what women truly want. The discourse of patriarchy's promise asserts "the inevitability and reality of male power" and "force of social convention" (Radway, p. 78). In other words, the discourse of patriarchy's promise insinuates that it is futile to resist participating in the practices and institutions of patriarchy. Although Bella is reluctant to marry Edward, the text assumes that, one day, it is inevitable that she will be with, and probably marry someone. Edward speaks to this inevitability: "I knew that if I continued to ignore you as I should …that someday you would say yes to Mike, or someone like him" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 303). Jacob, too, voices this idea that it is natural and inevitable to couple up, telling Bella, "I was the natural path your life would have

taken" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 599). Throughout the series, it is assumed that Bella's identity is naturally insufficient and that a man is the answer to that insufficiency.

Per convention of the romance, and particularly modern chick lit romances, Bella ultimately denounces her initial resistance against marriage and surrenders to the idea that her "legitimacy and personhood" rests in "the roles of lover, wife, and mother" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 84). As Radway agued, "as in all romances, female defiance is finally rendered ineffectual and childlike as well as unnecessary" (Radway, p. 80). In *Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, as Bella walks down the aisle, she dismisses all her very legitimate reservations about marrying at the age of eighteen: "In that moment, as the minister said his part, my world, which had been upside down for so long now, seemed to settle into its proper position. I saw just how silly I'd been for fearing this" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, p. 49).

This last minute about-face has carried over into the post-feminist discourses of modern chick lit romances. Like the heroines of modern romance, Bella struggles to reconcile feminism's goals with her desire to make very traditional choices. Although Bella executes a superficial performance of feminism, in the end, she believes she is entitled to make choices which are not necessarily those which feminism has fought for. As Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006) explained, these modern romance heroines:

> value autonomy and bodily integrity and the freedom to make individual choices. What is interesting, however, is the way in which they frequently use their empowered post-feminist position to make choices that would be regarded by many second wave feminists as problematic, located as they are in normative notions of femininity. They choose, for example, white weddings, downsizing, giving up work or taking their husband's name on marriage. (p. 499)

The reader learns that, in spite of Bella's adamant resistance to marriage and her blasé attitude about children, her true self really wanted to marry and become a mother all along. As Gill and Herdieckerhoff explained, the post-feminist discourse of modern romances suggests that the freedom feminism represents does not "speak to women's true desires" and is rather a "mere posturing or performance—something that women in a post-feminist world are required to enact, even though it is not what they want" (p. 494). While feminists like Betty Friedan (1963/1997) blamed a women's decision to become a young bride and stay-at-home mother on a lack of vision, of an "inability to see oneself after 21" (p. 126), one could argue that Bella's character represents the post-feminist backlash in that she blames her *resistance* to the institutions of marriage and motherhood on a lack of vision: "Maybe *I had a really bad imagination.* Maybe that was why I'd been unable to imagine that I would *like* being married until after I already was—unable to see that I would want a baby until after one was already coming" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)* p. 132).

However, Meyer does succeed in giving her character a unique talent that only the hero can fully appreciate. As Modleski (1982/2008) explained, the romance heroine's youthfulness and inexperience is key because it "allows her to innocently do things and wear things that arouse the hero" (p. 43). In *Twilight (1)*, the heroine does not necessarily need her youthful sexual innocence, because it is not Bella's sexual naïveté but her lack of familiarity with the vampire world which allows her to arouse the hero's lusts and his curiosity unintentionally. She is completely unaware that the scent of her blood drives Edward mad. Bella is equally unsuspecting of Edward's mind reading abilities and the fact that her mind happens to be uniquely impervious to his vampire-enhanced gift. Unbeknownst to Bella, her alluring scent and

her impenetrable mind make her, as the conventions of genre establish, a "charming enigma" (Modleski, p. 43) to Edward.

Meyer also stresses Bella's passivity, for the romance formula dictates that the heroine's passivity is the requirement to and reward for realizing the promise of patriarchy According to Masse (1992), through the institution of marriage, women "tender" their "passivity and disavowal of public power in exchange for the love that will let them reign in the interpersonal and domestic sphere" (p. 18). Throughout the *Twilight* series, Bella attracts danger and allows others to fight and risk their lives for her. These hyperbolically perilous circumstances force Bella to accept her need for a strong, male representative, not only to thrive, but to survive. Once married, Bella reasons that she will no longer have to worry about taking care of herself. As Radway (1984/1991) explained,

> Passivity *is* at the heart of the romance experience in that the final goal of each
>
> narrative is the creation of that perfect union where the ideal male…finally
>
> recognizes the intrinsic worth of the heroine. Thereafter, she is required to do
>
> nothing more than *exist* at the center of this paragon's attention. (Radway, p. 97)

In these ways, the *Twilight* series, particularly the first installment, deploys the discourse of patriarchy's promise and depicts the institutions of patriarchy, particularly marriage and motherhood, as not only advantageous, but inevitable for women.

Gothic.

While the *Twilight* series begins and ends by fulfilling many of the essential narrative elements of a romance, the series, particularly *New Moon (2)*, *Eclipse (3)*, and *Breaking Dawn (4, part 1& part 2)* possess many of the characteristics and aesthetics associated with gothic. Masse (1992) and Modleski (1982/2008) associate the gothic genre with the discourse of

masochism. According to Masse, women in gothic novels often must come to terms not only with their own repeated abuse, but the abuse of other women as well. The trauma those women experience can come in many forms: physical confinement, denial of autonomy, and forceful silencing. While gothics tend to emphasize the threat of male power, what I call the *masculine menace*, these novels also feature men who nobly adhere to rules of chivalry. The discourse of nobility, in both the sense of noble by blood-right and noble by chivalrous action, is an important part of the gothic formula in that noble, chivalrous men, come to the aid of the suffering heroine.

Twilight incorporates many elements of what Botting (2008) called the gothic aesthetic that is, the superficial indicators which gesture to a certain ambiguity, darkness, and terror. For example, gothics are typically set against a "dark" (Botting, p. 7), "mysterious" (Birkhead, 1921, p. 22; Mussell, 1983, p. 58), and "disorienting" (Botting, p. 11) backdrop. The gothic setting serves as a metaphorical prison for the heroine. From Bella's point of view, Forks is a dismal, claustrophobic, disorienting nightmare. She describes it as an "inconsequential town" which sits under a "near-constant cover of clouds" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 1). Although she admits that the canopy of forest shrouding Forks is beautiful, something about the place makes her feel out of sorts. She says of her new home, "It was too green—an alien planet" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 8). Bella also gives the reader some insight into how claustrophobic the setting feels to her. On the first morning back in Forks, Bella comments on the fog and concludes dismally, "you could never see the sky here; it was like a cage" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 11). This feeling of confinement will prove just the beginning of our gothic heroine's ordeal with disorientation and imprisonment.

Gothics are also typically set in old, ruinous manors which may or may not be haunted (Birkhead, 1921; Clery, 2000; Hogle, 2004; Punter, 2006). While *Twilight* incorporates its share of the supernatural, it doesn't entertain the existence of ghosts. However, Charlie's home is

haunted, in another sense, by the memories of his failed marriage to Bella's mother, Renee.

Bella describes Charlie's home as if it were the ruins of a bygone era, noting that the place is

virtually unchanged since her mother left when Bella was just months old. Bella observes that

the kitchen cabinets are still painted a bright shade of yellow that Renee selected, and her

parents' wedding picture still sits above the fireplace. As Clery (2000) explained, the

"abandoned state" of such ruins "provokes reflections on morality" (p. 59). In her new home,

Bella reflects on her mother's irresponsible decision to marry as a teen, and she is tormented by

the surrounding reminders of her parent's failed marriage. She concludes, "It was impossible,

being in this house, not to realize that Charlie had never gotten over my mom. It made me

uncomfortable" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 12).

The closest large city to Forks, Port Angeles, even stands in what Reynolds (1996) called

a gothic metropolis, a center of "urban depravity" (p. 14). It is here Bella experiences her first

run-in with the masculine menace. For five pages, Meyer takes the reader through all of the fear

and dread of being stalked by a pack of four men in a city that seems to close in on Bella:

> The street was lined on both sides by blank, doorless, windowless, walls. I could see in
>
> the distance, two intersections down, streetlamps, cars, and more pedestrians, but they
>
> were all too far away. Because lounging against the western building, midway down the
>
> street, were the other two men from the group, both watching with excited smiles as I
>
> froze dead on the sidewalk. I realized then that I wasn't being followed. I was being
>
> herded. (*Twilight (1)*, p. 160)

Although, thanks to Edward, Bella makes a narrow escape from her would-be attackers, Port

Angeles serves its purpose as a dangerous gothic metropolis again and again. In *New Moon (2)*,

when Bella goes looking for trouble, she quickly finds a motorcycle gang in Port Angeles to

oblige her. In *Eclipse (3)*, a vampire named Riley draws from Port Angeles' faceless numbers to populate his army of newborn vampires.

However, home is, despite appearances, no safer for the heroine. As Mussel (1983) noted, in the typical gothic novel, "excitement, mystery, danger, and action occur side by side with domestic activities" (p. 58). As is typical of gothic narratives, domestic details can be found throughout the series just a few pages away from intense scenes featuring the supernatural. In *Twilight*, there are several instances in which Bella learns that the vampire threat has literally invaded her home. For example, she learns that the vengeful vampire, Victoria, went through Bella's laundry to find a worn shirt so that she could teach her army to recognize Bella's scent.

Gothic narratives are also characterized, according to Clery (2000) by a "strange mingling of history and fantasy" (p. 2) that one might best describe as nostalgic. As discussed previously, Tenga (2011), Coker (2010), Cochran (2010), and Kane (2010) each noticed how Bella used the historical setting of literary fiction as a lens through which she viewed her relationship with Edward. Edward represents a type of gentlemanliness typical of a bygone era, and Bella longs to reconnect to that era through him. Meyer grounds the noble Cullen clan and tribal order of Quileutes in history. She begins this historical framing in the first book, *Twilight (1)*. Edward asks to tour Carlisle's study with Bella, which is full of artifacts from the Cullen family patriarch's centuries-old life, explaining, "I wanted to show Bella some of our history" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 335). Meyer also used vignettes in which Bella learns how each member of the Cullen clan came to be a vampire and how each vampire came into the Cullen clan. For example, Edward, Bella learns, was turned during the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918, experienced a rebellious period in which he killed humans in the twenties, and then came back to Carlisle a few years later. Jasper was turned by a woman named Maria during the Civil War, and

only recently joined the Cullens. Rosalie was turned by Carlisle during the Great Depression,

and had been a part of the Cullens since. Meyer adds to this layer of history in *Eclipse (3)* when

Bella is allowed to sit in on a telling of the Quileute origin myths. Bella gains a new

appreciation for these stories, which Jacob describes as the "histories….we always thought were

legends" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 243).

Bella also exhibits many of the characteristics of a gothic heroine. As Milbank (2007)

explained, gothic literature often highlights "the perceiving female subject" (p. 159) capable of

explaining the supernatural. Bella demonstrates her powers of discernment early in the *Twilight*

series as she reflects on all the odd things she noticed about Edward that make him suspicious:

the impossible speed and strength, the eye color shifting from black to gold and   black

again, the inhuman beauty, the pale, frigid skin. And more—small things that registered

slowly—how they never seemed to eat, the disturbing grace with which they moved.

(*Twilight (1)*, p. 137)

The entire population of Forks has ignored these subtle indications of the supernatural, but Bella

is different. As Milbank (2007) might say, every natural and supernatural thing about the gothic

heroine's surroundings, is "opened to her gaze" (p. 159). A typical gothic heroine, according to

Modleski (1982/2008), is also (justifiably) paranoid, particularly about the hero. She "broods

over the slightest fluctuation of the hero's emotional temperature or facial expression, quick to

detect in these alteration possible threats to her very life" (Modleski, pp. 24-25). When Bella

speaks to her dangerous lover, she is always careful to monitor his facial expressions and body

language. Even after Edward has established Bella's trust, she continues to make a practice of

consciously reading his face. In *Eclipse (3)*, suspicious that Edward is keeping a secret from her,

Bella makes a probing inquiry. She recounts, "my eyes were fixed on his face as I spoke, measuring his reaction" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 50).

Aiding Bella's remarkable intuition is another specifically gothic trait: her supernatural ability to produce dreams foretelling the future. In the first installment of the series, Bella dreams of Jacob and Edward fighting as werewolf and vampire, long before she knows that either of the supernatural beings actually exist. In *Eclipse (3)*, Bella wakes from a dream knowing how her pursuer, Victoria, plans to attack the Cullens with an army of ultra strong newborn vampires. In *Breaking Dawn (4)*, although Bella has come to terms with her decision to forfeit the ability to bear children, she begins to have a recurring dream about a baby with Edward's eyes. These dreams, which begin on the night before her wedding and continue throughout her honeymoon, also allude to the threat the Volturi will present to the child: "In this dream…I simply had to protect the unknown child. There was no other option" (*Breaking Dawn (4)*, p. 105).

Edward also demonstrates characteristics associated with a gothic hero archetype: the Byronic aristocrat. Meyer named her hero after Edward Rochester (Myers, 2009), but, as an English major, she traced the origins of Edward Cullen further back: "If you go back to Byron, it's all there" (as cited in Reagin, 2010, p. 8.). Edward, like the typical Byronic aristocrat (McEvoy, 2007), is so burdened by a dark secret that he lives the life of a self-appointed outcast. And yet, Edward retains an air of haughtiness. He first thinks of Bella as "insignificant" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 271), a "nobody" (Midnight Sun, 2009, p. 21). Byronic heroes are also known for their streak of unapologetic badness. Just as Edward Rochester made it clear to his innocent governess, Jane, that he was a "commonplace sinner," Edward Cullen tells Bella, "I'm essentially a selfish creature. I crave your company too much to do what I should" (*Twilight (1)*,

p. 266). And yet, this type of hero is often taken to very vocal fits of self-loathing (Bealer, 2011; Myers, 2009). Edward tells Bella: "I truly hate myself" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 365) and "*I shouldn't exist*" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 476). Edward exhibits the Byronic hero's talent for dramatic self-hatred, so much so that his vampire sister, Alice, refers to his "melodramatic" (*Breaking Dawn (4)*, p. 438) and "theatrical tendencies" (*Breaking Dawn (4)*, p. 419).

The Byronic aristocrat is also sometimes the source of the masochistic heroine's suffering as he is subject to wild mood swings and angry outbursts in which he demonstrates that he can be "fierce, powerful …[and] brutal" (Gilbert & Gubar, 1978, p. 14). This fierceness often translates into a sexual fierceness. Gilbert and Gubar call the Byronic hero the very "incarnation of male sexuality" (p. 14). In other words, the ferocity of the Byronic hero translates well into sexual ferocity. Edward and Bella's pillow-biting, lingerie-shredding, headboard-busting honeymoon attest to that. Sex with Edward not only leaves the room wrecked, it leaves Bella's body sore and covered in bruises.

Although Edward finally allows himself to unleash his sexual ferocity in *Breaking Dawn (4)*, for the majority of the series, he is gentle and chaste. In fact, when Bella tells him that she is a virgin, he proudly tells her, "at least we have that one thing in common" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 311). Edward's chastity is an important deviation from the romance and gothic romance formula. In the romance formula Radway (1984/1991) described, there is a "double standard" (p. 74) by which men are allowed to be promiscuous while women must maintain their sexual purity. Meyer, however, requires sexual virtue not only of her heroine, but of her heroes as well. Both Edward and Jacob begin the series as virgins. Edward's virginity and commitment to refraining from premarital sex is even more remarkable when one considers that he is over a hundred years old. He reasons that having committed so many immoral acts "my [sexual]virtue is all I have

left" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 454). Jacob's sexual purity is a bit more complicated. In *New Moon (2)* and *Eclipse (3)*, Edward bristles when he reads Jacob's presumably sexual thoughts about Bella, however, when Jacob imprints on Edward's daughter, his connection to her is so pure that, Edward notices Jacob does not even think about the sexual implications of her rapid physical and mental development.

Many have connected Meyer's emphasis on male sexual purity to her religion's prohibition against premarital sex. While this certainly factored into her characterizations, this call for male sexual purity is not entirely out of place within the gothic discourse of chivalry. Wright (2007) explained that as the gothic genre evolved, "its connotations moved … to a more fluid aesthetic association with medieval chivalry" (p. 1). Chivalry is connected to the practice of courtly love; the rules of courtly love outlined the ethics of what constituted proper sexual conduct between "lover-knight[s]" (p. 39) and the ladies of the court. According to Markale (1987/2000), the sixth rule of courtly love as outlined by medieval author Andreas Capellanus in *De Arte Amandi*, instructed knights of the court to "keep yourself chaste for your lady" (p. 33).

The series also transforms Jacob into a very specific type of character associated specifically with some of the earliest gothic novels: the "interesting peasant" (Birkhead, 1921, p. 21). Before I discuss Jacob's new role beginning in *New Moon (2)*, an explanation of his role in the romantic plot of *Twilight* is necessary. When Jacob is introduced in the first installment of the *Twilight* series, his characters serves two purposes. First, Jacob acts as one of many romantic foils to Edward. He also plays a supporting role in Bella's attempts to decipher Edward's erratic behavior. In *Twilight*'s first installment, Jacob falls into roughly the same category as Mike, Tyler, and Eric—a childish boy whom the heroine, per convention of the romance, hardly regards. Although by noting Jacob's husky voice and pleasant demeanor Bella pays slightly

more attention to Jacob than she does Mike, Eric, or Tyler, she shows so little regard for Jacob's feelings that she heartlessly pretends to flirt with him for the sole purpose of extracting information about the real object of her fancy, Edward.

However, in *New Moon (2)*, after Edward's indefinite departure, Jacob re-enters the saga as more than a supporting character or a romantic foil. Meyer redraws Jacob in the image of a second, equally heroic figure in gothic romances of the "interesting peasant." A good example of this figure can be found in what is considered by many to be the first gothic novel, Horace Walpole's (1764) *The Castle of Otranto*.

The Castle of Otranto centers on the drama surrounding an ancient Catholic family living in medieval, feudal Italy. In this first gothic novel, the principal villain, Manfred, fears losing lordship of the title castle and surrounding lands when his only male heir dies suddenly on the eve of his wedding. Believing this tragedy to be the partial fulfillment of an old prophesy foretelling his loss of the castle, Manfred plans to capture and force his son's fiancé, Isabella,[10] to marry him so that he can produce a male heir and thereby secure his claim to the property. Fortunately for Isabella, a local peasant boy, Theodore, uses his ties to the church to help her escape. Isabella and Theodore fall in love, and it is eventually revealed that Theodore, through a previously unknown blood relation is, in fact, the true heir of the castle. Theodore, who is both noble in action and by blood right, receives his just reward, laying claim to both Manfred's castle and his would-be wife, Isabella.

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[10] Besides the fact that Stephenie Meyer majored in English and is widely read, there is no indication in interviews with Meyer that she intended to name her heroine after the first gothic heroine. Meyer explained that she was saving the name Isabella in case she ever had a daughter. Without the opportunity to inquire directly, we must attribute the connection between Walpole's Isabella and Meyer's Isabella to be a coincidence.

While the Byronic aristocrat is often born noble by blood right, he must work to attain nobility of character. The interesting peasant, on the other hand, begins his life already noble in character; he simply lacks the title of nobility. For example, when Theodore rescues Isabella, he does so expecting no reward or real recognition. He believes that any union between himself the noble lady would be impossible. In other words, Theodore rescues Isabella simply because it is the right thing to do. However, the poor hero is rewarded for his chivalrous act by learning that he is, in fact, the one destined to inherit the disputed property and the eligible lady.

When *New Moon (2)* begins, Meyer quickly establishes the necessary circumstances to introduce Jacob as a legitimate hero to complement Bella, the heroine. First, Meyer surprises her readers by removing Byronic aristocrat Edward from the picture indefinitely,[11] while leaving Bella still in need of a "perpetual savior" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 166). In *New Moon (2)*, Jacob takes over the duty of rescuing Bella from the constant threats on her life. He also rescues Bella figuratively from the haunting memories of Edward.

In *New Moon (2)*, Meyer works to separate Jacob from the other romantic foils of *Twilight*. She reminds the reader that Jacob is not like the other boys. He is interesting— has a particular skill for rebuilding engines. This is a skill which Bella remembers when, while on a motorcycle, she makes the discovery that such death defying acts conjure hallucinations of her long lost love. Bella happens upon a pair of old motorcycles for sale, remembers Jacob's automotive expertise, and enlists his help in her scheme to keep Edward, in whatever form, in her life.

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[11] There is not even the slightest hint that Edward or the Cullens might return until p. 382 of New Moon.

Using his unique mechanical skills as a starting point, Meyer works to repaint young

Jacob as a mature adult. First, Bella notices that in the months since Bella last saw Jacob, he'd

experienced some significant physical changes, and she describes his metamorphosis in detail:

> Jacob had grown into some of his potential in the last eight months. He'd passed that
>
> point where the soft muscles of childhood hardened into the solid, lanky build of a
>
> teenager; the tendons and veins had become prominent under the red-brown skin of his
>
> arms, his hands. His face was still sweet like I remembered it, though it had hardened,
>
> too—the places of his cheekbones sharper, his jaw squared off, all childish roundness
>
> gone. (*New Moon (2)*, p. 131)

On a long drive to retrieve motorcycle parts, Jacob and Bella engage in a playful debate about

the difference between chronological age and maturity. After considering such factors as skill

and size, Jacob nearly doubles in age. Bella explains, "by the time we got back from La Push, I

was twenty-three and he was thirty—he was definitely weighting skills in his favor" (*New Moon

(2)*, p. 147). In this way, Meyer reframes Jacob as an older, dominant man.

Next, Meyer works to establish Jacob's good character. As discussed in Chapter 2,

Jacob's poverty, especially when compared to Edward's wealth, has drawn much critical

attention. However, there is another way to interpret Meyer's emphasis on Jacob's poverty.

With everyday details about the simple life Jacob leads between a small house and a small shed

on the Quileute reservation, Meyer equates Jacob's poverty with a kind of unspoiled goodness.

