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Nikol Šustrová

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI
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Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF LOVE IN ANNE RICE'S VAMPIRE
CHRONICLES
Bakalářská práce

Autor: Nikol Šustrová

Vedoucí práce: Prof. PhDr. Michal Peprník, Dr.

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Prohlášení

Místopřísežně prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma: “The Impossibility of Love in Anne Rice’s Vampire Chronicles” vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího diplomové práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne

Podpis

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NÁZEV:

Neuskutečnost lásky v Upířích kronikách Anne Riceové

AUTOR:

Nikol Šustrová

KATEDRA:

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

VEDOUCÍ PRÁCE:

Prof. PhDr. Michal Peprník, Dr.

ABSTRAKT:

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na téma lásky v prvních čtyřech upířích románech Anne Riceové (The Vampire Chronicles). Práce si klade za cíl vyvrátit všeobecně zavedený mýtus, podle kterého jsou upíři Anne Riceové schopni milovat. Úvodní část je věnována vzniku a proměnám upířího charakteru a analýze polidštěného upíra Anne Riceové. Druhá část se zabývá analýzou vztahů mezi upíří literaturou Riceové a literaturou Gotiky a Romantismu. Třetí část sleduje různé druhy lásky a vzorce typické pro nastolování nefunkčních vztahů mezi upírem a člověkem, upírem a upírem a v neposlední řadě mezi upírem-člověkem a člověkem. Závěrečná část navrhuje metaforický vztah mezi upíří neschopností milovat a lidskou nutností potýkat se každodenně s vnitřním pnutím mezi dobrem a zlem.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA:

Anne Riceová, upír, polidštěný upír, láska, byronovský hrdina

TITLE:

The Impossibility of Love in Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles

AUTHOR:

Nikol Šustrová

DEPARTMENT:

Department of English and American Studies

SUPERVISOR:

Prof. PhDr. Michal Peprník, Dr.

ABSTRACT:

This thesis deals with the theme of love, as it appears in the first four vampire novels of Anne Rice (The Vampire Chronicles). The aim of the work is to challenge the generally believed myth according to which the Ricean vampires are capable of love. The first part of the thesis focuses on the development and transformation of the vampire character; in addition, the chapter offers an analysis of the Ricean humanized vampire. The second part explores the relationships between Anne Rice's vampire fiction and the Romantic, Gothic and Byronic literature. The third part focuses on the functional human love patterns and on the dysfunctional love patterns between a vampire and a mortal, between two vampires, and between a vampire-human vampire and a human. The last part of this thesis proposes a metaphorical relationship between the vampire's inability to love and the everyday human quest for goodness.

KEYWORDS:

Anne Rice, vampire, humanized vampire, love, byronic hero

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Introduction

Just a few readers today realize that between the images of Dracula – the repulsive, frightening, and essentially evil vampire of the Victorian era – and Edward Cullen – the shining, honest and handsome boyfriend-vampire – stands a line of other vampires. The most prominent among these vampires are those of Anne Rice and her Vampire Chronicles. Compared to the contemporary vampires of young adult and adult vampire fiction, the Ricean vampires are contemplative, vicious predators searching, desperately, for the things we search for: happiness, self-actualization and – love. Yet, unlike their contemporaries, the Ricean vampires are never given the opportunity to love in the human sense of the word, nor to establish a loving relationship. Thus, where the contemporary vampires establish life-long marriages and live happily ever after (literally), the Ricean vampires suffer through numerous unsuccessful attempts to love and to become loved. In my thesis, I have therefore decided to describe precisely why the vampire of Anne Rice can never become the perfect lover and boyfriend known to us from the contemporary supernatural fiction.

As far as I know, the skeptical approach I intent to pursue – that the Ricean vampire cannot love – has not been previously applied to any of the Ricean vampire novels. Anne Rice’s contribution to the vampire genre has been immense and as such widely reflected by a number of critics, yet love was always seen merely as a secondary feature proving the extraordinary humanity of her vampires. Thus, it began to be generally trusted that Rice’s vampires “love even more deeply than humans” (Zimmerman 106), even though “they are denied the everyday human pleasures of sex and food” (Zimmerman 106). Repeatedly, it was being remarked that the Ricean vampires are outsiders unable “to conform to social norms” (Zimmerman 109). The inability was then believed to have resulted in an abstraction of all human concepts, and – therefore – also in the abstraction of love. Still, nobody thought it necessary to look at the way vampires give meaning to the vacant human concepts they can no longer use. Instead, critics decided to focus on the theme of sexuality, even though Rice’s vampires – as we can see in both *The Queen of the Damned* (1988) and *The Tale of the Body Thief* (1992) – are clearly impotent and have no sexual desire. A large number of critics have also discussed the homosexuality in Rice’s Vampire Chronicles. Since, similarly to Zimmerman, I do believe that the vampires’ “ability to transcend

gender [...] makes gender and sexual orientation irrelevant” (109), I will not be concerned with the psychoanalytical and gender studies point of view on *The Vampire Chronicles*. Instead, I intend to reflect upon the theme of love through the means of comparison with the philosophical, psychological and sociological concepts of love known to us – people – yet, apparently, disguised to the Ricean vampires.

I will start my thesis with a brief introductory chapter on the Ricean humanized vampire and his dual vampire-human nature; a part of the chapter will also deal with the predecessors and descendants of the Ricean vampire. In the following chapter, I will try to explain why – in terms of the love theme – it is important to separate the Ricean vampire character from its Byronic predecessor; in addition, the chapter will discuss the Gothic tradition in *The Vampire Chronicles*. The next, major chapter will deal with the theme of love in detail. First, I will give a referential overview of some of the kinds of love important for the following comparison and analysis. In the next part of the chapter I will be analyzing the vampire’s attempts at establishing relationships with both the vampire characters and humans. The last part of the chapter will ponder the theme of love as it appears in *The Tale of the Body Thief*. Specifically, I will be focusing on the word love and the meanings it acquires after the vampire Lestat gets a chance to experience humanity once again. The last chapter of my thesis will focus on the consequences of the vampires’ inability to love and will offer an explanation according to which the vampire’s search for love serves as a metaphor to the everyday human quest for goodness.

1. The Development and Characteristics of Anne Rice's Vampires

Byron gave the vampire its spirit, Stoker its character, and Rice its conscience.

– Kathryn McGinley, “Development of the Byronic Hero: Byron, Stoker, Rice”

The aim of this chapter is to give a brief overview of the predecessors and descendants of Anne Rice's vampire characters; in addition, this chapter should serve as an introduction into the characteristics of the humanized vampire of Anne Rice. First, I am going to briefly talk about the development of the vampire character until the year 1970s when publication of *The Interview with the Vampire* (1976) changed the representation of a vampire character forever. The following chapter and its subchapters will focus on the vampire of Anne Rice. The main emphasis will be put on the humanization of the Ricean vampires. A short introduction into the problem of the dual vampire-human nature and the inability of the Ricean vampire to meet the essential emotional needs will follow. The last chapter will introduce the descendants of Anne Rice's vampires – the vampire characters of today.

