

Dangerous Young Men:  
Themes of Female Sexuality and Masculinity in  
Paranormal Romance Novels for Young Adults

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
University of Ottawa  
for the Master's Degree in Sociology

## Acknowledgements

I first want to thank my partner Ryan, for pushing me to leave the small town I had always lived in, in order to do bigger and better things with my life. I want to also thank my family for being so confident in me, and always providing words of encouragement. My friends, for putting up with my craziness during this whole thing, specifically Laurel, I don't think I would have made it out of this "sanely" without her.

A huge thanks goes out to Dr. Phyllis Rippeyoung who was there for me as my supervisor, and friend. I would also like to thank Dr. Mireille McLaughlin, who helped me push through the final steps, as well as Dr. Willow Scobie and Dr. Kathleen Rodgers for their helpful input.

## *Abstract*

Key words: Patriarchy, Sexuality, Masculinity, Literature, Paranormal Romance

Patterns of masculine and feminine portrayals can be found everywhere, yet one place sociologists tend not to look is in novels. Young adult novels have generated 27 million dollars in e-books alone in 2011, with paranormal romances and dystopian genres making up the majority of the sales (Scott, 2013). Understanding these novels is sociologically important because they are reaching wider audiences with their adaptation into Hollywood blockbusters. While the novels demonstrate stronger characteristics given to women, the messages about the ideal male in the novel often reflects one who is putting the female in danger. A content analysis of ten popular paranormal young adult novels demonstrates patterns of the construction of gender. Drawing on Radway's (1984) analysis of romance novels and Connell's, (2005) and hook's (2004) theories of masculinities, this paper explores the messages in paranormal fiction geared to a mainly young adult female reading audience. My preliminary findings demonstrate thus far that these books reflect unhealthy ideas about relationships, violence, the body, and sexuality. The novels portray masculine bodies as hard, dangerous, and seductive. They also share a storyline consisting of the fear of getting killed by someone they are in love with.

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## ***Chapter 1: Introduction***

I love to read, like many readers in recent years, I have read plenty of paranormal romance novels. Following the publication and intense commercial success of Stephanie Meyers *Twilight* Series, publishers have provided readers with numerous variations of the genre. As I read a few of them, I soon realized they shared similar narratives about relationships. Namely, in the majority of these novels, young women fall in love with young, super powerful, and threatening men. I began to wonder about paranormal romance novels as a phenomena; why this genre now? How do they reproduce or disrupt gender ideologies? How do they portray relationships and should we be concerned with the fact that they are mostly read by teenagers?

### *Sexuality today*

Sexuality is distinct from but highly related to gender. hooks identifies that most people in society believe that if males are not having sex, then they will go to any means necessary to acquire it. This leads to ideas that men are naturally sexual, that women are passive; this leads to rape culture (hooks, 2004:77-78). At the same time *“learning to fear the penis as though it were a weapon that could backfire, rendering them powerless, destroying them. Hence the underlying message boys receive about sexual acts is that they will be destroyed if they are not in control, exercising power.”* (hooks, 2004:80). This quote captures how men are taught that their sexuality is dangerous to themselves and those around them- it needs constant control. Farvid and Braun (2006) explore genital control surrounding males, even though they are desire sex all the time. Conflicting messages surrounding what control they have over their penis has led to a contradictory understanding of what male sexuality is. Boys are supposed to want sex, yet be in control of their penis. This is demonstrated at various points through the teen romance novels.

What does not help the case in the lack of understanding of male sexuality, is how female sexuality is portrayed as submissive by the media young men consume.

In 2005, 43% of teens aged 15-19 in Canada reported having sexual intercourse (StatsCan, 2008). That is close to 50% of teenagers who are having sex. Teenagers have sex, talk about sex, and are faced with information in the media regarding sex and sexuality. Tiefer (2004:72) expresses that in today's media, passion and sensuality of sexuality are exaggerated on television and in movies. In school, children are not being taught about the psychological needs nor what influences attraction. Extended from this is how women's sexuality contains shame and ignorance over bodily responses and reactions. Throughout this research, key concepts of sex and sexuality must be understood in order to conceptualize why and how sexuality has been written in the novels. Foucault (1978) examines the historical changes of sexuality. Specifically, the ways sexuality is viewed and talked about in society has changed immensely. Foucault (1978) argues that communication about sexuality has undergone important transformations throughout past years. He argues that we have never talked so much about sexuality, all the while pretending we are not. Within our confessional society, the expression of our selves has been caught up in institutions, all interested in questions of sexuality. While sexuality is talked about, popular media is a competing source of discourse of sexuality that often escapes the surveillance of institutions, as well as parents. Meanwhile, it is still bound by the logics of capitalist profit making.

If we look at young adult novels, which can reflect the ideologies of today, and which are wholly constructed using language, we will be able to see how sexuality is being presented within novels. Foucault (1978) plays an important part about understanding the discourse of sexuality and power, as well as understanding how society has made it difficult to have

knowledge about sex due to the multiple spaces in which it is presented and talked about. Romance novels provide an opening to explore the emotions and situations surrounding sex. Yet, they could still be used as a tool to reduce sexuality as something only between a heterosexual couple (Foucault, 1978:45), as well as to control the information and language used to communicate sex to adolescents. In order to understand more about the context with which adolescents are understanding sexuality, an understanding of the various ways they learn about it needs exploration. One of the channels of information is romance novels, whose structure must be understood in order to better grasp its function.

### *Representations of Sexuality in YA Novels*

As expected then, for teen literature, novels for teenagers do contain sex. According to Younger (2003), young women within young adult literature are being represented more as sexual beings than they had in the past. In contrast, however, Alderson (2012) points out that although there may be romanticized, sexual scenes, they are often presented as arising out of relationships of love. Within her practices of writing, she says that one needs to be careful how sex is being depicted in novels. Many teens experience pressure to have sex, it must be dealt with carefully within the novels. As a novelist herself, Alderson (2012) says she creates her romantic scenes between characters by not having them actually have physical contact, creating more tension and excitement for the readers. The dynamic of physical attraction, as well as physical contact can be set up differently for young men and women, and depending on the novel and the writer, we may see different levels of sexual acts. Planned Parenthood defines sexual acts, sex and sexual behavior in terms of anything ranging from kissing, touching, oral sex, anal sex, and penis-in-vagina (PIV) intercourse (PPFA, 2013). Some novels may have characters that are

engaging in only kissing and touching, while other novels may present their characters as having had PIV intercourse.

According to Wood (2010), more young people are able to explore their sexuality without the stigma of such explorations as there were in the past. The author examined a random sample of young adult novels from the shelf in a large public library to see how many of them contained various forms of sex and sexuality. The majority include some kind of portrayal and discussion regarding sex. Young people today have more options for how they are going to guide themselves through learning and exploring sexuality, with novels being one of these options. Wood also explores healthy and unhealthy relationships within novels, stating that novels allow education on forms of relationships, as well as information on sexual health (2010).

Masculinity is supposed to pour from a man's body, his sexuality most of all. Men's sexuality within literature and the media is often viewed as violent, forceful and assertive (Connell, 2005:41; Kilmartin, 2010:226) Hollywood and novels especially, showcases masculinity as violent, where specifically: "*women are reluctant to participate in sex and therefore respond to forceful men*" (Kilmartin, 2010:226). For men, they are supposed to be the ones to initiate sex, be promiscuous, and to constantly seek sex. They are supposed to value toughness, fearlessness, logic and confidence. They are socialized to know that they need to keep their emotions in tight check, and not to appear vulnerable (Kilmartin, 2010:149;163). These gender representations of masculinity and sexuality have created men who are emotionally cut-off and whose purpose is to forcefully and assertively get sex from women. Women are supposed to accept this, and should never be the ones wanting sex, and should instead be persuaded to have it. Radway (1984) and Kilmartin (2010) offer that men have no other place for intimacy,

and therefore their relationship is where they seek this intimacy. These points of emotional cut-off, assertive sex, and intimate relationships create contradictory expectations of men.

Younger (2009) found that YA lit helps to negotiate sexual standards. The novels create young adolescent sexuality as “wild and frenzied” (2009:xv). While female characters are often punished for their sexuality in some novels, in general, female desire is constructed as abnormal and dangerous; and male desire as normal yet out of control. Younger (2009) continues her analysis in writing that YA novels construct intercourse as something that is unpleasent for young women. This information is discouraging as it closes doors for young women to explore pleasure and sexuality. However, some feminist YA romance novels construct female sexuality as pleasurable, and that it does not need to be pursued only in the face of love. How we construct sexuality within the novels depends, as Younger (2009) has put into view, what the social and historical context of the novels are.

As Tognela (2011) points out, sexualized media has created female sexuality as submissive and dehumanized. Females are seen as sexually passive, as well as the primary victims of abuse, and objectification (Lamb, 2009). While males are supposed to be in constant states of sexual desire, women are supposed to be in a constant state of seeking a relationship- they must work at sex, as well as compete for it (Farvid & Braun, 2006). Talk of empowerment surrounds female sexuality, which may help female sexually become disconnected with current notions of passivity (Lamb, 2009). However, as Bay-Cheng (2012) points out, girls do talk about their changing sexuality, yet they lack the “social and material” privilege to get people to listen. Change within young adolescent sexuality, in terms of empowerment, could be present within current generations. Instead of being passive in their sexuality, young women may be becoming more assertive, but more research and exposure on young women and their sexuality is needed.

## *YA Novels as Spaces of Socialization*

When girls are young they receive many messages about handsome princes, and knights in shining armor that come to their rescue, through the movies they watch and the storybooks they read. When females grow up, many find themselves enjoying constant reading throughout their week (Scholastic, 2013), and sharing those novels with other girls around them. Girls begin to create social circles around novels and prefer certain book series to others. Once girls begin to get older and begin reading “teen” or young adult novels, they contain more messages regarding “coming of age” stories (Cole, 2009), with dating being one of the more popular topics within the novels that girls are reading. The values presented in the childhood tales may be persisting in the novels girls read as they get older. The young men within the novels may still be presented as “Prince Charming” or various portrayals of masculinity. Concerning romantic relationships in young adult romance novels, with the majority being heterosexual, in young adult romance novels, the images of masculinity and relationships being given to the readers will be explored.

Women and girls consist of the majority of the reading audience of young adult romance novels, as well as reading in general. Women and girls understand better the value of reading than men and boys, and are more likely to share books. In a 2012 study done by publishing company Scholastic, 56 percent of girls vs. 47 percent of boys in 2012 think reading books for fun is important. As well, 36 percent of girls read for fun 5-7 days a week, and continue this habit into their teens, whereas boys decrease the habit of constant reading as they age (Scholastic, 2013). In general, young individuals prefer reading fantasy fiction over other genres of novels (Kelley et al, 2012:82). Young adult literature targets an audience aged 12 to 18 years old, while some young adult literature goes from 16 years old to early 20’s (Elliot-Johns, 2012:41). As young women are leading readership, romance novels-among which paranormal

romance novels-are good investments for publishing houses. They therefore tend to portray themes that are of interest to young women.

Author Hegvedt says there is a reciprocal relationship between literature and society, where they both influence and reflect one another (1991:1). Singer extends this notion by saying that novels work to give “sources of sociological data” and also “expose the reader to social systems” (2011:308-309). He continues arguing that characters challenge and transform social inequalities, offering empowerment to the reader (2011:318). Similar to my own research, Singer (2011) analyzed a random sample of children’s novels. He views them as a source of sociological data that provide information on ideologies and representations. His methods consist of a “blend narrative analysis with a sociological imagination” (311). He is taking the narratives within the novels, and placing them in today’s society to understand and apply them to larger societal trends. Singer’s study on power in children’s novels demonstrates an understanding, as well as challenge to that power. For Hallen (1966:15), society and literature are linked together and are interdependent. When a certain type of literature comes to be produced, is because people are expecting it, thus creating a demand for it. Perhaps paranormal romance novels are so popular at this time in order to demonstrate the confusing messages young women are given within a patriarchal society, as well as their continuous struggle for power.

#### *Overview of Content of YA Novels*

Young adult literature often depicts coming of age stories, separation from parents, acquiring new groups of friends, their search for self-hood and identity, as well as their resistance from adult control (Ostry, 2004). Young adult novels are usually presented in the form of first person narration (Cole, 2009; Robinson, 2009). They explore sexuality and relationships,

and the parents are often absent from the novel or the characters find themselves at odds with them (Cole, 2009). Robinson (2009) also conducts research on the connection between young adult novels and systems within society. She says that novels are about power. The novels construct gender in a way to challenge it. Robinson (2009) explores the different messages within young adult novels that young men and women are receiving. Often, these novels are being read and accepted without any critique from the young population.

Similar to my research, Beth Younger (2009) examined teen novels in the context of their sociological and historical context. She selected various young adult novels and analyzed them for their sexual content, as well as their discursive qualities. She explains and examines the ways that the novels provide views of oppressive social structures which provide a definition of femininity that is quite different from reality. She groups her novel into sections such as “Pregnancy and Female Sexuality” and “Romance, Repression, and the Male Predator”. Within her “Male Predator” section, she analyzes how sexuality can be portrayed as both a negative and a positive thing in YA novels. The depictions of violence mixed with desire demonstrate romance as important, but also dangerous (94). Her study is similar to my own in placing the construction of sexuality within this current context of society. Younger (2009) exposes that novels are demonstrating that female sexuality exists and that young women do indeed seek pleasure (81). The difference with my research is that I am studying more recent novels, as well as specifically looking at the uprising of paranormal romance novels for young adults. Masculinity is often ignored, yet it relates so much to femininity. By focusing specifically on representations of masculinity, it captures both the dynamics of gender relations in the novels, but also how femininity has an effect on masculinity.

Since the *Twilight* series (Meyer, 2005), a story of an awkward girl falling in love with a vampire who is constantly struggling with his desire to kill her and drink her blood, the novel has produced speculation on healthy *versus* non healthy relationships. There have been many articles and books written about this novel and the harm it is causing young women. Some described the vampire Edward as a psychopath (Merskin, 2011); others analyze how the use of vampires in the novel draws attention to the body through their perception of blood, a heartbeat, and smell (Mercer, 2011). *Twilight*, it is argued, provides girls with messages to tame the beast that is the man, and provides notions of “helplessness and sexualized violence” (Happel & Esposito, 2010: 530). Taylor (2011:35) says that Bella is uncomfortable inside her awkward teen body, living in a patriarchal society. The author also goes as far to call *Twilight* “masochistic”.

### *Research Question*

Much of the research about *Twilight* focuses on Bella and Edward separately. Specifically they see Edward as a monster, and Bella as a victim of her desires. After all, instead of running for her life when she realizes what he is, she tries to get in his pants (Mercer, 2011). While the focus of much paranormal romance novel research has focused only on *Twilight*, it has also been mostly focused on Bella and Edward as representatives of their genders separately. There has been little research on the relations and expectations of each gendered character as having an effect on one another. Yet, as contemporary research on gender and masculinity stresses that gender identities are often constructed in relation to a dominant male-female binary (Foucault, 1978). Much work stresses that struggles for gender equality starts with challenging the binary (Butler, 2004). This would also mean that representations of gender in popular culture would change so as to represent gender as a less constraining social identity. This led me to wonder: how are gender identities represented in paranormal teenage novels? What’s changing?

What remains the same? And what does this tell us about gender equality in popular culture today?

The works of Janice Radway (1984) and her focus on romance novels provides good background to answer these questions. Analyzing the forces behind the mass production of romance novels for women between the 1970s to the 1980s, she shows that reading these romances produces a need for female satisfaction in the real world, by demonstrating the frustration of living in a patriarchal society (Radway, 1984:212). I will use her analysis of romance novels in the 1980s to map out the transformation-or lack thereof, of representations of masculinity and femininity in romance novels. I will argue that little has changed in the last 30 years in the way romance novels portray the relationship between males and females. The novels of today still seem to be about girls struggle with living in a patriarchal society. There are nuances, however. With the recent introduction of stronger characters than Bella, some differences in the portrayal of femininity are emerging within the novels.

The purpose of this study is to provide an in depth look at the relationship between masculinity and femininity within young adult paranormal romance novels. The majority of authors focusing on relationships and gender within novels are often from a particular feminist perspective, wherein girls are usually described as struggling for power, and males are incapable of compassion. Using theories of gender, masculinity, and sexuality, I will explore how female sexuality within the novels is presented and its connection to the portrayals of masculinity. I believe that effects of gender on the body, its performance and reactions, are connected to the relations presented in the novels between men and women. Janice Radway (1984) has produced the most work on romance novels, and will be used extensively within this research. Patriarchal understandings of authority, power, and masculinity will be used as a theoretical foundation. As

well, theories of the sociology of literature will tie in why anyone should care about what these novels are saying in the first place. Therefore, using the literature that has already been produced regarding paranormal romance novels, *Twilight*, and gender construction within novels, I ask: How is female sexuality being constructed in paranormal romance novels for young adults. I argue that masculinity and femininity are related in their construction, in ways that produce inequalities and power struggles. While these novels are a growing genre, they may not be providing anything different to young women than what we have seen in the past, even with the inclusion of strong female characters.

I will explain this lack of change by analyzing these novels through theories of patriarchy. While Radway (1984) has already expressed that the drive for romance novels is produced by women's struggle for an understanding of their lives within patriarchy, these new novels therefore demonstrate there is still a struggle for these understandings. By analyzing separately male and female narrated novels, the nuanced differences between the genders as social actors becomes evident by the portrayal of the power struggle for the characters within the novels. While the young female characters in the female narrated novels experience significant changes to their outside world, grasping for control and understanding of their environment; the male characters within the male narrated novels seek to understand the power already given to them. While the female characters demonstrate stronger characteristics, this is only a function of the paranormal aspect of the novel; the real power still lies with the rationality of the (even stronger) male character.

Chapter 2 involves looking at the literature. The beginning of the chapter will focus on the sociology of literature in order to conceptualize the link between romance novels and society. Secondly, the influential work of Janice Radway's analysis of romance novels 30 years ago will

be examined, along with a look at the similarities between paranormal romance novels today. Chapter 3 will focus on theory; specifically notions of patriarchal power, the role of masculinity within patriarchy, and how masculinity and femininity are connected. Chapter 4 is the methodology used within this research. An inductive approach was used to qualitatively analyze ten paranormal romance novels for young adults. Chapter 5 will contain the findings, themed by femininity, masculinity, sexuality and violence. Chapter 6 explores discussions relating the findings to previous literature. The discussion will analyze further the representations of female sexuality, and how masculinity is tied into these understandings. Chapter 7 contains the conclusion, summarizing the study, as well as the caveat.

## *Chapter 2: Literature Review*

Romance novels are one of the ways in which young adults access discourses about sexuality. It is therefore important to situate their content within contemporary literature on sexuality. The review of the literature of romance novels and paranormal romance novels allows me to identify key themes that have emerged in this scholarly literature. I focus here on a specific debate: most authors argue that romance novels are set within patriarchal understandings of gender, while a few argue that romance novels allow for a contestation of patriarchy. Firstly I will situate this research within the sociology of literature. I will present the foundational work of Janice Radway, a scholar who first studied romance novels in the 1980s. I will then proceed to present the literature on paranormal romance novels and the nuanced debate about representations of gender in popular culture within this body of literature. Particularly, I will focus on the work of Mukherjea, who argues that paranormal romance cultural products such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* showcase a redefinition of feminine identity. I conclude by arguing for a relational approach to the analysis of romance novels, one which studies both the ways in which female and male characters evolve.

### *Sociology of Literature*

Paranormal romance novels are a subgenre of romance novels that often includes magic and supernatural beings such as vampires, werewolves and other such creatures (Lee, 2008:53). Although the paranormal romance subgenre has received little scholarly attention, it is a rapidly growing subgenre of romance fiction. Specifically, out of the 6,400 romance titles released in 2006, 9 percent of them were paranormal (Lee, 2008: 53). The rise in popularity of fantasy fiction is in part thanks to series such as *Harry Potter*, which have allowed interest and

acceptance of paranormal encounters, fantasy and supernatural forces (Mercer, 2010:265). Other forms of fantasy such as TV shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* were the beginnings of other interests in supernatural beings, and watching them on television every week became normal (Mercer, 2010:265). An important explanation for the growing trend of more authors publishing novels in popular adolescent markets are the economic opportunities (Bickmore, 2012:186). The popularity and financial benefit to producing books which are paranormal and dystopian fiction is evident when we look at books that are being made into movies, such as *Harry Potter* (Rowling, 1997), *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), *Twilight* (Meyers, 2005), *The Mortal Instruments* (Clare, 2007), and *Beautiful Creatures* (Garcia & Stohl, 2009).