In Bella's estimation, Jacob glows with a certain beneficence she tries to explain:

> Jacob was simply a perpetually happy person, and he carried that happiness with him like
>
> an aura, sharing it with whoever was near him. Like an earthbound sun, whenever

someone was in his gravitational pull, Jacob warmed them. It was natural, a part of who

he was. No wonder I was so eager to see him (*New Moon (2)*, p. 145)

Sweet, sunny Jacob pulls Bella from her six-month depression, and like Theodore offering

Isabella sanctuary in the Church, Jacob offers Isabella Swan the sanctuary of the Quileute

reservation in La Push.

In fact, characterizing Jacob as a viable rival could be interpreted as progressive on

Meyer's part. As Pearce (2007) explained,

> For the white, middle-class heterosexual, certainly, the last century has seen a radical
>
> relaxation of those sorts of social controls—such as social/geographic mobility, parental
>
> approval—that actually facilitated the "sudden" arrival of a dangerous/desirable "other"
>
> in one's life. (p.185)

Jacob's status as a Native American does not provide enough difference to qualify him as an

exciting, exotic 'other'. In fact, Bella's father prefers Jacob. Meyer had to literally turn him into

a monster for him to become exotic enough to present a legitimate challenge to Edward. In this

way, Meyer bypasses the traditional obstacles of race and class by imagining a romance which

operates in a supernatural economy of difference.

Meyer goes on to establish Jacob as one who is, like Edward, secretly part of a type of

noble order. Using authentic Quileute creation mythology as a foundation, Meyer develops a

modern-day analog for the old concept of nobility by blood-right. Jacob explains in the first

book of the series that, according to legend, his ancestors were spirit wolves charged with

protecting the tribe from the cold ones. Like his ancestors, he has an inherited ability to shape-

shift into a large wolf capable of killing vampires. In *New Moon (2)*, Jacob becomes part of this

ancient, noble order of protectors, otherwise known as the wolf pack.

However, from this point forward, Jacob is also bound to what Hurley (2007) called a "richly grotesque comic body" (p. 138). As Hurley explained, "not attempting to transcend the flesh," the comic body "is invigorated and renewed by its embrace of the earthly" (p. 138). Unlike Edward who embraces sacred, romantic ideas about love, Jacob embraces his fleshly desire for Bella, and he expresses it in almost profane ways. Not only does Jacob forcibly kiss Bella, he frequently uses the sort of "crude insinuations" Radway (1984/1991, p. 133) attributed to the villainous type of romantic foil. For example, when a blizzard strikes in *Eclipse (3)*, Bella allows Jacob to warm her with his supernaturally high body heat. He cannot resist the opportunity to make a crude remark, telling Bella, "you'd warm up faster if you took your clothes off" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 491). In that example, Jacob's frankness reads humorous, comedic, and it is taken that way. Throughout the series, Jacob's character is used to provide comic relief. When Edward bursts out in surprised chuckles from hearing Jacob's inner monologue, Bella affirms, "Jake's a crack-up" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 251). Jacob embraces this role a "court jester" (p. 251).

Jacob embodies humor, heartiness, warmth, and comfort, and, in spite of herself, Bella responds well to those characteristics. As *Eclipse (3)* screenwriter, Melissa Rosenberg, noted (in Vaz, 2010), Jacob truly becomes a "legitimate rival" (p. 38) in the third installment of the series. In *Eclipse (3)*, Bella finally asks Jacob to kiss her, and he obliges her with an embrace so passionate it borders on violence. Bella finds Jacob's intensity oddly liberating. She explains, "I didn't have to be careful with Jacob. And he certainly wasn't being careful with me" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 527). If you will recall, in the ideal romance, the heroine never gives any regard to any man except the hero. Bella, however, is truly torn between two viable suitors. As she kisses Jacob, she imagines a life with him: "I could see the enormous red-brown wolf that I loved,

always standing as a protector if I needed him….I saw the bobbing heads of two small, black-haired children" (p. 529 *Eclipse (3)*).

The series is also gothic in its narrative formula. At the end of *New Moon (2)*, the figure of the "older male villain" (Roberts, 1980, p. 64) enters the picture. In *New Moon (2)*, Aro, the ancient immortal who has lead the Volturi for "millennia" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 340), targets Bella. In *The Castle of Otranto*, the older male villain attempts to capture the heroine because she has ties to wealth. As the ruler of all vampires, Aro has unlimited access to riches, so he focuses his energies on acquiring valuables of another type. Bella explains,

> even in the short time I'd known Aro, I'd been able to see that he was a collector—and his most prized treasures were his *living* pieces. He coveted beauty, talent, and rarity in his immortal followers more than any jewel locked in his vaults. (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)*, p. 532)

Bella learns that, just as Aro attempted to enslave Alice for her ability to tell the future, Aro is interested in Bella's ability to shield herself from other vampires' mind-penetrating powers. Knowing that vampirization will only enhance this talent, Aro demands that she be transformed within the year.

However, Aro and the Volturi are not the only vampire threat. In Eclpise, Bella learns that vampire femme fatale Victoria, is planning to exact revenge on Edward for killing her mate, James. Victoria reasons that justice can only be truly served if she takes Edward's mate from him. To avoid Alice's ability to read her mind, Victoria creates a newborn vampire and uses her feminine wiles to convince him to raise an army of vampires to attack Bella and the Cullens.

To keep Bella safe from her many enemies, the Cullens and the Quileute wolf pack form an uneasy alliance. The Cullens and the Quileute tribe function as two noble orders called into

service to protect Bella and the town of Forks from the vampire threat. As Gil Birmingham, the actor in the movie who portrayed wolf pack leader, Sam Uley, explained the motivation of his and his fellow Quilute characters, "our young men are now carrying the burden and responsibility their forefathers endured to protect the tribe," adding, "and the [Cullen characters] are doing the same thing. It's a clan thing, you know" (in Vaz, 2010, p. 84).

Although the two clans eventually work together, the series is also characteristically gothic in its incorporation of "conflicting land claims" (Hogle, 2004, p. 221) between the two clans. These land claims Jacob referenced in the first installment of the series develop into all out gothic "blood-feuds" (Gamer, 2000, p. 181) between the Cullens and the wolf pack by the beginning of *Eclipse (3)*. Jacob explains in *Twilight (1)* that his great grandfather "was the one who made the treaty that kept them [the Cullens] off our land" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 124). However, territorial concerns override the ultimate goal of capturing the vengeful Victoria. Jacob describes trying to track Victoria who they catch scent of near the Quileute/Cullen line: "we took off after her at full speed, but she crossed the line before we caught up. We spread out along the line hoping she'd cross back over" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 105). Edward forbids Bella from seeing Jacob on the premise that he is too dangerous while Jacob maintains that Edward is the real danger. As Bella tries to negotiate her desire to remain friends with Jacob and her greater desire to be with Edward and eventually become a vampire, the treaty is at the forefront of everyone's mind. Jacob accuses Edward of being overprotective and tells Bella that her life would be better "on my side of the line" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 83). These disputes over claims to land and Bella continue until the resolution of the series.

The oldest gothic stories also resolve with the hero's concern for "establishing correct inheritance" (Hogle, 2004, p. 220). In *Eclipse (3)*, Bella learns that, although the wolf pack has

always recognized Sam as "alpha," Jacob is the true heir of Ephriam Black, the original alpha.
Sam is alpha, but only because Jacob allows it. Given this revelation, Bella views Jacob, once
again, as a legitimate competitor for her affection. Playfully calling him "Chief Jacob," Bella
revels in his newfound status: "He was more of a grown up than I'd ever given him credit
for….there was a majesty here that I'd never suspected" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 485). Interestingly,
Jacob refuses to assert his claims to alpha status until Sam threatens to lead the wolf pack in
killing Bella and her child. Jacob describes the moment he claims his status as true heir:

> No one could dispute the Alpha's decision – except for me. I hadn't earned
> anything. But there were things that had been born in me, things that I'd left
> unclaimed. I'd never wanted to lead the pack. I didn't want to do it now. I didn't
> want the responsibility for all our fates resting on my shoulders. Sam was better at
> that than I would ever be. But he was wrong tonight. And I had not been born to kneel
> to him. The bonds fell off my body the second that I embraced my birthright. (*Breaking*
> *Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 209)

Claiming his alpha status to save Bella is Jacob's supreme act of nobility because, at this point in
the saga, he has no reason to believe that he stands to gain anything from defending her. He has
no hope of having a romantic relationship with Mrs. Cullen. He simply defends her because he
feels it is what is right and just. Jacob's reward? He "imprints on" that is, forms an immediate
soul-mate-like bond with Bella's daughter. Edward and Bella eventually resign themselves to
the disturbing fact that their rapidly developing child will one day become Jacob's bride. In
offering Jacob Bella's daughter, Meyer grafts her Native American peasant into the New World
aristocracy and the new nobility established by the Cullen family.

Using marriage to unite families is also a decidedly gothic narrative element. According to Masse (1992), the fathers in gothics are notorious for using their daughters as bartering pieces to "ratify various alliances" and "consolidate blood lines, and the bonds among men" (p. 23). For example, Bella's father, Charlie, and his good friend, Billy (Jacob's father), collude to encourage a romantic relationship between their two teens. When Bella renews her relationship with Edward, Charlie grounds her. This, too, is consistent with the gothic characterization of fathers. According to Birkhead (1921), gothic fathers are known for the ignoble practice of imprisoning their disobedient daughters. After several months of being "on lockdown" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 10), Charlie lifts Bella's grounding in the hopes that Bella will use her freedom to see Jacob, explaining, "I think maybe you deserve a parole for good behavior" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 10). When Bella refuses to cooperate with Charlie's plan, he reminds her, "the Blacks are practically family, Bella….and Jacob has been a very, *very* good friend to you" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 13). Although Bella stands her ground and refuses to bow to her father's wishes, a very unlikely set of circumstances will ultimately allow Jacob to marry into Bella's blood line.

The series is also gothic in that Bella begins to experience increasing anxiety about "an unfortunate female's life," particularly her mother's life, "repeating itself through her" (Modleski, 1982/2008, p. 61). Bella's most pressing concern is that she will suffer the same misfortune Renee did by marrying young and living in the oppressively tiny town of Forks. Although Bella is willing to forfeit her humanity and her soul to assure she can be with Edward forever, when Edward broaches the topic of marriage, she balks, claiming that such a move would be "not responsible" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 276). Bella sees herself heading down the same path that led to her mother's misery:

I couldn't help think of my mother's most life-altering mistake. Silly and romantic,

getting married fresh out of high school to a man she barely knew, then producing me a

year later….she'd drilled it into me over and over—smart people took marriage seriously.

(*Eclipse (3)*, p. 45)

Although not succumbing to her mother's fate is highest on Bella's list of priorities, she

encounters several other tragic female figures whose fate she must avoid. As Masse (1992)

explained, the gothic heroine is often forced to come to terms with her own abuse and witness

and come to terms with the abuse of other women as well. For example, in the first installment

of the series, Bella has a close call with a pack of rapacious men in Port Angeles. Later, in

Eclipse (3), she learns that Edward's sister, Rosalie, was raped and left for dead by her wealthy

fiancé and his drunken friends. Bella relates the incident with Rosalie to her own narrow escape,

describing it as "close to what happened to me that time in Port Angeles, only no one was there

to save *you*" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 153). After Rosalie delivers her account, Bella comes away with a

renewed appreciation for Edward's intrusive stalking.

Emily's disfigurement story has a similar effect on the young gothic heroine. When

Bella first meets Emily, she cannot help but notice "three thick, red lines" running "from [her]

hairline to [her] chin" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 331). Bella learns that these scars came at the hands of

Emily's husband, Sam, the first Quileute in the series to have his wolf genes activated by

vampire activity. Although none of the Quileutes give an explicit account for Emily's injuries,

the reader is left to assume that Sam lashed out at Emily while in wolf form, disfiguring his

young wife's face forever. At this point in the series, Jacob is Bella's primary love interest, so

spirit wolf behavior is particularly relevant to her. Bella studies Sam as he "kissed the dark scars

on her right cheek before he kissed her lips" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 333) and comes to the disturbing

conclusion that sometimes (wolf)men strike the ones they love. Bella's fear that being with

Jacob will lead to a fate like Emily's surfaces in her unconscious mind. She dreams of "holding

Emily's scarred hand as we faced into the shadows and waited anxiously for our werewolves to

come home" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 341).

Another type of female adversity comes to Bella's attention several times—the inability

to have children. There are not one, but three barren woman accounts in the series. The reader

learns that Rosalie's story was tragic not only because her would-be husband murdered her, but

because, as a vampire, she lost the ability to have children. In *Eclipse (3)*, Rosalie tells Bella that

she would rather have died than endure her current existence without the hope of having

children. Before Bella marries, Carlisle tells her a second barren woman narrative. This story

centered on a nameless female vampire, known only as Irina and Tania's mother, who was so

dissatisfied with adopting/creating adult daughters (in the manner Carlisle had created his

family) and so unable to overcome the emptiness felt by her inability to have a baby, that she

broke the Volturi's law by creating an immortal child. Because these immortal children had a

reputation for being unable to hunt discreetly, the story ends with Tania and her sisters helplessly

watching the immortal child "burn in his mother's arms" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, p. 35).

When the story shifts to Jacob's point of view at the mid way point in *Breaking Dawn (4)*, even

he learns of the tragedy of the infertile woman. Leah Clearwater confesses to Jacob the immense

sorrow she experienced when she learned that her spirit wolf abilities caused her to stop

menstruating. Citing her fear that she'd become "a genetic dead end" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part

2)*, p. 318), Leah empathizes with Rosalie's fight to defend Bella's only chance to have a baby.

In these three stories, the ability to have children becomes *the* standard of truth by which women

understand themselves.

There is a third type of female tragedy Bella must work to avoid—the death of a child. Bella listens to Quileute elder, Billy, tell the story of The Third Wife—a story designed to explain why the wolves had to learn to hunt in packs and why the packs today are so large. The story of the Third Wife is about a young woman who stabbed herself in the heart to distract the vampire who had killed her spirit wolf son and was sure to kill her wolf husband next. Bella, and the only female member of the wolf pack, Leah, are haunted by this ancestral story. Bella reflects:

> I was trying to imagine the face of the unnamed woman who had saved the entire tribe, the third wife. Just a human woman, with no special gifts or powers. Physically weaker and slower than any of the monsters in the story. But she had been the key, the solution. She'd saved her husband, her young sons, her tribe. I wish they'd remember her name.
>
> (*Eclipse*, p. 260)

By repeating this pattern of the tragedy of the barren and/or childless women, Meyer establishes motherhood as not only an institution within patriarchy but maternity and female reproductivity as a discourse in itself. In *Twilight*, the ability to have children is one of the central standards of truth by which women understand themselves. The ability to be a mother is also one of the standards by which females become noteworthy characters. For example, after the Volturi leave, Leah, the genetic dead-end, is presumed to have gone off to community college. With no love interests in Forks and no ability to have children besides, Leah's character never receives proper closure. She simply disappears.

True to the formula of the gothic, although Bella makes many of the same choices as the unfortunate women she learns about, she escapes their fates. For example, like Rosalie, Bella is threatened with rape in Port Angeles, but Edward saves her. Like Emily, Bella interacts with

dangerous monsters, but she is never harmed permanently by them. Unlike the supernatural females in the series, Bella is miraculously able to reproduce. And, unlike the nameless Quileute heroine, Bella does not lose her child to vampire attack. Lastly, by series end, the reader is left to believe that there is nothing but happy, wedded bliss in front of this teen and her husband. Bella will not divorce like her mother.

Marital gothic

In *Breaking Dawn (4)*, Meyer begins to follow the narrative pattern of a specific subgenre of the gothic: the marital gothic. The formula for this subgenre of gothic is relatively simple. It begins with the couple's marriage and the heroine's "transition from unjust to just authority, by the move from father's house to husband's" (Masse, 1992, p. 11). However, after the heroine marries the hero, she learns information that casts doubt on his good character. She is, in other words, estranged from her familiar. In fact, in most marital gothics, the heroine suspects the husband of being insane or a murderer (Modleski, 1982/2008; Russ, 1973). This type of gothic is resolved when the heroine investigates and eventually exonerates her husband.

Breaking Dawn (4) begins in the marital gothic tradition with a happy wedding. However, it doesn't take long for Bella and Edward's marriage to take a dark turn. The trouble begins when Edward, against his better judgment, agrees to consummate their marriage with Bella still in her human state. After their first night together, Bella wakes covered in bruises. Ever increasingly Byronic, Edward expresses incredible self-hatred and vows never to touch her again, until she is a vampire. Bella, who does her best to masochistically downplay her sex-related injuries, feels sad and alienated from her new husband. She reflects, "It looked like my honeymoon was over. The thought put a lump in my throat" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, p. 96). Edward spends the remainder of their time on the island together trying to tire Bella out so that

she will not have enough energy to pressure him for sex. Circumstances quickly change when the young bride learns she is pregnant.

Bella's pregnancy brings to light new, disturbing facts about Edward. As Modleski (1982/2008) noted, gothics frequently feature children who are introduced into the narrative seemingly for no other purpose but to be despised by the hero and protected by the heroine. Bella's pregnancy functions as the marital gothic version of this trope. The child, indeed, proves to Bella that, unlike her mother, Renee, she will not put her husband above her child. However, it is also through the introduction of the child that terror, uncertainty, and alienation invade the would-be domestic bliss of the newly wed couple.

When Edward learns that Bella is pregnant, he becomes extremely agitated. Bella calls him a "violent tornado" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, p. 130). She listens as Edward makes plans to abort the child, and she learns that her new husband is not the sweet and nurturing gentleman she thought he was. Instead, he is a murderous man bent on killing their unborn child.[12] This is the first time Bella truly begins to doubt her hyperbolically positive assumptions about Edward: "He didn't care about the baby at all. He wanted to *hurt* him" (*Breaking Dawn, (4, part 1)*, p. 133). True to the formula of a marital gothic, Bella finds herself, "mute" and "paralyzed" (Masse, 1992, p. 20) by Edward's uncharacteristic rage. Conjuring images of a battered wife, Bella remarks, "when I could no longer bear the violent energy radiating out of him, I quietly left the room. His manic concentration made me sick to my stomach…. I would wait somewhere else for his mood to pass" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, p. 133). Like the heroines of marital gothic, Bella begins to experience "difficulty and despair about using language directly" (Masse,

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[12] It is interesting to note that in the film version of the first half of *Breaking Dawn*, the script establishes Edward as a murderer even earlier by adding a scene, originally written for *Twilight*, in which Edward confesses to using his mind reading abilities to kill would-be murderers.

1992, p. 20). She thinks to herself, "I couldn't talk to this icy, focused Edward who honestly

frightened me a little" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, pp. 130-131). Bella calls on the help of

someone who knows first-hand about the difficult position in which she finds herself, a person

who understands what it is like to find out her betrothed is a murderer who would take away her

ability to have a baby—Rosalie.

Mere hours after learning about Bella's pregnancy, Edward rushes Bella back to the

Cullen manor where she will spend the rest of her human days confined indoors to her sickbed.

Here, like the typical gothic heroine (Masse, 1992), Bella finds herself "mute, paralyzed,

enclosed..." (p. 20). While she is in the Cullen home, she is surrounded by male medical

authorities who believe her baby to be an abomination, even according to monstrous standards.

According to Masse (1992), it is common in gothic for heroines to suffer trauma from the hero's

denial of her autonomy and identity. However, Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006), also noticed

that a similar behavior was characteristic of both old and new romances: "men in chick lit, like

earlier romantic heroes, are still presented as knowing better about what women want and who

they are than women themselves" (p. 498). Just as Edward initially denies Bella the right to

claim immortality and invincibility, he also denies Bella's right to make the decision to keep her

baby. Edward strongly wishes to overrule Bella's decision to carry her child, and, for the

duration of the marital gothic period of *Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, he holds no regard for Bella's

opinion on the matter. Edward even gives consideration to Jacob's suggestion to "hold her down

and knock her out with drugs" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 178) to facilitate the abortion.

Bella is unable to defend herself from a chorus of dissenting male voices, so she enlists Rosalie's

help. It is interesting to note that this is the only part of the entire saga in which the reader loses

direct contact with Bella's internal monologue. From the time Bella returns to Forks carrying

her baby, the point of view shifts to Jacob. Even when the point of view comes back to Bella

during her transformation into a vampire, she finds she is literally unable to speak. While the

painful transformation takes place, Bella cannot move, scream, or escape the pain of her

changing body. When Edward injects Bella with a combination of morphine and his vampire

venom, he inadvertently paralyzes Bella.

> I wanted to raise my arms and claw my chest open and rip the heart from it—
>
> anything to get rid of this torture. But I couldn't feel my arms, couldn't move one
>
> vanished finger.…The fire blazed hotter and I wanted to scream. To beg for
>
> someone to kill me now, before I lived one more second in this pain. But I
>
> couldn't move my lips. The weight was still there, pressing me. I realized…it was
>
> my body. So heavy. Burying me in the flames. (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)*, p. 376)
>
> Marital gothics are typically resolved when the heroine investigates her suspicions about
>
> her husband, and learns information which "exonerates" him (Modleski, 1982/2008, p.
>
> 68).

Although Bella does not actively investigate Edward, she does her best to learn what she can

about the child growing inside her. While Carlisle goes, on Bella's behest, to investigate the

existence of similar human/vampire hybrid children, Bella waits, passing the miserable hours by

talking to her "little nudger" (*Breaking Dawn*, p. 447). Having become intimately familiar with

her baby, Bella notices that it responds to Edward's voice, and, learning this, Edward's opinion

of the child's right to live changes completely. He becomes just as enamored with the child as

Bella when he learns that he can read its mind. Jacob describes this scene:

> "It…he or she, is…" He paused and looked up into her eyes. His eyes were filled with a
>
> similar awe—only his were more careful and grudging. "He's *happy*," Edward said in an

incredulous voice….As he stared at [Bella], his face was not frightened or angry or burning or any of the other expressions he's worn since their return [from their honeymoon]. He was marveling with her. (*Breaking Dawn*, p. 326)

By suffering through Edward's temporary desire to murder the child, Bella allows Edward the time to exonerate himself. Edward is not really a murderer, Bella can now reason; he just needed to feel the connection she felt to love the baby.