1.1 The Predecessors¹ of Anne Rice's Vampires

The literary vampire character as we know it today went through a number of major transformations in both its appearance and behavior. The rightful, primary ancestor of the vampire character is the folkloric vampire, who at the eighteenth century inspired many poems of German origin. However, it was not until the turn of the nineteenth century and the rise of prose that the noble literary vampire – a true vampire archetype – appeared for the first time. The first of such vampires can be found in *The Vampyre: A Tale* (1819), a vampire novella written by John Polidori, but commonly attributed – in one way or another – to Lord Byron.² As Carter suggests, Polidori was not only the first to write a vampire prose in English, but also the first to infuse the vampire character with the erotic, seductive traits (621). Similarly influential was J.

¹ This is only a brief, schematic summary. I did not delve into the depths of the historical development of the literary vampire myself. This summary should be therefore taken chiefly as illustrative of the set of prevailing arguments about the development of the vampire character.

² The majority of the critics claim that Polidori's vampire story is based on an outline, or a fragment of a story written by Lord Byron (Overstreet Ch1, ¶27; Carter 621); others suggest that Polidori's vampire story had nothing in common with Lord Byron's writings or ideas (Tichelaar 220). Nevertheless, all critics seem to acknowledge that Lord Ruthven – the main vampire character of *The Vampyre* – is based on Lord Byron.

M. Rhymer's horror novel *Varney the Vampyre* (1847), a text which according to Clements "featured one of the first examples of a conflicted vampire" (4). But among all the vampire stories and poems, it is Bram Stoker's Count Dracula of his epistolary novel *Dracula* (1897), who is regarded as the most iconic of all vampires and the essential prototype for all vampires. With his alienated, old, bestial, tall, evil, yet still highly seductive vampire character, Stoker shifted the horrifying portrait of a vampire into a new dimension where blood-sucking became a symbol of titillation, rather than of horror and fear. Nevertheless, even Count Dracula counts among vampires of the nineteenth century, who were quite unlike their vampire counterparts of the twentieth century. As Senf reminds us, the late Romantic and early Victorian Period vampire was portrayed as "nauseated by his 'nasty' habits and rejected by the human beings around him" and "often inspired genuine fear, horror and more than a little awe" (11). Moreover, because "early vampires tended to represent a culture's fear" (Clements 5) most of the early nineteenth century writings described vampires as sexually aggressive and destructive demons, or, in other words – metaphors to the Victorian's repressed sexual mores, and class differences. As Carter argues, the general assumption (with a few exceptions) regarded vampirism as an evil, cursed condition, and "a vampire partook of "goodness" only in so far as he or she resisted the cursed condition" (627). Thus, even though readers of the late Romantic Period saw the vampire becoming an aristocratic, arrogant and seductive creature, who was now a part of the society, rather than a monster of the dark castles and cemeteries, it had no heart and no emotions. This mode of representation changed immensely in the 1970s with the publication of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*.

1.2 Anne Rice's Humanized Vampires

Even though Anne Rice was probably not the first one to write a vampire fiction from the point of view of the vampires themselves³ (Carter), she was definitely the first one who realized that "there is something more basic at work in the vampire myth; it touches upon the most fundamental questions of humanity" (McGinley 72). Thus, she

³ To prove her point, Carter refers specifically to the novel *The Dracula Tape* (1975) by Fred Saberhagen, in which Count Dracula retells Bram Stoker's story from his point of view, and consequentially becomes the hero of the novel (628). However, there is a high probability that among the countless 1950s-1960s horror and pulp fiction vampire stories, others might be found to prove that Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, however innovative, was not the first story written from a vampire's point of view, but merely the first to become both popular and critically acclaimed.

created a world where the evil nature of vampires is not certified and where the “supernatural characters are intended to represent the human (rather than inhuman) condition” (Hoppenstand and Brown 3) – a world which is “not an escape from reality but a venture into reality” (Hoppenstand and Brown 4). The vampires Rice brought to life are not creatures we should be afraid of, or repelled by; rather, they are to appeal to us with their “strikingly contrasting personality traits” (Hoppenstand and Brown 3), and its “characters, who, on the one hand, are very similar to us, but who, on the other hand, are decidedly unlike us” (Hoppenstand and Brown 3). After their transformation, Rice’s vampires become superhuman in a number of ways: their skin becomes pale and hard, their touch cold, their senses heightened, their nails start looking like glass, their features become beautiful, and their movements unearthly fast. But alongside these powers, Rice’s vampires also acquire the vampire nature: the need to feed on blood of people, the ability to ponder the world around them as if through a magnifying glass, and the inability to practice humanity ever again. As a result, the vampire has to forever look at the human world through the eyes of a feline – with a certain amount of detachment and enthrallment. On the other hand, the vampire is never given the ability to detach himself from the human world completely. This dual vampire-human nature – the vampires’ ability to look at humans and recognize them as both their prey and their once fellow species – then proves to be Rice’s specific version of the punishment of Tantalus. Because even though the vampires become supernatural, immortal creatures and do not have to fear death or illness, they are not given any answers to the life questions of humanity, nor are they given the opportunity to forget about humanity once and for all. Thus, although framed as fantastical creatures, Rice’s vampires are nevertheless never given a completely independent supernatural mind and are therefore bound to spend their eternity talking “about life and death, and love and loss, and sorrow and misery, and viciousness and grief” (Riley 14) and other human concepts just like an ordinary human being.

1.2.1 The Inability to Meet the Essential Emotional Needs⁴

In allowing her vampires to become “a vehicle for philosophic speculation” (Waxman 82) and a metaphor for human being (Riley 165), Rice ended up creating vampires who share the emotional fears, concerns and needs of their mortal counterparts, yet cannot partake in them. With this indisputably Romantic characteristic trait, Rice allowed for a comparison of her vampires to the monster of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1918). Similarly to the monster in *Frankenstein*, Anne Rice’s vampires are supernatural creatures with unnatural speed, strength and beauty. Unlike Frankenstein’s monster, however, they are also beautiful, alluring, seducing, and quite human-like in their appearance. This permits the vampires to engage with the human world in order to observe, hunt and kill; yet it does not allow them to partake in the basic human physical and emotional needs and ailments. As a result, the Ricean vampires no longer suffer from human physical weaknesses such as tiredness, old age or illness. On the other hand, they never stop craving the fulfillment of the basic human emotional needs, i.e. love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Another similarity between the monster and the Ricean vampire is the desire of both to partake in humanity. A difference, however, can be found in their ability to identify with humanity. Thus, while Frankenstein’s monster learns by observation how to become a part of the society, and consequently identifies with the human needs; Ricean vampires find themselves paralyzed with a painful inability to identify with what they once knew as humanity. To put it in other words, the vampire – compared to Frankenstein’s monster – feels the vestige of his once-human cravings, but he cannot make himself get involved in them actively. This is particularly painful, because even though the vampire is urged, subconsciously to fulfill his human needs, the vampire part of his nature resists any participation in the insignificant struggles of the human-prey. Compared to Frankenstein’s monster, the vampire then remains in the role of an observer throughout his whole life. Yet the vampire finds himself in the role of an observer not because of some external powers such as prejudice, or lack of understanding, but because of his own inherent dual personality – a personality which lacks certain essential needs

⁴ The term *essential emotional needs* and its impact on the vampire characters is derived from developmental psychology (a study of the emotional and physiological development of a human being). The essential emotional needs are basic emotional needs which have to be met if an individual is to be in a good mental health. The emotional needs discussed in my paper are narrowed primarily to those which are somehow connected to love or belonging, although I will talk briefly about other needs later on in this chapter.

fundamental for an identification with humans, yet still possesses a distinct number of needs allowing the vampire to feel a painful, partial identification with his once fellow human beings.