In Bilz (2004) novel *Life is Tough: Guys, Growing Up, and Young Adult Literature*, she defines that in the past, before young adult literature existed, various roles of gender were not explored in the novels; men were perceived to act as men should, and women as women should. However, as Bilz points out, gender roles have changed, and it is good for young adults to see these changes displayed, in order to see all the different roles available to them in today's society (2004:xi). However, if the novels being written today, found on the New York Times Bestseller list, are not providing young readers with any challenges to understandings of patriarchy, gender roles, and sexuality, then what are they doing? While paranormal romance novels have been growing in popularity, seemingly because they provide strong female characters and challenging gender roles, the surprising aspect of their popularity is, as I will show, that they are actually doing the opposite.

Jadhav (2013:3) believes that sociology and literature are connected because of a concern to change the world we live in. There is a clear connection between novels and sociology: “*literature not only analyses society but also shows the ways in which men and women*

*experience society as feeling*” (Jadhav, 2013:4). For Hallen (1966), literature has three ways of connecting with society, through reflection, social control and influence. The author sees literature as a record, keeping track of how society has been created and changed. Literature therefore allows a comparison for time periods in society. As Griswold (1993:461) points out, many books in the early part of the century were egalitarian, compared to literature in the mid-century which did not reflect such egalitarian notions. Radway’s (1984) analysis of romance novels demonstrates the lack of egalitarian notions within novels.

Many authors (Griswold, 1993; Hegtvedt, 1991; Hallen, 1966; Jadhav, 2013) reflect the direct connection between literature and our society. It is the importance of correlating literature and its reflection of social life, social control, agency, and what influence it has over our lives. It is a tool that we can use to understand theories and concepts. For Singer (2011), novels expose readers directly to the social systems that we live in, the inequality we face, and the gender stratification within our society (308). Singer (2011) believes that “the most sociological research on novels” (309) is indeed Janice Radway’s work. Radway (1984) focuses on the dynamics between male and female characters, and my hope is to explore whether these trends that came from older adult romance novels, are apparent in current popular young adult fiction.

#### *From Radway to Paranormal Teen Romance*

One of the most fundamental works written on romance novels is Janice Radway’s (1984) novel *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. She focuses on everything from the marketing of romance novels, to gender and sexual scripts, and narration within the novels. Although her book focuses on romance novels for adults, it parallels young adult romance novels in many ways. Her work is 30 years old, yet may still reflect what is presented in contemporary romance novels, and will therefore be a large source for this analysis.

Radway (1984) posits that various types of romance novels draw in different types of audiences, and certain genres such as historical romances provide readers with a more independent and defiant main character. These historical romances may attract younger readers who are more in tune and supportive of changing gender roles. Radway (1984) uses theories of gender roles and patriarchy to explain the relationship between the male and female character within the novel. She offers that love stories are often the exploration of what patriarchy means for women. The stories are therefore concerned with the idea that men possess and can exercise power, and that the novel aims to examine the situation of the women and allow her ways to cope (1984:75). This is reflected with how the readers respond to the relationships and characterization within the novel.

For the most part, readers want their female character to be intelligent, independent and have a sense of humour (1984:77). The female protagonist is often differentiated from other females in the novel by possessing a higher level of intelligence and an “extraordinarily fiery disposition” (1984:123). The heroine is also very beautiful (though usually unaware of this), yet described as straying away from being feminine, which is important for the story due to her willingness not to succumb to the control of men, nor to be silenced by them (1984:124). Eventually, however, the female is portrayed as having traditional female characteristics such as compassion, understanding and kindness. These are important for the storyline in order to transform the man into becoming emotionally dependent on the woman (1984:127). Thus, as much as the character tries to be equal to men, and not so feminine, it is always her feminine qualities which seem to make the men fall in love with them.

When the male character is near the female character, she is overcome with how her body is responding to him, she cannot control it, and as Radway (1984) puts it, she is “inevitably

‘awakened’ by his ‘probes’” (126). The female character is dismayed and surprised at the reaction of her body, and the fact that she appears to have no control over it. These issues of the body are centered on her lack of control, but also how the male bodies are characterized as being purely sexual. The attractive male body cannot simply be described as muscular, but as being the epitome of all maleness (126-128). This allows the female body to be considered out of control, submitting her sexuality to the male who becomes the embodiment of everything male and sexual. This becomes dangerous when the female has doubts about him, and even though he seems to be showing her a more gentle side, she is still unsure about what he wants. While the males have all had previous sexual encounters, which are said to mean nothing, the young female heroine has never been with anyone else (126). Combining her lack of sexual knowledge, a body that she cannot control, feelings she is unsure about, and a typical “love-hate” relationship (65) in the storylines and the novel has created confusion over the female body. These stories also then depict male power and control over the heroine, allowing her to believe that her feminine qualities will tame his wild manliness. Though this applies more with love stories that end in marriage, many of the themes that Radway discusses may relate to contemporary YA paranormal romance novels.

Within Radway’s (1984) novel, patriarchy is used at length to interpret and present romance novels and both an escape from, as well as a demonstration of patriarchy. Radway expresses that romance novels are about women exploring the meaning of patriarchy, where power is carried and used by men. Not only are patriarchal meanings explored within the novel by men using power, but also by displaying women as being truly feminine by possessing nurturing skills (1984: 75;127). Also expressed within Radway’s analysis of patriarchy, is its association with female sexuality within the novels. She explores that while female sexuality is

present within the novels, is it always done so in a manner which replicates the unchallenged understandings of female sexuality as something repressed (1984: 143). So, while female sexuality is explored within the novels, it is still only being understood as what is being allowed and controlled by understandings within patriarchy.

Romance novels for women help capture the “*nature of patriarchy and its meaning for them as women*” (1984:149), specifically as social actors who possess little power compared to the men who dominate society. hooks defines patriarchy as the social and political system in which we live in, which places men as dominant and women as subordinate (2004:18). While reading these romance novels, which was often done as a break from household duties, as well as a distraction, may be a way of challenging patriarchy; it is only a challenge within the novels, and not real life. The novels are representations of desire to challenge patriarchy and gender roles, yet only captured between the pages, not within real life actions (1984-212-213). These novels are reflecting frustrations within society about the ideologies with which we live in. While the novels analyzed by Radway are now over 30 years old, I would like to better understand if there have been any changes in the past 30 years about the representations within the novels, and whether the additive of paranormal beings as also produced changes.

The above concepts of Janice Radway’s analysis can still be applied to the romance novels of today; even those geared towards teens. While the following literature on paranormal romance novels incorporates themes of beasts and paranormal creatures, the majority of present themes are still those presented by Radway (1984). I will argue that contemporary romance novels continue to capture the direct frustrations of women about living in a patriarchal society. While typical romance novels are often read by adults, this emerging genre of paranormal romance novels, when stripped away of their beasts and teenagers, may still be presenting the

same facts that Radway (1984) presented about 30 year old romance novels. Authors Singer (2011) and Younger (2009) also focus on the messages found in young adult novels. Singer (2011) focuses on the power relations found in children's novels. He argues that the novels reflect inequalities and represent issues surrounding gender stratification. Younger (2009) focuses on the body images and messages about female sexuality found in young adult novels. She found that many young adult novels do indeed feature elements of female sexuality that presents female desire and pleasure as normal. However, the relevance of these paranormal romance novels as their own separate genre may be their representation of female sexuality as something only seen in relation to masculinity.

Paranormal fiction novels include fantasy elements mixed with other versions of reality, and are one of the most popular and appealing genres (Scott, 2013). The characters are often those pulled from horror stories such as demons, vampires, and ghosts. Recently, many books have been written on vampires and werewolves, where readers are avidly involved with the dark characters who are often posing danger to those around them, yet who also provide love. According to Kaplan (2012), these novels appeal to the "dark side of human nature". Examples of these books are the *Twilight* series (Stephanie Meyer), the *Fallen* series (Lauren Kate), the *Vampire Diaries* (L.J. Smith), the *House of Night* (P.C. Cast), and the *Wolves of Mercy Falls* series (Maggie Steifvater) (Kaplan, 2012:26-27). Danger and love are packaged together in these novels. This research project seeks to deconstruct how masculinity is used within these novels to create a dangerous scene for young women.

Part of the appeal of these novels to many readers is the non-humans such as vampires and werewolves, who make the novels more exciting. The characters are usually described as dark, dangerous and exciting, beyond handsome, and they are all eternally youthful and

incredibly rich (Merskin, 2011). Often teenagers, especially young women, who are the least powerful (Younger, 2009) are depicted as vulnerable, as they acquire new bodies and deal with shifting emotions and identities. Because young women are often struggling with their self-esteem and appearance, they are often enticed by a beautiful non-human male is attracted to an ordinary girl (Merskin, 2011:164-168). Using the vulnerability young women feel, along with the constant pressure put on them to be in a relationship, these novels draw young female readers in by providing dangerous young men (Firminger, 2008:269). The young men may be what initially draw young readers in, however, once they begin reading, the strong and independent young women in the novel may be providing them with inspiration instead of just romantic thoughts.

Masculinity within paranormal fiction is often portrayed as hegemonic. Since the male characters are embodying immortal beings, they are also portrayed as being able to embody every masculinity from past to present. The male characters within paranormal romance fiction often put themselves at risk to save a female character, or offer the young ingénues mental and physical support (Mukherjea, 2011). Although masculinity continues to be desired, Mukherjea (2011) argues that through the portrayal of male vampire characters, such as Edward, provides an acknowledgement of the oppressive forms of masculinity. Vampires, such as Edward in *Twilight* often demonstrate dissatisfaction towards male dominance over women, and thus ultimately reject sexism. She also explains that these paranormal characters must simultaneously be strong to protect the female character, yet also be sensitive and soft. Within the novels, men are depicted as trying to be perfectly in control of their sexuality and themselves. This notion of control is central to many theories of masculinity for real men (Connell, 2005 & hooks, 2004),

which explain that the central ideology for men is that they are supposed to be in control of their sexuality and emotions at all times.

Mukherjea (2011) posits that the masculinity within the novel changes directly as a result of the rejection of emphasized femininity in these novels. Because women are increasingly portrayed as strong, paranormal male partners are presented as offering all the preferred types of masculinity, without the threat of violence to women. Hegemonic masculinity is related directly to violence, but if hegemonic masculinity is no longer used, because hegemonic femininity is no longer used, then violence will be less present. Mukherjea argues that "...the issues most at stake in these stories, then, is not the uneasy instability of changing *masculinity* but of changing *femininity*" (19). This quote demonstrates that Mukherjea's understanding of how masculinity changes, is firstly dependent on whether femininity has changed. Whether this notion of lack of violence is true is very important, because it takes into account the question of what types of masculinity are being offered to the female readers, and why they are being consumed and offered to them.

However, Mukherjea's work is a starting point, since she only looks at vampires in paranormal romance, from older shows/books such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and *The Vampire Diaries*, and the contemporary phenomenon of *Twilight* (Meyers, 2005). Stemming from her work, my research will broaden this area by extending to other versions of paranormal romance characters such as angels, demons, fairies, witches and werewolves. It will also look at contemporary and popular fiction that were published no later than 2007 (ongoing series) to find out whether or not these male characteristics that Mukherjea mentioned really do permeate many of the present paranormal romance novels. While vampires are still very popular in this genre of novel, they have always dominated the research, movies and stories. It is important to look

beyond vampires to see if all fantasy characters provide the same characteristics or if they provide something new and challenging. Vampires have always had similar characteristics and storylines, and other paranormal beings may provide alternative versions to gender constructions within the novels.

Although Mukherjea suggests that the role of the young men within the paranormal genre allow for changing masculinities, Ormond (2008) believes that they are actually not offering alternative forms of masculinity. In her exploration of the weeping alpha male within paranormal romance fiction, she argues that many women are drawn to the dynamic of a strong alpha male who contains a sensitive side. This is similar to research done in the 1970's examining romance novels, where women were argued to seek out the sensitive side of men Radway (1978). Ormond expresses that masculinity is changeable and adaptive, with ideologies merging from various forms of masculinity such as medieval chivalry to today's hero identity. This makes the male characters strong, yet also capable of sensitivity, which appeals to today's society and readers. She constructs further questions of how these ideals of both strong and sensitive come together within the romantic relationship of the characters, as well as how it effects the construction of masculinity (Ormond, 2008:5-6). Schell (2007) links men's predatory nature to contemporary paranormal romance fiction:

“The alpha male has provided the writers of contemporary romances with a way to retain the domineering hero of bygone days while simultaneously updating the heroine to reflect the sensibilities of modern women, who apparently no longer relish the fantasy of being ignorant, helpless children. Romance heroines are now often competent, sexually experienced adults; the conflict in the plot derives from the clash between the heroine's up-to-date values and the hero's instinctive dominance behavior” (Schell, 2007:17-18)

Schell is arguing that the way alpha males are now written provides writers with a strong female character, while still retaining a strong male character as well. Much of the storyline is therefore

coming from the woman not wanting the man to constantly step in or tell her what to do. This may mean that the novels are actually incorporating changing female gender roles while still maintaining traditional male roles.

Although there has been work critiquing *Twilight* (Meyers, 2005) by multiple authors (Taylor, 2011; Myers, 2009; Mukherjea, 2011; Merskin, 2011; Mercer, 2010), I am building upon their work because there have been many more paranormal romance fiction novels written for young adults since *Twilight*. The work from the above authors has been used to examine themes of violence within the relationship in the novel. The importance and relevance of my research is to see how female sexuality is depicted in relation to hegemonic masculinity, and if patterns found in the *Twilight* series are more generally found in more current paranormal romance novels.

While much of the focus has been placed specifically on masculinity and femininity, by the authors cited above, I believe it should be looked at more broadly. Following the work of Janice Radway (1984) and her conception of the part of patriarchy within romance novels, this idea needs to be brought forth once again for further consideration. While the authors cited above discuss the impact of having male alpha characters, or alternative male characters, it all comes down to the foundational lens through which we must observe these events, which is patriarchy. While ideas of romance and the predatory nature of men have been explored above, I believe it should be tied into patriarchy, which should lend a different conclusion than the works of previous authors. While it is important to see what gender roles and characteristics are, or are not changing within the novels, it is equally important that it is demonstrated in such a way as to clearly show why. Our understanding of gender representations are confined within the discourse of patriarchy through which our society is structured upon. Taking into account these discourses

allows for a better perception into how female sexuality and the relationships between masculinity and femininity are being presented within the novels.

### *Romance Novels and Representations of Gender Relations*

In this section, I will demonstrate the debate about what messages young adult romance novels provide. While some authors argue that contemporary romance novels provide young women with alternatives to their lives, besides just seeking a boy; other authors say that these romance novels continue to provide patriarchal understandings to young women. As well, this section explores the conversation regarding the type of men characterized within the novels.

Printed media is a large source that provides young adults with messages about sexuality. These depictions are among a multitude of messages young adults receive about sexuality. They are, therefore, an integral part of their socialization into sexuality. Print media, however, tend to present masculinity in reductive terms. For example, within teen magazines, young men are depicted as potential providers for romance. They are seen as exciting, emotionally inexpressive, highly sexual, good looking and attracted to physically attractive girls. The magazines send competing signals by portraying some young men as potential “bad boys”, but also suggestions for how young women can obtain the “good boys”. Further messages are provided that in order to be happy the young women must beautify themselves in order to retrieve a good looking guy so that they may find themselves in a good heterosexual relationship (Firminger, 2008:269). Young women may be being given the same message regarding being in a heterosexual relationship in young adult novels as well. Printed media is an important source of where young adults get their messages from, and since it is always changing, it is an area of study that needs regular examination.

Young adult paranormal romance fiction focuses on the relationship between a man and a woman, with the majority of novels containing similar types of relationships between the male and female characters. With the recently acclaimed *Twilight* (Meyers, 2005), which has spawned millions of fan, both young and old, have been many more observation about what types of characteristics male personas are providing within novels. Within *Twilight*, Edward can be seen as handsome, mysterious, cold, aloof; somewhat of a Byronic hero in his darkness (Taylor, 2011; Myers, 2009). The same descriptions are given to the Edward in *Jane Eyre*, both of which can be described as a Byronic hero (Myers, 2009:148). These same characteristics can also be classified as “bad boy” characters that women are seen to be drawn to. At times, there can be moments in which we see aspects of sensitivity, when they want to know what their female counterpart is thinking, and when they are insecure about whether their romantic partner actually cares about him (Broyles, 2010). There are many dynamics that can be given to male characters, but further exploration on the representation of young men for young women needs to be examined.

Romance novels directly relate to what bell hooks is saying about male emotion and patriarchy. She says that women want men to express emotion, and participate in the relationship with more emotion, however, men are so disconnected that they are unable to do so (2004:66). Connect this to Radways’ (1984) breakdown of romance novels, where women seek the emotions of the men, as well as to be their emotional outlet and dependent. As well, much of the media demonstrates how men are violent, as well as demonstrating that whenever there are intense emotions, there is also violence. Violent movies that make men appear heroic are only reinforcing the traditions of violence and emotionless capabilities of men, as well as how to dominate women (hooks, 2004:67;71). Within media, there is also a creation of “the other” male as the violent rapists and murderers, which deflects the truth that is it not just the “other” who is

capable of such acts. The messages sent demonstrate that in reality, men cannot escape themselves, and the “beasts within” them (2004:134). This talk of beasts has become a reality for young readers of paranormal romance novels.

Della-Madre believes that young men grow up socially sanctioned into the notion that “boys will be boys”, they view pornography in many areas, and end up objectifying women, often seeing them as sexual objects (della Madre, 2011). The “bad boy” portrayed in media such as films and novels appeal to young women’s desires to attract the best looking boy in school (Merskin, 2011:160). We see young girls being attracted to novels because the male characters are exciting, dangerous and forbidden. When these dangerous and exciting characters are good looking, sexy, resourceful and power vampires, the young girls are drawn to the novels even more so (Merskin, 2011:163). Firminger (2008) states that in the media for young women, they are told that being in a relationship should be their goal in life. They are supposed to attract the bad boys, yet be careful that they find the right guy to be with. These bad boys are spawned from our patriarchal society, which creates men who distance themselves from their emotions, including love. In the media we are pushing young women to want young men who are incapable of returning feelings of love (hooks, 2004). These relationships that young people create then consist of confusion and rage. As hooks (2004) points out, young women refuse to give up on the young man, since she is told she should be able to fix him. The messages given to both young women and young men regarding men’s feelings have the effect of creating and sustaining abusive relationships (hooks, 2004).

A majority of YA romance novels present the female as being unwhole and unhappy if she does not have a male in her life. Other YA romance however, portrays young women as using the relationship with the male to find self-definition and discovery. The romance allows

her to become independent and detach herself from her family. It allows the relationship to be seen as part of her, yet separate in a way that it is not the center of her being (Younger, 2009). This provides a positive view of YA romance novels, yet not all of them consist of this forward thinking. Radway (1984) identifies that the relationship found in romance novels consists of the woman trying to uncover the emotions of the man. The novels usually start out with the characters mistrustful of each other, yet as they grow closer, he begins to open up to her, which makes her fall in love with him. Tied in with a submissive female and a dominant male; his emotional dependence on the female makes it okay that he has a violent side. She is supposed to stay in the relationship and support him, because he needs her, and she is told she needs him. These notions are certainly present in young adult paranormal romance novels, yet much of the previous literature on the subject of masculinity within paranormal romance novels consists of authors only looking at the *Twilight* series (Broyles, 2010; Mercer, 2010; Merskin, 2011; Mukherjea, 2011; Myers, 2009; Taylor, 2011).

The above literature demonstrates a conversation that places romance novels within a debate about the understandings of masculinity, and how it affects young women. These novels not only draw perceptions of the expected relationship young women have to men, but those limited expectations we are giving young men to be anything but aggressively masculine.