In spite of her child's love for both parents, the hybrid cannot help but harm Bella as it grows inside her human body. While kicking, the baby breaks Bella's ribs, and during delivery the baby breaks Bella's spine. Adding insult to injury, just before Bella loses human consciousness, the baby bites her breast in an attempt to suckle blood from it. Bella succumbs to the injuries she sustains during delivery, and as her heart faintly beats, Edward injects it directly with his venom, insuring Bella can make the transformation into a vampire before her mortal body dies. Once Bella wakes from her transformation, she is able to exonerate the violent, parasitic baby who murdered her. After only a few days of life, the insatiable fetus has matured into a remarkably low-maintenance child. Renesme sleeps through the night, can communicate her needs with a telepathic touch, and goes through the diaper-changing phase of childhood development mercifully fast. Bella masochistically reflects that all of the pain she endured was worth her perfect child:

She was the same one I'd fought for from the beginning. My little nudger, the one who loved me from the inside, too. Half Edward, perfect and lovely. And half me – which, surprisingly, made her better rather than detracting. I'd been right all along. She was worth the fight. (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3),* p. 447)

Bella can also forgive her violent child for taking her human life, for she realizes after being a vampire that her human life was no loss.

The series also culminates with a characteristically gothic ending. As Felski (2003) quipped, looking at the gothic genre, one would assume "a women's story… can only end in marriage or death" (p. 100). In *Breaking Dawn (4)*, Bella's story ends with both. In *Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, Bella and Edward marry, thereby completing the work of the romance started in the first installment of the series. However, as we have seen, *Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)* shifts into a marital gothic tale which ends in the heroine's death. However, Bella's mortal death and subsequent transformation into a vampire is what Brownstein (1994) and De Rougemont (1940/1983) called the ideal "poetic" death. This type of gothic death, according to De Rougemont is "a death that means transfiguration, and is in no way the result of some violent chance" (p. 45). Another important feature of a gothic death is that it locks the departed in a forever youthful state. This ideal death avoids "the messy process of ageing and death and focusing our attention, instead, on their….'wholesome' immortality" (Pearce, 2007, p. 85). Bella's emergency vampirization is a perfect example of a gothic transformation which functions as a "management of death" (Pearce, 2007, p. 84) in that it allows the young heroine to indefinitely defer the messy processes of ageing and decay.

Discourse: masochism.

Having established that *Twilight* participates in the gothic genre, I then examined how the series might perpetuate the discourse Masse (1992) identified in gothic: the discourse of masochism. Masse argued that the discourse of masochism involves repeated trauma endured by the heroine and by the women around her. This trauma can come in many forms such as physical abuse, imprisonment, or the traumatic denial of identity" (p. 18) and autonomy. The

heroine might experience these traumatic events first-hand, or she might bear witness to the trauma of other women. The gothic heroine, according to Masse, learns to accept the conditions which cause her suffering "as unique to herself" (p. 3), therefore, and unavoidable.

Bella likewise interprets the acts of violence which befall her to her own innate ability to attract danger. She knows that this sort of suffering was the "pattern" of her life:

> I'd never been strong enough to deal with the things outside my control, to attack the enemies or outrun them. To avoid the pain. Always human and weak, the only thing I'd ever been able to do was keep going. Endure. Survive. (*Breaking Dawn, (4, part 3)*, p. 374)

And yet, Bella fails to see that the pattern of suffering extends beyond her circumstances. Instead of tracing her trouble to broader social institutions and practices, Bella traces the source of her suffering to a mysterious force which makes her a "magnet for trouble" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 174). Bella fights to survive in this environment which she believes is singularly brutal only to her. Her masochistic solution is to shed her clumsy, ageing, corruptible human frame which is always in need of rescuing with a graceful, strong, and durable vampire body. However, the process of becoming a vampire requires even more suffering. Bella uses masochism "as a strategy for survival" (Masse, 1992, p. 4).

She uses masochism not only to survive the repeated trauma of external physical threats but also as a strategy to survive the trauma of love. According to Pearce (2007), the love of an "other" is inherently traumatic. If you define love, even good love, as traumatic, and if you interpret love as that which completes a person's otherwise insufficient identity, you can interpret the holding on to that traumatic love as a masochistic strategy for survival. Bella also uses her endangerment to keep Edward, upon whom she is now thoroughly dependent, in her

life. Foreshadowing how she will use her reckless behavior to trigger hallucinations of Edward

in *New Moon (2)*, Bella thinks to herself manipulatively, "If I had to, I suppose I could

purposefully put myself in danger to keep [Edward] close" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 211). Edward's

departure in *New Moon (2)* proves the ultimate "trauma that gives rise to masochism" (Masse,

1992, p. 3). Not only does she engage in dangerous activities because she will hallucinate and

see Edward, demonstrating that she wants love "in whatever guise, above all else" (Masse, p. 4),

she also revisits the meadow where Edward declared his love to her so that she could relive the

traumatic gain and loss of love in their enchanted space. In this second installment of the series

Bella learns that she has, indeed, developed a "masochistic" "taste for torture" (*New Moon (2)*, p.

159).

       The grotesqueries of horror.

       The *Twilight* series has often been classified as at least part horror, due largely to its

inclusion of monsters such as vampires and werewolves. Those who have studied the

characteristics which establish an entity as monstrous or horrific (e.g., Bakhtin, 1968/1984;

Hurley, 2007; Kristeva, 1980/1982) often describe monstrosities with words like liminal, abject,

and grotesque. I first compare the characteristics of the vampires and werewolves of the *Twilight*

series with the characteristics associated with the liminal, abject, and grotesque. Then, using

Stephen Asma's (2009b) theories about New Testament and Old Testament paradigms of

monstrosity and heroism, I will argue that the vampires of *Twilight* exist as a combination of the

New Testament vision of the monster and the noble monster slayer of their own monstrous

desires.

       Stephenie Meyer's characterization of Edward and the Cullens marks a shift in the

ongoing negotiation of the vampire. Meyer's vampires are, like the first figures of the vampire-

aristocrat, seductive, cultured, but still dangerous. That which is unavoidably grotesque about

their monstrous ontology is downplayed by the author. For example, subsisting on a diet of

blood is necessarily grotesque. According to Bakhtin (1968/1984), any act of "interorientation"

which is "performed on the confines of the body and the outer world" such as "eating, drinking"

(p. 317) can be considered grotesque. Although Meyer establishes the fact that her civilized

vampires drink animal and not human blood, she shields Bella, and, therefore, the reader, from

the more off-putting details of this practice. She describes the Cullens "hunting" trips as if they

were similar to human hunting excursions. Further, Bella, and, by extension the reader, is not

privy to the details of these co-called hunting trips until she becomes a vampire herself. Early on

in their relationship, Edward establishes the ground rule that Bella will never be allowed to see

him hunt (*Twilight (1)*, pp. 216-217; pp. 224-225).

Far from the grotesque figure of the *revenant*, the returning corpse engorging itself on the

blood of the still living, Meyer draws her vampires as almost superior to human mortals. Imbued

with superhuman strength and immortality, they exist more as demigods than abominations of

God's law. Although Meyer's vampires could be considered liminal in that they exist at

"threshold between two opposing conceptual categories" life and death, "and so can be defined

by both neither and both of them" (Hurley, 2007, p. 138), it is difficult to describe them as

abject. As Hurley explained, it is difficult to picture an "animate corpse capable of speech" as

anything but monstrous (p. 138). It is here, at the level of abjectness, that Edward and the

Cullens fail to adhere to the standards of the monstrous. The abject is that which is so ugly,

disturbing, despicable, or reprehensible that it must cast itself away or be cast away by a society

which rejects it. Although an animate corpse is the utmost in abjection, in Meyer's mythology,

vampires never really exist as corpses, *per se*. In fact, she makes it very clear that the human's

heart must still be beating if the vampire venom is to take hold and transform the body (see *Breaking Dawn (4)*, p. 235) into a vampire. The Cullens might be considered cast off in the sense that they cannot risk the familiarity of close human relationship, but they interact with those in their community effectively. Carlisle works as a physician, the Cullen children attend school, and the family hosts lavish parties. While humans feel an innate sense of discomfort around the Cullens, it is a feeling they cannot quite put their finger on, a feeling easily ignored. Lastly, the Cullens deny their most abject quality—their craving for human blood, by following a moral and religious code of human blood abstinence established by Carlisle. As Kristeva (1980/1982) explained, religion and morality function to correct the abject, especially abject behavior. She wrote, "such codes are abjection's purification and repression" (p. 209).

While Edward is only mildly monstrous according to the definitions established by horror and the grotesque, his characteristics easily fit the figure of the modern monster as shaped by the paradigms of New Testament Christianity. According to Asma (2009b), New Testament monsters became creatures designed to elicit sympathy. They are "'innocent' at birth," "misunderstood," (p. 100), sad, and ultimately redeemable. As Averill (2011) noted, the Cullens "control their deviance" like "well-behaved human followers of the Judeo-Christian worldview" (p. 229) and teach other monsters to do the same. In fact, the Cullens are so devoted to their lifestyle of self-restraint that they fight against their fellow vampires in the service of humans. The Cullens are not only Christian monsters; they are heroic Christian monster slayers.

Carlisle, the patriarch of the Cullens, exemplifies the monster of New Testament Christian ethos. Not only is he innocent at birth and redeemable, he is the founder of a new Christian faith which offers his kind the hope of redemption. As Edward explains to Bella in the first installment of the series, Carlisle was brought up as the son of an Anglican pastor who

hunted the vampires of London by night. Carlisle was turned when one of the vampires he and

his father were hunting attacked him. Finding it impossible to commit suicide[13] and morally

unacceptable to feed on humans, Carlisle eventually feeds on a passing herd of deer. Out of the

epiphany that animal blood, although unsavory, would sustain his body and decrease his cravings

for human blood, Carlisle's "new philosophy was born" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 337). Although

Carlisle's heretically monstrous ontology is an affront to his faith, he still clings to that faith as a

source of redemption. Carlisle tests his will to the limits by studying medicine, and, like a

prophet to the undead, encourages his family members to do the same.

The religious nature of Carlisle's philosophy is impossible to deny. Edward explains that

Dr. Cullen "found his calling, his penance, in …saving human lives" (p. 339). Words like

"calling" and "penance" conjure Christian associations. To followers like Edward, Carlisle is a

saint. Bella describes Edward's expression as he tells the story of Carlisle "awed, almost

reverent" (p. 339). Like Christians who believe in the necessity of being born again, Edward

calls being saved from mortal death through Carlisle's emergency vampirization, his "new birth"

(*Twilight (1)*, p. 342). Even Edward's description of his rebellion against Carlisle is laden with

Judeo-Christian connotations. Edward explains that after an "adolescent rebellion" in which he

used his power to read minds to target murderous humans, he returned to Carlisle and made a

vow to "recommit to [Carlisle's] vision" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 342). Edward explains that Carlisle

accepted him back like the "prodigal" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 343) son.

Like Christianity which encourages "reborn" believers to honor the sacrifice of their

prophet by taking up the cross and crucifying their flesh daily, Carlisle's philosophy calls newly

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[13] In Meyer's mythology, it is very difficult to commit suicide without assistance. A vampire can incite one of her or his kind to commit murder. For example, Edward plans to commit suicide in New Moon by invoking the Volturi in hopes they will sentence him to death.

turned vampires to live in a perpetual state of self-denial. The Christian practice of restraint and self-denial is largely influenced by stoicism (e.g., Cobb, 2010; Irvine, 2009; Marmyaz, 2012). Stoicism, according to Marmysz, "advocates the elimination of emotion and submission to fate" (p. 417). However, the Christian caveat to stoicism lies in the belief that it is the human condition to struggle against one's fallen nature. In Meyer's vampire mythology, her monsters struggle with their monstrous (fallen) nature.

Asma (2009b) argued that suffering self-denial is the cornerstone of heroism in the Christian paradigm and the all important link between a fallen monster worthy of pity and redeemed monster capable of heroism. He explained, "Indeed, a new kind of hero was invented in Christianity. Christian heroes suffer, as do heroes of the ancient world, but unlike the ancients, Christians' suffering *is* their heroism" (p. 99). According to Carlisle's vampire religion, one is never meant to escape the suffering of self-denial, but master it. Edward, having already mastered his desire for the blood of the average human, tests his will to the limit when confronted with Bella's particularly enticing blood. Edward crucifies his flesh whenever he's with Bella. He is two persons in one: he is always the monster, and yet, he is always the slayer of that selfsame monster.

Meyer's sprit-wolves are also, at first glance, vaguely grotesque in the sense that they are liminal. As human/animal hybrids, Meyer's spirit wolves have a complicated ontology which violates the simple categories of human and animal. Jacob's most grotesque feature is his language. When Jacob becomes a spirit wolf, he a adopts a coarse, crude manner of speaking. He is prone to using profanity, and he never hesitates to state his opinion frankly. When Edward offers Jacob the chance to conceive a child with Bella in the hopes that she will agree to an

abortion[14], Jacob retorts, "Where is this psycho crap coming from? Are you making this up as you go?" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 182). Jacob is just as abrasive with Bella. When the emaciated Bella tells Jacob that she believes she can survive her pregnancy, he responds, "Shut up, Bella. You can spout this crap to your bloodsucker, but you're not fooling me" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 193). As Bakhtin (1968/1984) noted, "literature of the grotesque" often features this type of "abusive language" (p. 27), explaining that it is "closely related to the "down to earth and degraded nature of the grotesque" (p. 27).

While Jacob uses degraded language throughout the series, it is a stretch to call Meyer's spirit wolves grotesque in the disgusting or despicable sense. In fact, much of what makes spirit wolf ontology special is enviable. Meyer's spirit wolves, like their vampire counterparts, possess remarkable strength, they heal quickly, and they do not age. With their primary concern the protection of their tribe and the other innocent humans in their area, Meyer's spirit wolves are noble and quite tame.

In fact, using Asma's (2009b) framework, Meyer's wolves, like her vampires, are more consistent with the image of the heroic monster slayer than the image of the monster. According to Meyer's mythology, the spirit wolf's sole purpose is to defend his tribe against vampire attack. Once again, in keeping with the Christianized definition, Meyer ties Jacob's heroism to suffering. While an honor, serving the tribe as a vampire-killing spirit wolf is also a burden. Jacob describes learning about his spirit wolf heritage as analogous to "being drafted into a war you didn't know existed" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 484). Meyer also paints the process of maturing into a spirit wolf as a painful one. Before he understands the supernatural nature of his adolescent

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[14] At this point, Edward and Bella know that the child will kill her during delivery. Edward believes that Bella's insistence on having his child stems from a sudden realization that she wants to be a mother before becoming a vampire. In other words, Edward believes that Bella simply wants a child, *any* child.

transformation, Jacob believes he has the flu. He tells Bella "I feel horrible" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 222). Although spirit wolves are very strong, they are by no means invincible, especially if they choose to work alone. Jacob finds this out in *Eclipse (3)* when a vampire breaks several bones in his body. Being part of a pack also means losing a degree of one's autonomy and privacy—spirit wolves can read each other's minds when they are in wolf form. Lastly, those who carry the spirit wolf genre are not at liberty to fall in love with whomever they choose. Genetic imprinting overrides their choice and forces them to select a mate with the best possible chance to produce strong offspring. With these personal liberties stripped, Jacob looks at his call to duty as a "life sentence" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 287).

While, in many ways, Jacob and Edward are in the same situation in that they are liminal creatures called upon to fight unredeemed monsters, they represent two different types of monster-slaying heroes ruled by two different concepts of nobility. Asma (2009b) explained, "the new [Christian] nobility is quite different from the old pagan nobility" (p. 100). Edward's heroism is informed by the new nobility, which is tied to "Judeo-Christian humility culture" (p. 100). Like the Christian hero ascribing to the ways of the new nobility, Edward is humble about his acts of heroism. He does not save Bella from her various attackers for the purpose of claming or impressing her, and he does not expect Bella to be impressed that he has conquered his lust for her blood. Jacob, on the other hand, is drawn up in image of the pagan hero who operates under a different economy of meaning, what Asma called "the rules of the old nobility" (p. 100). As Asma explained, pagan monster killers are typically "strong men of action that are needed to save the family or tribe or village" (p. 98). According to their pagan sense of justice, these heroes "want to be publicly recognized for their acts of heroism; they want honor as payment for their monster-killing services" (Asman, p. 101). Jacob thinks it fitting that Bella

reward his many heroic efforts with a chance to be her lover, and operating under this brutish notion, he forces a kiss on Bella.

However, Jacob eventually embraces the ethics of the new Christian nobility. He changes after Bella marries. He has no real desire to impress her; the hope of winning Mrs. Cullen's love with his good deeds has disappeared. When Jacob claims his right as Alpha to save Bella and her baby from the wolf pack, his motivation is pure. By finally stoically embracing his burden, his role as protector, he comes into the fold of the new nobility Asma spoke of, and, like Edward, is rewarded, not with Bella, but with the next best thing, her daughter.

As we have seen, the abjectness and grotesqueness required of monsters is largely absent in Meyer's vampires, especially the domesticated Cullens. Nor is it found in the noble order of spirit wolves, for their hybrid characteristics are designed specifically to counter the vampire threat. In fact both of these groups, the Cullens and the wolf pack, work to slay uncivilized monsters such as nomadic James and his vengeful mate, Victoria. As Derrida (1990) argued, "Monsters cannot be announced. One cannot say: 'Here are our monsters,' without immediately turning the monsters into pets" p. 80). In the *Twilight* series, vampires and werewolves, the monsters announced as such, are so domesticated that they work for the service of humankind as slayers of the as-yet-unredeemed monster.

Maternal gothic and the monstrous maternal.

"I wondered if I was a monster. Not the kind that he thought he was, but the real kind." (Bella Swan, *Eclipse (3)*, p. 421)

While Meyer announces and thus domesticates her vampires and spirit wolves, there is one monster that goes unannounced, a monster Meyer paints with vivid shades of red. That

monster is the gestating female. As Shapiro (2009) noticed, in *Breaking Dawn (4)* author

Stephenie Meyer "momentarily put aside her aversion to graphic horror" (p. 114). This

unannounced monster took many readers by surprise. For example, one fan complained, "It

wasn't what I expected at all," explaining, "It didn't seem to fit the world that I thought

Stephenie Meyer created" (as cited in Ward, 2008, para. 1). A friend who read the series

remarked, "The delivery part was a little much." When I asked her to elaborate she said, "It's

gross. I understand that she had to go there, because, it's a vampire series, they're supposed to

be like stone, marble, I get why Bella… had to get her out, but it was gross."

That word gross, the grotesque, is most aptly personified in Meyer's depiction of Bella's

gestating body in the second part of *Breaking Dawn (4)*. *Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)* is also

noteworthy because it marks, as I noted earlier, the first and only point of view shift Meyer

makes in the series. As if to prevent Bella, the beatific martyr, from complaining about the

difficulty of her pregnancy, Jacob takes over the difficult task of narrating the events leading up

to the birth of Bella's baby. When Jacob first sees Bella's "hugely pregnant" (*Breaking Dawn

(4, part 2)*, p. 270) body, we can imagine how painful it must be to behold her swollen abdomen.

According to Bakhtin (1968/1984), the "pregnant and begetting body" (p. 26) is inherently

grotesque because of its protuberances and convexities which seek "to go out beyond the body's

confines" (p. 317). Jacob does not use the polite colloquialisms common in descriptions of

pregnant females. He calls Bella's baby bump "the deformed part" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*,

p. 174). As Bakhtin (1968/1984) explains, "one of the fundamental tendencies of the grotesque

image of the body is to show two bodies in one" (p. 26). This statement might be true of any

normal pregnancy, but Bella's pregnancy is filled with fear, for the ontology of her composite

fetus is unknown, ambiguous, and seems to be draining the life from her body.

While Bella's abdomen continues to expand, the rest of her body wastes away. Jacob's description upon seeing Bella is brutally honest and tinged with fear: "Bella's body was swollen, her torso ballooning out in a strange, sick way" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 174). He continues, "the rest of her seemed thinner, like the big bulge had grown out of what it had sucked from her" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 174). The sight of Bella's body "so pregnant, so sick" is so abject that it makes Jacob nauseous (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 174). This simultaneous growth and disintegration is also a hallmark of the grotesque (Bakhtin, 1968/1984). One can easily compare Bakhtin's comments about the grotesque image of the senile laughing hags with Jacob's commentary on Bella's body. Bakhtin says of his pregnant hags:

> They combine a senile, decaying and deformed flesh with the flesh of new life, conceived but as yet unformed. Life is shown in its two-fold contradictory process; it is the epitome of incompleteness. And such is precisely the grotesque concept of the body. (Bakhtin, pp. 25-26)

Like those pregnant hags, Bella's body disintegrates as the child develops inside her and from her.

Meyer once described her vampire narrative as atypical in that it does not take the reader into a "dreary, blood-thirsty world" (as cited in in Margolis, 2005, para. 2); however she makes an exception to this self-imposed standard as, through the unblinking eyes of Jacob, Meyer describes Bella's frail human body in its feeble attempts to support the hybrid fetus. In order to satisfy the needs of this gestating aberration, Bella resorts to drinking human blood obtained by Carlisle from a blood bank. According to Bakhtin (1968/1984), any act of eating and drinking might be considered grotesque in that in so doing "man tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself" (p. 281). If drinking is grotesque, a human drinking copious

amounts of another human's blood certainly is so. Her consumption of blood is even more

grotesque in that she is drinking to satisfy her fetus' unquenchable thirst. The image of the

monstrously thirsty baby appears in Rabelais' work as well as he described the infant Gargantua:

"he did not like other babies cry: 'Whaay! Whaay!' but in a full, loud voice bawled: "drink,

drink, drink!"(Book 1, Chapter 6 of Rabelais' *Gargantua and Panatagruel* as cited in Bakhtin,

1968/1984, p. 226). Bella's consumption of blood is, therefore, doubly grotesque in that it

combines the already grotesque act of drinking with the grotesque image of the thirsty child.

Even Carlisle describes Bella's life-saving act as "monstrous" and "repulsive" (*Breaking Dawn

(4, part 2)*, p. 242). Here Jacob has the opportunity to spare the reader from a description of still-

human Bella drinking human blood. Bella tells him "you don't have to stay and watch this"

(*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 246). But Jacob stays and fulfills his purpose in the narrative. He

describes the scene in stomach turning detail. As Bella holds the "cup full of human blood"

(*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 251), her weak hands tremble, so that "slopping" (*Breaking Dawn

(4, part 2)*, p. 249) and "sloshing" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 248) sounds emanate from the

cup. Bella continues to "gulp" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 250) mouthfuls of blood, until she

finally tells Jacob, "I think I've drunk two gallons in the last hour" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*,

p. 346).