The Vampires' Hierarchy of Essential Emotional Needs

It is important to note that the inability to meet the essential emotional needs is closely related to the vampire's innate indifference to at least two categories of human needs and ailments, which – with the transformation – became useless, alienated, and therefore insignificant for the supernatural vampire. If we are to use Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a reference point, then, starting from the very bottom of the diagram, Ricean vampires are clearly not motivated to fulfill any human physiological needs such as breathing, eating, clothing, or having a shelter, which are for humans and their survival the most fundamental⁵.

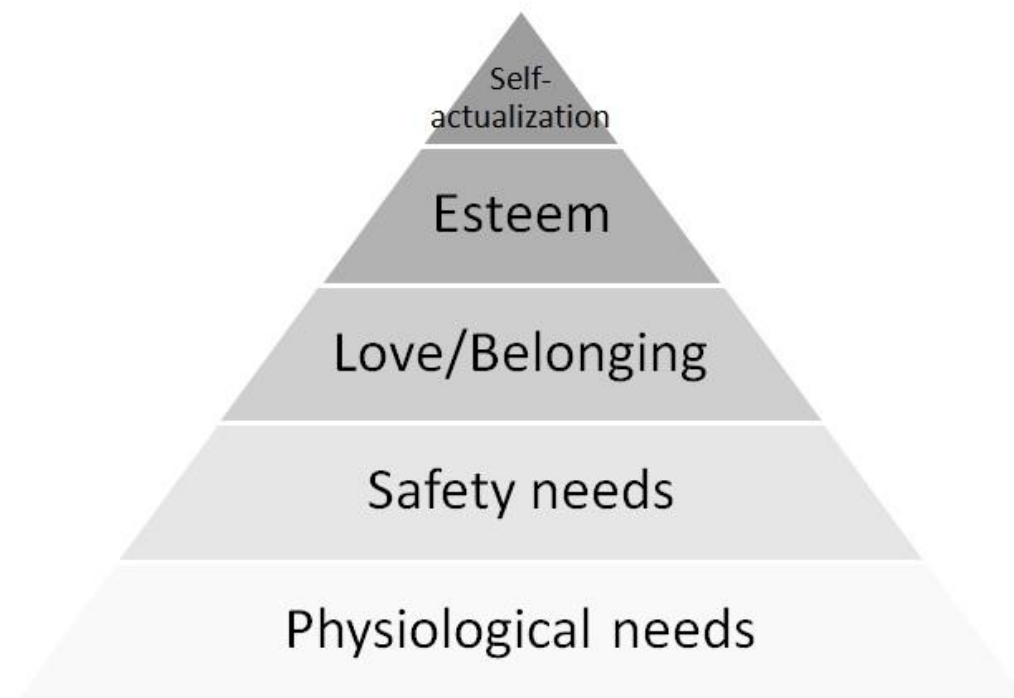


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid

⁵ I deliberately omit drinking of human blood from the physiological needs, because it is not an essential need a vampire has to meet in order to become mentally healthy. On the contrary, human blood-drinking – as a kind of addiction – makes the vampire lose control over both his mental and physical self. Moreover, it is apparent that a vampire could live on blood of animals as a kind of substitution for his addiction, but he or she permanently chooses otherwise. Therefore, human blood-drinking should not be thought of as an essential need; rather, it should be perceived as an external obstacle, which prevents the vampire from a healthy mental growth. However, since a vampire is unable to live without blood, blood-drinking (the general act of feeding) should be included as a physiological need.

Having nice clothes and a shelter is in fact a mere luxury, or a choice of living, and not a necessity, as we are throughout the novels instructed by Gabrielle, who instead of sleeping in a coffin sleeps comfortably in a mere pit underground, wearing the same garments almost constantly. The second level of the pyramid is dedicated to safety needs: financial, personal and health security. Because with the transformation the physical body of a vampire literally dies, the vampires find themselves immune to any kind of illness. Similarly, they are not affected by wars, economic crisis or unemployment. Thus, whereas the personal security of humans is disturbed by unexpectedly occurring internal (illness) and external distresses (physical abuse, natural disasters, wars, financial matters), the security of vampires is disturbed primarily by other vampires – by their fellow-beings.

Living in a world where vampirism is perceived as a pure folkloric myth, the vampires of Anne Rice do not have to fear people; however, they still have to look out for the other, older vampires who could do them harm. From the very beginning of their search for other vampires, Louis and Claudia hope to find others of their kind – vampires with answers to their questions. But when they finally meet other vampires, they find themselves physically threatened by their own kind. The vampires of Hungary, Germany, Transylvania and Bulgaria are mindless creatures who attack humans and vampires as well, and from which Louis and Claudia have to flee into safety. But even more dangerous prove to be the vampires of Paris theater society called *Theatres des Vampires*, lead by Armand. It is among these vampires that Louis and Claudia find out about a cardinal crime – killing another vampire – for which a vampire can be hunted down by others. Subsequently, Louis finds himself captive in a coffin for “killing” Lestat, while Claudia finds herself and her newly made companion Madeleine waiting for a death by sun. At this moment, Louis learns that being a vampire does not ensure him a complete personal security; and that treason, viciousness, falsehood and killing are common and punishable even within the vampire minority. Similarly, all vampires learn their lesson in *The Queen of the Damned* when Akasha – awoken by Lestat in *The Vampire Lestat* (1985) – decides to purify the world of all men and all vampires who stand in her way. As a mother of all vampires – the first vampire to be created – Akasha represents the most powerful vampire; she can fly, almost does not need human blood, and can set things and living beings on fire – including vampires. It is at the time she starts wiping the world of male humans and vampires alike that the main vampire characters summon a meeting in order to

secure their safety needs. After destroying Akasha and fulfilling their personal security, the vampires advance to the fulfillment of another essential need described by Maslow as the need of love and belonging.

To sum up, the adjusted Maslow's hierarchy of needs for a vampire confirms the dual nature of Ricean vampires – half of their needs copy their vampire nature, while the other half copies the remnants of their human nature. If we were to divide the previously shown diagram of Maslow's hierarchy of needs for a vampire (*Figure 2.*) into two, we would get a representation of what a vampire before Anne Rice looked like (*Figure 3.*) – a creature hidden in the shadows of a castle, yearning day and night for the blood of humans, and thus fulfilling its only two vampire needs. The life of Ricean vampire became more complicated when Anne Rice combined their safety and physiological vampire needs – the core of folkloric vampirism – with the human needs aiming at self-actualization. As I have emphasized before, this fusion of human and vampire nature did bring about serious consequences. First, whereas the vampire nature is active – vampires actively hunt for human blood and they also actively secure their personal security – the human nature stays in the passive mode. That is why a vampire can only passively feel the need of love/belonging and other subsequent needs, but cannot actively seek to fulfill them. The result of this passive/active clash between the two vampire's natures is the vampires' inability to both partake in humanity (to pursue the fulfillment of the essential human emotional needs) and his inability to cut loose from humanity altogether (to become a mindless creature yearning only the fulfillment of physiological and safety needs).⁶

⁶ Writers of contemporary vampire fiction – and especially those who focus on young adult vampire fiction – usually use this divided nature of vampires introduced by Anne Rice in a slightly different and a lot simpler way. Thus, the contemporary vampires are not pulled in both the human and vampire direction of their nature, but are allowed to choose and freely switch between being a good vampire with a human consciousness, or a bad vampire with no remorse over his/her deeds. An extreme handling of the ability to freely choose between the good/bad nature can be seen in the CW television series called *The Vampire Diaries* where the vampires can permanently “switch off their humanity” and stop feeling love, guilt or mental pain.