### ***Chapter 3: Theory***

#### *Patriarchal Power-What is Patriarchy*

In order to explore the representations of sexuality in contemporary paranormal teenage novels and how it reproduces and challenges gender inequalities; a better understanding of the ideology that is patriarchy and its power must first be understood. I situate female sexuality within the novels in the context of a changing patriarchal society. I question, indeed, what is changing about gendered power relations and what stays the same. I define patriarchy as literally translated as “rule by the father”, specifically implying that society is under the rule of the male. Patriarchy also “*designates societies or situations in which men play the dominant roles.*” (Calhoun, 2002:357). Patriarchy creates and allows for a society where men are dominant, and unable to feel love. This also creates frustration in the women who are unable to be in a relationship where love is reciprocated. Although women may be frustrated, they continue to raise their own sons under the context that they should learn to hide their emotions at a young age.

I argue that representations of female sexuality are therefore being understood only within the structured understandings that have been given to us through patriarchy. The relevance of these novels is then, that they must be looked at through a lens of patriarchal understandings, and what that means for the female reading audience. These novels as a newer genre growing in popularity, present much about female sexuality and their struggle for power. While the young women within the novels are given physically stronger characteristics, their struggle for power and understanding is still present within the novels. Radway (1984) has presented the ways that past romance novels have connected to patriarchy, connecting the real world to the world of literature. Whether the currently published teen romances have changed at

all, remains to be seen. Patriarchy is an ideology that allows for particular representations of masculinity, and its relationship to femininity.

Patriarchy produces images of men as naturally violent and emotionless. This creates a yearning for women to want a romance with a domineering, “take-control”, strong man (2004:13). hooks defines patriarchy as:

“a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence.” (2004:18)

Patriarchy is responsible for instilling and enforcing masculine traits that are a threat to the health of men, and a threat to the wellbeing of women. Men are forced to shut down any emotions, and instead adopt rage and violence (hooks, 2004; Kilmartin, 2010:162-163). This in turn creates an acceptance that that is who men are, and what women should learn to deal with and to be attracted to.

This patriarchal thinking is not just taught to boys, but to girls as well. Both men and women in society have accepted these “patriarchal attitudes” and adopted them into their lives (2004:23). Although patriarchy allows men to feel successful and powerful, it is not the same as allowing them emotions. Patriarchy denies men the capacity to feel a full range of emotions. Although they may be permitted some emotions at a very young age, they are socialized over the years to keep their feelings inside which can result in rage and violence (2004:31). Relating to violence, patriarchy makes it okay that “all boys are being raised to be killers”, which is hidden within the appropriate gender expectations of men. Raising a boy to perform traditional masculinity under patriarchy is not just done by the father, but the mother as well. This is simply

how boys are socialized; unfortunately this socialization leads to violence against women, as well as violence against other men.

Patriarchy is the ideological structure that our society is based upon. What upholds that structure, are the roles of masculinity; particularly the roles of hegemonic masculinity. I understand masculinity as the expected roles that continue to place men as dominant and women as subordinate within everyday transactions. Important authors whose focus is on masculinity are hooks (2004) and Connell (2000;2005). bell hooks' (2004) book *The Will To Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* captures the ways in which patriarchy affects the lives of young men in negative way, which in turn affects the lives of women. Connell (2005) defines hegemonic masculinity as”

“the configuration of gender practices which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guaranties the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (77).

Hegemonic masculinity is established by its claim to “embody the power of reason”. Hegemonic masculinity is the most desired and honoured form of masculinity (Connell, 2000:10). It is not always that hegemonic masculinity is associated with violence (2005:164). Masculinity is often seen in relation to structures of power that place women as subordinate to men. It also places masculinity as the symbolic difference and opposition of masculinity and femininity (2005:223). Therefore, hegemonic masculinity is defined as the direct opposite of femininity. While most people believe that men act the way they do because of their biology, such as testosterone, that is simply not the case. Masculinity, within our society is organized around social power that provides access. If a man fails in one area of power, they are likely to resort to another, such as sports, aggression, or sex (Connell, 2000:137). Hegemony allows for a successful claim to authority, and while violence is not always associated with hegemonic masculinity, it is often a

support for authority (Connell, 2005:237). These associations of masculinity and its role in authority is what upholds patriarchal power.

Violence is often seen as something natural for men. hooks (2004:55) associates violence not with men directly as natural perpetrators of violence, but with the expectations of our “dominator culture”. It is not only men that commit acts of violence, but women in the positions that men normally take are committing similar acts of violence. Therefore, it is not the man that is violent, but the expectations imposed on masculine roles from a patriarchal society. However, as hooks (2004:55) points out, people are convinced it is biology that makes men violent, and consequently it is seen as something natural instead of something changeable. Boys have been told at some point that in order to demonstrate their masculinity, they must become violent (hooks, 2004:60). In cases of male violence, it is assumed testosterone is the culprit, and that men and boys cannot help but be violent (Connell, 2000:215). Connell expresses that for men and boys, it is their bodies’ ability to commit violence that makes them masculine. Their body and how it is constructed is an extension of their masculinity and sense of self (2000:218). In this understanding, masculinity and violence become one in the same thing, neither escapable from the other. Violence is therefore one of the main components of masculinity.

While masculinity may contain core components, Connell (2005) also believes that masculinity is plural. Connell (2000) believes that tension and conflict is a source which allows masculinity to become reconstructed. This tension is a result of changes in society and gender expectations, where hegemonic masculinity is now conflicting with other expectations. Although there are multiple forms of masculinity that are played out, unfortunately most people believe that masculinity is something natural and real due to the media’s focus on violent, stoic forms of masculinity (Connell, 2005:15). This may also lead to patriarchy to be thought of as a natural

form of society, specifically when ideas of the biological nature of men are left unchallenged. There are various relations between different types of masculinity, such as dominant and subordinate, and hegemonic masculinity does not always have total control (2005:37). Although there may be capacity to change, most people still believe in rigid forms of performance. As discussed by Connell (2005), most people insist that men and women are born into acting the way they do, this is known as sex role theory. This idea can hinder the possibility of change to roles that are less oppressive for both for men and women. Men are seen as naturally masculine, where masculinity is seen to exude from their bodies, and therefore they are the way they are. The same goes for women; women are passive because they are the ones to whose bodies change for childbirth, once again creating a link between bodies and “natural” gender. When men are socialized through the discourse of patriarchal ideologies to act aggressive, impulsive and uncaring, just because of the genitalia they were born with, makes it difficult for them to understand that those are not the only options out there for how to act (Kilmartin, 2010). However, if the messages being sent within the media to both men and women are that men are tough, then they will never know any different.

#### *Link between masculinity and femininity*

Gender, typically defined as male or female in Western culture, are the culturally dependent roles that have been given to presumed sex bodies. Gender is often seen as a performance, establishing the expectations for men and women. It is the directions we are given about to become and how to perform the roles assigned to us as social actors (Butler, 2004; 1990: 8-11). Connell (2005:71) describes gender as an arena of social practice, where our life is organized around sexual reproduction and our bodies. Although our gender behavior may change in certain situations, it is always based on ideal forms, which are hegemonic masculinity, and

emphasized femininity (Spade & Valentine, 2008:155). Gender, and the beliefs associated with gender statuses are what lead to inequality (Ridgeway, 2011). The statuses that we have given to men and women as characteristics of their gender have led to inequalities and stereotypes. Ridgeway (2011:196) takes into focus how gender beliefs structure general competence, and how this gender status will not change unless the cultural notions surrounding the ideas of competence also change. The stereotypes created are shared and encouraged by so many. Even when certain individuals around us change and bend expectations, and we ourselves have set aside gender stereotype, we still rely on them as a script for interacting with the world. These stereotypes take longer to change than it does people's actual behavior (Ridgeway, 2011). These stereotypes relate most to sex role theory, where most people are comfortable with assuming others around them act the way they are supposed to, based on their genitals. The scripts that follow these gender stereotypes are part of the media, and may also be part of popular literature.

Recently gender theorists state that hegemonic masculinity is always defined in relation to femininity, and that there is not much meaning of masculinity without taking into consideration notions of emphasized femininity (Korobov, 2011; Messerschmidt, 2012). Messerschmidt (2012:64) posits that in order for there to be hegemonic masculinity, there must be women who perform emphasized femininity. Hegemony, developed by Gramsci (1971), refers to the cultural ideals that the dominant class defines as the most appropriate and sensible, that are then adopted through the rest of society. Gramsci (1971) argued that dominant classes use the power of hegemony to control economic and political spheres (Gregory & Halfp, 2013:418). Hegemonic masculinities are deemed hegemonic when they have the power to legitimate hierarchical relations of various masculinities, as well as relations between genders. Hegemonic masculinity upholds patriarchy. It consists of being non-nurturing, independent,

assertive, and unemotional (Kilmartin, 2010; Connell, 2005). Other forms of masculinity such as dominant (widespread masculinity) or dominating (exercising power and control) are not considered hegemonic masculinities because they do not have a direct influence to legitimize patriarchy, and set up hierarchical relations (Messerschmidt, 2012:72-73). Various types of these masculinities, including hegemonic, dominating and dominant may be found in the novels, and this literature is helpful to decipher which type of masculinity is actually being presented (if it is at all).

As Bean and Harper (2007:13) argue that, masculinity is always understood in relation to something else, particularly in relation to bodily practices of men (Connell, 2005; Bean & Harper, 2007). These bodily practices include sport, and other activities that evoke power. However, what happens to these positions of power when others are stepping in? If masculinity is always relational, then what does it become when women step into these powerful spheres? Korobov (2011) argues that the shift for women over the last number of decades away from highly feminized roles placed young men in vulnerable positions. The young men are no longer able to rely on traditional masculinities. Traditional masculinity is only effective in relation to emphasized femininity, and if it is no longer being played, then men often resort to alternative forms of masculinity.

While Connell (2005) explores hegemonic forms of masculinity-those dominant forms of masculinity that every man should thrive for- there has not been much study on what happens when this dominant form is being interrupted or invaded. As Allen (2007) demonstrates, the young men find themselves adopting different masculinities depending on situations. In the case of Allen's (2007) research, a lot of that change results from romance. The men are often adopting various forms of masculinity when they attempting to be romantic. Masculinity is changing

because it has to through the adoption of different femininities, even more so in circumstances of romance.

The idea of plural masculinities allows for an understanding of masculinity as being formed from the past, and from the present (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2012:578-579). Some men resist forms of macho masculinity, and are instead adopting irony and nonchalance. Resistance to traditional masculinity often starts in early adulthood; it is the time when they start to develop changes to their identity. Men adopt forms of nontraditional masculinity, and instead take on ordinary and nonheroic roles. When men are rejected by women, they take on self-deprecating, humorous and non-chalant roles (Korobov, 2009:287; 2011:54-58). Author Allen (2007) believes that young men present a new heterosexual masculinity through romance. This is due to young women's increasing demand for emotion from young men. This "new" masculinity combines the hard masculine traits, with emotional romance (150). This may be what we are seeing within the paranormal romance novels. A mixture of traditional masculinity, combined with well-placed emotions allows readers to connect both to the relationship and to the young men they are told to desire. Also, Messerschmidt (2012) connects Connell's theories of hegemonic masculinities, and emphasizes that hegemonic masculinity only has real meaning in its relation to emphasized femininity. Paranormal romance novels may be taking away emphasized femininity, and what is left for masculinity in the novels must be understood.

Examining power relations and privileges for males when it comes to intimate relationships is important when looking at romance fiction, to see the power dynamics between the male characters and the female characters. Rubinstein-Avila (2007) does not believe that the young female protagonists within young adult novels challenge patriarchy because they still end up marrying the male character and conforming to patriarchal goals. However, the female

protagonist may still be challenging their femininity. By being portrayed as “gutsy”, “independent” and “strong” characters, they may be defying a patriarchal sense of femininity. de Beauvoir says women have been haunted this sense of femininity because of their constant reminder of being fragile and emotional (2007:253). If women have been haunted, or drawn down by their efforts to attain this sense of femininity, perhaps through the stronger characters within novels today, they are pushing back those characteristics of femininity and adopting new ones, even if they are not necessarily challenging patriarchy. The one question is however, if females characters in novels are challenging their ideals of femininity (although not necessarily patriarchy), are male characters also challenging ideals of masculinity within popular novels?

Discourse is looked at as the individuals and language that link aspects of power to the reproductive forces that uphold institutions (Calhoun, 2002:125-126). In the case of patriarchy, the characteristics of gender are the discourses through which patriarchy is upheld. As gender is a discourse of patriarchy, it helps both “transmit and produce”, as well as reinforce power (Foucault, 1978:101). The construction of femininity and masculinity within the novels is a discourse which inserts itself into a conversation of patriarchal ideologies. This also allows me to see whether change has or has not occurred, as well as how it does, within the novels. Within novels, the discourse of patriarchy through gender and sexuality is explored through both the author and the reader. Novels can either challenge the discourse, or continue to perpetuate it. Through the analysis of these novels within the discourses through which patriarchy is upheld, I aim to discover if paranormal romance novels present challenges to the notions of patriarchy, or whether they continue to perpetuate it. If the novels continue to provide understandings of female sexuality that is something constrained and dominated by men, then the novels are maintaining the discourses through which patriarchy is reinforcing its power.

### *Present Romance Novels*

The concerns that have spread since *Twilight* over the messages provided to young girls, I believe, is extended to notions of patriarchy, masculinity, and female sexuality. This particular genre is attracting many readers, as well as movie producers. These novels help to further explore patriarchy due to the struggles that the young women are facing within them. Whether symbolically or literally, the young women within the novels may represent the seeming advancement within feminism by being given paranormal strength, yet seem to continually struggle with their outside world, as well as the understandings of their bodies. These novels may give light to the idea that while women may be gaining some power, they are still living their lives through patriarchal lenses. While society has seemingly changed since Radway's (1984) analysis of romance novels, there should be at least something remarkably different about these novels. The present research on aspects of female sexuality and its relation to the portrayals of masculinity seeks to explore if these novel do anything to disrupt past ideas on female sexuality and masculinity.

### ***Chapter 3: Methodology***

Analyzing female sexuality within paranormal romance novels, particularly its relation to masculinity, is the focus of this research. Qualitative methods have been used in order to get a larger and inductive understanding of the themes within the novels. Qualitative methods help researchers grasp the complexities of the construction of masculinity. Bean and Harper (2007) say that when thinking and learning about the construction of masculinity, one must also think about its construction and relation to femininity, as well as other social differences, such as class, age, race, and ethnicity. Bean and Harper (2007) posed several questions at the end of their research on alternative portrayals of masculinity in young adult novels, and demonstrate the need to explore other genres of novels to find out whether masculinity is presented in different ways. Bean and Harper's article provides a starting point in opening up view of masculinity from not only young adult novels in general, but various types of genres within the area of literature. Their research also demonstrates that the majority of the research on the genre of paranormal romance novels has mostly just included *Twilight* (Meyers, 2005).

In order to analyze how female sexuality is being presented within the novels, a content analysis was used. In general, a content analysis is a formal way to analyze and quantify the meanings in texts. It is the evaluation of words and phrases, and can include areas such as styles, themes, ideologies, and other media forms (Calhoun, 2002:92). For this study, a content analysis of ten paranormal romance novels was performed. Specifically, a grounded theory coding analysis was used. Flick (2009) demonstrates that grounded theory allows the interpretation of the data to be dependent on the sampling of the literature. Interpretation is the deciding factor of which data will be used, and how it is used in the analysis (Flick, 2009:306). Grounded coding also allows the categorization of the data into groups that are formed upon the recovery of the

data, specifically how it relates to the research question. Open coding allows for a wider variety of notes, codes, and categories relating to the text (309-310). This specific method of open grounded analysis allows for a deeper understanding and knowledge that goes beyond simply summarizing (317). Using open coding while reading the novels allowed myself as the researcher to collect as much data from the novels as possible in order to see patterns that had developed across the genre.

The drawback of this method is that the coding and interpretation is subjective. The data, and it's analysis has been chosen based on the research question, which allows for specificity, but this can be seen as both a positive and negative thing. Since the coding is directly based off of the research questions and is more open, it allows for a better understanding of the themes and representations of the novel. It allows a better relation of the general theory used to determine what types of masculinity are being presented in the novels. Through an open grounded analysis, I explore what aspects of the novel make it a paranormal romance novel, how masculinity is constructed, it's relation to femininity, and how sexuality is constructed in the novels. This openness allows me to construct my own analysis, go deeper into the understanding of the novel, and see how everything fits together. As there were no human participants involved in the study, ethical clearance is not required.

### *Sampling*

Paranormal romance novels are a subgenre among the popular novels available for young adults and their availability has been growing increasingly. Kaplan (2012) provides examples of novels derived from different genres that are available to young adults, particularly paranormal romance novels. Kaplan's (2012) novel *The Changing Face of Young Adult Literature* explores

the genres and themes within contemporary young adult novels, and is therefore one of the leaders in young adult novel research. Some of his suggestions have been included in my own research, such as P.C. Cast's *House of Night*, and Maggie Steifvater's *Wolves of Mercy Falls*. These novels, under his section of paranormal romance literature, are described as series that fascinate the public with teenagers who enjoy tempting fate, while simultaneously appealing to the mysterious and dark side of human nature (27). The novels sampled for this research were chosen based on their inclusion in the category of paranormal romance literature, while also appearing on the New York Times Bestseller list. The books and an overview of pertinent characteristics of the novels sampled are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic Novel Information

Novel	Author name	Publisher	Date of publication	Gender of Author	Age range for readers	Gender of main character	Age of main character
Hush, Hush	Becca Fitzpatrick	Simon & Schuster	2009	Female	14+	Female	16
The Iron King	Julie Kagawa	Harlequin Teen	2010	Female	12+	Female	16
Nightshade	Andrea Cremer	Philomel	2010	Female	14+	Female	17/18
Chosen	P.C Cast and Kristin Cast	St. Martin's Griffin	2007 (ongoing series)	Female	14+	Female	16
Beautiful Creatures	Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl	Little Brown & Company	2009	Female	12+	Male	17
Infinity	Sherrilyn Kenyon	St. Martin's Griffin	2010 (ongoing series)	Female	12+	Male	14
The Fallen & Leviathan	Thomas E. Sniegoski	Simon & Schuster	2003	Male	16+	Male	18
Anna Dressed in blood	Kendare Blake	Tor Teen	2011	Female	13+	Male	17/18

Shiver	Maggie Steifvater	Scholastic Inc.	2009	Female	13+	Female and Male	17 and 18
City of Bones	Cassandra Clare	Simon Pulse	2007 (ongoing series)	Female	14+	Female and Male	15 and 16

Male narration and men as primary characters are being analyzed to allow a broader understanding of the construction of gender within the novels. First person narration allows for inner thoughts about their emotions, as well as how the characters act and think in certain situations. This also allows further insight into the creation of male thoughts in the novels. This was helpful to compare whether the construction of gender in the paranormal novels was different between first person views of males and females, due to the theoretical difference that on the outside men need to be stoic and inexpressive (Kilmartin, 2010; Connell, 2005), yet they may actually have feelings side. The young women present the young men as unemotional in their first person narration. However in the first person narration by the young men, there is a demonstration of male inner emotional thoughts.

### *Method of Analysis*

I acknowledge that this methodology is subject to interpretation of literature; however, using a clear structure as to the purpose of analyzing the novels will improve the reliability, as well as the validity of my analysis. By using charts, both Appendix A and Table 1, other researchers can follow the same pattern of novels used, as well, the detail of the novels found in Appendix A allows for consistency across the sampled novels. The validity of the research lies with using relevant theory, and applying it to the information found in the sampled novels. Over the course of a few months, each novel was analyzed the same way. Coloured post-it sticky paper and pens were used to highlight sections. Pink was for aspects of femininity, green for

aspects of masculinity, yellow for sexuality, orange for violence, and blue for extra/other. Once I finished each book, I went through the books again, typing out all the quotes by theme. This allowed a second view of the literature, as well as a hard copy of the themes that could be read over multiple times. Grouping the quotes based on themes from each novel allowed to view the patterns, as well as the consistent overlap in expressions and language used. In a separate document, I noted the name and gender of each author, the publisher, published date, as well as basic information about narration, as shown above in Table 1.

Within the general themes of masculinity, I looked at how the male characters were described, whether they shared their emotions; their bodily reactions; as well as their violent reactions. The same criteria were used to examine femininity. Violence was examined in terms of general physical and verbal violence, which characters it took place between, and how the character felt about it. Sexuality was described as any sexual, physical contact between the characters-who initiated, what language was used, emotions, bodily reaction, and roles (dominant/submissive) the characters played. In Appendix A, a detailed sheet can be found which contains the names of the characters in the novel, and types of paranormal beings found within the novel. Also, contains extra thoughts/comments, as well as sexual activity. The following findings section groups the quotes by themes, and will be followed by a discussion section relating my findings to the literature and theory.