When it is time for Bella to deliver, she drops the cup of blood, and Jacob describes "the

dark red blood spilling out onto the pale fabric" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 346) of the

couch. Then, his ears are assaulted with the sickening "muffled ripping sound" (*Breaking Dawn

(4, part 2)*, p. 346) as the placenta connecting baby and mother detaches. He watches in horror

as Bella "vomited a fountain of blood" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 347). Bella faints, and

Jacob describes the horrific scene as Bella's distended abdomen begins to thrash and convulse.

They rush her into a well lit room and prepare for a caesarean. Jacob describes the scene: "In the bright light, Bella's skin seemed more purple and black than it was white. Deep red was seeping the skin over the huge, shuddering bulge of her stomach. Rosalie's hand came up with a scalpel" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, pp. 349-50). He continues, describing the "soft, wet sound of the scalpel" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 351) penetrating Bella's skin and the sight of ever increasing amounts of "blood dripping on the floor" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 351). Then he hears the "shattering crack" of the child breaking Bella's spine (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 351). The scalpel proves ineffective in penetrating the supernaturally tough skin of the hybrid creature's amniotic sac, and a desperate Edward bites through it to save time and Bella's life. Jacob describes the sound of Edward's teeth frantically tearing at Bella's abdomen resembling "metal being shredded apart" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 351).

Jacob holds nothing back from the reader. Like Bakhtin (1968/1984) describing the birth of Gargamelle's caesarian operation, Jacob relays the story of Bella's body in the grotesque throes of "giving birth and dying" (p. 26). Jacob agonizes as he watches his first love in excruciating pain, "I couldn't look away from Bella's face," "I watched only Bella" (p. 353). This image of Jacob beholding Bella is truly horrific. As Kristeva (1980/1982) explained, horror is "a vortex of summons and repulsion" (p. 5). Hurley (2007) echoed this sentiment, adding "One cannot bear to look upon it, but cannot bring oneself to look away from it, either" (p.138). With Bella and her baby and Gargamelle and hers, in both pregnancies and deliveries "two heartbeats are heard; one is the mother's, which is slowed down" (Bakhtin, 1968/1984, p.26). Finally, Bella dies. Jacob reports, "with a last dull *ga-lump,* her heart faltered and went silent (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 353).

Jacob takes in the grotesque sight of Bella's lifeless body: "It was red with blood—the blood that had flowed from her mouth, the blood smeared over the creature, and fresh blood welling out of a tiny double-crescent bite mark just over her left breast" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 353) where the baby had bitten her trying to nurse. This image of intermingled blood is very much like Bakhtin's description of Gargamelle's delivery of Gargantua. After eating too much tripe (animal intestines) Gargamelle begins to go into labor. At that time, her intestines, full of animal intestines, fall out making a "link between the devoured tripe with those who devour them. [...] The bodies [of human and animal] are interwoven and begin to be fused in one grotesque image of a devoured and devouring world" (Bakhtin, 1968/1984 p. 26). Like that intermingled tripe, it is impossible to look over Bella's body and distinguish the placental blood from the blood spilled in the violent caesarian and the blood of a human donor which Bella ingested to nourish the baby.

However, like Meyer's other monsters, Bella becomes heroic through her suffering, and eventually evolves into a monster slayer. Early in the series, Edward notices that Bella makes a habit of denying her self-interest and suffering in silence: "You put on a good show," he tells her, "but I'd be willing to bet you're suffering more than you let anyone see" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 49). Bella's pregnancy, however, puts her ability to suffer silently, and stoically, to the test. In fact, I would argue that Meyer assigns Jacob the job of telling the story of Bella's horrific pregnancy and delivery so she can set Bella up not only to die, but to die as a beatific martyr who never complained about her unhappy lot. Bella dismisses Jacob's worry about her deteriorating health, and attempts to persuade him to look at her choice to die for her unborn child from a more spiritual perspective. She tells him "I'm not saying things will work out *easily*, Jake" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 189). She explains, "I just…feel…that this is all going

somewhere good, hard to see as it is now. I guess you could call it *faith*" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 190).

Interestingly, becoming a vampire enhances Bella's ability to suffer in silence for the sake of others. When Bella's barely alive body first begins the process of transformation, it is the morphine Edward injected her with which renders her unable to move or scream. However, as the change takes place, Bella regains the ability to move. It is no longer morphine which renders her suffering body mute and paralyzed; it is her vampirization-enhanced will to shield others from harm. She recalls, "I struggled to keep the screams and thrashing locked up inside my body, where they couldn't hurt anyone else, it felt like I'd gone from being *tied* to the stake as I burned, to *gripping* that stake to hold myself in the fire" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)*, p. 379). After silently enduring the pain of transformation into a vampire, Bella continues to prove her heightened powers of stoic self-control. Although newborn vampires are known for their overpowering thirst for human blood, when Bella accidentally comes upon a human couple on her first hunting trip, she immediately runs away. Jasper paints the scene of Bella's empathy-driven act of stoicism: "I've never seen a newborn do that – stop an emotion in its tracks that way. You were upset, but when you saw our concern, you reined it in, regained power over yourself" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)*, p. 404). Further, when Bella awakes, although newborns are known for their uncontrollable blood lust, Bella's self-control out performs Edward's. She is even able to swaddle her half-human child whose veins course with blood: "It seemed very natural to lean in and press my lips to her forehead. She smelled wonderful. The scent of her skin set my throat burning, but it was easy to ignore" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)*, p. 447).

Masculine horror gothic: the monstrous masculine and the burden of patriarchy.

By changing the point of view from Bella to Jacob, Meyer dabbles in yet another subgenre of gothic: the "masculine horror gothic" (Vargo, 2004, p. 234). Masculine horror novels are easily distinguished from "feminine terror gothics" (Vargo, 2004, p. 234) in that they are told through the point of view of the hero. Grounded in a "preoccupation with destabilized subjectivities" (Baker, 2007, p. 168) and the binary of reason/passion, masculine horror gothics focus on a hero living in a state of repression, particularly sexual repression. While religious and moral codes are designed to repress and purify the abject, this repression can lead to what Morris (1985) called "a dangerous release from restraint" (p. 306). The hero of the masculine horror gothic, according to McEvoy (2007) is "portrayed from within" so that readers can "more explicitly focus through his … desire and passion" (p. 24).

Throughout the series, Jacob struggles with his adolescent lust for Bella. Meyer's switch to Jacob's point of view in *Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)* not only allows readers to understand the misery of Bella's pregnancy, it allows readers to empathize with Jacob's struggle with that lust. When Jacob can no longer bear watching Mrs. Cullen pregnant and suffering, he escapes into his instinct-driven wolf form. As Jacob transitions from wolf to human and back, the reader can hear his every agonized thought as he works to overcome the pain of losing Bella to Edward. For example, tired of pining for a love that will never be his, Jacob tries to seek out the girl he is destined to imprint upon. Although he finds a pretty girl named Lizzie who shares his love of cars, her interest in him does nothing to ease his pain. He explains, "her smile did nothing about the sharp, cutting blades that raked up and down my body. No matter how much I wanted it to, my life was not going to come together like that" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 334). Even

readers who resent Jacob for casting doubt on the perfect romance established in *Twilight (1)* can better empathize with him through this change in point of view.

Meyer was so interested in detailing how men suffered from the trauma of love that she began a reworking of *Twilight* told from Edward's point of view called *Midnight Sun*. Although Meyer postponed the project when a draft of it was leaked, she posted a revised copy on her website. In Midnight Sun, readers can appreciate the full scope of Edward's internal struggle to refrain from killing Bella. The Edward of Midnight Sun is hardly recognizable as he contemplates taking Bella's life that first day they meet: "The monster in my head smiled in anticipation….In a few moments, there would be nothing left in me that would reflect the years I'd spent with my creator, my mentor, my father in all the ways that counted. My eyes would glow red as a devil's; all likeness would be lost forever" (Midnight Sun, pp. 15-16). Although much of the series is devoted to the traumatic and violent nature of the transition Bella makes to be with Edward, by shifting to Jacob's point of view for part of *Breaking Dawn* and by giving a detailed account of Edward's struggle between love and blood lust in *Midnight Sun*, Meyer shows that romantic love is traumatic for and destabilizes the subjectivity of not only women but men.

Chick lit and post-feminist discourses of boldness, entitlement, and choice.

Meyer also incorporates some of the trademark characteristics of modern chick lit romance in her series. According the Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006), chick lit romances typically begin with a sexually bold, body-obsessed heroine who is stuck in a "dead-end" (p. 495) job in which her talents are wasted.

Like the sexually experienced heroines of chick lit, in a very short period of time, Bella attracts a disproportionately large number of boys who are interested in dating her, and she

shares a few "scathing portraits of dysfunctional men and disastrous dates" (Modleski, 1982/2008, p. xxv)   Take, for example, this scene in which Bella attempts to gather a group of friends to go to the movies and ends up sandwiched between two boys with unrequited feelings for her: "Both Jacob and Mike had claimed the armrests on either side of me. Both of their hands rested lightly, palms up, in an unnatural position" (*New Moon (2)*, p. 210).

Chick lit heroines are also characterized by sexual boldness: "Far from being virginal, most of the heroines are sexually experienced" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, 2006, p. 494). While inexperienced, Bella is not sexually passive. In this way, I would argue that Meyer troubles one of the fundamental "binaries on which conventional romance depends" –the "virgin/whore" binary (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 492). Meyer allows her technically inexperienced virgin to be sexually aggressive, even lustful. When Edward explains that "love and lust don't always keep the same company," Bella retorts, "They do for me" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 311). By admitting to both love and lust simultaneously, Bella's sexuality defies the simplicity of the virgin/whore binary.

In a chick lit novel, the heroine is often obsessed with taming her "unruly" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 497) body, particularly through weight management. One could easily describe Bella's body as unruly. She is obsessed with what Hurley (2007) might call her "changeful mortality" (p. 138) throughout the series. Even in the first installment, Bella tells Edward, "I'm going to die….Every minute of the day, I get closer. And I'm going to get old" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 476). In *New Moon (2)*, Bella is panic-stricken by the idea of turning eighteen because Edward's body will never age past seventeen. Anxiety brought on by her upcoming birthday causes the teen nightmares.

Like the heroines of chick lit romances, Bella is stuck in a situation in which her one talent, her talent to shield herself and others, will never reach its fullest potential. She

demonstrates this desire to defend time and again as she attempts to save others by offering

herself up in their stead. In the first installment of the series, Bella escapes her protectors to meet

murderous James alone in the hopes he will free her mother who she believes has been abducted.

When Bella believes Edward's life is in danger while fighting Victoria, she contemplates taking

a cue from the legendary Third Wife and spilling her blood as a helpful distraction. Sadly, none

of these attempts prove successful. Bella is not stuck in a dead-end job, but she is tethered to an

unruly, mortal body, and her ability to defend others will never reach its fullest potential. Bella's

clumsy, earthly body also keeps her from reaching her full sexual potential. The one thing Bella

recalls enjoying the most when she kissed Jacob was the fact that, with him, she did not have to

be careful. As a vampire, Bella and Edward are compatible, and she can enjoy sex with him in

that same, liberated way. Just as the heroine of a chick lit romance finds in her hero the

inspiration and courage to escape dead-end jobs, learning about Edward and the existence of

immortal vampires inspires Bella to reach her full potential and escape her dead-end life.

Bella's human death also bears a resemblance to a trope in chick lit that Gill and

Herdieckerhoff (2006) call the "make-over paradigm" (p. 497). It seems that Meyer had a

makeover in mind for Bella from the start. According to Krohn (2011), Meyer's choice for

Bella's last name, Swan, was informed by "the fairy tale of the ugly duckling" (p. 32). Like the

ugly duckling, Bella was destined for transformation. Not only is Bella's human death gothic in

that it defers the otherwise inevitable deterioration of the body, it is an opportunity for her to

receive a makeover in the modern sense. Edward's venom begins the process of making up for

Bella's less than perfect appearance, and his sister, Alice, completes Bella's look with new

clothes.

In many ways, Alice serves throughout the series as Bella's chick lit side kick. Ever the event planner, Alice makes the elaborate arrangements for Bella's birthday, her graduation party, and her wedding. Always on the look out for "an opportunity to shop" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, p. 40), Alice uses the Cullen's unlimited finances to purchase appropriate clothes for each of these occasions. Upon learning that Bella will soon join the Cullen family, Alice supplies Bella with a closet full of new, designer clothes, asserting, "it's about time to get over this aversion to new clothes" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)*, p. 40). Alice even provides Bella with a selection of sexy lingerie for her honeymoon. In fact, through Alice, our otherwise dowdy heroine can participate in fashion and normative femininity through consumerism without losing any of the modesty which comprises her virtue.

Complications.

As we have seen, *Twilight* participates in several genres. For the longest time this bothered and concerned me. I wanted very badly to be able to reduce the series to one label, one classification. However, I took the advice of Derrida (1990) who suggested "Instead of giving into normal and legitimating representations which identify, recognize and reduce everything too quickly, why not rather be interested in 'theoretical monster[s]'" which defy and "make comical all classifications" (p. 79). Looking at *Twilight* as a literary monstrosity allowed me to see that it participated in multiple genres and, in so doing, deployed several contradictory discourses.

I was able to see that *Twilight*'s narrative structure and characterizations resemble those of both twentieth century trade romances and the chick lit romances which first appeared in the 1990's. However, *Twilight* also incorporates several gothic characteristics. Edward Cullen bears a striking resemblance to Edward Rochester of the gothic romance *Jane Eyre*, and Jacob Black resembles the interesting peasant figure of older gothics such as Walpole's (1764) *The Castle of*

Otranto. Bella, too, possesses the characteristics of a gothic heroine: she uses her powers of observation and her remarkable intuition to make sense of her disorienting, supernatural world. *Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)* stands in as a marital gothic as Bella learns that her perfect husband is capable of murdering an innocent child. And lastly, readers get their first real taste of horror as they witness the pregnant and gestating Bella waste away before dying a violent death during childbirth.

Just as *Twilight* participates in several genres, it deploys several, often contradictory, discourses. For example, *Twilight* is clearly a romance, and according to Radway, one would expect it to perpetuate the discourse of patriarchy's promise. My textual analysis revealed that, indeed it did. However, *Twilight* clearly participates in the gothic genre as well. According to Masse (1992), gothics are written in the discourse of masochism, and as such, focus on the suffering women must endure at the hands of their fathers, lovers, and, sometimes, husbands. These two discourses, the discourse of patriarchy's promise and the discourse of masochism, directly oppose one another. While it would easy to call the series gothic-romance, I would be left with the unresolved issue that gothic and romance are associated with contradictory discourses. This proves, as Foucault (1976/1978) predicted, that within a common classification such as gothic-romance, "there can exist different and even contradictory discourses" (p. 102).

One may as well cast these two discourses into the binary of patriarchy's promise/patriarchy's peril. If *Twilight* truly participates in both the romance and gothic genres as well as the discourses of patriarchy's promise and the discourse of patriarchy's peril as I believe it does, we can see that this humble popular text challenges the very promise/peril binary around which feminist literary critics have attempted to account for the manner in which patriarchy shapes literary texts. Working from a definition which describes queer as that which "disrupts

the order by evoking an identity that refuses and exceeds the binary system" (Kane, 2010, p. 105), *Twilight* is, indeed, a queer text, a queer text about patriarchy. However, it seems insufficient to say *Twilight* merely deploys the discourse of patriarchy. Standing alone, that word patriarchy seems to long for a positive or negative connotation. I needed some way to describe patriarchy which could simultaneously account for both the benefits and dangers of that social system. As I noted earlier, I found what I needed in the concept of *pharmakon*.

Derrida (1972/1981) made this concept famous in his essay, "Plato's Pharmacy". In it, Derrida examined Plato's dialog, *Phaedrus*, and a myth within it which a character named Pharmacia leads the protagonist astray. Derrida studied the Greek root of this word *pharmacia* and found that, although it possessed a negative connotation, its root word referred to something ambiguous called a *pharmakon*. A pharmakon, Derrida explained, could serve as either a negative thing, a poison, or a positive thing, a remedy, depending upon how it is administered. Derrida argued that, although Plato relied on binary logic with the word pharmacia, that negative word carried the trace of ambiguity, of pharmakon, a vague word which epitomizes the différance which plagues all language.

I would argue that feminists literary critics have likewise relied on binary logic to describe the deployment of patriarchy in women's texts. Janice Radway (1984/1991) argued that romances are fantasies read for the purpose of escaping and supplementing one's life. As such, Radway believed that they focused on the positive side of patriarchy, that is, the "promise of patriarchy" (p. 119) to supplement the fact that patriarchy does not offer that promise in reality. Masse (1992) made the opposite argument for gothics. She read gothics as mimetic and subversive texts documenting real trauma inflicted upon women in the real world. She explained, "The Gothic plot is …not an 'escape' from the real world, but a repetition and

exploration of the traumatic denial of identity found there" (p. 18). Whether supplementing for a promise lacking in patriarchy or mimetically reflecting the peril in that same social system, the underlying assumption is that patriarchy, in reality, is not a social system designed with women's interests in mind. In both Radway's and Masse's logical equations, the conclusion is the same: patriarchy is bad. I believe that much of feminist literary criticism about romance is rooted in the worry that the author "has passed a poison off as a remedy" (Derrida, 1972/1981, p. 98).

What neither of those studies account for is the fact that what we call romance today evolved from England's gothic movement in the late eighteenth century. Romance was always already gothic. As Vargo (2004) noted, that which distinguished "masculine gothic" from "feminine 'terror'" was that the latter was "tied to the marriage plot" (p. 234). In other words, the first novels written by women portrayed marriage as the cause of and/or the expulsion of terror. The earliest gothics began with terrifying villains and ended with the expulsion of that terrifying villain by the hero who marries the heroine. However, over time, and thanks in part to the complex figure of the Byronic aristocrat, the hero and the villain became one. Although we often call these stories featuring these villain-heroes simply romance, in many ways, they are even darker because of that hero-villain combination. Now (still gothic) romances begin with a hero who behaves villainously, undergoes an almost mystic transformation, and then becomes the hero for loving and marrying the heroine. Marital gothics simply explore the villain-hero dynamic from a different angle. I believe that romance has always been gothic, and conversely, gothic has always been romance. It is, therefore, more accurate to call any novel written about terror and marriage a gothic-romance.

The discourse of patriarchy as pharmakon.

Twilight is one such gothic-romance text, and as such, it perpetuates the discourse of patriarchy's promise *and* patriarchy's peril, or what I call *patriarchy as pharmakon*. Edward is not (simply) good for Bella; however this is not the same as saying he is bad for her. He is both threat and rescue from threat incarnate. Edward tells Bella, "I could reach out, meaning to touch your face, and crush your skull by mistake (*Twilight (1)*, p. 310), and yet, he uses his strength to prevent Bella from being crushed. Although the first installment in the series ends with Edward desperately trying to extract vampire venom from Bella, as Bella wastes away in *Breaking Dawn (4)*, vampirization becomes Bella's only hope for existence. Edward can break Bella, but he is also the one who can make Bella unbreakable. Edward, the promise of patriarchy incarnate, is also patriarchy as pharmakon incarnate in that he literally possesses "venom that will repair anything that goes wrong" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 303). This curative poison proves the remedy to relieve Bella of her clumsy, grotesque, comic body and its changeful mortality. Even while Edward's vampire venom "means remedy" it "cites, re-cites, and makes legible that which *in the same word* signifies, in another spot and on a different level of the stage *poison*" (Derrida, 1972/1981, p. 98).

Anytime some thing is presented as a remedy, it signals the existence of a disease. As Socrates (as cited in Derrida 1972/1981) said, "where there is no disease, there is, we are aware, no need of medicine (*ouden dei pharamakou*)" (p. 117). This disease which the remedy of patriarchy addresses, the disease of female insufficiency, has attracted a great deal of critical attention. However, it is interesting to note that, in the *Twilight* series, Meyer depicts both female and male identities as insufficient. Throughout the series, there are several scenes in which men feel just as empty and incomplete without a woman as there are in which women feel

incomplete without a man. For example, Edward describes how, although Carlisle "craved

companionship" he, "could not risk the familiarity" of a companion and was, as a result, "very

lonely" for many years (*Twilight (1)*, p. 341). Esme describes Edward before he met Bella as

"the odd man out" explaining, "it's hurt me to see him alone" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 368). Edward

admits to being incomplete without Bella: "For almost ninety years I've walked among my kind,

and yours… all the time thinking I was complete in myself, not realizing what I was seeking.

And not finding anything, because you weren't alive yet" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 134). Just as Edward,

the promise of patriarchy incarnate rescues Bella, she, in the modern tradition (Garland-Tomson,

2002/2009) knows that she "rescued him right back" (p. 524). Informed by the New Testament

ethics Asma (2009b) described, Bella saves Edward with a lover's grace. As Asma explained,

"true Christianity seeks to embrace the outcast" and "love the ugly, the repulsive" (p. 100)

Just as Bella worries that she is plain and ordinary next to Edward's magnificence,

Edward fears that, his monstrous ontology is too repulsive for Bella to accept. He confesses to

her: "I know that at some point, something I tell you or something you see is going to be too

much. And then you'll run away from me, screaming as you go" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 340).

However, Bella embraces Edward the Byronic outcast, transforming him into a more human

version of himself, proving that all Edward ever needed was "the love of the right woman"

(Botting, 2008, p. 2). Jacob is also transformed by his imprinting on Renesme. Once the very

incarnation of the instability of the monstrous masculine, Jacob settles into his human,

domesticated form. Jacob not only imprints upon his soul mate, his union with her leaves him

imprinted.

Before imprinting, Jacob also suffers because he is alone. He longs to imprint so that he

can find that "peace and certainty" which those who had someone "always radiated" (*Breaking*

Dawn (4, part 1), p. 153). Jacob imagines a life without someone else as "the very worst thing in the world" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 2)*, p. 331). Bella's father, too, is sad and lonely without someone. Bella looks at the new chemistry between her father and the recently widowed Sue Clearwater and concludes happily, "Sue would be with Charlie—the werewolves' mom with the vampire's dad—and he wouldn't be alone anymore" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)*, p. 752).