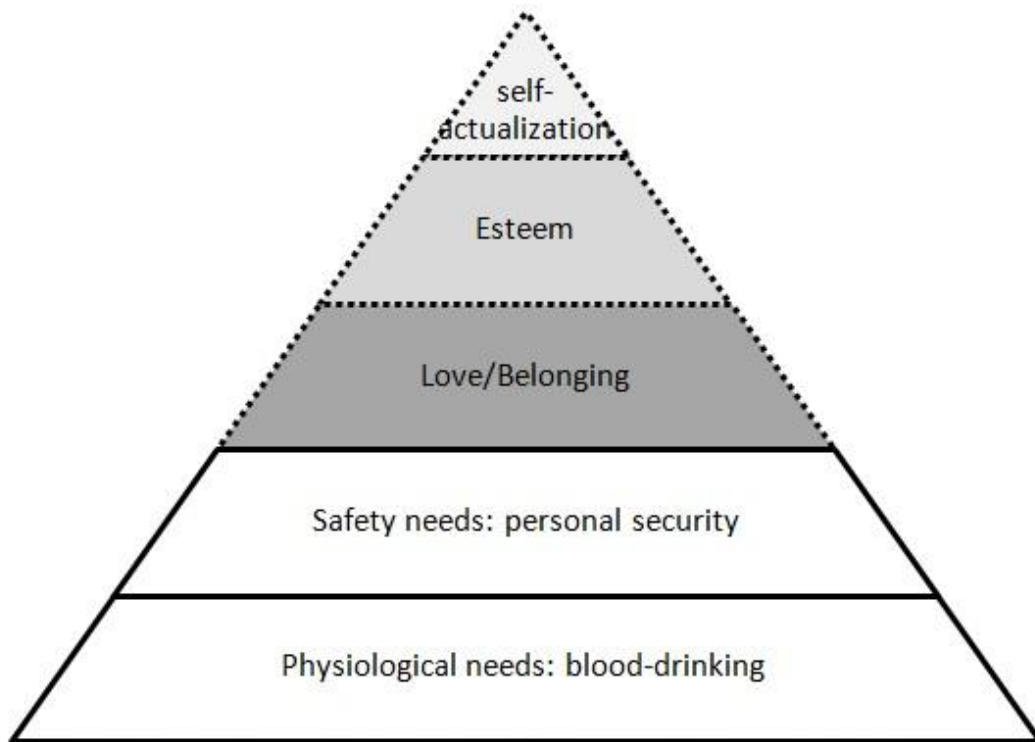


Figure 2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid for Ricean Vampires

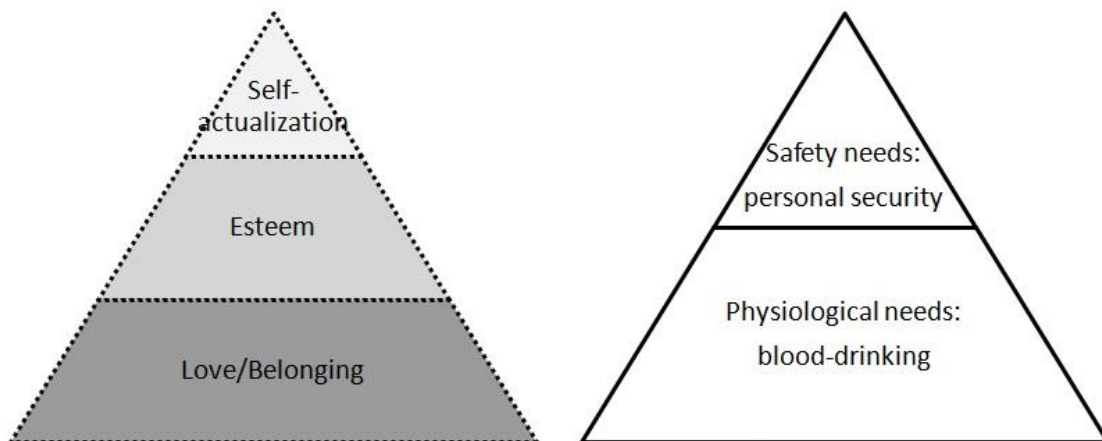


Figure 3. The Dual Nature of Vampire: Human's Nature (left), Vampire's Nature (right)

Coping with the Inability to Meet the Essential Emotional Needs

We're not angels, Akasha; we are not gods. To be human, that's what most of us long for. It is the human which has become myth to us.

– Lestat, *The Queen of the Damned*

The vampire's coping with the dual vampire-human nature triggers the vampire's many insufficient attempts at fulfilling the love/belonging need,⁷ and is therefore a theme

⁷ The hierarchy of needs is successive – if the bottom need is fulfilled, the vampire advances to the higher one. Thus, after the vampire ensures his physiological and safety need, he inevitably proceeds to

Anne Rice follows throughout all first four novels of *The Vampire Chronicles*. In *Interview with the Vampire*, the focus is put on Louis's inability to reconcile with the fact that his human needs are only passive and cannot be fulfilled. As a striking contrast to the human-like Louis, Rice introduces the reader with the ruthless vampire child Claudia and her growing awareness of her essential human emotional needs. Throughout *The Vampire Lestat*, *The Queen of the Damned* and *The Tale of the Body Thief* an emphasis is put on the nostalgia the vampires feel over their inability to act within the scope of humanity, and, similarly, on the confusion they feel over their increasing inability to recollect what was humanity like. There is therefore a visible progress in the theme of coping with the emotional needs – from a denial, and an actual awareness to the many hurtful and desperate attempts at fulfilling the human needs of love and belonging.

The Denial of Louis and Claudia

An example of the inability to reconcile with the passive human nature and also the gradual awareness can be explored on the cases of Louis and Claudia in *Interview with the Vampire*. Claudia, a five-year-old child Louis finds in a village stricken with plague, has recently lost her mother and is left alone next to her rotting body. Thus, at the time Claudia is being transformed into a vampire, some of her emotional needs are unfulfilled, while some others are probably still unknown to her.⁸ Since Claudia is transformed at the age of five, her inability to meet the essential emotional needs combines with the inability to even identify them. With the transformation into a vampire, Claudia then suffers the typical split of her nature into the vampire-human one. Since she has had little experience with the fulfillment of emotional needs as a human, her vampire-human nature does not primarily resist the fulfillment of the human emotional needs (as does the nature of fully matured vampires like Louis or Lestat), but seems to completely deny their existence. Thus, Claudia becomes a ruthless, coldhearted vampire, who kills mercilessly, showing no remorse. This turn of events is

the love/belonging need. The love/belonging need then becomes crucial – a vampire cannot fulfill it, yet he has the urge to try to fulfill it over and over again.