## *Chapter 5: Findings*

Paranormal romance novels help us document shifting ideologies of gender in contemporary popular culture. I will present the narratives of the romance novels under study and then outline how gender, sexuality and violence are presented in the novels. I will show that definitions of femininity-and of women's sexuality-are changing. Female characters often reject emphasized femininity, express sexual desire and are presented as strong. Definitions of hegemonic masculinity, however, seem to rely on a contradiction: male characters are expected to be gentlemen who protect female characters, all while posing a threat to the latter. In chapter 5, I will discuss what these findings mean for our understanding of masculinity.

The findings are based on the methodology above, approaching how themes of female sexuality are presented in paranormal romance novels for young adults- as well as the relationship between masculinity and femininity. The themes presented will begin with characteristics of femininity; it is important to begin with it in order to compare its effect on masculinity. Secondly, characteristic of masculinity will be demonstrated. The themes on gender are followed by findings of sexuality and violence within the novels. To begin, a breakdown of what each novel was about will be given. Each novel presented itself with different plot lines, characters, and paranormal monsters. Although they all share their genre, and demonstrate similar patterns and themes in terms of masculinity, femininity, sexuality and violence, the following are the plot lines for each novel. Beginning with the novels sampled that featured a male as the main character, I examined *Beautiful Creatures*, *Anna Dressed in Blood*, *The Fallen* and *Leviathan*, and *Infinity: Chronicles of Nick*:

- **Beautiful Creatures** (2009) (age 12+) by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl, describes the relationship between a normal boy, Ethan, and female “Caster” Lena. A Caster is somewhat like a witch; able to use magic. While she is coming-of-age and turning 16, she will either turn bad or good. The couple struggle to remain together in a town that is trying to keep them apart. Ethan demonstrates secret alternative masculinities by being the star player on the basketball team, yet hiding his love of reading at home.
- **Anna Dressed in Blood** (2011) (age 13+) by Kendare Blake follows a 17 year old boy, Cas, who kills ghosts. When he travels to Ontario to kill one of the strongest ghosts yet, Anna, he ends up falling in love with her. Secondary characters such as Carmel, the popular girl turned ghost-hunter, demonstrate rejected forms of traditional femininity. Anna ends up using her strength to save everyone else, sacrificing herself for Cas. Cas never realizes his true feelings for her until she has already sacrificed herself for him and is now stuck in another world.
- **The Fallen and Leviathan** (2011) (age 16+) by Thomas E. Sneigoski follows a high school boy who finds out he is half-angel. He also discovers that he has an important destiny to fulfill. He leaves his town, and his love interest, Vilma, behind to go in search of his younger brother. During the whole novel he searches for his brother and discovers his power, yet, doubts his ability to control it, and be strong enough to fulfill his destiny. By the end of the novel he embraces the power inside him, and while still wary of it, wants to learn to control it.
- **Infinity** (2010) (age 12+) by Sherrilyn Kenyon, is about a 14 year old boy Nick, who finds himself in the middle of a zombie invasion. Nick soon finds out he is not who he thinks he is, and that instead of being a regular teenage boy, he is a powerful demon. His

group of friends turn out not to be quite human. He meets a new girl in town, who is also not who she seems. It turns out she was sent there to either make sure he does not become the monster he was born to be, or to kill him if he does. However, upon learning more about him and spending time with him, she develops feelings towards him.

The following novels are the ones sampled that have a female as the main character:

- **Nightshade** (2010) (age 14+) by Andrea Cremer, follows high school student, werewolf and alpha pack leader Calla. Calla is supposed to marry Ren, another alpha leader. However, with the help of an outsider, and her love interest Shay, she discovers that she no longer trusts the system she has been living in. She leaves her pack behind to try and have a chance to save them from their Keepers. The whole novel focuses on her being torn between the life she should be living with Ren, and the life she wants to live with Shay.
- **Marked** (2007) (age 14+) by P.C Cast and Kristin Cast depicts the over dramatic life of Zoey, a teenager who is vampyre fledgling. She is going to a new school in order to develop into an adult vampyre. She has an ex-boyfriend who will not stop following her around, as well as a new vampire crush. Together with her new friends, they take down the evil queen-bee of the school, as well as prove that Zoey is the most powerful fledgling at the school.
- **Hush, Hush** (2009) (age 14+) by Becca Fitzpatrick. While the title should speak for itself, this story follows a teen who thinks she is being stalked by a new boy at her school. This boy turns out to be a fallen angel, who wanted to kill her in order to get himself back into heaven. However, upon falling in love with her, he decides not to kill her. The novel

centers on her inability to trust the boy, while continually getting harassed, but managing to fall in love with him anyways.

- **The Iron King** (2010) (age 12+) by Julie Kagawa, is about a young, lower class girl, who finds out that she is a fairy princess. Her best friend, Puck, has been protecting her. She is hunted down by the winter court prince Ash, who wants to kill her. However, they end up working together to defeat an evil king, and eventually fall in love.

The last two novels sampled had both the female and male as the main character:

- **Shiver** (2009) (age 13+) by Maggie Steifvater is a love story between 18 year old boy named Sam, who turns into a wolf every winter; and a 17 year old girl named Grace. They met when Grace was attacked by a pack of werewolves, and Sam turned human to save her. They struggle to keep him human as the colder months approach, and team up with a stuck-up classmate, Isabel, who wants to find a cure in order to save her brother, who was bitten. They try meningitis as a means to stop them from turning into wolves, and while it kills Isabel's brother, by the end of the novel, Sam is cured and remains a human.
- **City of Bones** (2007) (age 14+) by Cassandra Clare, is a story about Shadowhunters. Shadowhunters kill demons in order to protect the human world. When 15 year old Clary's mother goes missing, her and her best friend Simon team up with young Shadowhunters to find her. One of the Shadowhunters, Jace, who is dark, dangerous and brooding falls in love with Clary.

These novels have all been analyzed based on the methodology mentioned above. The findings present similar themes in terms of gender, and themes of sexuality and violence. While novels such as *Hush, Hush* (2009) and *The Iron King* (2010) present the most violence with their

romance, all the novels incorporate some level of violence. After the themes have been presented, their link to previous literature will be discussed.

## **Female Characteristics**

I've argued that masculinity changes depending on the type of femininity constructed. The two are interconnected. Because of this, I will first analyze femininity. After going through all the characteristics given to the young women in the novels, a number of them were repeated throughout, which are the ones I shall focus on. The following section reveals the repeated characteristics given to the female gender within the novels, specifically a rejection of traditional femininity. The following words are those repeated as adjectives given to the young women in the novels:

- Strong
- Beautiful
- Curvy
- Warrior
- Smart
- Different
- Independent
- Soft

These characteristics were the most pronounced, and they accurately reflect the female characters from the sampled novels. While the word "curvy" may seem slightly out of place, the descriptions used within the novels identified curvy as being a good thing. Characters such as Clary (*City of Bones*), Nora (*Hush, Hush*), and Zoey (*Marked*), were among the most prominent to express depictions of the female body as being curvy and healthy. As Zoey from *Marked* remarks:

“Her body was, well, perfect. She wasn’t thin like the freak girls who puked and starved themselves into what they thought was Paris Hilton chic. ... this woman’s body was perfect because she was strong, but curvy. And she had great boobs. (I wish I had great boobs.)” (Zoey, *Marked*, Page 46).

Male characters remark ways that the female’s clothing touched all the right places:

“As I looked at her, my knees started to buckle, which was starting to become a familiar feeling. She was so pretty it hurt...Lena’s dress fell from her body, clinging to all the right places...” (Ethan, *Beautiful Creatures*, Page 371).

A couple males also remarked specifically about the female’s legs: “Killer skirt, deadly legs” (Patch, *Hush, Hush*, page 183),

“Her long legs exposed as she slid them out from under the covers. So sexy it hurt.” (Sam, *Shiver*, Page 156).

These descriptions of the female body while they may not reflect all young girls, at least provides a healthier impression of the body. The above quotes from the males demonstrate that the female body can cause pain to the male body. This can give young women the impression that they have some control over the male body. Unfortunately, it is through the use of their body as a sexual tool of control. The females are unaware of this, and perhaps the representation in the novel of the male body reacting to the female body is only perpetuating rape culture, in which the male has no control over his body due to the “overt sexiness” of the female body. The fact that they “hurt” can only make me think that their erection is causing them pain due to being confined in their pants.

The word “soft” was used by Nora in *Hush, Hush* to describe herself next to Patch. Clary, in *City of Bones*, remarked that she was too skinny flat to be remarked as beautiful. Those were the only two novels where the females were negative about themselves, but even in the case of Nora, it was more about pointing out her vulnerability next to Patch. As we will see below, each girl does not recognize the fact that she is beautiful. While they may like Nora, point out how long their legs are, none of them realize their own beauty. This lack of knowledge was

mentioned by Radway (1984) as a key element in romance novels. The girls within the novel are seen as different from the rest of the girls surrounding them. This helps construct the romance novel due to their differences and her not being like other girls, is what makes them fall in love. As well, as Radway (1984:123) points out, the girls as being different and lacking female stereotypes also brings readers into the romance novels to begin with.

*Girls as being different:*

Within the romance narratives, what sets these girls apart as being the ones who are fallen in love with is that they are “different” from all the other girls. As Radway (1984) has pointed out, usually there is a drawback from femininity and feminine roles that makes the female character appealing to the readers as well as the male characters. The female character is also unaware of these differences. This was the case for most of the novels, as the following quotes demonstrate:

Most of my classmates already had licenses and could drive themselves to clubs and parties and anywhere they wanted. I was always left behind, the backward hick girl nobody wanted to invite. (*The Iron King*, Page 16).

I wasn't Nora Grey, average girl. I was the descendent of someone who wasn't even human. And my heart was smashing itself to pieces over another nonhuman. A dark angel. (*Hush*, *Hush*, Page 339).

In that instant, he decided that not only was Vilma the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, but also the most real. There were no games with her. She said exactly what was on her mind and he liked that. A lot. (*The Fallen*, Page 183).

“You've never seemed to really need anyone, Clary. You've always been so...contained. (*City of Bones*, Page 303).

She was clutching at her sketchpad, her bright hair escaping out of its braids. He leaned against the door frame, ignoring the kick of adrenaline the sight of her produced. He wondered why, not for the first time. Isabelle used her beauty like she used her whip, but Clary didn't know she was beautiful at all. Maybe that *was* why. (*City of Bones*, Page 324).

I stared back at her. Then, without thinking, I lifted my teeth into a snarl. The growl that escaped from me surprised both me and her, and she jumped down from the window. (*Shiver*, Page 25).

“We’ve got plenty of day left. And it’s nice to see you...*emote*...for once. Instead of being so damn stoic.” (*Shiver*, Page 204).

“Do you own anything beautiful?” She shook the offending T-shirt at me. “Define *beautiful*,” I returned. I swallowed a groan, searching for any clothes I particularly wanted to protect, and sat on top of my Republicans for Voldemort hoodie. “Lace? Silk? Cashmere?” Naomi asked. “Anything that isn’t denim or cotton?” ... I could hear the chime of my mother’s chandelier earrings when she shook her head. “My lovely flower. You can’t hide your assets anymore. You’re a woman now.” With a disgusted grunt I rolled across the bed, out of her reach. “I’m not flower.” I pushed the curtain of hair back behind my shoulders. Free of the brain, it felt cumbersome and heavy.... “Yeah, I know. Finesse. She wants finesse.” I wanted to gag. “And Emile is concerned about what Renier wants,” she said. “What *Ren* wants?” I said, wincing at the shrillness of my voice. My mother lifted one of my bras from the bed. It was plain white cotton—the only kind I owned. “We need to think about preparations. Do you wear *any* decent lingerie?” The burning in my cheeks began again. I wondered if excessive blushing could cause permanent discoloration. (*Nightshade*, Page 17-18).

The above quotes capture that the girls do not present themselves as traditional femininity would have them. Calla rejects emphasized femininity, adopting boyish looks and refusing to wear “girly” clothing. Grace is not emotional as young women are expected to be. The young women in the novel are also not human, already setting them aside as something more interesting and intriguing to the young men. The following quotes capture what Ethan, the male narrator of *Beautiful Creatures*, thinks about his love interest, Lena. She is portrayed as vastly different from all of the other girls at school, which is why he likes her.

The thing they didn’t know what, I wasn’t into girls like Emily. She was pretty, but that was it. And looking at her didn’t make up for having to listen to what came out of her mouth. I wanted someone different, someone I could talk to about something other than parties and getting crowned at winter formal. A girl who was smart, or funny, or at least a decent lab partner. (*Beautiful Creatures*, Page 17).

It wasn’t about how she looked, which was pretty, even though she was always wearing the wrong clothes and those beat-up sneakers. It wasn’t about what she said in class—usually

something no one else would've thought of, and if they had, something they wouldn't have dared to say. It wasn't that she was different from all the other girls at Jackson. That was obvious. It was that she made me realize how much I was just like the rest of them, even if I wanted to pretend I wasn't. (*Beautiful Creatures*, Page 36).

When we pulled up in the Beater, Lena was standing outside in the darkness, in front of the brightly lit theater. She was wearing a purple T-shirt, with a skinny black dress over it that made you remember how much of a girl she was, and trashed black boots that made you forget. (*Beautiful Creatures*, Page 149).

Not only is Lena not human, but she also does not act like the rest of the girls at school. This captures the attention of Ethan, who also sees himself as a bit of an outcast. He is attracted to her for not being the stereotypical girly girl, which he is accustomed to at his school. Radway (1984:123) points out that these non-stereotypical, intelligent female characters are who the male characters fall in love with, which also brings in readers. The young women in the novels as “different” may give the readers knowledge that they do not need to act in the traditional femininity emphasized way to attract a boy.

### *Girls as being strong*

Just as there is evidence of the girls being different and rejecting traditional forms of femininity, they also demonstrate aspects of being strong. Whether it is physical strength, or emotional strength, each character is given the role of heroine.

I couldn't be weak, not anymore. If I was going to have any hope of saving my brother, I couldn't stand in a corner and cry. I had to be strong. (*The Iron King*, Page 239).

Machine regarded me with depthless black eyes. “You are as beautiful as I imagined,” he said, walking forward, his cabled coiling around him. “Beautiful, fiery, determined.” (*The Iron King*, page 339).

But I refused to let Patch think he could intimidate or scare me. I felt an irrational need to defend myself and decided right then and there I wouldn't back down until he did. (*Hush*, *Hush*, Page 14).

I've only had detention once so far, and that wasn't my fault. Really. Some turd boy told me suck his cock. What was I supposed to do? Cry? Giggle? Pout? *Umm...no...So* instead I

bitch-slapped him (although I prefer using the word smacked) and *I* got detention for it. (*Marked*, Page 108).

“Stephen, you might teach her better manners. I expect my alpha females to embody finesse. Naomi has always had the utmost grace in the role.” She continued to watch me, so I couldn’t bare my teeth at her the way I wanted to. *Finesse, my ass. I’m a warrior, not your child bride.*(*Nightshade*, Page 14).

I can hear each fat drop of blood strike the floor. I open my eyes. She’s standing above me, the goddess of death, black lips and cold hands. ... She sets him on his feet. He’s bleeding from the cuts on his face and hands. He takes one step backward. Anna bares her teeth. I hear my voice coming from somewhere else, telling her to stop or just screaming, and Mike doesn’t have any time to scream before she thrusts her hands into his chest, tearing through skin and muscle. (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, Page 77-78).

There’s an edge of protection in her voice. I look at her gratefully, standing by my side in her hopeful white dress. She’s pale and slender, but no one could mistake her for weak. (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, Page 289).

“Why don’t you take me yourself?” I hear her ask. Anna, my strong, terrifying Anna. I want to tell her to watch out, that this thing has tricks up its rotting sleeves. But I can’t. so my mother and I huddle in between this hissing match of the strongest spirits we’ve ever seen. “Cross the threshold, beauty girl,” he says. (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, Page 282)

And then an Amazon comes out of nowhere. Carmel has jumped down the stairs, halfway down the wall. She’s screaming. The Obeahman turns just in time to catch an aluminum bat in the face, and it does more than it did to Anna, maybe because Carmel is way more pissed. It knocks him down into his knees, and she strikes again and again. And she’s the prom queen who thought she wouldn’t do anything. (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, Page 307)

I had Lena. She was powerful and she was beautiful. Every day was terrifying, and every day was perfect. (*Beautiful Creatures*, Page 280).

“How do you think I got a black eye? And for your information, she don’t hit like a girl. She might be from an all-estrogen family, but some dude trained her well.” (*Infinity*, Page 252).

Only she wasn’t the girl he knew who made him laugh and who kissed him on the cheek. She was something else entirely. Dressed in armor, she looked like an ancient warrior, complete with helmet and shield. And a sword she was driving straight through his heart. (*Infinity*, Page 368).

“I told her how brave you’ve been. How she’d be proud of you. Her warrior daughter.” (*City of Bones*, Page 471).

Grace carefully took the keys from me, with not even a hint of fear, though she had to know what was happening. She pulled again; she was stronger than I thought she was. I got to my feet; my height somehow surprised me. (*Shiver*, Page 138-139).

The above quotes encompass a mixture of emotional strength as well as physical strength. The term warrior, which can relate to physical strength, can also apply to the morals and actions that the females have been taking, which can also simply be correlated to emotional strength. There are no instances except for *Anna Dressed in Blood* where a female character actually has the strength and dominates physically over a male character. While Zoey from *Marked* took power over her ex-boyfriend to drink his blood, she did not use physical strength on him.

Each novel presented itself with a female character who possessed the strength to be in the position to save the male character. The only exception to this was Vilma in *The Fallen and Leviathan*, who was not overly present within the novel, and was not in any dangerous scenes. She was also presented as being an ordinary human. While Kody in *Infinity* did not directly save him, she was given the role as his guardian. That each novel has a female hero, while also containing a male character is important in order to analyze the masculinity within the novels. While typically it is the man who is supposed to do the saving, supporting and protecting, there is also now a woman doing those same roles. The outcome of having two heroes in the story, one male and one female, results in an equal alliance. Ethan was the emotional and supportive crutch for Lena, even though she was powerful. He decided most of which action to take. In *Nightshade*, *The Iron King*, *Hush*, *Hush*, *Anna Dressed in Blood*, *Shiver*, and *City of Bones*, there was an equal amount of heroic acts from both the female and male characters. This will be analyzed further in the discussion section. The masculinity within the novels provided both traditional and alternative forms, each resulting in similar relationships with the female characters.

### **Characteristics given to males**

As the above examples of femininity within the novels demonstrate not every novel presented alternatives to femininity, nor did they all present traditional emphasized femininity. However, the majority did present strong female characters. The sampled novels produced

findings on how masculinity was presented in paranormal romance novels for young adults. There were a variety of masculinities presented, and did correspond to the various forms of femininity found in the novels. The following words are those that have been repeated throughout the novels as adjectives given for the young men:

- Lean
- Gorgeous
- Brooding
- Protective
- Dangerous
- Dark
- Predator
- Muscular

Typically within the novels, the young men were all described as tall, lean, and muscular. The bad guys, and some secondary characters, were given descriptions of short and broad. Ren father in *Nightshade*, who was the villain, was given the description of short, big and broad. None of the young men in the novels were ever described as broad and overly muscular. It was always that they were tall and lean. The muscle they had was described as toned, but not large.

“Looking good as always,” he said to me, taking his chair. He leaned back in it, stretching his legs out in front of him. I’d known all along he was tall, but I’d never put a measurement to it. Looking at the length of his legs now, I guessed him to top out at six feet. Maybe even six-one. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 63).

Still, as I’m rolling with my jaw clenched, trying to angle my knife toward the guy’s throat, I wish that I were built more like Will’s football-player physique. My leanness made me agile and quick, and I’m pretty wiry, but when it comes to this up-close-and-personal stuff, it’d be nice to be able to hurl someone across the room. (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, Page 186).

Michelle had said that he reminded her of a boyfriend she’d once had: tall, dark, and brooding, the first of many to break her heart. (*The Fallen and Leviathan*, page 38).

Amma had practically raised me, and she felt it was her personal mission to grow me another foot or so, even though I was already 6’2”. (*Beautiful Creatures*, page 7).