However, just as the men of *Twilight* feel incomplete without a woman, they also suffer. They masochistically endure the trauma to their subjectivity that accompanies falling in love. They suffer with their guilt, make real sacrifices for the women they love, and hold on to the promise of realizing the promise of love for themselves. Just as the romance formula begins with the hero antagonizing the heroine, Bella unwittingly antagonizes Edward, reaching him with her difficult-to-deny scent thus touching him at his most vulnerable point. He recalls in *Twilight (1)* that he viewed Bella as a "demon" (p. 269). In the masculine horror gothic version of *Twilight (1)*, *Midnight Sun*, Edward calls her a "plague" (p. 23). Bella is for Edward, just as he is for her, the dangerous/desirable other. She is his weakness. He tells her, "You are the most dangerous creature I've ever met" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 457). Bella's love for Edward is also the "trauma that gives rise to masochism" (Masse, 1992, p. 3). Love is, as Pearce (2007) asserted, traumatic. Edward explained, "when Bella entered my life" it was a "permanent change. There's no going back" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 500). After confessing his love for her, Edward calls himself "a sick, masochistic lion" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 274). "Bring on the shackles" he concedes, "I'm your prisoner" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 302). Edward is not the only one traumatized by feelings of love. Jacob experiences the immense suffering of unrequited love. He repeatedly, masochistically, pursues Bella, even when there is virtually no hope of winning her. Even after Bella is engaged, Jacob is tormented by his feelings for Bella. He even asks Edward for help in dealing with those

feelings. "When you thought you'd lost her forever," he asks, "How did you …cope?" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 499). Jacob also makes serious sacrifices for his soul mate, Renesme. He gives up his free will to choose a mate by imprinting, and he takes a "sabbatical" from high school to spend time with Renesme (see *Breaking Dawn (4)*, p. 534). Modleski (1982/2008) famously explained the trauma love causes the hero and his subsequent dependence on the heroine as a manifestation of women's desire to experience a "revenge" fantasy. I would argue that this theory assumes that love is not traumatic for men, and that they do not suffer the way women do so women must create a fantasy in which this is so. However, there is a chance that these gothic, romantic narratives might make male suffering and dependence more visible. Perhaps the revenge fantasy is merely a fantasy that women might feel, see, experience first-hand, and thereby receive comfort from the knowledge that the trauma and joy they, as women, experience when falling in love is mutually reciprocated by men.

Patriarchy's institutions, marriage and the family, address, and provide a remedy for both female and male insufficiency. Patriarchy turns single, lonely women and men into wives and mothers, husbands and fathers. However, the problem with this reasoning is that marriage and the family can exist just as easily in a matriarchal society as a patriarchal society. There is still something going on in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series for which patriarchy (alone) cannot account. I found a clue to this problem in Pearce's (2007) writing on the dual nature of the "discourse" of "romantic love" (p.1). "For most of us, romantic love is the most ecstatic *and* traumatic even that we are likely to suffer," she reasoned; therefore, "it is hardly surprising that we should seek an explanation; more, that we should desire this explanation to be *the* explanation" (Pearce, p.1). I believe that *the* explanation offered, the discourse deployed in texts

such as *Twilight*, is not only patriarchy, although patriarchy is a factor. The cure offered is romantic, that is, passionate and sexual, (heterosexual), love.

Pearce (2007) reasoned that love, even the type of love which results in a healthy relationship, is traumatic because it involves the sudden arrival of an "other." She explained, this "difference" is "experienced first as shock, surprise, or indeed trauma, is, and remains, one of the key defining features of a specifically romantic love" (p. 187). However, as Pearce noted, thanks to a "radical relaxation" of social controls, it is increasingly difficult for a romance author to create a sufficiently "dangerous/desirable 'other'" (p. 185) to inspire passionate love.[15] This, I would argue, is one reason Meyer others the arguably already "othered" Native American, Jacob. Although Wilson (2010) critiqued Meyer for creating with her love triangle a "racial allegory" in which a young girl chooses "an ultra-white, ultra privileged vampire" over "a far less privileged wolf of color" (p. 55), I would like to argue that the fact that Meyer felt she had to increase this Native American's "other" factor by having him transform into a dangerous wolf gestures to the progress romance literature has made since the days of the "sweet savage romance" (Radway, 1984/1991, p. 148). In other words, Meyer insistence on othering and abjecting Jacob as a human/wolf hybrid suggests that she felt his status as a Native American was not sufficient to qualify him as a dangerous/desirable, i.e., exotic, other.

Passionate love is also inherently disruptive of the independence/dependence binary. It is restorative in that it gives a lonely independent person someone to depend on, it is also traumatic and places an otherwise independent person in a place of dependence. Notice, for example, the number of instances in *Twilight* in which romantic, passionate love is equated with drug dependence. For example, Edward famously tells Bella, "you are exactly my brand of heroin"

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[15] For an interesting satirical commentary on the dangerous desirable, see *Saturday Night Live'*s April 24, 2008 skit "Encounter with Martine."

(*Twilight (1)*, p. 268). Then, in *New Moon (2)*, Bella admits, "I needed Jacob now, needed him like a drug" (p. 219). Jacob, in turn, compares Edward to a drug upon which Bella is dependent: "He's like a drug for you, Bella. I see that you can't live without him now. It's too late" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 599).

Romantic, passionate love also disrupts the pain/pleasure binary. As Botting (2008) explained, "Pain and suffering—the true passion of a romantic plot—hold out the promise of a 'happy ending'" (p. 16). De Rougemont (1940/1983) put it more simply: "passion is suffering" (p. 15). The masochism which is so prevalent in both romances and gothics is simply a practice of queering the pain/pleasure binary. Take, for example, Bella's masochistic thoughts as she betrays Edward by kissing Jacob: "I more than deserved whatever pain this caused me. I hoped it was bad. I hoped I would really suffer" (*Eclipse (3)*, p. 528). "This type of painful pleasure," Derrida (1972/1981) explained, "is a *pharmakon* in itself" (p. 99). As Jacob and Bella kiss, Bella is able to access Jacob's feelings and she can feel that, for Jacob, "his happiness was somehow also pain" (*Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)*, pp. 528-529).

Just as "there is room for more than one theory of romantic love" (Pearce, 2007, p. 1), I believe there is room for more than one theory about the literature created around the idea of romantic love. Although I present this theory of patriarchy as a pharmakon, I do not intend for it to be interpreted as a replacement of those theories that helped shape it. In other words, I believe it is still important to understand the arguments which Radway and others have used to connect romance to the discourse of patriarchy's promise. I believe that these theories that connect gothic to the discursive practice of masochism are equally important.

Multiple, contradictory discourses.

I found that the first installment of the series, *Twilight*, combined with *Breaking Dawn (parts 1&3)*, fulfilled all of the essential narrative elements outlined in the romance formula Radway (1984/1991) described and, as expected, could be read as a deployment of the "the promise of patriarchy" (p. 119) she described in her study.

While *Twilight (1)* and *Breaking Dawn (4, part 3)* served as romantic bookends to the series, between these two installments[16] the series takes a gothic detour. In *New Moon (2)*, Meyer removes the increasingly brooding, Byronic Edward from the narrative indefinitely and refashions the supporting character, Jacob, into a true romantic rival by casting him the image of one of the earlier types of gothic hero, the "interesting peasant" (Birkhead, 1921, p. 21). This re-introduction of Jacob in *New Moon (2)* as a viable alternative to the original hero, Edward, turns the ideal romance initiated in *Twilight (1)* into what Radway (1984/1991) called a "failed romance" (p. 157).

The series becomes increasingly gothic as it progresses. Edward's return in the latter part of *New Moon (2)* re-ignites an old, and characteristically gothic blood feud between the Cullens and the Quileutes. This feud is based on conflicting land claims and the two group's differing views about how to reconcile the Cullens' agreement not to harm any humans with Bella's wish to be bitten and transformed into a vampire. Bella also begins to develop gothic characteristics. Bella becomes increasingly worried about her mortality, particularly her age, and about the tragedies of other women repeating themselves through her. In *New Moon (2)* and *Eclipse (3)*, Bella learns the stories of several tragic female characters. Some, such as Rosalie, Emily and

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[16] Book Three of *Breaking Dawn* could have stood alone as its own serial installment. In fact, Little and Brown attempted to persuade Meyer to release the 754 page *Breaking Dawn* as two books. However, Meyer did not want to make her fans wait that long to complete the series. Instead, she cut 20,000 words (Shapiro, 2009).

Esme,[17] have been abused, and others also suffered the loss of a child or the ability to have

children. Bella also reflects on her mother's tragic mistake—marrying young to a man she

loved, only to feel trapped and confined by her new married life within a year. Fulfilling her role

as a gothic heroine, Bella becomes increasingly paranoid that she is destined to suffer the same

fate of these unfortunate women.

When, in *New Moon (2)*, Bella's wish to become a vampire becomes a requirement

through the Volturi's ultimatum, she must come to terms with the fact that doing so will mean

she that must sacrifice her ability to ever have children. When Bella becomes engaged in *Eclipse*

(3), she must come to terms with the fact that she is taking the same steps, which for her mother,

ended in divorce. When she marries and becomes pregnant in *Breaking Dawn (4, parts 1 &2)*,

she experiences the terror many of the abused women she learned about faced as her betrothed,

whom she knew as the promise of patriarchy incarnate, becomes a stranger—someone she does

not know, someone violent and even capable of murder. She willingly commits to becoming an

infertile vampire and a young bride because she believes she can avoid the fate of the unfortunate

women she knows and that, in her particular care, the institution of marriage serves her interests.

Time after time, Bella willingly, masochistically, and faithfully endures pain and

suffering to prove that the institutions of marriage and motherhood will ultimately complete her

identity and her happiness. She withstands Edward's violent temper and his threats to have the

pregnancy aborted, and Edward eventually learns to love their baby. By enduring her miserable

and violent pregnancy, she also proves that committing to Edward did not mean giving up the

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[17] Esme does not suffer at the hands of her vampire spouse, Carlisle. However, in Twilight Lexicon, Meyer explains that Esme's first (human) husband abused her. The Twilight Lexicon website began as a collaboration between a fan, Lori Joffs, and Meyer to field fan questions. The web site provides character biographies based on both published content and personal communications with Stephenie Meyer. In fact, the manager of the web site "will not comment on anything that is not pre-approved by Meyer or her publisher" (Baptiste, 2011, p. 15).

ability to have a child. Bearing the painful transformation into a vampire, Bella proves that remaking one's identity in the image of her husband doesn't have to stifle a woman, it can, in fact, liberate her.

The last part of the series, *Breaking Dawn (parts 1 & 2)*, follow the pattern of a marital gothic which is simple. It begins with a happy ending. The heroine marries the hero who represents the promise of patriarchy. He, however, turns out to be a stranger, someone who could be a murderer, and the institution of marriage makes a terrifying transformation from an institution guaranteed to change a woman's life for the better, to an institution which threatens to take her life. However, ultimately, the heroine investigates and exonerates her husband, thereby symbolically banishing the terror of marriage and reaffirming the beneficence of that institution.

Meyer takes the premise and the purpose of the marital gothic one step further, creating what I call the *maternal gothic*. In *Breaking Dawn (4)*, it is not only the institution of marriage and the figure of the husband which threatens the heroine's life, it is the institution of motherhood and the figure of the child. Although the ability to have children is the standard by which women in the series evaluate the quality and the completeness of their lives, Meyer also depicts motherhood as dangerous, even deadly. Marriage and motherhood turn Meyer's delicate heroine into a creature more grotesque than her vampires and spirit wolves—the monster of the gestating female. However, by the end of the series, Bella trades in her clumsy, grotesque, and comic body for one which is stable, complete, and thus, classically beautiful. Meyer reaffirms the promise of marriage and motherhood by demonstrating that her heroine's new existence as an immortal with a special child is far superior than what she could have ever had as a human.

Meyer also incorporates elements of the chick lit in this series. According to Radway (1984/1991), "one of the most crucial is the [romance] genre's careful attention to the style,

color, and detail of women's fashions" (p. 193). In the book and in the outtakes of the *Twilight (1)* film, Meyer described Bella and Alice's prom dresses with such detail that a fan actually found the dresses from the 2003 Paris Fashion Week which inspired Meyer's description (Meyer, 2013). Through the figure of Alice, Meyer allows dowdy Bella to occasionally participate in fashion, i.e., "normative femininity" through "consumerism" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, 2006, p. 487), without losing her requisite modesty. However, Meyer also shapes Bella to resemble the more sexually bold heroines of modern chick-lit romance. By actively pursuing Edward and insisting upon re-making her identity through the supernatural means he makes available, Bella reflects what Gill and Herdieckerhoff call the "discourses of boldness, entitlement, and choice" (p. 487) typical of chick lit novels. I will further argue that Bella's initial resistance to the institutions of marriage and motherhood are, per convention of chick lit, drawn by Meyer as mere performances of feminism which prove contrary to the heroine's true wishes and best interests.

Stephenie Meyer: Resisting and Redeploying Discourse

"*The book often leads one to believe it's all fun and games, when something essential is taking place, something of extreme seriousness: the tracking down of all varieties of fascism, from the enormous ones that surround and crush us to the petty ones that constitute the tyrannical bitterness of our everyday lives.*" (Foucault, 1976/2000, pp.109-110)

Shaping subjectivity.

On its surface, the fact that Stephenie Meyer, a Mormon and stay-at-home mother of three young children wrote a 2,458 page gothic-romance series about vampires and werewolves seems remarkable. At the time she began writing, Stephenie's boys were 1, 2, and 5 years old (interview with Winfrey, 2009b), and, according to her, they were a handful. Stephenie is also a

practicing member of the Church of Latter-Day Saints. For many in her church, the central

subject matter of her series, the heretical figure of the vampire, was disconcerting. Meyer

describes the chilly reception her books received among her Mormon family and friends

"'vampires,' they say, with a critical lilt in their voices. Then they add self-righteously, 'I don't

read those types of books'" (as cited in Shapiro, 2009, p. 15). Meyer wrote in secret for months.

She was especially loath to tell her husband that she was diverting attention from her household

duties to write, particularly to write a "vampire romance" because, as she explained in an

interview with Irwin (2007), he would "be even more perturbed" (p. 2). Meyer faced resistance

on every side. Like the first eighteenth-century female gothic authors Felski (2003) described,

Meyer had to overcome "economic dependency, lack of time and space, and the relentless

infusion of everyday life in the form of squalling infants or testy husbands" (p. 58). However, I

would argue that, without the discursive institutions of marriage, and motherhood, (and

specifically Mormon doctrine centered in patriarchy), Meyer could not have written the *Twilight*

series. In fact, I will argue that Meyer used her most developed talent, reading, to resist those

institutions.

Early life, early texts.

I first examined how I thought Stephenie's subjectivity was constituted in experience.

Stephenie grew up in a household with a strong culture of reading. Her father, after whom

Stephenie is named, engaged in a nightly ritual of reading to his children. However, instead of

reading children's literature, Stephen simply shared with his children a chapter or two of the epic

tales he enjoyed. Stephenie recalled, "He always stopped reading when the suspense would get

real high. But I was so anxious to see what happened next that I would sneak down, get the

book, and read ahead" (as cited in Shapiro, 2009, p. 24). These early reading practices left an

indelible impression on young Stephenie. She explained, "There's something about seeing your dad, who you know is a very, very busy person, and you know how much his time counts, and when you see him unable to rip himself away from a book, it impacts you" (as cited in Krohn, 2011, p. 15).

Stephenie was shaped not only by the practice of reading her father modeled, but by classic examples of romance and gothic. She explained, "I love Jane Austen, I love Charlotte Brontë…. Those are kind of the foundation blocks of my first reading experiences" (interview with Winfrey, 2009a). Her first reading of *Jane Eyre* was at the remarkably young age of 9 (Newkey-Burden, 2010), and it proved to be a favorite. Meyer felt a strong sense of identification with this gothic-romance heroine. She recalled, "Jane was someone I was close to as a child," adding, "We were good friends! I think in some ways she was more real to me than any other fictional heroine" (as cited in Newkey-Burden, 2010, p. 11). Meyer repeatedly schooled herself in this well known gothic-romance as she returned to the story of her good friend, Jane, "literally hundreds of times" (as cited in Newkey-Burden, 2010, p. 11). Meyer was especially fond of epic, lengthy tales. She told the Sunday New York Times "I went from *Gone with the Wind* to *Little Women* to *Pride and Prejudice* because they were the biggest books my parents had, and they were stories that were not going to end so fast" (as cited in Shapiro, 2009, p. 24). Early on, Meyer's subjectivity as a reader was shaped by her father's reading practices and her subsequent self-schooling in the classics, particularly the classics which might be classified as gothic, romance, or gothic-romance. As a practicing Mormon, Meyer also credits *The Book of Mormon* as one of the most influential texts she's read.

Stephenie's religion emphasizes the importance of schooling (Arnaudin, 2008). Stephenie was an excellent student, and she earned a National Merit scholarship. Like many

Mormons, Brigham Young was her college of choice, and when it came time to choose a major, English was an easy decision. She told Irwin (2007): "I don't know if I ever considered anything else. That's what I love. I love reading, and this was a major I could read in" (p. 6). During her junior year, Stephenie began making plans to continue her education by attending law school.

Inevitability.

However, this was also the year Stephenie met and fell in love with Christiaan Meyer. Theirs was a whirlwind courtship. Stephenie told Irwin (2007),

> On our second official date was when he proposed. He proposed a lot. Over 40 times. He would propose every night and I would tell him no every night. It was kind of our end-of-date thing. Mormons get married a lot faster. The no-sex thing does speed up relationships. (para. 29)

After only nine months of dating, Stephenie and Christiaan married (Krohn, 2011). Meyer worked as a secretary for a few years, but quit at 25 when she had the first of her three sons.

In order to understand the inevitability and necessity of Meyer's choice to marry and start a family at this pivotal stage in her life, one must consider not only the Mormon prohibition against premarital sex but also the role patriarchy plays in church doctrine and the sense of inevitability that doctrine instills in young Mormon women. In the 1960's, feminist Betty Friedan (1963/1997) argued that the young women of her generation chose marriage and motherhood because, in part, they were "unable to see themselves after twenty-one" (p. 126). Stephenie reported a similar lack of vision at this stage in her life. She told the *Phoenix Sun Times* that, at the time she met Christiaan, she "wasn't thinking much beyond being a student" (as cited in Irwin, 2007, p. 6).

Meyer's views about the inevitability and benefits of patriarchal institutions was also informed by her religion. The Mormon faith is centered on traditional model of patriarchal family which is the fundamental unit of the church (Arnaudin, 2008). According to Granger, Mormons place the husband as the god-head of the family, and Mormon doctrine states that the husband possesses the ability to call his wife in to the Celestial Kingdom when the time comes for all believers to be resurrected. In other words, in the Mormon faith, marriage is salvific; it is an almost necessary part of a woman's salvation. In fact, single life is not well looked upon in the Church of Latter-Day Saints.

The discourse of husband as salvation can be seen throughout the *Twilight* texts. Bella experiences with Edward the sort of sublime love that borders on religious devotion. There are a number of instances, for example, in which Bella describes Edward as an angel or a god. She hears Edward's voice and thinks, "I couldn't imagine how an angel could be any more glorious" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 241). Edward inspires in Bella sublime awe as she looks upon him as a "destroying angel" (*Twilight (1)*, p. 65). So pronounced is this angelic imagery that the director of the film *Twilight (1)*, foreshadowed Edward's salvific function for Bella by placing a taxidermy-preserved specimen of a white owl directly behind Edward so that it appears that white wings spring from him. So overplayed are Bella's deifying descriptions that satirists such as those who wrote *Nightlight* (2009) could not resist exposing Edward as a not so subtle symbol for the epitome of patriarchal authority. When Belle Goose (Bella Swan) first beholds Edwart (Edward), she thinks to herself: "He looked older than the other boys in the room—maybe not as old as God or my father, but certainly a viable replacement" (*Nightlight,* p. 13).

While other denominations of Christianity praise celibacy as an expression of devotion, Mormons, according to Granger (2010), "consider sex within marriage as a spiritual exercise" (p.

180) for it is a means for procreation and adding "spirit children" (p. 161) to the kingdom of heaven. The Mormon faith celebrates large, closely knit families, because children, if brought up in the faith properly, will be added to the Celestial Kingdom.

  Dissatisfaction.

  Although, as a married mother of three, Stephenie could rest in the knowledge that her heavenly salvation was secured, she was quite candid about the undesirable ways in which marriage and motherhood shaped her earthly subjectivity. She told a *Phoenix Sun* reporter that 2003, the year she began writing, had been a particularly rough year. She was approaching her thirtieth birthday, and this encroaching milestone had inspired her to evaluate her life's accomplishments. Stephenie did not like what she saw. She said that she "was so not ready to face being 30," explaining, "I didn't feel I had much going for me. I had my kids, but there wasn't much I was doing" (as cited in Irwin, 2007, p. 2). It also was during Stephenie's 29th year that her husband, upon whom she was economically dependent, was diagnosed with Crohn's disease (interview with Irwin, 2007). Stephenie was also feeling haggard from three closely spaced pregnancies. During her first pregnancy, she experienced complications and was mistakenly told she was close to miscarrying (Shapiro, 2009). Then, while carrying her third child, she fell and broke her arm badly. She explained —"I was realllly pregnant" (interview with Irwin, p. 2). She was worried about the way pregnancy had changed her body, and she complained, "I'd put on so much weight with the last two babies" (interview with Irwin, p. 2). Years of being her three boys' primary caregiver had also left her worn. She once jokingly described them as "monkeys on crack" (as cited in Shapiro, 2009, p. 39). Six years after Meyer began writing the *Twilight* series, she said in an interview with Winfrey:

My kids are all great now, but I had horrible babies—chronic ear infections, colic, and so

none of them slept through the night until after they were two. I was really burned out.

I'd really gotten into that zombie mom way of doing things where I just wasn't Stephenie

anymore. (Winfrey, 2009a)

As Judith Butler (1997) argued, "The unconscious constantly reveals the failure of identity" (p.

97). I believe that Meyer's sublimated frustration with how patriarchy shaped her subjectivity

was the impetus for her now famous dream upon which the *Twilight* series is based.