⁸ Knowing that there were no other bodies in the house found dead, we may assume that Claudia had no mortal experience of paternal love, brotherly love, or even friends' love, and definitely not erotic love, since further on in the text she asks Louis how does making love feel. One might certainly object that we cannot be sure about the existence of other Claudia's family members. They might have died long before Louis and Lestat got to the village. However, since Claudia, both shortly after her transformation, and also when already a matured vampire, asks only about her mother and cannot herself recollect any memory of other family members, we might assume she was the only child.

strikingly appalling to Louis, who still sees Claudia as a little human girl. As Louis describes Claudia later on to Daniel, the interviewer, he says that “not the faintest conception bound her to the sympathies of human existence” (*Interview* 164), and that she was “less human” (*Interview* 164) than both him and Lestat. When the interviewer asks Louis if he could “instruct her [Claudia] on the matters of human heart” (*Interview* 164) Louis exclaims “to what avail? So she might suffer as I did?” (*Interview* 164). Louis’s desperate exclamation illustrates his split personality. On one hand, he is aware of his inability to identify with humans and with his inability to successfully fulfill his human emotional needs; on the other hand, he still has his hopes high for a possible turn of event. As “the most human of Rice’s vampires” (McGinley 82), Louis simply cannot give up on the possibility of becoming truly human again. Claudia, in contrast to Louis’s denial, only slowly comes to the realization that she is subconsciously “searching for something” (*Interview* 137) that she cannot describe in more detail. In the end, they are both searching for love and belonging – for the fulfillment of a human need – that would quench the feelings of “Loneliness! Loneliness to the point of madness!” (*Interview* 159).

The Idealization of Humanity

In *The Vampire Lestat*, *The Queen of the Damned* and *The Tale of the Body Thief*, the theme of balancing of the dual vampire-human nature is pondered in a greater detail. The main vampire characters are given space to slowly come to a hurtful realization – that for them the world of humans is forever closed, yet still deceptively within reach. While trying to reconcile with this agony, the vampires go through the above described stages of denial, awareness, detachment, until they reach the final stage of coping – an idealization of humanity. Since it apparently takes time to arrive at the idealization of humanity, the final stage proves to be characteristic of the oldest vampires. Thus, the ones with whom Anne Rice illustrates the case are vampires old enough to remember pagan and Roman times (Marius, Armand), or even the Babylonian and Egyptian era (Akasha, Enkil, Maharet, Mekare, Khayman). On the other hand, Lestat, Louis and Claudia (at least from the point of view of Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*) are young enough to remember humanity as it really was; for them, humanity still seems to be within reach, and only with the passing hundreds of years it becomes disturbingly deformed, idealized and distant. As a matter of fact, in the beginnings of a vampire life, it is relatively easy to succumb to the idea of being

able to interact with humans. For a vampire it takes a lot of experience to at least partially reconcile with the fact that an interaction with humans is inevitably destructive. Yet even after this reconciliation the vampire stays vulnerable and needs constantly to be reassured – through speeches of older vampires or through his own painful attempts – that there is no way to reclaim humanity. In *Interview with the Vampire*, one such moment occurs when Louis and Claudia decide to go and find their own kind. On the boat to Europe, Louis, moody and melancholic, muses on his fate in which he is “a specter with a beating heart” held to the mortal world by “an unbreakable chain” (*Interview* 182). Upon Louis’s melancholic disposition, Claudia – at that time still unaware of her human needs – comes and without a scruple tells him: “This is not your sea. The myths of men are not your myths. Men’s treasures are not yours” (*Interview* 181).

Even though Claudia later on discovers her human needs and attempts fulfilling them, *Interview with the Vampire* does not offer an idealized point of view on humanity. It is only in the subsequent novels that Rice allows us to meet the eldest vampires of her fictional world and presents their matured, yet still confused points of view on humanity. In *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat goes through a number of painful experiences (creating vampires from his lover Nicholas, and from his mother Gabrielle, meeting Armand) before meeting Marius, one of the eldest vampires, who shares with him his story, his knowledge of vampires and supernatural beings, and spends countless days giving advice to Lestat. He advises Lestat to think about how it would be like to be mortal again before recklessly condemning those who decided to become vampires after being born as mortals for the second time. Lestat gives no reply to Marius, but refuses the idea of questioning the image of humanity he has stored in his mind: “[...] what I had made of mortality in my imagination I didn’t really want to lose. I wanted to go on grieving for my lost mortality” (*Lestat* 518). It is apparent that Lestat realizes his image of humanity might be twisted. However, he does not want to acknowledge it, and stubbornly claims he wants to become mortal again. However, once he becomes mortal in *The Tale of the Body Thief* he not only disgusts himself with his physiological needs, but also suffers a number of shocks and panic attacks at the realization of the limitations, sufferings and ailments of the human life.

Similar idealization of humanity can be seen in *The Queen of the Damned*, where Rice focuses on the rise of Akasha – one of the two eldest vampires – and the conflict between her and Lestat’s philosophical points of view, while simultaneously

using the framework of the novel to examine how the ancient vampires cope over the years with their inability to re-enter humanity. In her pursuit to document the personal feelings of ancient vampires, Rice employs a number of third-person narrated chapters and sub-chapters revolving around the ancient vampires and their inner monologues. Among the vampires, who are given such space, are – besides Lestat – also Pandora, Khayman and Maharet, all of whom mourn the fact that for vampires’ humanity is beyond recovery – becoming almost mythical. Similarly to Lestat in *The Vampire Lestat*, the eldest vampires in *The Queen of the Damned* cling to the idealized image of humanity and their human past even though it seems to them “more than ever a myth” (*Queen* 71). In the chapter on Pandora, we meet an old vampire, a fledgling to Marius, who, feeling an unknown danger (Akasha had risen and wants to wipe the world of all men), desperately searches for Marius. Her inner monologue jumps from thought to thought, but we learn that even she is still compelled by “the vague shining human past” (*Queen* 71), considering it a myth “to be cherished” even though “all practical belief died away” (*Queen* 71).

Another example of both the partial reconciliation and idealization of humanity appears in the chapters dealing with the fate of Maharet. Maharet – one of the red-haired twins, the vampires who later on take revenge on the evil queen of vampires Akasha – is introduced not only as a blood-sucking vampire, but also as an ancient mother of the Great Family. As a human, Maharet is ordered to be raped by Khayman in front of the court of Akasha and Enkil, and later on bears a child called Miriam. Her daughter becomes the first descendant of Maharet’s Great Family, a human clan after which Maharet looks after throughout her vampire life. Even though Maharet’s act might be considered an act of humanity, it nevertheless does not ease her love/belonging needs. On the contrary, we find Maharet admitting that over the centuries “the human [in her] melted away” (*Queen* 490). The link with her sister and the link with her descendants is what Maharet maintains almost artificially, rather because she is still “anchored to the [human] past by chains [she] cannot break” (*Queen* 490) than because it would make her feel human again or let her quench her human needs. After all, humanity as it once was is beyond recovery and what the vampires are left with are only memories, altered and twisted by the vampire nature into something unrealistically beautiful – within reach, yet at the same time detached. For a vampire, to fulfill his human needs becomes an impossible quest, and thus he dreams of another, similarly unattainable Romantic wish to come true – of becoming fully human again.