His shirt was off, showing his lean, muscular arms and chest. He was built more like a dancer or martial artist than a bodybuilder, the elegant frame hinting at a grace a human simply could not match. His tousled black hair fell into his eyes, and he absently raked it out of his face. (*The Iron King*, Page 229).

“Tall, dark, and rabid?” (*Nightshade*, page 168). ...Where Ren was strong and lithe. (*Nightshade*, page 319).

He was a boy who looked about my age: seventeen, maybe eighteen. Brown hair with a slight shimmer of gold fell in a mess around his face. Sweat had caked strands of it to his forehead and cheeks. He was lean, strong—someone who could find his way around a mountain, as he clearly had. (*Nightshade*, Page 5)

“He’s tall, dark, and annoying.” ... I’d liked *a lot* of what I’d seen. Long, lean muscles down his arms, broad but relaxed shoulders, and a smile that was part playful, part seductive. (*Hush, Hush*, page 19-20).

His sleeves were pushed up his forearms, and I could see his muscles working as he punched buttons. He was tall and lean and hard, and I wouldn’t have been surprised if under his clothes he bore several scars. (*Hush, Hush*, page 101-102).

One quick look and I could tell Patch clocked several hours a week running and lifting weights. A body that defined didn’t come without sweat and work. Suddenly I felt a little self-conscious. Not to mention soft. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 287).

A stranger stood in Ethan’s bedroom, a tall, lean figure dressed in silver and black. A boy, perhaps a little older than me, though it was impossible to tell his exact age. His body was youthful, but there was a stillness to him that hinted at something far older, something incredibly dangerous...He turned then, looking right through me, and I would’ve gasped if I had the breath. He was gorgeous. More than gorgeous, he was beautiful. Regal beautiful, prince-of-a-foreign-nation beautiful. If he walked into my classroom during finals, students and teachers alike would be throwing themselves at his feet. Still, it was a cold, hard beauty, like that of a marble statue, inhuman and otherworldly. His slanted eyes, beneath long, jagged bangs, glimmered like chips of steel. (*The Iron King*, Page 81).

Words such as “hard” are also repeated. One word that was repeated often was “predator”, which goes hand-in-hand with the young men as dangers.

I was actually afraid to bring it up. Robbie seemed like a different person now, quiet, brooding, watching the kids on the bus with predator like intensity. He was acting weird-weird and creepy-and I wondered what was wrong with him. (*The Iron King*, Page 45).

He was devastatingly gorgeous, dressed all in black, his pale face seeming to float over the ground. I remembered the way he smiled, the look in his silver eyes as we danced. He wasn’t smiling now, and his eyes were cold. This wasn’t the prince id danced with Elysium night; this wasn’t anything but a predator. (*The Iron King*, Page 212).

...his voice like the purr of a jungle predator. (*The Fallen and Leviathan*, Page 464).

Acheron moved toward him with the deadly gait of a ferocious predator. With long black hair streaked with green, he wore a pair of opaque sunglasses that kept Nick from seeing his eyes. Dressed all in black with a glow-in-the-dark vampire skull on his t-shirt, he had a black backpack slung over one shoulder. (*Infinity*, Page 177).

Ren, flanked by Sabine, Neville, Cosette, and Dax, seemed to float down the hallway. He moved as though he owned the school. His eyes darted from side to side—ever a wolf, always predatory. (*Nightshade*, Page 28)

These words are used in reference within these novels to the fact that the characters are not human. However, this does create paranormal romance novels as an area that promotes young men as dangers to young women. Although there are no werewolves and demons in real life, when these novels present dangerous young men as exciting, even though they are mythical, it makes it also exciting in real life for the readers.

### *A love of bad boys*

As mentioned above through the use of words like predator, the young men within the novel are directly presented as dangerous. The following quotes are a few examples of how males are portrayed as dangerous to the female characters:

“Oh, he’s rude to everyone,” said Isabelle airily, “it’s what makes him so damn sexy. That, and he’s killed more demons than anyone else his age.” (*City of Bones*, page 60).

“That turned Sam around in a hurry. He didn’t move toward me, but he didn’t have to—his yellow eyes stopped John in his tracks. Or maybe it was just Sam’s stance beside me, shoulders stiff. In the space of a second, I had a flashing thought that Sam might be dangerous—that maybe he normally quieted the wolf inside him far more than he let on.” (*Shiver*, page 203.)

But Shay was dangerous; I knew I had to fight the attraction that seemed stronger each time I saw him. The decision provoked a dull ache that settled in my shoulders. I liked this strange human boy. His shockingly reckless approach to life and his disregard for its rules were welcome changes from the crushingly close world I was in. Then he was talking through the door. Olive green henley, jeans, messy hair that kept falling over his eyes....He was fearless and decisive, reminding me of a lone wolf, an alpha even, but without the bonds of a pack to root him in any one place. (*Nightshade*, Page 142)

Ash looked different now, the cuts and burns healed, his hair falling softly around his face. He wore simply dark pants and a white shirt, and his sword hung at his side. Still dangerous. Still inhuman and deadly. Still the most beautiful being I'd ever seen. His mercury eyes found mine, and he inclined his head. (Page 361).

Patch had a frightening past and many, many secrets. If brutal and senseless violence was one of them, I wasn't safe riding around alone with him. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 238).

"She was going to be so angry at him when she woke up. But better that than she be like Madaug's mom and be taken from him. He'd kill anyone who touched her, and that wasn't an idle threat. He knew he had it in him. (*Infinity*, page 358).

Patch wasn't the kind of guy mothers smiled on. He was the kind of guy they changed the house locks for (*Hush, Hush*, Page 236)

Jace, on the other hand, looked like the sort of boy who'd come over to your house and burn it down for kicks. (*City of Bones*, Page 213)

The danger directly posed to young women within the novels is considerably less so in male narrated novels. While Nick (*Infinity*) says that he knows he has the power to kill in him, he does not. Aaron is afraid of the power in him, but it poses no threat to anyone else; Ethan (*Beautiful Creature*) does not pose a threat to Lena, although she does pose a threat to him. Cas (*Anna Dressed in Blood*), even with all his ghost hunter skills, does not use it on Anna, but even if he did, would still be powerless against her:

"My moves are sure, strong, and quick. She's right when she says she hasn't seen my best, and I don't know why that is. "I don't want to hurt you, Anna. You know that, don't you?..." (Anna Dressed in Blood, page 140).

This may be the characters being represented as gentleman, and could possibly represent how males like to see themselves. However, in the novels narrated by females, as well as the two narrated by both, characters such as Jace (*City of Bones*), Ren (*Nightshade*), Patch (*Hush, Hush*) and Ash (*The Iron King*), all pose direct threats to the life of the female, yet each time, the female still finds herself attracted to him. These are directly negative messages that promote that fear in your partner is okay, as long as they mean well. This is explored further within the findings on violence.

### *Males as being protectors*

Although as I mentioned above, it is both the young men and young women as heroes within the novel, the young man is often still given the role of protector over the young woman. This demonstrates within the novel, that even though the young women are strong, the young men still have that responsibility. Even a matriarchal society, *Marked* still features men as their protectors:

“...Vampyre males are strong, honorable, and unique. They have been our warriors and protectors for countless generations. How do you expect to make the Change into a being who is more warrior than man if you do not practice the discipline it takes even to stay away in class?” (*Marked*, Page 121)

“Yeah, but with all this weird sh—“ he caught himself before he said something she’d ground him over. “—stuff going on, I’d feel better if you weren’t be yourself.” A slow smile spread across her beautiful face. “You going to be my protector?” “That’s my job, isn’t it?” (*Infinity*, Page 215)

“It’s just a bad scene. Full moon and all. You should go home where it’s safe.” “Are you...”—she narrowed her eyes as if searching for a word—“trying to protect me?” Oh, he knew that tone. It was dangerous. “I’m not being a male chauvinist. I know a woman is just as capable of taking care of herself as a man, but there are thins...I’m sure you’re parents are worried about you and—“ “You *are* trying to protect me.” A broad smile curled her lips and did the strangest things to his stomach. “That’s so sweet.” Instead of slapping him, she actually kissed his cheek. (*Infinity*, Page 365-366).

Because I can feel the newspaper clipping in my pocket like it weighs a thousand pounds. I can feel that photo of Anna, staring out from sixty years ago, and I can’t help myself from wanting to protect her, wanting to save her from becoming what she already is. (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, Page 127-128)

None of the young women within the novels quoted above actually needed the protection by the men. They still felt it necessary, however. Often, the young women may comment, but still allow the young men to protect them.

### *Men as rational beings*

One of the major descriptions given to men, specifically representing hegemonic masculinity, is rationality (hooks, 2004; Connell, 2005; Kilmartin, 2010). Within the novels, the young men are given characteristics of being rational, where the young women are being irrational. In *Beautiful Creatures*, Ethan yells at Lena in order to get her attention and calm down after destroying her house due to her emotional outburst. In *Shiver*, Sam attempts to rationalize and wait to have sex with Grace, because he thinks it's the proper thing to do. Even Grace's mother thinks she is being irrational, and that she has "...no survival instinct." (page 239). Jace becomes forceful with Clary in *City of Bones* when she refuses to listen to what their supposed father has to say. Nick is constantly trying to convince his hysterical and over-protective mother of things that she refuses to listen to. This rationalizing also has to do with the young men being perceived as always in control, and keeping their emotions in check. In the quotes below exploring male emotions, we will see that only a few characters actually express emotions. As well, with the emotional expression shown, the young men are always trying to keep it hidden. Ethan stares into a lamp to make his tears go away, and also Aaron and Nick want to cry, they never allow themselves to go so far.

### *Male Control*

Author's hooks (2004) and Connell (2005) theorize about the control that men are supposed to possess over their bodies. This will be further discussed in the next chapter, however, it was clear within the novels that males need to control themselves, and that it was indeed hard for them at times.

It was hard to have showdown with someone as indifferent as Patch. No, not indifferent. Perfectly controlled. Down to the last cell in his body. (*Hush, Hush*, page 302).

*I'll be a perfect gentleman. Honest.* I pushed it all to the back of my mind, thinking about anything, the weather, basketball, and reached into the popcorn tub. Lena reached in at the same time, and our hands touched for a second, sending a chill up my arm, hot and cold all mixed up together. Pick 'n' Roll. Picket fences. Down the Lane. There were only so many plays in the Jackson basketball playbook. This was going to be harder than I thought.

*(Beautiful Creatures, Page 152)*

A long moment passed before she said anything. "Why are you so careful with me, Sam Roth?" I tried to tell her the truth. "I—it's—I'm not an animal." "I'm not afraid of you," she said. She didn't look afraid of me. She looked beautiful, moonlit, tempting, smelling of peppermint and soap and skin. I'd spent eleven years watching the rest of the pack become animals, pushing down my instincts, controlling myself, fighting to stay human, fighting to do the right thing. As if reading my thoughts, she said, "Can you tell me it's only the wolf in you that wants to kiss me?" All of me wanted to kiss her hard enough to make me disappear. *(Shiver, Page 292).*

Sam groaned softly. His palms brushed the bare skin at the bottom edge of my T-shirt, his thumbs tracing desire on my sides. "Don't tempt me." I didn't say anything; just stood in his arms looking up at him. He pushed his face against my shoulder and groaned again. "It's so hard to behave myself around you." He pushed away from me. "I don't know if I should keep staying with you. God, you're only what—you're only seventeen." "And you're so old, right?" I said, suddenly offensive. "Eighteen," he said, as if it were something to be sad about. "At least I'm legal." I actually laughed, though nothing was funny. My cheeks felt hot and my heart pounded in my chest. "Are you kidding me?" "Grace," he said, and the sound of my name slowed my heart immediately. He took my arm. "I just want to do things right, okay? I only get this one chance to do things right with you." *(Shiver, Page 151).*

The above quotes capture that young men have something they need to keep in control. Ethan keeping his mind preoccupied with basketball plays so that he does not become aroused to the point where he can no longer "be a perfect gentleman". Sam uses words like "don't tempt me", and "I'm not an animal", expressing that if he lets himself succumb to his desires, he is acting primitively. Another aspect of this, is the use of the word gentleman, Ash also uses it in *The Iron King*: "*He smiled then, bitter and self-mocking. "And I promise to be a perfect gentleman until the night is done. You have my word."* (Page 169). Ethan, in the above quote also promises to be a gentleman, this implies that it takes effort, and is something that must be promised to the young woman. However, as we shall see below, even young men who are supposed to be in control of their emotions let them show at times.

## *Male Emotions and Vulnerability*

Within the novels narrated by males, there was a large amount of insight into the emotions of the male. The only novel with a male author, *The Fallen and Leviathan*, carried a tremendous amount of self-doubt and fear over the roles that Aaron had. These roles were his destiny, decided for him at birth due to him being half angel and half man. The whole novel he struggles with the acceptance that there is something dark and strong inside him, which he fails to unleash because the loss of control scares him. He repeats over and over that he wants a normal life, which for him includes:

“And I’ve got it all planned out. I’m gonna finish high school, go to a good college, graduate in the top of my class, and get an amazing job that I love.” Aaron had no idea what that job would be, but he was on a roll and couldn’t stop himself if he tried. “I’ll meet a nice girl, get married, and have a bunch a’ kids.” (*The Fallen and Leviathan*, Page 174)

As well, throughout the novel, he finds himself on the verge of tears multiple times. This novel could potentially represent a struggle that all men have demons inside them, yet they need to be strong enough to control them.

She seemed unconcerned with his clumsiness, but as nervous around him and he was feeling around her. “I’m good,” he said with a nervous nod and an idiot grin. “Real good.” His mind was blank, completely void of all electrical activity. He had no idea what to say next, and wondered how she’d react if he started to cry. (*The Fallen and Leviathan*, Page 167-168)

He was a bit taken aback, and reached up to nervously scratch the back of his head. “Are you saying that you think I’m cute, or is there some other guy you’re going to call?” Vilma laughed and rolled her beautiful almond-colored eyes. “I thought you were supposed to be the dark, brooding guy—not a big doofus. “She shook her head in mock disbelief. (*The Fallen and Leviathan*, Page 183).

Aaron’s need for a normal life represents what every male strives to do: get a good job, a good girl, and have multiple children. His struggle for control to have a normal life despite their being something powerful and potentially out of control inside him ties directly into the other novels,

where the males are something more, that there is something dangerous inside them, yet they are trying to tame it in order to be with the person they love.

Ethan, from *Beautiful Creatures*, also demonstrates that boys do indeed cry and have feelings. He also demonstrates alternative masculinities through practices such as reading:

“You know what’s stupid? I have books under my bed.: I just said it, like it was something I said all the time. “What?” “Novels. Tolstoy. Salinger. Vonnegut. And I read them. You know, because I want to.” She rolled over, propping on her elbow. “Yeah? What do your jock buddies think of that?” “Let’s just say that I keep it to myself and stick to my jump shot.” “Yeah, well. At school, I noticed you stick to comic.” (*Beautiful Creatures*, Page 71)

On Monday, I helped Amma bring the boxes of holiday decorations down from the attic. The dust made my eyes water; at least, that’s what I told myself. (*Beautiful Creatures*, Page 416)

*It just makes everything so much harder. I thought I had a lot to lose before, but now I have you. I know what you mean.* I knocked the shade off the lamp next to my bed and stared straight into the bulb. If I stared right at it, the brightness would sting my eyes and keep me from crying. (*Beautiful Creatures*, Page 437)

The love story between Ethan and Lena represents exactly what Radway (1984) describes: the male opening up to the female, becoming dependent on her as an emotional outlet. Stories such as these participate in the construction of a male point of view, even if it is written by a female author. She captures that boys do cry, although they may not want to. This story, unlike some of the others analyzed in this research, demonstrates that males are also confused about emotions. This confusion about “being in love” is manifested in this novel by Ethan saying that he didn’t know what his feelings were, that Lena hit him like a pile of bricks, but that:

“I didn’t know, and I didn’t have any way to find out. Guys don’t talk about stuff like that. We just lie under the pile of bricks.” (Page 143-144).

However, as much as Ethan reads books and poetry, he is still presented as being unable to understand and share his emotions. For Cas, he was not even aware that he had fallen in love with Anna until the very end of the novel:

“We’re sorry about her, you know,” he says. “Carmel and I. We kind of liked her, even if she was creepy, and we know that you—”. He breaks off and clears his throat again. I loved her. That’s what he was going to say. That’s what everyone else knew before I did.” (Page 314-315).

These quotes demonstrate that men fall in love without so much thought, and that it seems to “just happen”.

Sam Roth is the other emotional male character, representing a real person with real feelings. He hates confrontation:

Sam was silent while I circled the lot another time, and finally, he groaned. “Grace, I hate this. I hate confrontation.” (*Shiver*, Page 301).

Also, as Grace puts it, he didn’t “*charge the mattress like a bull*” (page 77), as typical men are thought to do. Sam writes songs, and is emotionally damaged from his parents trying to kill him when he was younger. When Grace tries to describe Sam, this is what happens:

My head didn’t work with words very well—at least not in this abstract, descriptive sort of way. “Sensitive,” I tried. Sam translated “Squishy.” “Creative.” “Dangerously emo.” “Thoughtful.” “Feng shui” (*Shiver*, Page 207) (Words Grace uses to describe Sam).

Sam demonstrates that it is okay to have feelings, and to express them. His character also rejects traditional forms of masculinity, such as confrontation. However, as seen above, Sam still possesses aspects of being dangerous. While these “alternatives” to masculinity include writing songs to express feelings, reading poetry, crying, fear, and hating confrontation, each young man still possesses characteristics of traditional masculinity. Each male still has the potential to be violent, and some such as Ethan, retain their roles as sports players to keep the power status that it holds. Since he continues to play basketball, it keeps his role with his friends, the popular kids at school, and his town in check. These novels therefore demonstrate that it is okay to show emotions correlated with alternative forms of masculinity, as long as in the end, they still take charge and become aggressive when they need to.

Throughout the novels, I noticed that the young men were perhaps demonstrating instances of vulnerability to the female characters within the novel. Instances where Aaron almost cried in front of Vilma, Ethan demonstrated his deep attachment to Lena, and so on. The following quotes also capture situations where the young men present emotions to the young women.

Then I made a stupid mistake and I looked up at him. His eyes met mine, and for a moment, his face was open and vulnerable in the moonlight. I caught a hint of wonder there as we stared at each other. Slowing, he leaned forward. I caught my breath, a tiny gasp escaping. He stiffened, and his expression shuttered closed, eyes going hard and frosty. (*The Iron King*, Page 275).

He stuck his hands in his pockets and looked totally embarrassed. Well, totally cute and embarrassed, and I remembered how much I had wanted to say yes to him earlier when he asked me to watch dorky movies with him. And how here I was, rejecting him and making him uncomfortable again. It's a wonder the kid ever talked to me. Clearly, I was taking this High Priestess thing way too seriously. (*Marked*, Page 252).

Patch traced a finger along my collarbone, then headed south stopping at my heart. I felt it pounding through my skin. "Because I feel it here, in my heart," he said quietly. "I haven't lost the ability to feel emotion." (*Hush, Hush*, Page 314).

"I get it," I say softly. "The strength is what you hold on to. Kind of like me. When I walk through a haunted place with my athame in my hand, I feel strong. Untouchable. It's heady. I don't know if most people ever feel it." I shuffle my feet. "And then I met you, and all that went down the shithole." She laughs. "I come in all and big and bad, and you use me for a game of handball." I grin. "Makes a guy feel damn manly." She grins back. "It made me feel pretty manly." (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, Page 224-225)

His grip on her loosened suddenly; he stepped back, holding her a little away from him. "My God," he said, touching her face. "You idiot, what a thing to do." His voice was angry, but the gaze that swept her face, the fingers that gently brushed her hair back, were tender. She had never seen him look like this; there was a sort of fragility about him, as if he might be not just touched but hurt, even. (*City of Bones*, Page 431).

Her words almost succeeded in making his eyes tear up, but he was too tough for that. Nothing could make *him* cry. Nothing. "I love you, Mom". (*Infinity*, Page 62)

Nick demonstrates his vulnerability towards his mother. His mother is very young, and he feels it is his job to protect her. The rest of the above quotes demonstrate that the young men are sharing emotions with the young women. Each quote demonstrates that the men do have feelings, and whether they are verbally expressing them, or it is shown on their faces, it is still being

acknowledged. This vulnerability and demonstration of emotions, directly plays into what Radway (1984) has explored.