On the night of June 1, 2003, Meyer reports that she slept alone. Her husband had a head

cold, so she moved to the guest bedroom to avoid catching it (Krohn, 2011). That night was the

first night Stephenie would dream of Edward Cullen. She recounted:

I know the exact date of my dream — it was June 2, 2003 — because it was the   first

day of swim lessons and the first day of my much-delayed post-baby diet, and I had a

hundred more things to do besides. I woke up that morning with a dream fresh in my

head. The dream was vivid, strong, colorful… It was a conversation between a boy and a

girl which took place in a beautiful, sunny meadow in the middle of a dark forest. The

boy and the girl were in love with each other, and they were discussing the problems

involved with that love, seeing that she was human and he was a vampire. The boy was

more beautiful than the meadow, and his skin sparkled like diamonds in the sun. He was

so gentle and   polite, and yet the potential for violence was very strong, inherent to the

scene. I delayed getting out of bed for a while, just thinking through the dream and

imagining what might happen next. Finally, I had to get up, but the dream stayed in my

head all through my morning obligations. As soon as I had a free moment, I sat down at

the computer and started writing it out so I wouldn't forget it. I wrote ten pages that

day—what eventually would be Chapter 13—and that night I started into my imaginings

of where the story would have gone if I hadn't woken up. I wrote every single day for

the rest of that summer, and finished the book near the end of August. (interview with

Morris, 2005, para. 5)

The pull of this story must have been strong. Meyer described her writing routine as one

in which she was "constantly interrupted" (interview with Morris, 2005, para. 14). However, she

learned to balance her many obligations. She told a reporter for *School Library Journal*,

> I did a lot of writing at night, because after they were in bed was the best time to
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> concentrate. But during the day, I really couldn't stay away from the computer; so I was
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> up and down a lot. I'd sit down and write a few lines, and then I'd get up and give
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> somebody juice, then sit down and write a few more lines, and then go change a diaper.
>
> (interview with Margolis, 2005, para. 8)

Meyer struggled to balance her family obligations with her need for a creative outlet. She

explained, "I lost sleep to write. I mean you had to give up something, and I wasn't giving up

my time with my kids and I couldn't give up the things I had to do so it was sleep" (as cited in

Beahm, 2009, p. 44). Stephenie also wrote at night, in part, because her writing project was

initially a secret. Although she did her best to avoid telling her husband what she was up to,

Christiaan could not help but notice that something had changed in his wife. Writing at night,

editing during the day, and taking care of her family made for a very "sleep deprived" (interview

with Irwin, 2007, p. 2) Stephenie. She said in a 2009 interview,

> My husband thought I'd gone crazy. I barely spoke to him because I had all these things
>
> going on in my head and I wasn't telling him about this weird vampire obsession because
>
> I knew he'd freak out and think I'd lost my mind. (interview with Winfrey, 2009b)

Christiaan also noticed that Meyer had put a few of her typical duties "on the back burner" (Meyer, n.d.). Eventually, he lost his patience. Meyer recalled, "There were times when he would get really mad. He would say 'You never sleep! You don't talk to me! I never get to use the computer!" (as cited in Shapiro, 2009, p. 48). Once the secret was out, Stephenie and Christiaan argued about the time she spent writing, and she still kept the fact that she was writing a "vampire romance" a secret "because he was just going to be even more perturbed" (interview with Irwin, 2007, p. 2).

Meyer was able to write under these extraordinarily challenging circumstances for several reasons. She was desperate for a way to safely and symbolically express her frustrations and anxieties about how marriage and motherhood had shaped her subjectivity. She also needed an activity which would challenger her intellectually and use her now festering education. Also, just as Radway's participants used reading romances to declare themselves off limits, Meyer used writing to escape her present circumstances. Lastly, I will argue that as Meyer's circumstances changed, so, too did her reasons for writing. When Meyer learned that her series would be published as young adult fiction, I believe she felt obligated to warn young girls in her growing literary matriarchy to resist the oddly celebratory conceptions of female reproductivity she was exposed to a young girl.

As I read about Meyer's life and the circumstances surrounding her entrée into writing, I could not help but think about Betty Freidan's (1963/1997) *Feminine Mystique*. In this exposé Friedan described the feminine mystique as a simulacra-like commercial image of ideal female selfhood created and maintained by magazines, their advertisers, and other media to elevate and elaborate the occupation of housewife for the purpose of selling those housewives goods and services. Contrary to the image of the happy housewife insistently produced by media outlets,

Friedan reported that many housewives felt "deeply frustrated at times by the lack of privacy, the physical burden, the routine of family life, the confinement of it" (p. 69).

Although Friedan's work was written about and for women of the 60's, it is still relevant today because, as Susan Fauldi (1991/2006) reported, there has been a "deceptively 'progressive' and proudly backward" (p. 10) backlash against the feminist movement. It seems there is still room for the feminine mystique in Mormon culture. For example, the so-called "Modern" Molly Mormon blog, is a popular Mormon website dedicated to providing a place where women can share what they've learned about the art of homemaking. Raised in a culture which offers women a modern model for how to be a stay-at-home mother, Meyer was particularly subject to this backlash and the 21st century reassertion of the feminine mystique.

Something more.

"I did love my kids, but I needed something extra, my way to be me" (as cited in Shapiro, p. 42).

However, like the women Friedan (1963/1997) described, Meyer's belief that marriage and motherhood served her interests ran contrary to her personal experiences in those institutions. Just as Freidan argued that the feminine mystique caused women to suffer from "a problem of identity" (p. 133) which manifested in "a vague undefined wish for 'something more' than washing dishes, ironing, punishing and praising the children" (p. 114), Meyer expressed a desire for personal expression beyond scrap booking with the women at her church and teaching Sunday school. It appears that, before writing, reading was Meyer's favorite and, presumably, most rewarding activity outside of her familial obligations. She seemed determined to maintained her practice of literary reading after marrying and starting her family. She told Kirschling (2009):

I just read all the time. In fact, my husband used to tease me. I went through six years of

always having a little baby in my arms, and so my other hand was pretty much shaped in

the form of a book to hold it open. I probably read five or six novels a week. (p. 2)

Meyer's voracious reading suggested that there was still something missing. For both Meyer and

Friedan, that 'something more' was writing. However, for both Meyer and Friedan, that writing

was secret. These women understood that their writing signaled a lack of fulfillment in their

lives they were ashamed to admit. Friedan explained that she was "not quite able to suppress the

writing itch" and compared writing to something scandalous such as "secret drinking in the

morning" (p. 18). Like Freidan, Meyer wrote in secret because she struggled with guilt for

diverting her attention away from her familial obligations for a personal endeavor. Friedan was

familiar with this feeling of guilt, and argued that it was the feminine mystique which "made us

feel guilty about anything we did not do as our husbands' wives, our children's mothers, but as

people ourselves" (p. 45). Although reading served as a means of escape for Meyer for many

years, she explained that "when I switched to writing, it was a much fuller outlet for me"

(interview with Irwin, 2007, p. 2).

Festering education.

Friedan was particularly concerned for educated women. She claimed that aspiring to be

a housewife caused a "stunting or evasion of [women's] growth" (p. 133). Citing a *New York*

Times article which read "Many young women—certainly not all—whose education plunged

them into a world of ideas, feel stifled in their homes. They feel their routine lives out of joint

with their [formal educational] training" (as cited in Freidan, 1963/1997, p. 66), Friedan argued

that "the fact that education festers in these women may be a clue" (p. 74). Although Stephenie

faithfully adhered to the religious significance of her role as housewife, her education, which,

interestingly her religion also required, festered in her. Meyer had tried painting and scrap

booking, but these hobbies were not fulfilling for her (as cited in Newkey-Burden, 2010, p. 63).

Writing, on the other hand, was a way to put her extensive knowledge of literary fiction to work.

She realized "This is what I should have been doing for the last thirty years. What was I

thinking?" (as cited in Newkey-Burden, 2010, p. 63).

Writing like a reader: escape.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1991), any optimal experience like reading or writing,

can provide "a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new

reality" (p. 74). According to Radway, women who talk about reading as an escape can mean it

in the sense of "denying the present" (p. 90). The biographical data documenting the sacrifices

Meyer was happy to make during her writing suggest that she might have been experiencing

what Csikszentmihalyi called a "flow" experience. When one engages in an optimal experience,

one's "sense of duration is altered" and, at the same time the "concern for the self disappears" (p.

49). How else could a busy mother spend all day caring for others when and then writing at

night until she was "close to passing out from exhaustion" (Beahm, 2009, p. 44)? Meyer was

able to do this because the experience of writing was inherently rewarding. For Meyer, fleshing

out her vampire dream was what Csikszentmihalyi called an *autotelic activity*, "a self-contained

activity, one that is done not with the expectation of some future benefit, but simply because the

doing itself is the reward" (p. 67). Meyer had always enjoyed reading, but writing was an even

more optimal activity. "I had really always thought that reading was the best thing," she said,

"and then I discovered that day that writing was just a little bit better" (as cited in Krohn, 2011,

p. 29). As an amateur, a housewife, a "deauthorized subject" (Butler, 1992, pp. 13), the fact of

Meyer's writing, if not also the volume of her writing and its content, stands as both an act of

resistance against the subtle injunction to silence accompanying her subject position as a housewife and an indictment of the monstrosity of dullness which transformed her into a "zombie mom".

Writing like a reader: supplement.

According to Radway, women also used the word escape to figuratively describe the "sense of relief … by identifying with a heroine whose life does not resemble their own in certain crucial aspects" (p. 90). For Stephenie, writing was "like reading the best book ever, but you were in charge" (Krohn, 2011, p. 35). Since Meyer was in charge, she took the opportunity to experience those novel things she could not experience in real life. Stephenie wrote out her dream initially just for herself; she did not write with the idea of publishing her work. She told Susan Eglin of *Newsweek*, "I just wanted to write for myself, a fantasy" (Eglin, 2008, para. 2). Bella resembled her author/mother in many ways, but in very crucial ways, Meyer would fashion Bella's life to be different than her own.

Like Bella, Meyer says of herself, "I was always a little grown-up for my age" (interview with Elgin, 2008, para. 4). Like Bella, Meyer described herself as a "very shy" teen who was "quiet in class and made no waves" (as cited in Newkey-Burden, 2010, p. 23). Meyer also considered herself "kind of clumsy" (as cited in Shapiro, 2009, p. 27), and her financial means were modest in comparison with her wealthy classmates in high school. While "there were always Porsches in the student parking lot" (Shapiro, 2009, p. 27), Meyer was in her twenties before she owned a car (Babtiste, 2011). Meyer even fell for a boy like her fictional Edward; however, for her "it wasn't one of those happy things" (as cited in Shapiro, 2009, p. 27).

Stephenie created Bella in her own image and, in the *Twilight* series Bella makes many of the choices Stephenie herself made, but with fantastically different results. Instead of an

ordinary husband, susceptible to the common cold and suffering with a chronic disease, Meyer

bestows upon Bella an immortal man with supernatural strength and speed. Instead of a husband

who argues with his wife about milk (Irwin, 2007), Meyer bestows upon Bella a husband who is

best known for being "gentle and polite" (as cited in Morris, 2005, para 5). Meyer even grants

her heroine the daughter she never had. Meyer explained, "When I was younger I wanted to be

just like Jo March [of *Little Women*] and have [all] boys….and when I was older I wanted all

girls….I got my first wish" (as cited in Krohn, 2011, p. 25). Instead of having three sons, all of

whom had colic, Meyer bestowed upon Bella a daughter who sleeps through the night. Instead

of suffering through six years of having a baby in her arms (Kirshling, 2008), Bella's child

quickly matures through the most dependent stages of development.

Personal transformation.

As with any optimal experience, writing transformed Meyer. As Csikszentmihalyi

explained, after one completes an activity in which they had an optimal, flow, experience, "the

self that the person reflects upon is not the same self that existed before the flow experience: it is

now enriched by new skills and fresh achievements" (p. 66). Meyer, was enriched by her

achievement in more ways than one. Almost immediately, she was no longer economically

dependent upon her husband, Christiaan. The woman who once described herself as an

"insignificant little hausfrau" (as cited in Newkey-Burden, 2010, p. 76), received a $750,000

advance for the first three installments of the series. While she previously hoped for"10,000 to

pay off my minivan" (as cited in Krohn, 2011, p. 47), Meyer's sudden windfall went to

purchasing an Infinity G35 coupe. Also, Meyer is no longer a stay-at-home mother. In 2008,

her newfound fame and her hectic schedule of appearances to promote her books made it

possible and necessary for her husband, Christiaan, a professional accountant, to work from home taking care of the kids and managing the family's newfound wealth (Khron, 2011).

Having finished and published her first books, Meyer, like Bella Swan, transformed into a new, stronger and capable version of her former self. As Mann (2009) asserted, in Meyer's work, "there is slippage between the promise to the reader and the activity of the writer" (p. 143). As Mann argued, through writing, Meyer "resurrects" her identity by "furiously writing herself back into existence" (p. 143). However, I would argue that Meyer does not resurrect her old self. She can't go back to life before marriage or motherhood, nor would she necessarily want to. Instead, Meyer moves forward, refashions her life into a new image. As Csikszentmihalyi (1991) explained, although one tends to forget one's self and one's needs during an optimal experience, "paradoxically the sense of self emerges stronger after the flow experience is over" (p.49).

As Meyer wrote, her circumstances changed, and, so, too did her reason for writing. I would argue that Meyer was emboldened by the process of writing, and as she fleshed out the series, she felt more at liberty to explore darker side of patriarchy's dual pharmakal nature. This stage of Stephenie's writing (and reading of that writing) resembled what Foucault (1997a) called "practices of freedom" (p. 283) in that Stephenie used gothic figures and storylines to "problematize" (Foucault, 1984/1985, p. 10) how women's subjectivities are shaped, particularly by marriage and motherhood. Through writing, Myer delivered herself. She felt obligated to share with other women, particularly the teen girls which made up a substantial portion of her readership, some of what she had learned from her specifically feminine trials. As Beaty (1996) said of Jane Eyre, "beneficiaries of providential deliverance are obligated to record their

experiences to secure their memory and to instruct and inspire others" (p. 75). For Meyer and her growing literary matriarchy, this meant telling the gruesome facts of life.

Writing as mothering.

As Jackson (1994) reported, since women first began writing "didactic" novels, there has been an image of women authors as "mothers of their books, their characters, and, through them, their readers" (p. 164). It appears that Meyer shared this view of reading as mothering. As Krohn (2011) reported, "Meyer decided to give her heroine the name she had saved for her own daughter" (p. 32). In fact, Meyer described her young female readers as her "teenage adopted daughters" (as cited in Beahm, 2009, p. 42).

With these surrogate daughters in mind, Meyer explores some of the high school experiences a young girl might have: graduation, the pains of a bad breakup, the awkwardness of unrequited love. Interested in creating a story that was "realistic" for them, Meyer challenged the common romantic pattern that "a declaration of monogamy signals narrative closure" (Gill &, Herdieckerhoff, 2006, p. 492). As she argued in an interview with Sanders (2008), "the reality is that things don't fade to black when you get married" (p. 2). She reportedly modeled *Breaking Dawn (4)* after the *Anne of Green Gables* series, which she called "one of my favorites because it didn't end at the wedding. It wasn't a kiss and then everything was happily ever after" (interview with Sanders, p. 2). Meyer was particularly adamant about expressing what it is like to become a mother in realistic ways. She had suffered through a near miscarriage, a broken arm, and weight gain because of her pregnancy, only to come out on the other side a monstrous "zombie mom" (interview with Winfrey, 2009b). It is as if, surrounded by what Glazener (2001) called "eerie and celebratory conceptions of reproduction" (p. 160), Meyer, who had been through pregnancy, wanted to make a subversive, almost carnivalistic statement—that pregnancy

was not glamorous, after all. According to Shapiro (2009), the first draft of *Breaking Dawn (4)* was even more bloody and graphic than the final version. So, even though what is now published in *Breaking Dawn (4)* relates Bella's miserable pregnancy in stomach-churning detail, if it were up to Meyer alone, it would have been worse. As Russo (1995) remarked, sometimes a woman's power is found in "the willingness to make 'spectacle' of oneself" (p. 213). Through a spectacular monstrous and grotesque representation of Bella's pregnancy, Meyer offers testimony of her own terrifying and miserable pregnancies.

At the same time, Meyer, did not want to tell her "adopted daughters" (as cited in Beahm, 2009, p. 42) the cruel facts of life through the voice of her analog, Bella. Instead, Meyer changes point of view for the only time in the entire 2,458 page series, to talk about Bella's pregnancy from Jacob's perspective. This inconsistency is a signal that Meyer is making a deliberate maneuver. If you will recall, according to Modleski (1982/2008), romance and gothic authors often shift from a first person to a third person omniscient point of view to describe their heroine's beauty thereby preserving her modesty and innocence. Meyer does not worry about preserving Bella's innocence in the way of sexual attraction. As previously discussed, she allows her heroine to talk frankly about the psychology of attraction and the art of seduction. However, Meyer does use a shift in point of view to preserve her heroine's virtue in another sense to preserve Bella's virtue as a maternal martyr. Jacob provides the perfect sounding board from which to broadcast everything grotesque and comic about Bella's pregnancy. The same descriptions of Bella's pregnancy, if told from Bella's perspective, would sound resentful.

Conquering fear and restoring order.

"I guess things are going to be kind of boring now, aren't they?"

(Jacob Black, *Breaking Dawn*, p. 749)

With time, Meyer, like her gothic heroine, was able to exonerate her husband, who took care of the children to allow her to travel. Meyer was also able to exonerate her children who grew up and began sleeping through the night.

According to Masse (1992), "Returning to benign reality, earning a husband, and erasing horror are the wages promised …at novel's end" (p. 19). Although Meyer takes the reader through a scary courtship, and an unblinkingly graphic depiction of pregnancy, ultimately she neutralizes readers' fears with reassurances that coupledom, marriage, and motherhood are natural and worthwhile. Meyer made it clear that in spite of the fact that motherhood changed her subjectivity in a way she did not like, she still defended her lifestyle. She said in an interview that "losing yourself" is a "necessary part" of motherhood, explaining "when your kids are little, their lives depend on you all the time. And you really have to just devote yourself to them. It's just part of the job" (interview with Winfrey, 2009b). Meyer wants to make it clear that no matter how much marriage and motherhood drained her, she would not give up her family life, as Freidan (1963/1997) put it, "if she had the choice to make again" (p. 69). If it is true that "the heroine at the center of a novel is informed by a novelist's vision of character and destiny" (Brownstein, 1994, p. xvi), Bella's choices in *Eclipse (3)* and *Breaking Dawn (4)* serve as evidence that Meyer believed that, after being a student, marriage and motherhood were the natural and inevitable next stages of a woman's life. Believing this, in her novels, Stephenie ended her series by continuing the romantic tradition of prescribing "patriarchal marriage as the ultimate route to the realization of a mature female subjectivity" (Radway, 1984/1991, p.16)

Writing like a reader: producing singularity.

She explained in an interview with Irwin (2007), "there was a whole lot of pleasure in that first writing experience. It felt like a dam bursting, there was so much that I couldn't get out,

and then I could" (p. 2). When the dam of Stephenie's formal and informal education in literary

fiction burst, it was truly as if she were writing to make up for a decade of lost time. This is

evident in the length of the *Twilight* series and the breadth of literary influences Stephenie

incorporated into it. After years of reading, she had schooled herself in several literary forms. In

interview after interview, Meyer details several authors and works she admired: Jane Austen,

Charlotte Brontë, Shakespeare, and DuMaurier's marital gothic, *Rebecca*. Stephenie explained,

"Reading was really my only training in fiction writing. I never took a class or read a book on

how to write. I just absorbed the basics from reading thousands of other people's stories" (as

cited in Beahm, 2009, p. 41).

Interestingly, the use of literary influence, especially in the form of literary allusion, was

a phenomenon reported during England's gothic movement. For example, as Beaty (1996)

explained:

> especially in a novel by an unknown writer who has no canon to serve as context for
>
> reading the new work, the early chapters must establish kinship claims by directly or
>
> indirectly, loudly or quietly, precisely or vaguely, echoing earlier novels and novel
>
> genres. (p. 81)

As the first female wave of authorship began, the male literary elite commented on these novice

female authors' heavy reliance on past literary works to frame their own writing. Loudly, Meyer

ties her series to the comedies and tragedies of Shakespeare, the romantic works of Austen, and

Bronte' gothic romance, *Wuthering Heights*. While she relies on *Pride and Prejudice*, *Romeo*

and Juliet, *Wuthering Heights*, and a combination of The *Merchant of Venice* and *Midsummer*

Night's Dream respectively for the foundation of each installment of her series, Meyer gestures

to stories in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, and more quietly to one of her favorite novels, the marital gothic, *Rebecca*.

An avid reader desperate for a creative outlet, Meyer incorporated nearly every literary genre she could into a cohesive story. As we have seen, *Twilight* participates in several genres: romance, gothic romance, feminine-terror gothic, masculine horror gothic, marital gothic, grotesque horror, monster lore, and modern chick lit romance. As one schooled and well acquainted with samples of each of these genres, I would argue that Meyer read the patterns of genres as a text itself, a text which "always contains a promise to compromise itself" (Derrida, 1992, p. 69). Although Meyer "confirm[s], respect[s], and repeat [s] the signature" of the conventions of each genre, she also blends, twists, and leads those genres to new territories "so running the risk of betraying" (Derrida, p. 69) them. This is how she writes something which is "singular, irreplaceable" (Derrida, p. 70). For example, Meyer betrays her nearly perfectly executed romance, *Twilight (1)*, by introducing Jacob as a legitimate romantic rival in *New Moon (2)*. Meyer forfeits her romantic heroine's requisite naiveté by granting her the sexual boldness of a chick lit heroine and the self-conscious insecurity of a teen protagonist in a young adult coming of age story.

Although Meyer used her familiarity with different variations of romance and gothics to shape her work, she used her lack of familiarity with vampire literature to make her series unique. She told a *Phoenix Sun* reporter, "I know the [traditional vampire] stories because everyone does, so I knew I was breaking the rules, but I didn't really think about it much until I started worrying" (interview with Irwin, 2007, p. 3). However, she refused to go out of her way to educate herself in the rules of vampire and werewolf lore or to learn and repeat the well-known conventions of monster narratives. Instead, she reterritorialized vampire and werewolf

fiction. According to Foucault (1971/1982), an author can sometimes interject "unique discourses" into a discursive web "of which they are not the masters" (p. 126). In other words, through resistance, an individual can become "founders of discursivity," someone who changes "the possibilities or the rules for the formation of other texts" (p. 115). I would like to argue that Meyer as a novice in the publishing world, and, as such, she could be irresponsible to the rules. She blended the old with the new, treating the already queer genre of vampire literature as the "institutionless institution" (Derrida, 1992 p. 42). By "fusing different generic ways" (Beaty, 1996, p. 81), Meyer created a series which Beaty might have described as "heterogeneric" (p. 81). Meyer deterritorialized several genres, and came up with a new genre of modern supernatural gothic romance.