1.3 The Descendants of Anne Rice's Vampires

The vampire of the 21st century remains an important mythic figure (and therefore a figure worthy of serious study); however, it is undoubtedly a character of popular culture rather than of serious literature and drama” (Senf). As Susannah Clements points out, nowadays “our culture seems to love a vampire romance⁹” (149): strong, requited, romantic feelings and consequentially also sexual intercourse (both off- and onscreen) are essential to most of the contemporary young adult and also adult vampire fiction. Romance and sexuality is in fact so compelling to contemporary readers that when Deborah W. Overstreet tried to sort young adult vampire novels into categories based on the novel’s narration and direction, she realized that “stories of romance and love with vampire characters” are “the largest group of young adult vampire novels”, and suggested that “perhaps ‘vampire romance’ should be its own genre¹⁰” (Ch3 ¶11). Such genre could be defined again by Overstreet’s words: vampire romance novels “all contain some version of an intimate relationship between a vampire and a human”, and “the human is at least briefly in love with the vampire and often it is far deeper and more permanent” (Ch 3 ¶54). Whether the vampire fiction focuses on a doomed relationship or a relationship in which one of the couple adjusts to his/her beloved, it is still a romantic story where creativity gives way to a recycling and repeating of schemes that has proven profitable.¹¹ In her effort to classify contemporary young adult vampire fiction, Overstreet found out what many critics use as their argument against the literary merit of vampire fiction in general – that the prevailing narrative formula of vampire fiction is romance. The general rule of vampire romance could be summed up into

⁹ In this context, I use the term “romance” in its contemporary use; i.e. “romances *are* love stories” that “do apply a fictional treatment to the subject of love” (Ramsdell 4). In other words, I am referring to a genre that grew out of its medieval, Renaissance and nineteenth-century (gothic and historical romance) ancestors. Modern romances as such are rather formulaic stories following the growth of a relationship between a man and a woman. Obviously, the term is nowadays more restricted than it was in the past; also, it is often regarded as a popular “love” genre endowed with pejorative connotations of being stereotypical, sentimental, simplistic and escapist.

¹⁰ In other words, Overstreet suggests that vampire romance should be separated from romance itself.

¹¹ The only field contemporary vampire fiction writers seem to be interested in reinventing is the vampire myth. As Overstreet says, “the creators of vampire movies and books purposely play their vampires and narrative structures against all those that have gone before” (ch.2). This, however, can rarely be taken as an effort aiming at higher literary merit. Rather, it is often a deliberate move by which the authors ensure their vampire universe is different, and therefore more appealing to the readers. In such pursuit, contemporary vampire fiction overflows with not only newly invented vampire myths (such as that vampires can walk in sunshine), but also with other supernatural creatures – vampires, werewolves, witches, or even ghosts.

a simple sentence: the love interest is superior to everything else – even to the vampire character.

If Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* are character-driven – Rice's main idea was to give voice to vampires – then modern vampire fiction is driven by its romance formula, i.e. is plot-driven. The modern vampire narrative is built upon an idea of “a satisfying romance” into which a vampire, “transformed from its traditional portrayal” has to be placed (Clements 149). This new, transformed vampire character called sometimes “defanged” and far more often “domestic” ... “must be sanitized or domesticated enough that he becomes a plausible hero” and “remain[s] sympathetic for the romance to work” (Clements 149). Thus, the line between a vampire and a human character becomes blurred; the contemporary vampires are “scarcely distinguishable from their human neighbors—or classmates” (Overstreet Ch2 ¶137), and moreover they “can drink animal blood or do not need to kill to feed, have retractable fangs, can be out in daylight [and] do not sleep in coffins or dirt” (Overstreet Ch2 ¶12). As such, the domesticated vampires pass for humans not only thanks to their human-like appearance, but also thanks to their human-like character. In other words, the romantic plot requires the vampire characters to be robbed of all (or at least most) of the vampire conventions and dilemmas except for blood-drinking, and – consequentially – requires the vampire's conscience to be only mildly different from that of its fellow human characters. Thus, the domesticated vampire often becomes merely a fashionable, exotic supernatural element present in an otherwise quite typical romantic narrative, while the attractive elements of vampirism – such as blood-drinking, sex-appeal and troubled conscience – are retained only because of their ability to turn an otherwise classic love story into a popular paranormal romance. It is undoubtedly that in the domesticated vampire the model of Ricean humanized vampire was driven to extremes, and resulted in the creation of a vampire whose troubled conscience can be healed of vampirism in a truly human way – through love.

2. Gothic, Byronic and Romantic Tradition in the Vampire Chronicles

As soon as Rice's Vampire Chronicles acquired the status of high literature, two important literary relations were pointed out by the critics: first, that Rice's vampire narratives have a lot in common with the Gothic literary tradition; and second, that the Ricean vampires owe a lot to the Byronic hero character. In the beginning, this comparative approach was more or less¹² used in order to accentuate Anne Rice's indisputable contribution to high literature and to further justify her rightful place among the respectable literary authors of the day. Yet, over the time, these comparisons brought about also a rather problematic, simplistic belief according to which the terms Romantic/Gothic and Ricean are always parallel with each other. In this chapter I will, however, argue that in order to draw a complex analysis of Ricean vampires, one should rather doubtfully question the relationship between Gothic/Byronic and Ricean than to succumb to it. Thus, I will first deal with the theory of Gothic fiction and its overall relationship to Rice's vampire fiction, and then I will proceed to a concise analysis of the Byronic Heroes in relation to their so-called Ricean vampire descendants. I will conclude the chapter with a brief summarization, in which I intend to highlight how the partial conceptions of the relationship between Gothic and Romantic texts and Ricean vampire fiction can prove insufficient for a thorough analysis of her work.

2.1 Gothic Tradition

For a long time the Gothic novel was thought to be merely an escapist, schematic fiction with no literary merit, and, in the similar way, the term Gothic was considered to be – both in the literary criticism and reviews – rather a curse than a blessing. Because the early Gothic novelists' primary goal was to arouse gruesome, physical fear in the reader, many critics later on refused to comment on the genre of Gothic fiction, perceiving it as a tedious, low genre. It was not until the 1920s that the critics began to take Gothic fiction seriously.¹³ At that time, the Gothic genre was re-evaluated and two

¹² This approach is for example evident in the 1996 collection of essays called *The Gothic World of Anne Rice* edited by Gary Hoppenstand and Ray B. Browne.

¹³ When asked what caused the delay between the publication of *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat*, Anne Rice said, "I was deeply hurt by people calling me a Gothic or horror writer" (Riley). One cannot be surprised by Rice's reaction, since at the time of the publication of *Interview with the Vampire*, the stigma of the term Gothic was only slowly wearing off. Although, as Heiland says, serious criticism of gothic fiction appeared no later than in 1920s, it took another fifty years for it to get

schools of Gothic novelists were distinguished.¹⁴ Even though both of the Gothic schools aimed at creating a similar atmosphere of fear, the second school – more valuable from the point of view of the critics – managed to transcend the atmosphere, pondering many psychological problems. This Gothic transcendence is best described by Barbara F. Waxman in her essay on post-existentialism in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*:

From its beginnings as a subgenre emerging with the development of Romanticism in the later eighteenth century, Gothic fiction has always been more than mere “thrills and chills” sensationalism and escapist entertainment. In its probing of forbidden realms and occult experiences, it has been hospitable to philosophical ideas and quests: to speculations about ontology; to analysis of the nature of reality and surrealistic states; to investigation of constituents of moral behavior; and to determination of the meanings of human existence. (80)

As Waxman suggests, not all Gothic fiction is schematic and ludicrous; there are also Gothic novels, such as *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, which transcended the genre of fear, as they were asking important life questions, and consequentially left the reader dubious. This transcending quality is then the link to be found between the artistic Gothic fiction and the vampire fiction of Anne Rice.