Radway (1984) reflects that readers like to see the female able to change the male, for them to be able to share their emotions. This was a main theme within half of the novels:

“...When you met my mom, you were nice.” “Nice,” Patch repeated. “Let’s just keep that between you and me. (*Hush, Hush*, page 325)

“And Jace is so much better when you’re around.” Clary’s eyes widened. “He is?” “He is, actually. Less sharp-edged, somehow. It’s not so much that he’s kinder, but that he lets you see the kindness in him.” (*City of Bones*, Page 477).

“Nick?” Nick couldn’t answer her as he let the heat of her body comfort his ragged emotions. How strange that in a night of chaos, she seemed to ground him. (*Infinity*, Page 363)

There was something about Jace though, that made her want to push him, crack that shell of cynicism and make him admit he believed in *something*, felt something, cared about anything at all. (*City of Bones*, Page 256-257)

He reached one hand toward me as though he wanted to pull me back into his arms, but then he seemed to change his mind and his hand fell to his side. “Zoey, you make me feel different than anyone has ever made me feel before.” I felt my face getting hot and I couldn’t tell if it was from anger or embarrassment. (*Marked*, Page 254)

“It’s a shame,” Carmel sighs. “She was so pretty.” She reaches down to touch Anna’s face, and I brush her fingers away. Something’s happening to me, and I don’t know what it is. This girl I’m looking at is a monster, a murderer. This girl for some reason spared my life. I carefully trace along her hair, which is held up with a ribbon. There’s a warm feeling in my chest but my head is ice-cold. I think I might pass out. (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, Page 123-124)

This is also reflected in the male point of view when Ethan (*Beautiful Creatures*) points out that although he is saving Lena, she is the one who is saving him (emotionally):

“I wished I could tell her that I didn’t care if everyone in this town hated me, because it didn’t matter. I was lost before I found her in my dreams, and she found me that day in the rain. I knew it seemed like I was always the one trying to save Lena, but the truth was she had saved me, and I wasn’t ready for her to stop now.” (Page 414).

As Radway (1984) reflected, romance novels are often about the male being hard and emotionless at first, yet as the story goes on, the female character is able to crack their shell. These sampled novels also demonstrate that change within the young men is possible when the right woman comes along.

### *Secondary male characters as gay*

Lefebvre (2005) suggested that contemporary novels do feature alternatives to masculinity, and gay male characters, but they are often featured as secondary. Lefebvre (2005) was correct in these circumstances, as there were gay young men present as secondary characters within the novel. While these sampled novels were focusing on heterosexual relationships, however, including aspects of gay masculinity is also important for understanding alternatives.

...I didn't realize it was such a big deal." "It would be to my parents," said Isabelle quietly. "They would disown him and throw him out of the Clave-" "What, you can't be gay and be a Shawdownhunter?" "There's no official rule about it. But people don't like it. I mean, less with people our age-I think," she added, uncertainly, and Clary remembered how few other people her age Isabelle had ever really met. "But the older generation, no. If it happens, you don't talk about it" (*City of Bones*, Page 210).

"And this is the token guy in our group, Damien Maslin. But he's gay, so I don't really think he counts as a guy." Instead of getting pissed at Stevie Rae, Damien looked serene and unruffled. "Actually, since I'm gay I think I should count for two guys instead of just one. I mean, in me you get the male point of view *and* you don't have to worry about me wanting to touch your boobies." He had a smooth face that was totally zit free, and dark brown hair and eyes that reminded me of a baby deer. Actually, he was cute. Not in the overly girly way so many teenage guys are when they decide to come out and tell everyone what every already knew (well, everyone except their typically clueless and/or in denial parents). Damien wasn't a swishy girly-guy; he was just a cute kid with a likeable smile. (*Marked*, Page 81-82)

"Mason is gay." "You're not serious. Mason?" I said. "Mason is gay?" Ansel sighed. "You know, this is the problem with you alphas, you're so concerned about taking over the new pack that you don't notice what's happening right in front of your face." "Mason?" I repeated, embarrassed by the astonishment I heard in my own voice. (*Nightshade*, Page 135)-him and Neville are gay, and it is implied that Logan (their Keeper) is also gay.

Although the novels were not directly related to homosexuality, the fact that they did include these alternative forms of masculinity demonstrates opportunity for the presentation and understanding of homosexuality. As Isabelle in *City of Bones*, mentions above, it is the younger generation who is beginning further acceptance and understanding of homosexuality. If these understandings are presented in the novels that young people are reading, it demonstrates advancement in acceptance. The next section explores how heterosexuality is linked within the understanding of masculinity and femininity.

### **Sexuality**

Romance novels, even teen romance, are very much centered on sex. Once again, this research is bringing forth portrayals of female sexuality within the novels, and how that relates to masculinity. Gender expectations outline men as sexually aggressive, and women as passive. Within the sampled novels, these notions became complicated. The following findings on sexuality demonstrate that the females in the novel are not sexually passive, and it is not always the case that men are sexually aggressive. In *Beautiful Creatures*, the whole story added up to the fact that Lena and Ethan are unable to physically be together because Lena would end up killing him if they did. In *Shiver*, Sam struggled to contain himself with Grace, because he felt it was the right thing to do; meanwhile Grace took on aspects of typical masculinity, chasing after Sam for sex. Cassandra Clare, author of *City of Bones*, provided even more taboo around sex for her characters Jace and Clary by creating a story line, while after falling in love, they think they are brother and sister. If that doesn't dampen sex arousal, I'm not sure what does. In *Nightshade*, Calla was torn between her sexual attraction to Ren, and her sexual attraction to Shay. As she puts it:

When Ren touched me, it was like being swept up in a tornado of sensations, tossing my body into a wild abandon with no sense of control. Shay's gentle caress was different and somehow more addictive. The way his fingers lingered at my mouth seemed to ignite a flame that burned slowly, building heat, spreading through my cheeks, down my neck, finally consuming every inch of my skin with a fire so intense I didn't think it could ever be quenched. (*Nightshade*, Page 241)

Zoey, in *Marked*, finds herself feeling like a "slut" when she has been making out with two different boys. Meghan from *The Iron King*, and Nora from *Hush, Hush* both find themselves sexually attracted to boys that are trying to kill them, yet they still desire them.

Firstly, I will explore how the young women in the novels are being deemed as sexually inexperienced. As Radway (1984) demonstrates, in romance novels the women are often always less experienced than the man. However, his previous sexual conquests mean nothing, since he was not in love with them. This lack of experience in the female character, and multiple sexual encounters of the male, was well demonstrated in *Nightshade*.

"Poor, poor dear. Waiting must be so hard for you. I've heard Renier is an exquisite lover. All the Keepers gossip about him—the young Guardian who haunts their dreams." The smile on her glossy red lips was teasing and cruel. "But rules are rules. He's an alpha male, so his...eagerness can be excused. Yours, however, is a disappointment." ... "Those lovely legs of yours should be closed until Samhain." (*Nightshade*, Page 236)

"Right." He slowly stood up. "This is new territory for you. Stupid sequestering, the Keepers better not have turned you into a nun or something." I snatched the book off my nightstand and threw it at him. "Get out of my room!" He caught the book midair and laid it on the bed. "Easy, Lily. That was a bad joke. I didn't mean any offense." I shook with humiliation. "You don't know what it's been like." (Page 198)

"He's an alpha male and the most popular boy at your school. At least by all account I'm privy to." Her tone became wistful. "I'm sure he's accustomed to certain attention from girls. When your time arrives, you must be ready to please him." I swallowed sour bile before I could speak again. "Mom, I'm an alpha too, remember?" I said. "Ren needs me to be a pack leader. *Wants* me to be a warrior, not the captain of the cheerleading squad." "Renier needs you to act like a mate. Just because you're a warrior doesn't mean you can't be enticing." The sharpness of her tone cut me. (*Nightshade*, Page 19)

"The rules are different for him." "So, what, boys will be boys and girls have to behave?" he scoffed. "I'm the alpha female." I hooked my ankles around the chair's legs. "No one can touch me. It's the Keeper's Law." "But Ren can touch whoever he wants?" he asked. "Cause it sounds like he does." "He's the alpha male. The hunt is in his nature." My ankle lock on the chair legs was so tight I heard the wood creak. I didn't want Shay to ask the question I could see on his face. He frown. "But if you're an alpha too, wouldn't the hunt be

part of your nature?" I didn't answer. My legs felt like they were on fire. "And I touched you..." His fingers twitched, as if he wished he were touching me now. *Does he want me as much as I want him?* "I shouldn't have let you." My body went limp. (*Nightshade*, Page 214)

This reflection in the novel demonstrates that it is often the guy who has had sexual experience, and that even though most young women do not have experience, they are still expected to please men. In the novels narrated by females, all the males in the novels were presented as having past experience, while the females were not. The novels narrated by males all presented characters that had not had previous sexual experience. There was also a lack of overly sexualized content in the novels narrated by males. Sam in *Shiver*, and Jace from *City of Bones* were neither presented as experienced nor inexperienced. Overall, if there was any sexual experience in the novels at all, it only came from the males.

#### *Young women as out of control*

Most of the novels present the young women as confused and betrayed by their bodies. In the novels, the women have lack of control over their body, which is common for romance novels, as noted by Radway (1984). However, although the characters, such as Calla in *Nightshade*, Kody from *Infinity*, Zoey from *Marked*, Nora from *Hush*, *Hush*, and Meghan from *The Iron King* demonstrate, their bodily reactions come from having the male characters close to them. A list of words describing their body around the young men include: surprise, betraying, will power, self-control, mysteries, electric, foreign, reacting, flipped a switch, loss of limb control, behave, control, urgency. The following quotes capture how the female body seems out of control:

His eyes, cold and inhuman, glimmered with amusement. Up close, he was even more beautiful, with eye cheekbones and dark tousled hair falling into his eyes. My traitor hands itched, longing to run my fingers through those bangs. (*The Iron King*, Page 167).

His nearness made my senses spin, and I couldn't look away. This close, his face was carefully guarded, but I felt the rapid thud of his heat beneath my palm. My own heartbeat picked up in response. He held me a moment longer, just long enough to make my stomach lurch wildly, then stepped away, leaving me breathless in the middle of the trail. (*The Iron King*, Page 243)

Nekoda froze at the unexpected contact. Never in her life had anyone held her like this. Never had they greeted her as if they were thrilled to see her. A wave of foreign emotion ripped through her entire body. What was it? And it wasn't just the emotion, it was the sensation of his arm around her. Of his breath falling against her cheek and the warm smell of his hair. It made her entire body hum and gave her an insane desire to bury her hand in his soft hair. Most of all, it sent a wave of chills over her. "Nick?" Nick couldn't answer her as he let the heat of her body comfort his ragged emotions. How strange that in a night of chaos, she seemed to ground him. "I'm sorry," he whispered, before he let go and stepped back. "I didn't mean to assault you. It's just been a really, really bad night and I'm glad to see a friendly face." Nekoda trembled as he put his hand on her cheek. *He's my enemy*. A creature she was sworn to kill. But looking into those blue eyes, she didn't see a monster. She saw... Something that scared and shocked and scared her to her core. *Don't let him charm you. It's not real. It's his powers. Nothing more. He is evil to the center of his soul*. But her compulsion toward him didn't feel like it was coming from him. It felt like it was coming from deep inside her. As if some part of her just wanted to be closer to him. How utterly peculiar. Unable to stand it, she pulled his hand away from her face and put enough distance between them that she could think straight. (*Infinity*, Page 363-364).

For making me crazy about him when I knew it was wrong. He was the *worst* kind of wrong. He was so wrong it felt right, and that made me feel completely out of control. (*Hush, Hush*, page 341).

There was something unsettling about being near him. In his presence, I didn't trust myself. (*Hush, Hush*, page 123).

I covered my face with my hands, hiding behind them. Patch probably thought I didn't have any self-control. I'd fallen apart in his arms. I'd melted like butter. Right before I told him he should go, I was pretty sure I'd made a sound that was a cross between a sigh of sheer bliss and a moan of ecstasy. (*Hush, Hush*, page 130-131).

I liked it when he was closer to me. I could smell the excitement jumping from his skin, a wild scent of approaching storm clouds. Delicious warmth swirled in my body. I dug my nails into my jeans. *It's the coffee. It's just the coffee*. My body curled in on itself. He watched my taut limbs retreat from him. "Take your time. I want you to trust me." *You aren't the problem. I can't seem to trust myself*. (Page 117)

Hell! Was I becoming a vampyre slut? What was next? Would no male of any species (which might even include Damien) be safe around me? Maybe I should avoid all guys until I figured out what was going on with me and knew I could control myself. (*Marked*, page 187).

Ren's fingers caressed my skin in slow circles. The sensation of his subtle strokes moved out in ripples through my body. I closed my eyes, willing my heart to slow down from its breakneck pace. *Why does this happen every time he touches me?* (*Nightshade*, page 97).

I bit my lip, fighting temptation. *Come on, Cal, you know better. This isn't like you.* I pulled my arm from his grasp. A whimper of disappointment emerged from the boy's throat. I didn't know how to grapple with my own sense of loss now that I wasn't touching him. *Find your strength, use the wolf. That's who you are.* (Nightshade, Page 6)

Each quote represents the struggle that the young women are having over their body. It demonstrates a lack of understanding of sexual desire. Calla goes as far to say it's the coffee in her system that makes her feel that way. They are trying to deny that their body is experiencing these sensations.

Throughout the novels, males are seen to be controlling female sexuality. Grace from *Shiver* is the one who initiates intercourse between her and Sam, despite his reluctance. Sam is trying to control when him and Grace have sex. Ren is telling Calla what her body is feeling and wanting:

Everything in me buzzed, electric, wanting to close the few inches of space between us. She kissed me harder, breath huffing into my mouth, and bit my lower lip. Oh, hell, that was amazing. I growled before I could stop myself, but before I could even think to feel embarrassed, Grace pulled her hands out from behind her and looped from around my neck, pulling me to her. "That was so sexy," she said, voice uneven. "I didn't think you could get any sexier. I kissed her again before she could say anything else, backing into the room with her, a tangle of arms in the moonlight. Her fingers hooked into the back on my jeans, thumbs brushing my hip bones, pulling me even closer to her. "Oh, God, Grace," I gasped. "You—you greatly overestimate my self-control." "I'm not looking for self-control." My hands were inside her shirt, palms pressed on her back, fingers spread on her sides; I didn't even remember how they got there. "I—I don't want to do anything you'll regret." Graces back curved against my fingers as if my touch brought her to life. "Then don't stop." I'd imagined her saying this in so many different ways, but none of my fantasies had come close to the breathless reality. Clumsily, we backed onto her bed, part of me thinking we should be quiet in case her parents came home. But she helped me tug my shirt over my head and ran a hand down my chest, and I groaned, forgetting everything but her fingers on my skin. My mind searched for lyrics, words to string together to describe the moment, but nothing came. I couldn't think of anything but her palm grazing my skin. "You smell so good," Grace whispered. "Every time I touch you, it comes off you even stronger." Her nostrils flared, all wolf, smelling how much I wanted her. Knowing what I was, and wanting me, anyway. She let me push her gently down onto the pillows and I braced my arms on either side of her, straddling her in my jeans. "Are you sure?" I asked. Her eyes were bright, excited. She nodded. I slid down to kiss her belly' it felt so right, so natural, like I'd done it a thousand

times before and would do it a thousand times again. I was the shiny, ugly scars the pack had left on her neck and collarbone, and I kissed them, too. Grace pulled the blankets up over us and we kicked off our clothes beneath them. As we pressed our bodies against each other, I shrugged off my skin with a growl, giving in, neither wolf nor man, just Sam. (*Shiver*, Page 292-294).

His hips pressed against my knees, opening the, pushing my skirt up my legs. I gripped his shirt, clinging to him so I wouldn't fall into the sink. His hand pushed into my lower back. I gasped as his body fitted against mine. Heat flooded my chest, my pelvis. I thought I would drown in it. "We can't—" His lips stopped my words. The kiss just made me dizzy. I dug my fingers into his shoulders. "You said you didn't want to be left alone." His tongue flicked over my cheekbone. "This is me pestering you." "Aren't you breaking the rules?" I could barely get the words out. "What about the union?" "I'd rather have you on my own terms." His hand slipped between my thighs. All strength fled my limbs. "I can't breathe." "That means you like it." He kissed me again. (*Nightshade*, page 234-235)

While Sam's reluctance and attempt at trying to hold off on sex demonstrates male control over her sexuality, it is the opposite of the cultural construction of male sexuality as predatory. It is assumed culturally acceptable that men, not women, are the ones that want to initiate sex. The girls in the novels want contact with the male, they are craving the touch of their male love interest, yet some are constantly feeling shame over their bodies. The situations in the above quotes seem to create the male as having authority over female sexuality. This will be discussed more in depth within the next chapter.

While there already exists a body of media and magazines that cater to the physical arousal of males through the bodies of females, these paranormal romance novels suggest that the same can be said for females. The appearance of a "socially acceptable", lean and muscular body, as well as a handsome, angular face, is what arouses women. The following quotes capture the male body as functioning as an arousal for females:

As Patch rolled the sweatshirt down over abs hard enough to put a flutter in my stomach...Patch caught my eye and passed me a gold-medal bar-fight grin. The grin alone was scary enough, but under the rough exterior, it held a note of desire. More than a note, actually. A whole symphony of desire. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 234).

“Careful,” he said in a low voice. “They might think we’re flirting.” I felt like kicking myself because that’s exactly what we were doing. But it wasn’t my fault-it was Patch’s. in close contact with him, I experienced confusing polarity of desires. (*Hush, Hush*, page 103.)

I stepped back when Shay shrugged off his North Face jacket and pulled his shirt over his head. “Look.” He swept a hand along his chest. “Yes, very nice, you must work out,” I murmured. The warm flow of blood in my veins suddenly burned...I’d always thought my body was my greatest weapon, strong and unyielding as iron. Now my limbs were melting. I couldn’t look away from the curve of his shoulders, the way his hips sharply cut into a V where his jeans rested precariously across them, and the maze of lines that carved muscles from his sternum to his abdomen. (*Nightshade*, Page 119).

These quotes demonstrate the creation of a male body that turns women on. Just as society created the ideal female body that men are supposed to drool over, an ideal male body has also been established.

### *Young Women as Assertive*

While the male body is arousing the female, which is generally expected for heterosexual females, it is also that the females want sex. Instead of being passively sexual, these novels are creating females as also pursuers of sex. There are many other instances within the novels where the young women enjoyed, wanted and initiated contact with the young men.

Wrapping my arms around his neck, I rose on my tiptoes to meet him, kissing him back with a hunger that surprised us both. (*The Iron King*, page 292).

I felt, more than heard, him moan and as he kissed me long and hard it was like he flipped a switch somewhere deep inside me, and hot, sweet, electric desire flashed through me. (*Marked*, page 254).

The kiss started slowly, a sweet, tentative searching. The soft touch of his mouth mesmerized me. I parted my lips for me, letting desire draw me down. Shay’s kiss deepened; his hand ran along my back, tracing the length of my braid, sliding beneath my shirt to stroke my skin. I felt like I was drinking sunlight. My fingers moved from his chest to his neck and stroked the line of his jaw. I pressed into him, wanting to know more of the mysteries he pulled so easily from my body. More of this freedom, this wildness. Shay grasped my hips and in a swift motion turned us, pinning me to the floor. His hands moved beneath my shirt, his body pressing hard against mine. I could smell his rising desire mixing with my own, our feverish need

infusing the air like lightning about to strike. Instead of being pulled down into him, I was rising up, legs wrapping around him. His fingers moved carefully, tracing my curves, lingering in places that stole my breath, binding me to him and yet setting me free. My own gasp of pleasure against his mouth brought the world hurtling back. The room spun as I pulled out of his embrace, stumbling toward the table. My heart rammed against my ribs, insistent and painful. *I can't do this, I can't.* But I wanted to. More than anything. (*Nightshade*, Page 211-212).

I kept my eyes on the hardwood floor, thinking about Shay's kiss and how much more I'd wanted from him. (*Nightshade*, page 195).

The world fell away, as it always did when he touched me. His hand slid beneath the loosened bodice from my back to my bare stomach, pulling me against him. I could feel every inch of his body touching the length of mine, the strength of his wanting matching my own, breath for breath. His fingers slide down and I gasped. My eyes wandered to his bed. It was so close. He could easily carry me there. ...I twisted away from his lips, fighting the flood of emotions his soft touch provoked, needing to quell the ache his hand had left lingering deep within me. (*Nightshade*, Page 435-436)

A smile tugged at his mouth. My thoughts dissolved and just like that, a new thought broke the surface of my mind. I wanted to kiss him. Right now. (*Hush, Hush*, page 124).