Effects on the publishing world.

Meyer's annotation and reappropriation of classic texts has had some interesting effects, not only on individual readers but also on the publishing industry that is trying to capitalize on the popularity of Meyer's series. First, the popularity of Meyer's series boosted the popularity of the Sookie Stackhouse series, and as one might expect, there are innumerable imitations of the *Twilight* series now available for readers. However, *Twilight* has also impacted the popularity of the classics to which Meyer alludes. For example, following the release of *Breaking Dawn (4)*, in 2009, HarperTeen, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers released re-printings of the literary fiction to which Meyer alluded most obviously in her series: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Wuthering Heights*. These reprints feature *Twilight*-esque cover art color scheme with bright red and white contrasted against a stark black background. According to Wallop, (2010), sales of *Wuthering Heights* quadrupled in 2009 because of the "*Twilight* effect." Quirk Classics, trying to recapture Meyer's magical combination of Jane Austen and the monstrous,

released campy gothic remakes with titles such as Ben Winters' (2009) *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, and the publisher's best selling book to date, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (Grahame-Smith, 2009). Capitalizing on the connection Meyer made between Edward Rochester and Edward Cullen the vampire, Gallery Books, a division of Simon and Schuster released *Jane Slayre* (Browning Erwin, 2010). This adaptation might appeal to "Team Jacob" fans, for in it, Jane is a vampire slayer who helps Rochester deal with his traumatic transformation into a werewolf. Lastly, *Mister Darcy, Vampyre* (Grange, 2009), is a marital gothic which follows up with Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy on their honeymoon, a honeymoon in which Mrs. Darcy learns that her mysterious husband is, in fact, a vampire.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY

In this study, my objectives were twofold. First, I hoped to identify the discourses at work in the *Twilight* series. Next, I hoped to describe how these discourses were perpetuated and transformed by Stephenie Meyer. Using the work of Janice Radway, Tania Modleski, Michelle Masse, Stephen Asma, and others coupled with participant data and published satire data, I believe I have successfully answered, and complicated, both of these questions.

Before I could even begin the work of identifying the discourses deployed in the *Twilight* series, I studied the history of literary criticism of books similar to *Twilight*. Through this process I learned that, although there are a number of common literary terms, there is no uniform language of genre or discourse which literary critics use. I assumed that, over time, a consensus had been reached about what characteristics and discourses are associated with romance, gothic, horror, etc. I quickly learned that no such consensus exists, and yet I found it very difficult to think without those categories. I created a schema to impose order on the overlapping and slippery terms of genres.

As I analyzed *Twilight* with that schema, I found that the series possessed the characteristics of several genres and subgenres including feminine terror gothic, masculine horror gothic, romance, modern chick lit romance, gothic-romance, horror, grotesque literature, and monster lore. I was encouraged by Derrida's Law of Genre, which explains that a literary work can participate in more than one genre without belonging exclusively to any of them. However, I was troubled because these genres, particularly the larger categories of romance and gothic, have been associated with seemingly contradictory discourses. If Radway (1984/1991)

and Masse (1992) are correct, if romance deploys a discourse which ultimately espouses the benefits of patriarchy and gothic deploys a discourse which suggests that patriarchy requires masochism of its female subjects, it would seem impossible for such a thing as a gothic-romance to exist. Yet, as I read the logic behind Radway's identification of patriarchy's promise and Masse's identification of masochism, I found a similar logic. I found masochism at work in Radway's essential romantic narrative. The romantic heroine must graciously endure the hero's ill treatment until he mysteriously falls in love with her. Conversely, I found patriarchy's promise often lay ahead for the masochistic heroines Masse discussed. Could it be possible, I wondered, that gothic and romance, are really virtually the same in this respect?

As I went further back into the history of these two genres, I learned that they did, indeed share a common history. The gothics women wrote in the late eighteenth century almost always began with the heroin's entrapment and abuse at the hands of men, usually their fathers and/or villainous older men, and ended with the heroine's marriage to the hero. These gothics were later termed "feminine terror gothics" (Vargo, 2004, p. 234). At first, I assumed that this word, "terror," referred to elements of the supernatural which were often integrated into these gothics of the late eighteenth century. However, I learned that the terror to which this label referred was not only the terror of some ghost or supernatural vision but also the more ordinary terror of male power within patriarchy. The supernatural forces common to gothic were simply a way to exaggerate the terror of male power within patriarchy. From the beginning, the terror of patriarchy has always been somewhere in each of the genres written for women by women. In romances, this terror takes the form of a hero who would be perfect, patriarchy's promise incarnate, if it were not for his callousness, cynicism, and brutal behavior toward the heroine. The terror raised by the introduction of the problematic hero is resolved when the heroine learns

to properly read him, reinterpret his behavior as resulting from a previous injury, and unlock his potential as the promise of patriarchy. In marital gothics, the heroine feels as if she has found sanctuary in the protection of the patriarchal institution of marriage, only to learn that this is not the case. However, once again, she investigates and learns information which allows her to excuse or exonerate her husband and, by extension, the patriarchal institution of marriage. Romance always carries the gothic vestige of masochism and gothics typically end by reaffirming the idea that marriage and the patriarchal family serve the needs of women. Each of these genres represent male power as both dangerous and beneficial. Likewise, each of these genres represent patriarchal institutions, such as marriage and the family unit, as full of both peril and promise.

I began this analysis with the assumption that it was odd, or somehow unique, to integrate monsters as the heroes of a romantic narrative. However, as I came to the conclusion that terror was always already at the center of even the most happily ended romances, I realized that monsters are an apt, if hyperbolic, way to symbolize the terror of masculine power. In the earliest gothics, the terror of male power was extracted into the figure of an abusive father who often conspired with or was too weak to defend his daughter against an older male villain. The hero in this formulation, the interesting peasant, represented a pure goodness outside the corrupt circle of powerful men. However, over time, the hero and the villain became one, internally conflicted, hero. The aristocratic Byronic hero made it possible for the terror and hope of patriarchy to reside within one intriguing, and yet terrifyingly unstable figure. The monster, particularly the monster as redrawn by New Testament doctrine, served as an apt, if exaggerated version of the Byronic hero's perpetually unstable, vulnerable, injured, but redeemable subjectivity.

The monster, in other words, functions as patriarchy's peril incarnate. Again, this idea can be traced to the first gothic novels. While women were breaking into and developing the then new style of narrative called the novel, men were taking up the gothic aesthetic and creating novels written from the masculine perspective. These "masculine horror" novels chronicle the inner turmoil of a male protagonist, who symbolizes the protection and authority of patriarchy, but who secretly suffers with a dangerously unstable subjectivity. Take, for example, Lewis' *The Monk*. In this masculine horror, a holy man called to a life of chastity and good works feels so sexually repressed he finds his only sexual outlet in secretly raping and then murdering innocent female victims. Another example is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This doctor embodies the ideal of the Enlightenment gentleman, one who aspires to conquer passion with reason, and yet, in so doing, creates a dangerous alter ego. This theme of dangerously unstable male subjectivity carries right through to the gothic-romance hero, the Byronic aristocrat. Although his status carries the potential of patriarchy's promise, he is brutal, fierce, even satanic. However, he is also moody. The instability of his subjectivity renders him even more frightening. Monsters, be they supernatural creatures with murderous cravings or human men breaking under the pressures of sexual repression and/or their elevated position in patriarchal society, have always already been the heroes of romantic stories.

Each of these genres, feminine and masculine gothic, romance, gothic-romance, and marital gothics, are centered in the discourse of patriarchy and deal with the conflict that arises for characters trying to negotiate lives within this social system. The texts written for women feature heroines enduring patriarchy's peril in the hope of realizing or reinterpreting it as promise. The texts written for men feature heroes working to reconcile the privilege of their

elevated place in society with its burden. I found that *Twilight* participates in each of these very similar genres; however, I believe there is a pattern to the style across the series.

The series begins and ends with an almost perfect execution of the standard romance formula, but before concluding her series, Meyer devises as many gothic obstructions to Bella and Edward's happiness as her literary imagination can generate. In *New Moon (2)*, Edward leaves Bella and makes it possible for Meyer to introduce Jacob as second legitimate gothic hero, the interesting peasant. In *New Moon (2)* and *Eclipse (3)* an older male villain, Aro, targets Bella for her unique abilities while a vengeful female vampire stalks Bella. Through *New Moon (2)* and *Eclipse (3)*, two noble orders, Jacob's wolf pack and the Cullens work to protect Bella from her many enemies. Edward reacts to these threats on Bella's life, not by granting the invulnerability and immortality he enjoys, but by placing ever increasing restrictions on her mobility. Bella's marriage to Edward in *Breaking Dawn (4, part 1)* does not signal narrative closure. In fact, the first two parts of *Breaking Dawn (4)* read as a marital gothic. Almost immediately after Bella marries Edward, he becomes the villain. Their honeymoon leaves Bella bruised, and pregnant and Edward angry. Bella begins to doubt her assumptions about Edward's good nature when he tries to convince Bella to abort the child with whom she's already bonded. As Meyer details the psychological and physical trauma of her pregnancy, and childbirth, she introduces a new variation on the marital gothic, what I call the maternal gothic. Finally, as a vampire, Bella sheds her frail body, confronts her last enemies, and can enjoy the fruits of her happy ending. The series, then, begins and ends as a romance with several gothic detours in between.

Having established the genres *Twilight* participates in these genres, I went on to see if the discourses literary critics associated with each of these genres coincided with the *Twilight* text. I

began with Radway's (1984/1991) theory that romance perpetuates the discourse of patriarchy's promise. I moved on to look for instances of what Masse (1992) called gothic masochism. Although the two primary discourse theories seemed at odds, I found that it was possible to argue the case that both discourses made their way into the series. Edward is, just as romance heroes ought to be, the promise of patriarchy incarnate. He comes from a successful, cohesive family unit led by a rich and highly esteemed patriarch, Carlisle. What's more, thanks to his vaguely old-fashioned sensibilities, Edward behaves in a way best described as chivalrous. Once the initial antagonism between Edward and Bella is cleared away, he has almost no other personality traits outside his willingness and capability to serve, protect, and provide for Bella. This promise of patriarchy is also connected to the post-feminist discourses of entitlement and choice. Although Bella dutifully resists the patriarchal institution of marriage, her resistance proves not only futile but unnecessary. She ultimately feels entitled to choose her happiness by claiming her traditional place in patriarchy as the partner of a man and the mother of his children. Further, because Edward is a vampire, marriage to him not only represents a symbolic completion of Bella's insufficient female subjectivity, it literally results in a life-altering transformation.

At the same time, Bella has to earn her happy ending by masochistically making herself available to a great deal of suffering. Renee's marriage inspires Bella to move to the claustrophobic town where she is tormented by memories of her parents' failed marriage. Bella's brave stand to be with Edward puts her in harm's way several times. First James tortures and nearly kills her; then his mate, Victoria, tracks her; then the Volturi. Lastly, Bella holds on to her hybrid child with masochistic determination, risking not only her clumsy human life, which she gives up gladly, but her chance to exist with Edward for eternity as an immortal.

How was it possible that one text could so convincingly make the case that the institutions of patriarchy serve the needs of women when it is at the hands of those institutions that the heroine endures so much suffering? Again, I found I was able to reconcile this apparent contradiction by complicating the binary logic of promise versus masochism. I concluded that when Radway (1984/1991) spoke of patriarchy's promise, the fantasy of this positive implied a reality which is negative. Masse's (1992) theory of masochism conversely emphasizes the negative implications of patriarchy for women, while hiding the fact that a gothic heroine's masochistic behavior is often driven by the hope of, and sometimes the realization of, patriarchy's promise. I found that I had to abandon the logic that a text might either participate in the romantic promise or the gothic peril of patriarchy. Instead, I embraced the logic of both/and, a logic conceptualized in the pharmakon. I therefore reasoned that *Twilight* exists as a gothic-romance, and, as such, perpetuates the discourse of patriarchy as a pharmakon.

However, there were several other discourses at work as well. I found that, in Meyer's text (if not other gothic romances), she paid a significant amount of attention to the dual, pharmakal, if you will, ontology of patriarchy for men as well. Throughout the text, Meyer details the insufficiency and masochistic suffering of men, particularly Edward, Jacob, and Charlie. Meyer characterizes each as incomplete without a woman. When these men find love, it is just as traumatic for them as it is for the heroine. Charlie suffers the trauma of his failed marriage, Edward suffers the trauma of endangering Bella with his company, and Jacob suffers the pain of an unrequited affection. Each of the men also carries the burden of his elevated position in patriarchy as he leads and protects his family and community. Police Chief Charlie quietly works behind the scenes to keep Bella and the entire town of Forks safe. Edward suffers more vocally with feelings of guilt as he works to reconcile his desire to be with Bella with his

desire to protect her—not only from himself but from the dangerous company he keeps. For Jacob and the members of the wolf pack, the burden of protecting their tribe actually forces their subjectivities to split into dual man/animal forms. Each of these principal male characters sacrifices and endures suffering, and each of their stories ends with a happy union to a woman who completes, and more importantly, stabilizes, his monstrously masculine subjectivity.

Within this matrix of suffering, sacrifice, and service, Meyer integrates the discourses of Christian stoic heroism and gothic chivalry and nobility. Meyer's heroic monsters, while liminal and grotesque, minimize their abject qualities by adhering to a Christian code of ethics. Again, in Meyer's execution of gothic-romance, both the heroine and heroes are subject to these discourses.

Throughout the series Meyer also tempers the romantic with the grotesque in two senses. First, she contrasts Edward who communicates sacred, romantic ideals with Jacob's profane and comedic, that is grotesque, manner of speaking. Then she contrasts the stability and classic beauty of her romanticized vampires with Bella's grotesque, that is, corruptible, unstable, clumsy, earthly body. While her wolves and vampires possess characteristics of the monstrous masculine, Meyer's most grotesque monster is the gestating female. In her unblinkingly graphic depiction of the physical and emotional trauma of carrying, delivering, and overseeing the proper development of a child, I believe Meyer deploys the discourse of the monstrous maternal.

It is easy to portray Stephenie Meyer as an unlikely author. Indeed, it would seem that a Mormon mom might shy away from rather than glorify the heretical figure of the vampire. It also seems difficult to believe that a busy mother of three young children could find the time to write an epic-length series. However, Stephenie's circumstances mirror those which the first female writers of gothic endured. Economic dependency, testy husbands and crying children, it

would seem, can inspire women to take up the practice not only of reading the therapeutic and restorative fantasies of other women but also of crafting fantasies of their very own. Writing the first installment of the *Twilight* series, I would argue, allowed Meyer to vicariously live out a corrective scenario to her own life. Raised in a religion which tells women that marriage and motherhood are necessary for life after death, Meyer was disappointed with how these supposedly salvific institutions drained her earthy body and mind. While her interest in literature festered, this bright woman about to turn 30 found herself looking in the mirror at someone her younger self would hardly recognize—an insignificant hausfrau, a mentally and physically drained and broken "zombie mom." Already a voracious reader, writing *Twilight* allowed Stephenie to experience a heightened sense of engagement as she used her extensive familiarity with literary fiction to craft an epic intertextual gothic-romance narrative. This narrative content not only allowed Stephenie to symbolically exonerate her husband and children for threatening to drain her of her life force, it also gave her a platform to resist celebratory images of motherhood by which her subjectivity has been so significantly shaped. By making a spectacle of the grotesqueries of pregnancy, I believe Meyer intended to help the young women making up her growing literary matriarchy by sharing the rather harsh facts of life. That work was encouraged by an awareness of the impact she might make on her audience of young girls and women. Ultimately, Twilight allowed Stephenie a place to subversively express not only her "anxieties, desires, and wishes" (Modleski, 1982/2008, p. 20) but the worries, hopes and wishes she held for younger generations of women navigating their way within the confines of patriarchy.

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Appendix A: Summary of the Twilight Series

In *Twilight*, the first installment of the namesake series, author Stephenie Meyer introduces her readers to Bella Swan, a 17-year-old who has lived most of her life with her divorced mother in Phoenix, Arizona. However, Bella's life changes when her mother, Renee, remarries. With the goal of giving Renee the freedom to travel with her new husband's minor league baseball team, Bella volunteers to move in with her father, Charlie. Understandably, she feels unsure about her decision. Bella has always detested Forks, Washington, the rainy town her father calls home, and years of infrequent visits to the bleak destination have rendered the father-daughter relationship distant and awkward. To make matters worse, on her first day at Forks High School, the most handsome and intriguing boy at school, Edward Cullen, seems to hate Bella for reasons she cannot fathom. However, through keen observation, Bella eventually discovers that Edward does not hate her. In fact, he feels an inexplicable drive to protect her from himself and those like him.

Edward, the reader learns, is no ordinary teen—Edward Cullen is, in fact, a 110-year-old vampire. His respectable, but eccentric, family is a coven of vampires striving to live civilly among the humans they would, save their extraordinary will power, hunt for sustenance. The Cullens consider themselves "vegetarians," forfeiting their natural food, human blood, for less satisfying substitute—the blood of animals.

The coven is led by Carlisle Cullen. Transformed while assisting his father with his religiously motivated vampire-hunting exploits in the seventeenth century, Carlisle believed he must overcome his desire to murder humans for food and somehow redeem himself with

humanity. Not only did he discover he could subsist on animal blood, he spent the next three

centuries practicing medicine. Carlisle built his family by transforming humans on the brink of

death to immortal vampires. Carlisle saved Edward in this way during the flu epidemic of 1918.

After transformation, Edward adopted his family's practice of drinking animal blood. However,

he does admit to having a rebellious period in which he tracked and killed human murderers

using his vampirization-enhanced ability to read minds.

The first installment of the *Twilight* series takes the reader along as, despite all odds,

Bella and Edward befriend one another and almost immediately fall in love. Unbeknownst to

Bella, her blood has a uniquely enticing aroma that tests Edward's already strained will power to

its limits. The remainder of the series details how Edward overcomes his desire to kill Bella and

how the couple works to reconcile their seemingly insurmountable differences. When Bella and

Edward are not working on their relationship, they are working to keep Bella safe from less than

civilized vampires. Not long after the two declare their love to one another, a sadistic nomad

vampire, James, makes sport of hunting Bella, and the entire Cullen family work together to

track down Bella's vampire stalker and kill him.

In the second book of the series, *New Moon*, the family's resident psychic vampire, Alice,

learns that Victoria, James' mate, wants to avenge his death by killing Bella. Not long after this

alarming revelation, one of Edward's vampire brothers, Jasper, comes very close to losing

control and attacking Bella. Considering these circumstances, Edward decides that the innocent

teen would be better off without him and the dangerous company he keeps. Citing a change of

heart, Edward breaks up with Bella. He and the entire Cullen family leave Forks. For months,

Bella is depressed and devastated, until she begins to befriend Jacob, a Native American of the

Quileute tribe and a long-time friend of Bella's father. Although he lives and attends school on

his tribe's reservation in La Push, Bella begins to make frequent trips to see Jacob after Edward leaves. The two develop a close friendship that leaves Bella feeling very conflicted. Jacob clearly wants a romantic relationship, and Bella enjoys his company and is tempted allow their relationship to develop in that direction. However, she continues to brood bitterly over the loss of Edward. Defying Edward's parting plea for her to be careful because she is prone to attracting danger, Bella begins to take on exceptionally hazardous pastimes, such as riding motorcycles and cliff diving.

During this time, Jacob begins to experience some inexplicable changes. Almost overnight, he bulks up and becomes incredibly hot-blooded. He learns that the recent rash of vampire activity in the area has triggered a gene in his Quileute bloodline that allows him periodically to turn into a vampire-hunting "spirit wolf." Bella helps Jacob deal with this distressing development, and she nearly gives into the temptation to turn their friendship into romantic relationship when Edward re-enters the picture. Alice returns to forks and informs Bella that Edward never fell out of love with Bella and that his true motivation for leaving Forks was to protect her. In a Romeo and Juliet-inspired mishap, Edward receives incorrect information that Bella has died. Unable to forgive himself for not being there to protect her, he plans to kill his immortal self the only way he knows how: invoking the Volturi.

The Volturi are the ruling family of vampires that govern all of their kind world-wide from a central location: Volterra, Italy. Their cardinal rule is discretion. Edward plans to reveal himself as a vampire on the public square of Volterra in the hopes that the Volturi will sentence him to death. Bella and Alice barely stop Edward before he carries out his plan. However, in the process, the nearly omniscient Volturi learn of Edward's violation of the discretion rule by having a relationship with a mortal. The Volturi take turns exercising their respective vampire

powers to torture and intimidate Bella, Edward and Alice. Aro, the leader of the Volturi, is

surprised to learn that his power to read minds is useless on Bella. Alice, whose vampire gift is

psychic in nature, has a premonition of Bella as a vampire. Given this development and his

strange curiosity to see Bella's exceptional defense against mental invasion enhanced through

vampirization, Aro concedes to let Bella live, but only if she is changed into a vampire very

soon.

In the third installment of the series, *Eclipse*, with Victoria still on the loose, Bella works

to mend her damaged friendship with Jacob. She also struggles to convince both Jacob and

Edward that becoming a vampire is not only inevitable, since the Volturi demand it, but also the

best decision for her. Edward proposes and Bella, fearing the stigma of being a teen bride,

reluctantly agrees to marry him. Per Edward's wishes, she also reluctantly agrees to remain

human as long as the Volturi allow it and go to college. Not long after, Victoria launches her

final attack on Bella, and, once again, the frail heroine barely escapes death as both Edward,

Jacob, and their respective supernatural families battle the vengeful vampire.