Using a Gothic subtext throughout her novels, Rice created a world in which her postmodern philosophy entwines with Gothic, as well as other modes of representation. For some critics, the Gothic elements appearing in Rice's fiction are especially the images creating an atmosphere of fear and macabre, such as graveyards, crypts, moody sunsets, and the descriptions of nights in *Interview with the Vampire*; for others

re-thought and re-shaped, particularly by feminists (1). Because *Interview with the Vampire* was written around the year 1968 and was published in 1976, it appeared just in the center of gothic criticism, which was only beginning its sudden rebirth from a rather pejorative, low genre into a genre belonging to the literary canon.

¹⁴ The schools of Horror-Gothic and Terror-Gothic were first described briefly by the Gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe. According to Radcliffe – who was at the time inspired herself by Edmund Burke –, Terror-Gothic was a higher type of Gothic, which had the ability to expand the soul of the reader; Horror-Gothic, on the other hand, Radcliffe described as a type of novel, which closes the mind of the reader by its visible repugnance (Radcliffe). According to such division, Terror-Gothic – depending on suspense, or dread – would have to be represented by the novels of Radcliffe and Walpole, while the novels of Lewis, Maturin and Mary Shelley would represent the horror-gothic that does not employ the means of suspense, but openly disturbs and shocks the reader. As Hume points out in his essay called *Gothic Versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel*, such division proved insufficient and unlikely for the Gothic critics, who consider Shelley's *Frankenstein* to be a fine work (284-285). Thus, in case of Gothic criticism the terms horror and terror acquired a different reading.

it is the set of themes connected with gender, sexuality, power and otherness, which can be probed in terms of Gothic criticism; and still for others it is the dark ambiguity of Rice's literary world – a world where both vampires and people are roaming in quest of finding the meaning of their lives. But no matter what reason we find for calling Rice's vampire fiction Gothic, we should never forget that her writing is primarily the work of a postmodern mind. Thus, as Radcliffe and Mary Shelley transcended the Gothic genre of their age, Rice can be said to be the one who – with a certain help of Gothic modes – transcended and immensely influenced the vampire fiction genre.¹⁵ This is not to say that the Gothic tradition in Rice's texts should be undervalued or overlooked; but rather, that it should be considered in context with the mindset of the 20th and 21st centuries in which Rice continues to write her vampire stories, as well as with all the other historical influences we might find in Rice's writings. As Ingebretsen reminds us, in Rice's texts "elements of the Gothic – as well as the romance, historical novel, and sentimental tale of confession – mix and conjoin" (94), and thus it is almost impossible to place her text, critically in a relation to only one, specific genre. To sum up, one should not forget that – regardless the Gothic elements – Rice's vampire fiction is still a genre of its own,¹⁶ a genre originating in the 20th century, which does not answer to any historical genre in particular.¹⁷

¹⁵ Even though critics agree that Gothic survived as a literary mode until nowadays, they do nevertheless still acknowledge that what we can find in the postmodern writings is merely a Gothic mode or subtext – a reflection of Gothic. Thus, although Anne Rice certainly uses a number of Gothic themes and images in her writing, she should not be called a Gothic writer. Similarly, we should not talk about her transcending the Gothic tradition, but rather about her transcending the traditions of vampire, or supernatural fiction. What Rice transcends and explores is not the long-gone Gothic genre; rather, it is the contemporary supernatural genre.

¹⁶ Since according to the contemporary genre division Rice's vampire fiction falls into the category of paranormal genre it is more than obvious that – in the borders marked out by both the historical and the contemporary genres – the classification of her vampire fiction is quite difficult, if not impossible. In the long run, a genre specification is – and always will be – a curse for writers like Anne Rice, who transcend immensely the genre, which they were labeled with to fulfill the requirements of the book-market strategies.

¹⁷ As an example of the non-existence of classification of Rice's genre, we can take a closer look at the dark ambiguity of Rice's vampire world. Although the deep conflicts, contradictions and fundamental questions of humanity are known to be cardinal for the Gothic genre in particular, they are also central to the tradition of Postmodernism. The blurred line between what is good and evil, the questions about death, sexuality or guilt – all are typical of both Gothic and postmodern tradition. Similarly, both genres are typical for its unwillingness to resolve such questions and give the reader any answers or higher truths. The ambiguity of Rice's vampire world could thus be labeled either Gothic or Postmodern – depending on the point of view of the critic.

2.2 The Gothic and Romantic Literary Heroes

With time, the Gothic/Romantic/Byronic Hero and the vampire hero began to be thought of as a set of easily described characters and a little attention started to be paid to their further role in the text, or to their relationship towards other characters in the prose/verse. As a result, the Gothic/Romantic/Byronic Hero¹⁸ – and consequentially the vampire character¹⁹ of the paranormal romance – began to be described as a protagonist, who is dark, handsome, brooding, mysterious, strong, isolated, sexually attractive and guilty of some unnamed crimes. With this elementary comparison, all vital information about the vampire character as well as about its relationship to the Gothic/Byronic Hero got lost. Furthermore, such comparisons seem to imply that the Gothic/Romantic/Byronic Hero are no more than three closed, narrowly defined prototypes designated, without restrictions, to any at least slightly likeable character comparison across both the literary canon and genres. However, as Thorslev²⁰ suggests, the Gothic,²¹ Romantic²² and Byronic Hero²³ are more than just a cluster of lifeless adjectives – they are heroes of a vast variety, multifaceted and different from not only one another, but also from each other in its own subcategory.

¹⁸ For critics, the terms Gothic and Byronic are usually almost polysemous; i.e. without further specification, the terms can refer to any hero subtype. Such oversimplification then creates misconceptions about the characters in question.

¹⁹ This Gothic/Byronic definition adheres strictly to male vampires.

²⁰ In this chapter, I am chiefly following the study called *The Byronic Hero* (1962) of Peter L. Thorslev, Jr., for I have not found a more profound work on the Byronic and Romantic hero, nor did I find a study which would be closer to my own perspective and opinion on this question. I have also consulted the text of Atara Stein – *The Byronic Hero in Film, Fiction, and Television* (2004), which is focused mainly on the representation of the Byronic hero in the contemporary culture (one chapter is devoted to Anne Rice and her vampires).