*I want you.* Feeling the grip of his hand in mine, the brush of his skin on mine, seeing the way he moved in front of me, equal parts human and wolf, and remembering his smell—I ached with wanting to kiss him. (*Shiver*, page 281).

She wound her hands into his hair, as she'd wanted to do since the first time she'd seen him. (*City of Bones*, page 316).

Then I feel her brush against my mouth, so carefully, and when I open my eyes I'm staring into her eyes. I close them again and kiss her. (*Anna Dressed in Blood*, 299).

*Ethan.* Even in my head, I could hear the urgency in her voice. I felt it too, like I couldn't get close enough to her. Her skin was soft and hot. I could feel the pinpricks intensifying. Our lips were raw; we couldn't kiss each other any harder. (*Beautiful Creatures*, Page 277).

While there is expression from both the young men and young women that they want sex, it is generally assumed that males are already ready to go. This is where it is unique in *Shiver* that Sam wants to wait. In the cases of the other novels, there is no hesitancy from the young men in

terms of wanting sexual contact. This is generally accepted of men in society, that they are the pursuers. These sampled novels, however, are showing those same aspects of pursuit that men demonstrate, but by women, which is generally not explored of female sexuality. This is an important finding, both in terms of female sexuality, but also how masculinity and femininity relate to each other, and how masculinity functions in our society.

## **Violence**

Upon analyzing the sampled novels, it became obvious that violence was a large part of every novel. This is because each novel is paranormal in nature, containing monsters such as ghosts, demons, werewolves, and fairies. The specific violence however, was the violence between the male and female characters. As hooks (2004) and Connell (2000ab;2005) have already explored, the construction of hegemonic masculinity is usually accompanied by some sort of violence. Therefore, violence was already associated with masculinity. The novels certainly reflected the link between hegemonic masculinity and violence. Specifically, within the novels sampled, there was much violence between the romantic characters in *The Iron King*, *Nightshade*, *Hush, Hush*, and *City of Bones*. These novels all contained the more hegemonic forms of masculinity. The following quotes capture Becca Fitzpatrick's *Hush, Hush* which besides demonstrating violence and hegemonic masculinity also connects violence and sexual arousal. The novel also reflects much of Radway's (1984) research on romance novels, where the two main characters are at odds and mistrustful at the beginning of the novel. The cringe-worthy title directly reflects that Nora thinks Patch is trying to rape or kill her. Despite the fact that he actually was trying to kill her, they end up falling in love. *Hush, Hush* dangerously caters to young female audiences who are still constructing their gender identity. It presents that it is okay to be scared of the boy you are in love with, and that you cannot ever quite trust them. The

following are some quotes from *Hush, Hush*, as well as other novels that also reflected similar themes:

“I have to admit, his dark side calls to me.” I had no desire to admit it, but Vee wasn’t alone. I felt drawn to Patch in a way I’d never felt drawn to anyone. There was a dark magnetism between us. Around him, I felt lured to the edge of danger. At any moment, it felt like he could push me over the edge. “It means I can’t get beyond his personality. No amount of beauty could make up for it.” “Not beauty. He’s...hard-edged. Sexy.” (*Hush, Hush*, Page 42-43).

Swallowing, I said in the calmest voice I could manage, “You scare me, and I’m not sure you’re good for me.” (*Hush, Hush*, Page 104).

I inhaled two sharp breaths. No, this wasn’t right. Not this, not with Patch. He was frightening. In a good way, yes. But also in a bad way. A very bad way. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 126).

Up until now I’d fantasized about discovering his deep, dark secrets because I wanted to prove to myself and to Patch that I was capable of figuring him out. But now I wanted to know his secrets because they were part of him. And despite the fact that I routinely tried to deny it, I felt something for him. The more time I spent with him, the more I knew the feelings weren’t going away. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 243).

For making me crazy about him when I knew it was wrong. He was the *worst* king of wrong. He was so wrong it felt right, and that made me feel completely out of control. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 341).

The spontaneous reckless half of my brain laughed at me. I knew that it was thinking. Early on I’d felt drawn to Patch by a mysterious force field. Now I felt drawn to him by something entirely different. Something with a lot of heat involved. A connection tonight was inevitable. On a scale of one to ten, that terrified me about an eight. And excited me about a nine. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 284).

I might have been tempted to hit him square in the jaw had he not taken me by the shoulders and pinned me against the wall. There was hardly any space left between us, just a thin boundary of air, but Patch managed to eliminate it. “Let’s be honest, Nora. You’ve got it bad for me.” His eyes held a lot of depth. “And I’ve got it bad for you.” He leaned into me and put his mouth on mine. A lot of him was on me, actually. We touched base at several strategic locations down our bodies, and it took all my willpower to break away. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 341).

Ash still held my hand. Gently, I tried pulling back, but he wasn’t letting go. I glanced up and found his face inches from mine, his eyes searingly bright in the shadows of the room. Time froze around him. My heart stumbled a bit, then picked up, louder and faster than before. Ash’s expression was blank; nothing showed on his face or in his eyes, but his body

had gone very still. I knew I was blushing like a fire engine. His fingers came up and gently brushed a tear from my cheek, sending a tingle through my skin. I shivered, frightened by the pressure mounting between us, needing to break the tension. I like my lips and whispered, "Is this where you say you'll kill me?" "If you like," he murmured, a flicker of amusement finally crossing his face. "Thought it's gotten far too interesting for that." (*The Iron King*, Page 239).

My instincts battled back and forth between the desire to tear Ren's fingers off my body and relief from his closeness. I reveled in the strong, soft pressure of his hands, but I resented his attempt to possess me. (*Nightshade*, Page 40)

These novels reflect the mixture of threats of death and sexual desire. It also reflects that young men are socialized to demonstrate anger and violence instead of emotion. The contradictions regarding the construction of masculinity within the novels subjugate femininity under masculinity, despite that the female narrators are presented as strong and at times, assertive. Hence, masculinity continues to define and contain female sexuality.

Some of the sampled novels, mentioned above, directly turned violence into sexual reaction. Both *The Iron King* and *Hush, Hush* began with a male character that was out to kill the female character. The female lacked trust in the male character, but through small actions of sincerity, as well as their "sexy lean bodies", the females developed feelings for the males. The males, subsequently, decided they were in love with the females and no longer wanted to kill them. The following quotes are instances of violence, yet the females still fall in love with them:

Ash stepped closer. His fingers came up to brush the hair from my face, sending an electric shock through me from my spine to my toes. His cool breath tickled my ear as he leaned in. "I'll kill you," he whispered, and walked away, joining his brothers at the table. He did not look back. I touched the place where his fingers had brushed my skin, giddy and terrified at the same time. (*The Iron King*, Page 178).

My stomach fluttered weirdly, and I backed into the hall. *What are you doing? I asked myself, appalled. This is Ash, prince of the Unseelie Court. He tried to kill Puck, and he might try to kill you, as well. He is not sexy. He's not.* But he was, extremely, and it was useless to deny it. My heart and my brain were at odds, and I knew I'd better come to terms with this quickly. *Okay, fine, I told myself, he's gorgeous, I'll admit it, I'm just reacting to his good*

*looks, that's all. All the sidhe are stunning and beautiful. It doesn't mean anything. (The Iron King, Page 229).*

Luke snarled something Clary couldn't hear. She hoped it was rude. She tried to twist away from Jace. Her feet slipped and he caught her, yanking her back with agonizing force. He had his arms around her, she thought, but not the way she had once hoped, not as she had ever imagined. (*City of Bones*, Page 454)

He lunged forward, knocking me onto my back. I tried to roll over, but he was over me, pinning me down, my belly exposed. His jaws locked around my throat, pressing into my windpipe, making it hard to breathe. *I know your scent, Calla. You'd been in there. Two, maybe three days ago.* I kicked at him, scraping at him with my nails. *Stop. Let me up! ... Do you really want to work against me?* His teeth bit into my neck, forcing me to submit. I'd never thought I could hate Ren, but in that moment I was close. He clamped down harder, making me writhe from the pain. I kept kicking and he snarled. *Don't fight me. Just tell me the truth.* I whimpered and went limp beneath him. ... *I'm only trying to keep you safe, Calla.* Ren licked my muzzle. *Don't take unnecessary risks. You're too important for that. I need you be my side. I'm sorry if I hurt you. You didn't.* I let him nuzzle me despite my humiliation, relieved that he didn't press the issue further. (*Nightshade*, Page 335-337)

"My hands were pressed against his stomach, which was so hard even his skin didn't give in. I was keeping a pointless safeguard between us, since not even a towering electrical fence would make me feel secure from him." (*Hush, Hush*, page 339).

"Patch's gaze felt especially hot. "A guy like me could take advantage of a girl like you. Better show me what you've got." (*Hush, Hush*, page 219-Patch has her pinned against a wall.)

I know it was straight ahead, but several of the overhead fluorescent lights were out of service, making it difficult to see clearly. If rape, murder, or any other miscreant activities were on Patch's mind, he'd cornered me in the perfect place." (*Hush, Hush*, page 215).

These quotes contain a mixture of both violence, but also lust within that violence. The violence is dismissed by other acts of love that occur in the novels, implying that the violence is okay, as long as he loves you and eventually means well. Ethan, in *Beautiful Creatures*, explains the heated, sexual situation between him and Lena as the result of "*Jewelry, I'm telling you. It's a thing. And love. And maybe danger.*" (Page 477). The findings in these sampled novels reflect that it is okay for young women to place themselves in dangerous situations, with dangerous young men, because it results in thrilling, exciting love stories. The creation of a mainly hegemonic and violent form of masculinity within these novels sets up a dangerous message for

young women. While the novels also contain characters that reject emphasized femininity, resulting in strong young women whose main focus is not on getting a boyfriend, it still creates situations where the young women are not the ones with the power.

### *Rape culture and the creation of the “other”*

There was one quote that bothered me, that I felt connected to aspects of rape culture and the “other”. The following scene in *Nightshade* presents what happens when another alpha leader implies a sexual connection between himself and Calla’s mother:

She turned on me, holding up her hand. “Leave it, Calla. It’s over.” “So this is what finesse is?” I couldn’t hold back my outrage. “Acting like a whore for any man who visits your parlor?” I was on the floor before I realized she’d hit me. My cheek throbbed from the blow. “Listen very carefully, Calla.” My mother stood over me, her fist still clenched. “I said it once, and I don’t want to explain myself again. Emile is not any man. He is the Bane alpha. You cannot cross an alpha male, even when you belong to another. You risk your own life to do so. Do you understand me?” ...“Are you going to tell Dad?” I asked. She piled dishes into the sink. “Of course not. He hates Emile enough, and you heard our masters say that cooperation is of vital importance right now. We can’t have the men tearing at each other while we’re trying to set up new defences. They’re so silly that way.” “Silly?! No one besides Dad is allowed to touch you!” “No *inferior* man can touch me. This was about rival alphas. Something you’ll hopefully never have to live with. Emile will take any chance he has to challenge your father. He’s always wanted to prove he’s the dominant alpha of the two packs. It’s only gotten worse since Corinne was killed.” (*Nightshade*, Page 324).

The following two quotes also capture that in the novel, it is always the “other” young men that are worse:

Risk a ride with patch or risk the chance that there was someone worse out there, page 220. Later on in the next page: I was feeling a lot more relaxed. Patch was warm and solid, and he smelled fantastic. Like mint and rick, dark earth. Nobody had jumped out at us on the ride home...for the first time all day I felt safe. Except that Patch had cornered me in a dark tunnel and was possibly stalking me. Maybe not so safe. (*Hush, Hush*, Page 221).

“That’s okay, we can do rough, right, boys?” “So can I.” A dark shape glided out of the trees, a portion of shadow come to life. The satyrs blinked and hastily stepped back as Ash strode into the middle of the herd. Looming up behind me, he slid an arm around my shoulders and pulled me to his chest. My hear sped up, and my stomach did a backflip. “This

one,” Ash growled, “is off limits.” “Prince Ash?” gasped the lead satyr, as the rest of the herd bowed their heads. He paled and held up his hands. “Sorry Your Highness, I didn’t know she was yours. My apologies. No harm done, okay?” “No one touches her,” Ash said, his voice coated with frost. “Touch her, and I’ll freeze your testicles and put them in a jar. Understand?” (*The Iron King*, Page 274).

The concept of this “other” created by men to demonstrate that there are more violent men out there was noted by hooks (2004), and will be further discussed in the next chapter.

The above findings demonstrate constructions of female sexuality, masculinity, femininity, and the relationship between the two. The supposed alternative forms of masculinity still rely on traditional forms of masculinity such as violence and power. I have explored the construction of femininity and masculinity in the novels. I have showed that the two are linked in their definition, but hegemonic masculinity remains central, whether as way to reproduce or construct characters that are alternatives to dominant definitions of masculinity. Female characters are more nuanced yet still display rejections of traditional femininity, as well as portray much strength. Male characters are still typically defined as dangerous, predatory, handsome, and most display much of the expectations associated with hegemonic masculinity. Violence was pervasive in many of the novels, couples often posing a threat to one another. Sexual arousal and violence are also very much tied together. Sexuality was generally themed as something uncontrolled by young adults, yet specifically, females were more inexperienced and out of control. Within the patriarchal understandings of these novels, the male body is used as a tool for female arousal. Just as we objectify the female body in media related to men, these novels, mostly read by young women, have objectified the male body. Below is the discussion of the above findings, linking them to previous literature and exploring themes.

## *Chapter 6: Discussion*

### *Gender Relations*

This research has aimed to discover how female sexuality is portrayed in popular paranormal romance novels for young adults, considering the relationship between masculinity and femininity. Within the literature, ideas from Rubinstein-Avila (2007) and Radway (1984) have offered particular insights into the characteristics of these novels. Rubinstein-Avila (2007) had pointed out that although the females are said to be strong and independent, at their root they are still not embodying these notions. As well, Radway (1984) demonstrated that the women within past romance novels were often reliant on men, with their goal in life to be married and supported by a spouse. From the findings above, words such as warrior, strong and independent were used to describe the female characters. However, I disagree with Rubinstein-Avila's assessment that women characters fail to actually embody these characteristics of strength. In paranormal novels, women do not end up tied to the male by marriage. More so, women character's strengths are about protecting and saving the ones they love, which is typically seen as the male's job.

Younger (2009) states that the young women within young adult romance novels may not be focusing entirely on getting the guy, and instead focuses on other issues that does not involve the relationship as the focal point. Within the sampled paranormal romance novels for young adults, although they are romances, the novels do not completely center on the female characters drive to be with the young man. Most novels focus on a separate problem, with the romance as the secondary plot. One large issue within the novels narrated by the female main characters are that they are struggling for power. Their outside world is changing around them, and, as a result, we follow their attempt to overcome and take charge of the situations. In all female narrated

novels, *Hush*, *Hush*, *Nightshade*, *Marked*, and *The Iron King*, something has changed drastically within the lives of the young women, and they are trying to take back some of the power that has been taken away by these changes to their lives. At the same time that these changes are occurring in their lives, they also encounter young men that make their bodies feel certain things, providing them with another source in their lives that seems to be out of control: their body. So while the young women are dealing with changes that are out of their control in their lives, they are also dealing with new sexual feelings that their body is experiencing, which they also seem to have no control over. I believe this could be seen as an overload of the expectations placed on young women in a patriarchal society. These novels are still reflecting the struggle of women's place in a patriarchal society that Radway (1984) reflected on 30 years ago.

Unlike the young women in the novels, the young men in the novels narrated by males are struggling with an inner source of power. Whereas the young women are feeling powerless due to their changing environment and misunderstood sexual desires, the young men in the novels are struggling with changes inside of them. In *Infinity*, *The Fallen and Leviathan*, *Beautiful Creatures*, and *Anna Dressed in Blood*, each young man faces changes to the understandings he has about himself. His life does not get turned upside down due to external forces; instead, he is dealing with internal changes. Both Nick and Aaron from *Infinity* and *The Fallen and Leviathan* discover that they have a power inside of them that they must learn to control. Ethan and Cas from *Beautiful Creatures* and *Anna Dressed in Blood* experience changes within themselves due to girls. In the novels narrated by both male and female characters, the result is the same, the young women, Clary and Grace (*City of Bones* and *Shiver*) focus on outside changes to their lives, while Jace and Sam focus on internal struggles. I would equate these differences in power struggles to the theories of masculinities of both hooks (2004) and

Connell (2000; 2005ab), in which men are struggling with themselves internally over the emotions that they are not allowed to share, and the power that they have been given in society. On the other hand, such as evidenced in the women's movement, women are trying to change their outside environment and gain some control in their lives that they did not have before. I would argue that this finding is a very important one, distinguishing what the difference is between novels with the first person view of women, and novels with the first person view of men.

### *Male "Alternatives"*

Hegemonic masculinity is mainly about power (Connell, 2000; 2005). While presented in the findings and discussed above, the female characters within the novels lacked power. However, contrary to what Rubinstein-Avila (2007) discusses, the young women in the novels do present characteristics of being strong and independent. This strength is not translated into power. It was still the male characters in the novel that held the most amount of power in terms of control and decision-making. This leads to the discussion regarding what type of masculinity was found in the novels. Throughout the literature on hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, it was demonstrated that masculinity is often about violence (hooks, 2004; Connell, 2000; 2005). As Connell (2005) has discussed, hegemonic masculinity is about the domination of men and the subordination of women, while men are supposed to manifest reasoning, which also supports their right to authority. Symbolically, these novels may be presenting that men are already given authority and power within society, just as it has been given to them in the novels, and now they seek ways of dealing with the responsibility given to them as authoritative and dominant figures.

While the literature (Mukherjea, 2011; Korobov, 2009; 2011; Allen, 2007) argued that there are alternative forms of masculinity. These alternative forms are about non-chalance, or providing women with more romance in order to make them happy. These alternative forms were often just about relinquishing some form of power. They made fun of themselves when rejected (Korobov, 2009), and provided more emotions when necessary to appease their female partner (Allen, 2007). Messerschmidt (2012) believes that masculinity changes depending on type of femininity. Both Korobov's (2009) and Allen's (2007) findings fit into what Messerschmidt (2012) is saying. Men using non-chalance and jokes, as well as providing more emotions to women, is a result of changing femininities. Within the examined novels, the young women provide less traditional forms of femininity and according to the literature above, this should result in alternative forms of masculinity. While it may appear within the findings that there are some versions of alternative masculinities within the novels, I will show that it is not the case.

“Alternative” forms such as Ethan reading poetry, and Sam being more sensitive are various aspects that support alternative forms of masculinity; while more men should adopt these habits, Ethan and Sam still retain power and reason within other areas of their lives, specifically over their partner. Ethan is seen as the rational one next to Lena, who the minute she gets upset breaks all the windows in their classroom. Ethan also remains on the basketball team, retaining his sense of masculinity and power even though he would rather read, which reflects Connell's (2000) statements about areas such as sport and sex as areas of power for men. Sam attempts to control his and Grace's sex life by trying to be the reasonable one when it comes to when they should have sex, based on the amount of time they have known each other and how old they are. Sam also retains his sense of authority and danger by being territorial over Grace. Accordingly,

even the male characters that could have been seen as embodying alternative masculinities still adopt more hegemonic forms of masculinity in terms of power, authority, and reasoning. Therefore, my original argument of a changing masculinity based on less emphasized forms of femininity is wrong, and that traditional forms of masculinity are still in place even when the female characters take charge.

I believe that this is happening due to the continued construction of the discourses of gender through patriarchy. The above discussion demonstrates that within the novels, men are still dominant, and women are still subordinate. While there may be perceived changes within the characteristics of men as becoming slightly more sensitive and less “macho”, their positions as dominant decision makers, and their presence within leading media cultures, such as sports, still creates the discourse through which patriarchal understandings retain their power. Contradiction supports that men have even more authority to seem both assertive and submissive, but have no fear of it lessening the power patriarchy holds, as the construction of femininity still allows for a domination of men. While the female characters are assumed to have some power, especially in novels such as *Marked*, the ways in which her personality and sexuality is presented within the novels (calling herself a “slut”) continues to constrain the perceptions of femininity. The contradictions within these novels regarding masculinity are still creating a discourse through which patriarchy remains in control; specifically, control over understandings and construction of femininity. Therefore, while we may perceive masculine “alternatives”, there is no relinquishing of patriarchal power, as the construction of femininity remains the same.