In the fourth and final book, *Breaking Dawn*, Bella and Edward marry immediately

following Bella's high school graduation, but the bliss of their honeymoon is interrupted when,

to their surprise, they learn that Bella has conceived a human/vampire child. The baby almost

immediately begins to drain Bella's blood from within, and Edward and Jacob both try to

convince Bella to consider abortion. Bella refuses, and she forms an unlikely alliance with

Edward's other vampire sister, Rosalie. In the 1920's Rosalie had been viciously assaulted and

raped by her fiancée and a gang of his drunken friends. Carlisle saved her by turning her into a

vampire, with the intention of bequeathing the beautiful girl to his lonely "son," Edward.

However, Edward felt no connection to Rosalie. Fortunately the pain of Edward's rejection was

soothed when Rosalie found her mate Emmet, a young man who had been mauled to the brink of death by a bear. Still, she longed for her lost opportunity to have a child, and her resentment toward her vampire "brother" never quite faded.

Although Rosalie had been initially hostile to Bella, the plain girl who captured Edward's heart, the two women prove unflappable defenders of Bella's unborn child. During the very short and violent pregnancy, Bella becomes increasingly weak as the baby drains her life force from within. At one point, Bella is forced to drink human blood to satiate the fetus and stay alive. After weakening Bella tremendously during the final stages of pregnancy, the monstrously strong fetus breaks Bella's spine during delivery. This, finally, necessitates the teen mother's "emergency vampirization." Edward injects her directly in the heart with his venom just in time to save what can be saved of his young bride's life.

Bella experiences a long and painful transformation, but when she awakes, she is strong and, like all vampires, alluringly beautiful. She immediately bonds with her hybrid baby girl, Renesme, who it turns out has the extraordinary gift of being able to communicate thoughts through touch. However, Bella is alarmed to find that two disturbing situations developed while she was incapacitated. Jacob, her friend and slighted love interest, has "imprinted," that is, fallen in love with, her infant daughter! Jacob explains that imprinting is how spirit wolves find mates. When they imprint, it is not necessarily sexual in nature; it is simply an inexplicable bond to the person who is destined to be their mate. Bella and Edward have a very difficult time accepting Jacob's claim on their daughter; however, this concern is quickly eclipsed by new knowledge that the Volturi plan to kill Bella and Edward's baby. A few years prior, a group of vampires who longed to have children started a trend of turning human babies into immortal vampire children. When the immortal children proved too immature to be discrete hunters, the Volturi

executed all that had been created and forbade the creation of more in the future. Believing

Renesme to be an Immortal child, the Volturi mobilize with the intention of killing Renesme.

When the Volturi arrive, Bella, Edward, Jacob's pack of wolves, and a large cast of vampires,

successfully defend the child. With all threats to their domestic bliss removed, Bella, Edward,

Jacob and Renesme are presumed to live an eternity of happiness together.

Appendix B: Genre Characteristics

Gothic and Romance Characteristics

| Heroine's Characterization | • "A young, (Modleski, p. 28), inexperienced, (Modleski, p. 28)
• "Poor to moderately well-to-do woman" (Modleski, p.28)
• "She lies constantly to hide her desires, to protect her reputation" (Snitow, 1979/2001, p. 312)
• "Rebel[s] against the male authority figure and at times wish to be able to compete with him." (Modleski, p. 36)
• Unique: "is about finding validation of one's uniqueness and importance by being singled out among all other women by a man." (Brownstein, p. xv). "…the ideal heroine is differentiated from her more ordinary counterparts" (Radway, p. 123) "by unusual <u>intelligence or</u> by an extraordinary fiery disposition." (Radway, p. 123). Fiery usually means "rebelliousness against parental strictures" (Radway, p. 123). Occasionally, she even <u>exhibits special abilities in an unusual occupation</u>. This makes her a "charming enigma" to the hero (Modleski, p. 43).
• "Brave, resourceful, and self-reliant until she falls in love" (Modleski, p. 70)
• Engages in a "continual deciphering of the motives for the hero's behavior" (Mod p. 24), Focus is on the "import of male motives" (Radway, p. 139).
• "Culturally prohibited from speaking of passion, unable to move toward the object of desire" the heroine remains repressed, "a 'good girl,' never entirely aware of her own sexual longings." (p. 10, Masse).
• Heroine will not be seduced (Brownstein, p. 81)
• Plain or a natural beauty (Brownstein, p. 64-66)
• Effortlessly beautiful "In traditional romances heroines fall into a category that might be described as "effortlessly beautiful"—that is, they are blessed by a particularly attractive appearance, but are also entirely unselfconscious about this." (Gill and Herdieckerhoff, 2006, p. 497) Unaware of beauty: This unconscious beauty/ (Brownstein, 64-66) and her youthfulness "allows her to innocently do things and wear things that arouse the hero" (Modleski, p. 43). Point of view: mostly "first person |

	voice of the narrator" (Radway, p. 64). apersonal third person point of view takes place "precisely those points at which the woman's appearance is noticed" (Modleski, p. 47). "It is also significant that romantic union usually occurs at precisely the moment when the heroine has taken no care whatsoever with her appearance." (Gill and Herdieckerhoff, 2006, p. 491) • Crafty "struggles to form the couple without appearing to do so" (Snitow, 1979/2001 p. 312). • Stoic, maintains calm façade (Snitow, 1979/2001, p. 312)
Hero's Characterization	• Strong, older, wealthy, experienced male (Modleski and Radway)
Narrative Structure	• Present feminine fantasy under the guise of realism" (Modleski, p. 28) by incorporating domestic details "frames reality with fantasy" (Botting, p. 18) • Change in point of view to maintain innocence of heroine. (Modleski). • Variety of obstacles manufactured by the author "a series of scenes often scattered throughout the novel establishes for the reader the reasons this heroine and hero cannot marry" (Regis, 2003, p.32), Nothing is allowed to settle (Botting, *De Rougemont*). passion "must 'devise fresh obstructions'" (Botting, 2008, p. 21)

Gothic Characteristics

Discourse/Theme	Masochism (Masse, 1992) Chivalry (Gamer, p. 181; Wright, p. 1)
Problem	First Generation gothics: • Heroine's targeted by a unscrupulous "older male villain" (Roberts, p.64) • Tyrannical father treats the heroine as a commodity to be bartered for his own gain. (Masse, 1992, p. 23) or weak father, coupled with a powerless mother are unable to stand up to the villain (Birkhead, p. 22). This dysfunctional family abandons heroine (Punter, p. 9). • Heroine confined in the home, tormented and persecuted either by father, or the older villain, or both. (Modleski, Birkhead, p. 22) • Those set especially Mediaeval, feudal times are concerned with conflicting land claims (Hogle, p. 221) and the problem of "establishing correct inheritance" and blood lines (Hogle, p. 220), "arcane rules of chivalry and its blood-feuds"

	(Gamer, p. 181), make the gothic narrative one filled with "vice and violence" (Punter, p. 8)
Solution/Resolution	• Supernatural prominent (Punter, p. 1), often helpful in terms of allowing the heroine to have prophetic visions, dreams, and read her surroundings for omens (Clery, p. 33) • In those set in Catholic states in feudal times, the heroine often finds temporary sanctuary in a convent with a monk or some other holy man (Punter, p. 7). (Eg, castle of Otranto). If a romantic gothic with a "dominant love plot" (Punter, 1996, p. 2), there are two typical scenarios for both the heroine and the hero. • The heroine escapes the villain and her dysfunctional family by marrying (Modleski, Brownstein, Birkhead, 1921). 2. the heroine dies an ideal "poetic" death in which she is frozen forever youthful (Brownstein, p. 81). • For the hero, there are also two possible outcomes: 1. if he began life as a poor peasant, he might, aided by circumstances related to rescuing the heroine, suddenly gain wealth and status through something like the "true heir" plot device (Roberts, 1980, p. 217). 2. he might maintain his wealth and high-status (Modleski, Brownstein) but he might also suffer some sort of "mutilation" (Modleski, p.13, also Showalter in Brownstein, p. 151) the heroine might save the hero's soul without compromising her own (Beaty, p. 85)
Tone	• "Adventurous possibility" (Botting, p. 11) • Nostalgic about past (Botting) • The sublime "excess and exaggeration" (Punter, p. 6) of emotion, the sublime • self-conscious un-realism (Punter, p. 4) • self-reflexive/ironic (Botting, p. 7) • Carnivalesque (Miles, p.4) • Serious in terms of religion (Botting)
Setting	• Dark (Botting, p. 7), mysterious, Mussell, 1983, p.58, Birkhead, p. 22, and "disorienting" Botting, p. 11 • Weather supernaturally reflects narrative events (Roberts) • Grand (Birkhead, p. 22) old manor (Punter, p. 7) and/or the haunted (Hogle, p. 22) ruins thereof (Punter, 7, Clery, p. 59), also a "remarkable collection of useful properties" (Birkhead, p. 22) • Historical, but not necessarily realistic history, rather a "strange mingling of history and fantasy." (Clery, p. 2). • Often set in the backdrop of an "arcane" (Gamer, p. 181), "antiquated" (Hogle, p. 22) social system such as those present during Medieval times (Longueil in Gamer, p. 48, Gamer, p. 181), such feudalism and its involvement with the Catholic church,

	• Can also be an urban gothic "metropolis" (Reynolds, p. 14)
Heroine's Characterization	• "In classic paranoid manner, broods over the slightest fluctuation of the hero's emotional temperature or facial expression, quick to detect in these alteration possible threats to her very life." (Modleski, pp. 24-5) • Paranoid about a "an unfortunate female's life" particularly her mother's life "repeating itself through her" (Modleski, p. 61). • Exercises "wise passiveness" (Hoeveler, p. 7), passive aggressive--she calls attention to her struggle thereby allowing the hero and to fight on he behalf sacrifices the self she never had)
Hero's Characterization	"interesting peasant" • "Interesting peasant"(Birkhead, 1921, p. 22) who rescues the heroine, discovers that he is, by blood right and the "true heir" plot device (Roberts, 1980, p. 217), entitled to a substantial fortune and therefore eligible to marry his love. Byronic • Aristocratic (McEvoy, 2007) • Self-appointed outcast (McEvoy, 2007) • Very vocal about their self-loathing (Bealer, 2011, Myers, 2009) • Carries dark secret (Cochran, 2010; Gilbert and Gubar, 1978) • Seductive, incarnation of male sexuality (Cochran, 2010; Gilbert and Gubar, 1978) • "Fierce, powerful …[and] brutal" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1978, p. 14)
Other	• Child hated by hero and defended by heroine (Modleski) • Authors often use references to literary canon to establish credibility (Gamer, p. 24, Beaty, p. 81)

Marital Gothic Characteristics

Discourse/Theme	Masochism
Narrative Elements/plot	• Begins with or shortly after marriage (Masse, p. 20) • After marriage, husband seems like a stranger • Heroine suspects husband of murder or mental instability. (Russ in Modleski, p. 31) • Hero becomes like the heroine's father—denies her identity and autonomy. (Masse, p. 20) • "The heroine finds herself mute, paralyzed, enclosed..." (Masse, p. 20). • Heroine investigates. (Modleski, p. 68)

	• Heroine exonerates hero. (Modleski, p. 68)
Tone	• Mystery, danger, suspense
Setting	• Home (Masse, p. 20)
Heroine's Characterization	• Experiences difficulty and despair about using language directly (Masse, p. 20) • Is a voyeur of, and must come to terms with, her abuse and that of other women (Masse, p. 41)
Hero's Characterization	• Murderer or lunatic (Russ in Modleski, p. 31) • Uses infantilizing tone with heroine (Masse, p. 33)

Romance Characteristics

Discourse/Theme	• Patriarchy's promise (Radway)

Narrative Elements/plot	1. heroine stripped of identity and family supports (Radway p. 134)),
	2. reacts antagonistically to a wealthy/aristocratic man
	3. he reacts ambiguously
	4. interprets hero's behavior as evidence of purely sexual interest in her
	5. responds to hero with coldness or anger
	6. hero retaliates and punishes the heroine
	7. they are separated
	8. hero treats the heroine tenderly (this change of heart is not explained at the time "not structurally explained by the narrative at the time it occurs"(Radway, p. 147))
	9. she responds warmly
	11. the hero proposes/openly declares his love for/demonstrates his unwavering commitment to the heroine with a supreme act of tenderness
	12. the heroine responds sexually and emotionally
	13. the heroine's identity is restored as the intended wife of a wealthy and socially well-situated man
	  • "Directs <u>aspirations</u> to higher or <u>sacred ideals</u> and, avoiding the ambiguities of ordinary life, simplifies moral facts" (Frye, 1976, p.51 summarized by Botting, p. 18)
	  • Male rival "described sparingly" and "almost never prove even momentarily attractive to the heroine" (Radway, p. 131).
	  • Female rival is manipulative, incapable of being nurturing and "self-interested pursuit of a comfortable social position." (Radway, 131)

Tone	• "Eschews irony", "eschews realism" and "takes love straight" (p.321). "designed to be read in this straightforward manner" (Radway, p. 191).
Setting	• "Enchanted space" in which the heroine is socially

	dislocated—perhaps on holiday, having gone away from friends and family to recover from a traumatic event. (Gill and Herdieckerhoff, p. 490) • No mention "of local peculiarities beyond the merely scenic" Travel documented as "mere travelogue". • "The couple is alone. There is no society, no context, only surroundings." (Snitow 1979/2001, p. 312)
Heroine's Characterization	• "Ayoung, (Modleski, p. 28) • Inexperienced, (Modleski, p. 28), repressed --"She lies constantly to hide her desires, to protect her reputation" (Snitow, 1979/2001 p. 312) • Poor to moderately well-to-do woman" (Modleski, p.28) • Is a "charming enigma" to the man (Mod, p. 43), singled out from among all other women, marriage proves it (Brownstein, p. xv) "…the ideal heroine is differentiated from her more ordinary counterparts …by unusual intelligence or by an extraordinary fiery disposition. Occasionally, she even exhibits special abilities in an unusual occupation. Although the 'spirited heroine is a cliché in romantic fiction, these ideal women are distinguished by the particularly exaggerated quality of their early rebelliousness against parental strictures (Radway, p. 123.). • "Struggles to form the couple without appearing to do so" (Snitow, 1979/2001 p. 312) • Innocent/unaware of sexiness (Modleski, p. 43) • Stoic, maintains calm façade (Snitow, 1979/2001 p. 312) • Spends a good bit of the story "uncovering his motives" and more generally trying to figure out "what the fact of male presence and attention means for her, a woman" (Radway, p. 139) • Unconscious beauty/ (Brownstein, 64-66) and her youthfulness "allows her to innocently do things and wear things that arouse the hero" (Modleski, p. 43). • "Rebel[s] against the male authority figure and at times wish to be able to compete with him." (Modleski, p. 36) • Wife and implied mother of a child (Radway, p.134)
Hero's Characterization	• Wealthy (Modleslki, p. 28, Rad 130), often aristocratic(Ra. 130) • Handsome (Modleski, p. 28) • Strong (Modleski, p. 28) • Experienced (Modleski, p. 28) • Older (Modleski, p. 28) • A "man among men" (Radway, p. 130) "participates in some major public endeavor" (Radway, p.130)

| | • Is mocking, cynical, contemptuous, often hostile, and even somewhat brutal (Modleski, p. 28)
• Appraises heroine "as an object" (Modleski, p. 32)
• Tells the heroine how much the thought of her has obsessed him. (Modleski, p. 6-7).
• Expresses his "devotion" to her through marriage. (Radway, p. 70).
• Understanding: As a lover, he is gentle and demonstrates a real "concern for his heroine's pleasure" (Radway, p.70). Understands the heroine's "hesitancy, doubt, anger, confusion, loss of control, exhilaration" (Jeanne Glass in Radway, p. 69-70).
• Extenuating circumstances keep him humble: Or reflects the new nobility "not noble in the sense of royalty or wealth, but noble nonetheless because he is a "poor," "earnest," and "self-effacing" (Hinnant, p. 295); "manages to avoid the snare of self-absorption" (Hinnant, p. 295). |
| Other | • Point of view: mostly "first person voice of the narrator (Radway, p. 64. The a-personal, third person point of view used "precisely those points at which the woman's appearance is noticed" (Modleski, p. 47). |

Modern Chick Lit

| Discourse/Theme | • Overall, modern romance, particularly chick lit, articulates a "distinctively post-feminist sensibility" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 489).
• Struggle to reconcile feminism, esp. passivity and dependence (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 487) with
• Boldness, entitlement, and choice in shaping oneself according to "normative femininity", often articulated through consumerism (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 487). Features "make-over paradigm" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff , p. 497) and monitoring the female body's "unruly"aspects" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 497). |

Problem	• "Present scathing portraits of dysfunctional men and descriptions of bad sex and disastrous dates" (Modleski, p. xxv).
	• Women rescued "from crooks and conmen, single motherhood, or even from themselves" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 498)
	• Career problems factor into the narrative structure (Gill & Herdieckerhoff p. 495). In a career which her talents are wasted (Gill & Herdieckerhoff p. 495), or in a good career that comes with a personal trade off, i.e., cannot balance career and the emotional energy required to handle a romantic relationship (Gill & Herdieckerhoff p. 496).
Solution/Resolution	• Makeover, either appearance or career: presented as having been transformed from "ugly duckling," (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 497). E.g., heroines magically have the courage to ditch their dead-end jobs and fulfill their dreams. Kate becomes an interior designer and Jemima realizes her ambition to become
	• A magazine journalist. Each explains how the love of a good man gave her the confidence to pursue her goals. (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 495)
	• Hero: "He must save her with the chivalry, wit,
	• and expertise she may not have herself." (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 495)
	• "Mutual rescue" e.g., in Pretty woman Vivian rescues Edward "right back" Mutual rescue (Warhol-Down, R. (2003/2009; p. 523)
Setting	• Urban (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 488).
Heroine's Characteristics	• Sexually bold: Far from being virginal, most of the heroines are sexually experienced (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 494).
	• They no longer need to be seduced and can initiate sexual contact (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 494).
	• Catty: "despite a popular belief that chick lit portrays strong female friendships, in fact other women are frequently represented as competitors and therefore not to be trusted" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 495).
	• Typically work, "invariably portrayed as employed and committed to the idea of a career" but they are in "underpaid positions" and they are "dissatisfied and struggling in their jobs" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 495).
	or
	• "Professional and successfully employed" but "unfeminine" in that she may be "cynical, cheating, hard-nosed, snobbish,

	and as a frequent drug-user" or "cold, manipulative, and immoral" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 496) • "Most women in chick lit are portrayed as single and unhappy about it" in fact, they are "absolutely desperate" to find a boyfriend (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 496) • "In chick lit novels, there are broadly two different approaches to beauty taken. In one the heroine is beautiful but, interestingly, is often presented as having been transformed from 'ugly duckling'" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 497). They also exhibit a "preoccupation with the shape, size, and look of the body that borders on the obsessional. What is striking is not only that appearance is such a preoccupation, but that it is depicted as requiring endless self surveillance, monitoring, dieting, purging, and work" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 497). The "second type of chick lit heroine is either less physically attractive or is adamant about being free of the demands of beauty" until she meets the hero (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 497). • "They value autonomy and bodily integrity and the freedom to make individual choices. What is interesting, however, is the way in which they frequently use their empowered post-feminist position to make choices that would be regarded by many second wave feminists as problematic, located as they are in normative notions of femininity. They choose, for example, white weddings, downsizing, giving up work or taking their husband's name on marriage" (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, p. 499).
Hero's Characterization	• "Men in chick lit, like earlier romantic heroes, are still presented as knowing better about what women want and who they are than women themselves" (Gill and Herdieckerhoff, p. 498)
Tone	• Disillusionment with love (Modleski), light, humorous, self-deprecating tone, especially pertaining to self image (Gill and Herdieckerhoff, p. 497)

Masculine Gothic Horror

Discourse/Theme	• Instability of human subjectivity
Narrative Elements/plot	• Centered on the pressures placed on men in patriarchal society, specifically the tension caused by the repression of unconscious, often primitive, barbaric, and otherwise taboo, desires (Punter, p. 4) • Results in a dangerously uncontrollable "release from restraint." (Morris, David 1985 p. 306) that, causes the

	protagonist to delve into the unruly depths of "sexual excess and perversion" (Clery, p. 2) • "Preoccupation with destabilized subjectivities" (Brian Baker, p.168) • Man divided into binary of reason/passion • "Younger Satanic heroes" (McEvoy in Spooner, p. 24).
Setting	• A situation in which there is extreme repression
Hero's Characterization	• Destabilized/monster
Other	• Point of view told through hero. "portrayed from within" so that the readers is "asked more explicitly to focus through his or her desire and passion" (McEvoy in Spooner, p. 24)

Vampire Lore

Discourse/Theme	• Associates sex, blood, and death (Brugger (2010) (Doerksen, 2002, Botting, p. 23) • Sexuality, esp. queer, taboo (Kane, 2010, 3. humanity (queered as a concept)body: infirm/corrupt and potentially grotesque, civil society: need for law and order ethics, aesthetic appreciation and even art • Queers and yet also reinforces religion, the need of redemption and a life after physical death.
Vampire Narrative Elements	• Vampire attacks, the giving and receiving of blood, is almost always sexualized (Doerksen, 2002, Botting, p. 23)
Characterization	• Hero-villain-victims" (McEvoy (2007p. 23) • Alienated (Botting, 1996) • Plagued by desperate solitude and moral corruption (McMahon, 2009, p. 205). • Lovers of "beauty and knowledge" (Botting, 1996, p.77) • Reminiscent of the Romantic era, he is "tortured by self-consciousness and a questioning spirit" (Botting, 1996, p. 77) "*Interview [with a Vampire]* stages its vampire-flaneurs as nostalgic creatures and projections of a lost nostalgia, their artifice, decadence and ennui, while exuding all the aesthetics of dark modernity, display the loss defining the postmodern (Botting, p. 91). • His very existence is sacrilegious in the his immortality (only Christ has risen from the dead). • "Sinister, haughty aristocrat of remarkable intelligence, charm, and physical beauty," (Brugger, 2010, p. 235)

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- Taking of blood is an inversion of Christ and the sacrament of blood (Mishra, 1994)
- Examples of other "vegetarian" vampires: Anne Rice's Louis who ate rats, Nosferatu ate rats, Adele Griffin's Vampire Island vampire eat regular food. Blood banks like *Forever Knight* (Baptiste, 2011, p. 91).
- Examples of other hybrids: Balkan folklore spoke of a dhampir , also in comic book Blade (Baptiste, 2011, p. 92).

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