Concerning other forms of masculinity, particularly the young men as emotional or vulnerable, this vulnerability is only expressed in relation to the young women. Patch

demonstrating he has feelings instead of being a scary monster and Jace allowing Clary to see that he is not a constant bad person are instances where the male characters slightly put down their masculine façade. Kilmartin (2010) and Radway (1984) explore that since men contain their emotions, the only place that is okay for them to have intimacy is in their relationship. This is supported in the majority of the novels. Cas falls in love with Anna, who is perfect for him, since he can't have a normal life, and she is not normal. Ethan relies on Lena, since his father is shut in his room, and his mother passed away. The other examples found in the findings under male emotions and vulnerability establishes that the relationships the men find themselves in allow them to be better human beings, and allows them to feel. While hooks (2004) states that even men in relationships do not often share emotions, therefore resulting in a frustrated partner, these novels allow young women to perhaps explore some of the emotions their partners are feeling.

Within the novels, the males were described as very physical, dangerous, controlling, rational, and protective. The quotes in the findings expose the young men in the novels as ideal masculine characters that are not good with emotions, can be violent when they need to, and also possess a lean, muscular body. These characteristics are all common and traditional forms of masculinity that fit into the theories of masculinity from Kilmartin (2010), hooks (2004) and Connell (2000ab; 2005). While the men within the novels possess these traditional male characteristics, including possibility of violence, they are also creating a male other, which hooks (2004) discusses in her book. She says that while men are all capable of violence, there is a formation of an "other" male that is always worse. The above findings demonstrate that a male "other" was created within the novels by using other men as worse. Particularly in *Nightshade*, Ren's father was used to make Ren not seem as bad, because his father was worse. Nora in *Hush*, *Hush* debated whether she should go on a motorbike ride with Patch, and decided that there were

worse people out there. As well, a bunch of thugs threatening Megan in *The Iron King* made Ash seem like a better person for protecting her, even though he had wanted to kill her in the beginning. These novels prove that what hooks (2004) discusses about how we create men in our society, and ignore signs of violence because there could be worse men out there, is a message that is being sent directly to reading audiences consisting of young girls.

These novels indicate that the messages being given to young generations is still encouraging traditional notions surrounding masculinity. If men are supposedly adopting alternative forms of masculinity in order to divert some form of power to women, it is done so in vain. We are still living within a patriarchal society, where as the dominant gender, they can take all the power back if they want, and continue to subordinate women. These novels, for the female characters, are about taking back that control and attempting to keep it which- evidenced by each novel being part of a book series-is a constant battle.

### *Female Sexuality*

As the novels demonstrate female sexuality, they are doing so within the cultural context of patriarchy. This means that female sexuality is only understood within its relations to dominant forms of masculinity. Kilmartin (2010) expresses it best within his conversation about female sexuality and masculinity. According to him, it is thought in society that women respond- and are aroused by- forceful men. In popular culture occurrences in the media all over North America, women are objectified, often represented as being there primarily for the enjoyment of men. In turn it seems, women are supposed to enjoy this rough objectification by being aroused when men act predatory around them. These novels certainly provide the exact message that women are struggling to change: that we are not mindless objects that swoon at the sight of a

pushy, sexy stranger. Below is the discussion of the findings concerning sexuality within the novels.

The findings concerning sexuality illustrate that the young women in the novels are inexperienced. None of the female characters in the novel had had sexual intercourse before they met their love interest. Calla from *Nighthshade* expressed particularly stronger feelings about this. There were comments about her turning into a nun, and that her sexual desire should be shamed is something that a lot of young readers probably share. Young girls may find themselves in situations where they are with a young man who has already been with girls. She may feel embarrassed about it. She may also be teased about it. These novels acknowledge that young girls do crave sexual interaction, yet they are continually shamed by it. It is supposed to be boys who want sex all the time, not girl. Zoey in *Marked* goes as far to call herself a “slut”. These reflections in the novel may be felt by the readers, and if it is something they understand, could be one of the reasons the novels are so popular. The readers are not connecting with the novels because they also know what it is like to turn into a werewolf; they are connecting with them because they face similar feelings and struggles. We need to acknowledge that it is okay for girls to want sex too. It does not make them sluts. Younger (2009) says that female desire is dangerous and abnormal, whereas male desire is okay. Bay-Cheng (2012) also pointed at that young women do feel differently about their sexual desire, that it is not something passive, yet they lack the social outlets to communicate this. As Younger (2009) points out, novels are produced within certain historical and social contexts. These novels, and their popularity, are promoting positive messages that women are not passive, and they do have sexual desire, and that is okay.

Along with the females being presented as feeling aberrant about being inexperienced, they were also portrayed as being out of control. The young women in the novels, demonstrated in the above findings, are encountering a loss of control over the arousal and sexuality of their body. Every time the young male love interest is around, their body seems to make them feel things that they do not think they should be feeling. Terms used such as the males “flipping a switch” within them could also show that it is men who are supposed to turn women on. The male body in the case of these novels is described as so sexy that even when the young women do not want to be aroused due to their uncertainty over him, their bodies still react. Foucault (1978), as discussed in the literature, provides much insight into sexuality. In his research, he remarks that sexuality and the body is “by nature alien” (1978: 103). Within these novels, the female body is very much presented as alien. They are unaware of what is happening, they speak of their sexual arousal and pleasures as “mysteries”. Foucault (1978) speaks much about the body as under surveillance. In the case of these novels, young women are attempting to keep their own bodies under surveillance. Their shame and outrage at the lack of control over their bodies is a main theme within the novels. They are constantly reminding themselves that they should not be feeling a certain way, yet the pleasures they are experiencing are too hard to escape from.

The findings show the young women as unable to trust their bodies. They are “betraying” them. The young women in the novels were not the only ones whose body was betraying them; male characters needed to control themselves as well. Ethan (*Beautiful Creatures*) demonstrates his train of thought when he is trying to avoid his body reacting to Lena. Sam tells Grace (*Shiver*) that she overestimates his self-control. hooks (2004) establishes that males are in constant need to tame their wild sexuality. Throughout the novels, the males are either thinking

of other things to distract themselves, or else warning the girl that she should stop tempting him. Well, the same is seen within the novels, but not only for men. The male body is presented as tempting the young women into losing the control they are trying to have over their bodies, and caving towards sexual action. Radway (1984) expressed that the female body is always awakened by the male within romance novels. This was proven within the novels sampled. The young women, by either touching or seeing the male body, were overcome with desire. Men in society are told they are going to react when they see the ideal female body, but they need to control this so that they do not go around sexually harassing women. These novels are presenting the exact same message, but about women. Zoey sees herself as a slut, because she cannot stop herself from interacting sexually with the young men in the novel. Calla is trying to control her desire to be with both Ren and Shay. Anna wants Cas, and since she cannot be with him since she is a ghost, she distances herself. Lena physically cannot be with Ethan, causing a large problem for the characters.

The issue of women as passive and men as sexual seekers is both promoted and challenged within the sampled novels. The ways in which female sexual passivity is promoted is the shame and confusion the young women feel in the novels. When the characters are feeling shame and confusion over their bodies, it is not promoting a healthy knowledge of female sexuality, or female assertiveness. While this may reflect the real feelings of young girls in society due an overload of sexual messages, some of the sampled novels did illustrate female characters as sexually assertive. Illustrated in the above findings, many female characters from the novels demonstrated moments of sexually assertive behavior. This is positive because it shows that young women experience sexual desire. It should be noted that these instances of

female sexual assertiveness were done within the context of knowing quite a lot about the male character, as well as not being afraid of him.

Although young women may not be sexually passive, it is often believed to be so. However, as demonstrated in the literature with Lamb (2009) and Bay-Cheng (2012), female sexuality is in reality, not passive. Foucault (1978) explains that while we discuss sexuality a lot within our society, we also condemn a lot of people over their sexual desires. While I believe he is mostly expressing that many men are locked up for deviant forms of sexuality, and sanctioned for them; I believe we do the same thing to women. Often women are sanctioned for being overly sexually assertive, as it is their role to be chased, and not the one doing the chasing. We have created a society where we have told men that their penis is a weapon that must be in constant control (hooks, 2004:80). Farvid and Braun (2006) explore the conflicting messages surrounding male arousal and control: men are supposed to constantly want sex, yet be constantly keeping it under control. This same message is being given to young women within these novels. The sampled novels represent that females also want sex, and are also trying to control their bodies. Perhaps men let go of that control more often because they are supposed to be seen as more sexually assertive, while females are not; perhaps it is the females in society that actually have a larger amount of control over their sexuality.

### *Sexualized Violence*

As demonstrated in the findings, novels such as *Hush, Hush* and *The Iron King* directly place the young women characters into dangerous situations that are based on violence and its connection with sexuality. As well, the violence directly relates to the potential love that the two characters have for each other. Nora from *Hush, Hush* puts herself in dangerous situations, where

Patch comes to rescue her. She also sacrifices herself in the end to save him. This is too similar to Stephanie Myers *Twilight*, and creates dangerous messages for the readers. While Taylor (2011) thinks that *Twilight* promotes masochism, then *Hush, Hush* really takes the cake. Nora is continually sexually aroused by Patch, even though she firmly believes he is both stalking her and wants to kill her.

Kilmartin states that “*women are reluctant to participate in sex and therefore respond to forceful men*” (2010:226). This notion is possibly what is being carried over within some of the sampled novels. However, instead of the men themselves persuading the young women verbally, to have sex, it is the lure of their sexualized bodies that draws the young women into sexual desire. While we create women as sexual objects in society, my findings have led me to propose that we are doing the same thing to men’s bodies within these novels. While the novels are creating violence as sexual arousal, they are also creating a hard, lean, muscular body as a sexual turn on for young women. This creates a male body within the novels that arouses young women due to both its physicality and capability for violence. Some of the sampled novels show that being in a dangerous situation is okay as long as the guy is hot and that you may be in love. In fact, it is this love that keeps them from the harming the girl. In *Infinity, City of Bones, The Iron King, Hush, Hush, Anna Dressed in Blood* and *Shiver*, it is the fact that they fall in love that keeps them from getting killed.

As hooks (2004) points out, most people think only men are capable of violence. This is seen as good for protecting our nation, as we need men to be able to become violent in case of war. However, she argues, women are capable of violence when they need to be. It is only the assumption that men are this way because of things such as testosterone. The female characters in the novels demonstrate that women are capable of violence as well. As seen in the literature,

violence from men is often related to biology (hooks, 2004; Connell, 2000). As hooks (2004) discusses, violence is the result of our patriarchal society where men are told that in order to be masculine and have power, they must also be violent. These novels are showing evidence towards both biological and social aspects of male violence. By creating paranormal characters that are violent, the authors are normalizing violence from a natural/biological perspective. They are also demonstrating that violence comes from expectations of power in society, where it is that the female characters use violence as power. As Schell (2007) wrote about the dominant alpha male being present within the novels, while also allowing a strong female character, her findings are certainly reflective of my own findings. A creation of violence within the novels almost seems normalized due to the fact that it is not just the male being violent, but the female as well.

Most importantly it should be drawn that these novels present similar messages to women that novels and plays have in the past. The young women in these novels face situations based on the repression of their sexuality, confined gender roles, and lack of power within a patriarchal society. In short, the analysis suggests that, from Shakespeare to paranormal teenage romance novels, little has changed in narratives of masculinity.

### *Novels as unchanged*

The contemporary paranormal romance novels explored demonstrate situations where female sexuality is controlled by men. Male characters such as Ren in *Nightshade* are telling Calla why her body is feeling the way it is, which is due to her arousal for him-- are not necessarily helpful for young girls. Zoey describing herself as a "slut" in *Marked* because she has kissed two boys in a short amount of time, is also not a healthy message to send to young girls.

These notions are patriarchal understandings of female sexuality, as it is the reflection of the domination of men and their judgment of female sexuality which are the norms and expectations young women face. Through a discourse of patriarchy through which we are each socialized, out genders continue to reproduce and uphold the society in which we live in. The lack of difference between Radway's 1984 analysis and my own analysis demonstrates that the understandings of gender roles and actions remain largely unchanged.

## *Chapter 7: Conclusion*

The goal of this research project was to determine how female sexuality was being presented in paranormal romance novels for young adults, while also arguing a change in masculinity due to changes in femininity within the novels. While the female characters were illustrated as different, strong, and independent, the novels still produced male characters with traditional masculine traits. Even those male characters that were demonstrating a few alternative characteristics still maintained senses of authority and rationality, both components of hegemonic masculinity. The sampled paranormal romance novels all produced characters that were dangerous, dark, brooding, and unemotional except in the case of showing feelings toward their female love interest. They all also shared similar body types, and acts of violence. While this is due to the fact that these novels use paranormal beings instead of humans, this is a problem since these novels are one of the most popular genres right now. While regular men may not turn into werewolves, these novels make it okay to be threatened as long as the guy threatening you is sexy.

Novels such as *Hush*, *Hush* and *The Iron King* that produce connections between violence and sexual arousal should be discussed more. These notions connect precisely with understanding of female sexuality, framing it as something men are able to turn on and off. While many parents may be screening video games, television shows, and movies from their children, perhaps they are not aware that the novel their child is reading contains messages that a hot guy is trying to rape a girl but that it's okay because she may love him and he is sexy. These novels support negative relationships between violence and sex. As well, they reinforce notions of male sexuality and the body, demonstrating that it is only through a sexual, muscular, controlled body that young men can turn women on. Younger (2009) wrote that young adult

sexuality is often framed as wild, and these novels certainly provide messages that young adults have little to no control over their bodies. As demonstrated, the young girls in the novel are certainly feeling shame and confusion over their out of control bodies. This shame is presented through ideals that men are supposed to be sexually assertive and constantly aroused, not women. In summary, these novels do not provide healthy or informative messages regarding young adult bodies or sexuality.

While the novels do provide strong female characters, these characters are still being held back by a lack of power over their lives. This struggle for power, within the sampled novels, is the main story line to the romance novels. The confusion and struggle for power with the lives and with their bodies could be due to, as Younger (2009) says, the lack of power that young girls have in real life. The young men in the novels with male narration are struggling with the power they have themselves, and could be a demonstration with what men have to face in the real world, which constantly involves keeping their emotions in check. The findings of this research are important to contributing to the sociology of literature, as it reflects that what is being described within the novels-- even metaphorically by using demon powers instead of emotional rage-- is often reflected in society. The upsetting feature is that these novels present nothing new from what Janice Radway (1984) discovered 30 years about romance novels. There was a lack of change in how masculinity and gender are constructed in the real world. While we may seem to advance, and just like the young women in the novels-be given power- that power is falsified due to the constricted allowance of understanding and freedom of our bodies.

This study led me to believe there needs to be more focus on the co-construction of male and female sexuality through discourses of masculinity. As Wood (2010) discusses, there is a lot of sexual information found in novels, and young adults could be using these novels as access to

sexual information. There are competing forms of knowledge about sexuality, which can lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Both of these forms of media are presenting forms of sexuality that may not be accurate to the real world. So, stemming from my own research, it is clear that more research is required on sexual education. While both romance novels and pornography are highly profitable businesses, they are not providing realistic messages about sexuality to young generations. While young adult novels, as demonstrated in this research, may have some redeeming qualities when it comes to healthy notions of relationships and sexuality, most of them do connect female sexuality as only understood through masculinity as discourse of patriarchal power.

#### *Caveat*

I believe Sherrilyn Kenyon, author of *Infinity* says it best in her novel:

Nick still had no idea how his beautiful, kind mother hooked up with such a monster. It didn't make any sense. She'd told him once that she liked bad boys. But there was a difference between a guy like him who had attitude and a guy like his dad who had mental damage. Why did women and girls find psychos so desirable? Even at his school, it was the vicious loons like Stone who got all the girls while the nice guys like him only got the finger when he asked them out. He'd never understand. (*Infinity*, page 318-319)

This quote captures my thesis research exactly. It also introduces the area which my thesis does not cover. While these novels are sending messages to young women, this research is qualitatively theoretical and inductive, and cannot explain why young women allow themselves to be placed into violent situations. The authors of these novels could possibly be seen as trying to acknowledge the problems in society, by once again presenting them in their novels, and then critiquing them. By Shay in *Nightshade* exclaiming that there is a double standard for women to please men, yet not want sex, while men can do whatever they want; the author is creating the

problem present in society. The author then challenges this problem with characters like Shay who acknowledge it, and characters such as Calla, who are struggling with it. The next step for this research would be to interview the young women that read these novels to get a better understanding of how they are interpreting the violent situations within these novels that lead to sexual arousal. While the research captures the themes presented in popular paranormal romance novels for young adults, an understanding of the view of readers should also be taken into consideration.

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*Appendix A*

<b>Novel</b>	<b>Author name</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Date of publication</b>	<b>Gender of Author</b>	<b>Age range for readers</b>
Hush, Hush	Becca Fitzpatrick	Simon & Schuster	2009	Female	14+
The Iron King	Julie Kagawa	Harlequin Teen	2010	Female	12+
Nightshade	Andrea Cremer	Philomel	2010	Female	14+
Marked	P.C Cast and Kristin Cast	St. Martin's Press	2007	Female	14+
Beautiful Creatures	Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl	Little Brown	2009	Female	12+
Infinity	Sherrilyn Kenyon	St. Martin's Press	2010	Female	12+
The Fallen & Leviathan	Thomas E. Sniegoski	Simon Pulse	2011	Male	16+
Anna Dressed in blood	Kendare Blake	Tom Doherty	2011	Female	13+
Shiver	Maggie Steifvater	Scholastic Inc.	2009	Female	13+
City of Bones	Cassandra Clare	Simon Pulse	2007	Female	14+

<b>Novel</b>	<b>Type of supernatural being</b>	<b>Name of main character</b>	<b>Name of romantic partner/opposite character</b>	<b>Gender of main character</b>	<b>Age of main character</b>
Hush, Hush	Angels	Nora Grey	Patch	Female	16
The Iron King	Fairies	Meghan Chase	Ash	Female	16
Nightshade	Werewolves	Calla Tor	Shay Doran/Ren Laroche	Female	17/18
Marked	Vampires	Zoey Redbird	Heath/Eric	Female	16
Beautiful Creatures	Witches	Ethan Wate	Lena Duschenes	Male	16
Infinity	Dark hunters	Nick	Kody	Male	14
The Fallen & Leviathan	angels	Aaron	Vilma	Male	18
Anna Dressed in blood	Ghosts	Cas Lowood	Anna	Male	16
Shiver	Werewolves	Grace Brisbane	Sam Roth	Female/Male	17
City of Bones	Shawdownhunters	Clary Frey	Jace	Female/Male	15

<b>Novel</b>	<b>Type of narration</b>	<b>Female Class</b>	<b>Male Class</b>	<b>Female saves male</b>	<b>Males saves female</b>	<b>Sexual Activity</b>
Hush, Hush	first person	middle class	unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Iron King	first person	lower class	upper class	Yes	Yes	yes
Nightshade	first person	upper class	upper class	Yes	Yes	yes
Marked	First person	middle class	middle class	Yes	No	Yes
Beautiful Creatures	first person	upper class	middle class	No	Yes	Yes
Infinity	third person	upper class	lower class	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Fallen & Leviathan	thid person	middle class	middle class	No	No	No
Anna Dressed in blood	first person	middle class	middle class	Yes	No	Yes
Shiver	First person	middle class	middle class	Yes	Yes	Yes
City of Bones	third person	middle class	upper class	No	Yes	Yes

<b>Novel</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Resistance from parents</b>	<b>Extra Comments</b>
Hush, Hush	No	None	Very violent, creates unhealthy relationship dynamics
The Iron King	No	Yes	Violence, yet attracted
Nightshade	no	Yes	Violence, body confusion
Marked	No	Yes	Body issues
Beautiful Creatures	No	Yes	Male emotion, alternative
Infinity	No	Yes	tough guy act, coming of age
The Fallen & Leviathan	No	None	Male doubt in self
Anna Dressed in blood	No	None	Strong male and female characters
Shiver	Yes	Yes	real, dynamic feelings and emotions. Alternative male personality/actions
City of Bones	No	Yes	Clary Forgets to eat, comment that she has not eaten. Alec is gay, inlove with Jace