²¹ There is an important difference between the role, appearance and behavior of the eighteenth-century heroes – between the Gothic Hero and the Gothic Villain. According to Thorslev, The Gothic Hero was either an active or a passive character, while the Gothic Villain was always an active, yet flat, pasteboard character, who did not grow or change, being an evil character from the beginning to the end. Furthermore, both the Gothic Hero and the Gothic Villain were rather schematic and predictable characters, who acted within the boundaries of an eighteenth-century organic, rational universe, and shared a set of stock images, emotional responses and themes typical of their age. It is obvious that the Gothic heroes were rather limited in both their appearance and behavior, since they had to fit the eighteenth-century values and codes of life. I have therefore deliberately omitted further analysis of their relationship to the Ricean vampires in this text. (Thorslev 51-61)

²² Thorslev distinguishes among the Noble Outlaw, Faust, Cain, Ahasuerus, Satan and Prometheus.

²³ Because the Byronic Hero shows the elements of nearly all other Romantic hero types, he is often put aside, or rather above the Romantic Hero category, thus forming its own category despite its direct link to the Romantic Movement.

2.2.1 The Byronic Hero vs. the Ricean Vampire

In his study on the Byronic Hero, Thorslev describes how the first Byronic Hero – Childe Harold – developed through the merging of a number of both the eighteenth-century and the Romantic Heroes²⁴ (47); further in the text he analyzes the different types of the Byronic Heroes, slowly working his way up to an important piece of knowledge – that even the great Byronic Hero was nothing more than just a coalescence of other hero subtypes (Thorslev 47). This does not mean that the Byronic Hero should be thought of as less important – no-one can deprive Lord Byron of both his talents and innovativeness. The output should be that the Byronic Hero, as well as the Gothic Hero should not be thought of as a closed, single faced type, but rather as a fluid and unstable character with characteristics that differ from one appearance of the Byronic Hero to another. Thus, there is no single description adhering to all Byronic Heroes alike. Similarly, we cannot say that the Byronic Hero and the Ricean vampire have parallel character descriptions. Put differently, insisting on the likeness between the Byronic Hero and Ricean vampire would mean that neither of the before-mentioned characters has individual characteristics, and, moreover, that both refer merely to one type of a hero. To thus deny – even if unconsciously – the many Gothic and Romantic literary influences evident in the Byronic Heroes could then lead to a fundamental mistake. As Thorslev reminds us, similar isolation of certain aspects of the Byronic literary tradition stands behind the now generalized belief, which dictates, both to the scholars and to the readers alike, that the Byronic tradition and character is reflected in all literary and film vampire characters (9). The same belief had been applied to Ricean vampires – and especially to the figures of Lestat and Louis.

There are supposedly many characteristics adhering to Lestat and Louis, the main protagonists of Rice's first two vampire novels, to the Byronic Hero. Among the Byronic characteristics²⁵ attributed to Lestat and Louis are most usually passiveness,

²⁴ According to Thorslev, the character of Childe Harold from the first two cantos is "a potpourri or an agglomeration of the characteristics of [...] the Child of Nature; the Gothic Villain [...]; the accursed Wanderer; the Gloomy Egoist [...]; and the Man of Feeling" (138-39). Further on, Thorslev describes the Childe of the last two cantos as "one of a long line of Heroes of Sensibility" (141), the coalescence of "a secularized Gloomy Egoist with the ethically unconcerned Man of Feeling" (141).

²⁵ Since both the Byronic and the Romantic Hero are known to possess a number of identical characteristics typical of other literary heroes of their age, most of these characteristics could be found either in the Gothic, the Romantic, or the Byronic Hero as well. In other words, the Byronic Heroes are known to borrow their characteristics of the Romantic Heroes, while the Romantic Heroes' characteristics are known to spring from those of the Gothic Heroes and Villains. Nevertheless, for our purpose it is especially important that many of these shared characteristics are often attributed

self-inflicted suffering and isolation, guilt, fear of death (or, conversely, the wish for death), egoism, melancholy, self-loathing, detachment from the world of people, no need of a human moral code, rebellion, power, alienation, moodiness, cynicism, capability of strong affection, diabolic quality, and many others. For further comparison, “often these traits are separated into two distinctly different Byronic heroes” (McGinley 82), one of which is Lestat, the other Louis. Across the scholarly articles on vampire fiction, these two different categories of the Byronic Hero are then described and named differently; McGinley for example says that “Lestat is the more classic example, the more like Dracula” (82) and compares him to both an alienated rebel and a leader of men at the same time. Furthermore, McGinley suggests that Louis “has the opposite qualities” – he is too sensitive and feels tremendously guilty for killing people (83). McGinley then concludes that we could call Lestat the Noble Outlaw and Louis the Hero of Sensibility (85). Overstreet, on the other hand draws on the descriptions by Wood and Hollinger and on the example of Louis and Lestat subsequently establishes two sub-archetypes: the Byronic Hero and the Reluctant Hero. According to Overstreet the Byronic vampire “is a loner, often consumed by guilt over a life fraught with violence and seduction” (Ch2 ¶19), while the Reluctant vampire is someone “who did not necessarily want to be vampire and who [is] troubled by [his] own inevitable actions” (Ch2 ¶20). While in her pursuit to compare the Byronic Hero to Ricean vampires Overstreet generalized the description of the Byronic Hero to extreme, McGinley chose to prove her point by comparing chosen aspects of the Byronic and Romantic Heroes to those of Lestat and Louis. From the two above mentioned approaches towards the comparison between the Byronic Heroes and Ricean vampires that of Overstreet is probably more widely used;²⁶ for my thesis, however, the comparison of McGinley is more important, since it raises a set of essential questions to be asked about Rice’s vampire characters. By far the most important of these is the Byronic conception of love theme.

exclusively to the Byronic Hero. This false exclusiveness then enables the comparison between what is commonly believed to be the Byronic Hero and the typical Ricean vampire.

²⁶ The oversimplification of the term Byronic Hero is especially used in the criticism of contemporary vampire fiction where such generalization is often sufficient, for the characters are rather flat and a description of their characteristics through enumeration can be quite harmless.

The Byronic Love

Concerning love in Byron's body of work, Thorslev says, "typical Byronic Hero [...] is a man of courtesy and sensibility towards women" (8), since all Romantic Heroes "have souls of sensibility" (188) and therefore "almost infinite capacities for feeling: especially [...] for the tenderness and the passion of love" (188). Thorslev even goes as far as to say that the Byronic Heroes "are all lovers – for most of them it [love] is the ruling passion in their lives – and they remain faithful, in true romantic fashion, until death" (149). This capacity for love – the capacity of the Byronic Hero to risk his life to save a woman, or inspire undying love, the true romantic feeling in a woman – is then generalized and as such believed to be the core for not only all the Byronic Heroes, but also for Rice's vampires. McGinley is not the only critic who claims that, when compared to the Byronic Heroes, "Rice's vampire heroes are also quite capable of feeling love" and "can also love each other" (McGinley 83). But even though this comparison seems at first plausible, there are differences to be found in the concept, use and role of love in the Byronic/Ricean narratives.

As already noted, the Byronic love – derived from the Romantic love – is dissimilar to Ricean love and plays a different role in the Byronic narratives: for the Byronic Hero, love is at once his unreachable dream, his doom, and his transcendence. Love – the most powerful feeling of all – profoundly affects the fate of the Byronic Hero, and demands to be felt. Regarding this Romantic concept of the Byronic love, a thematic generalization has to be made: once, the Byronic Hero felt great love, but this love was usurped from him (usually because of his own deed), and now he finds himself in a kind of slumber, a depressed state of yearning for his past, unreachable love – the only true love of his life. It is apparent that the Byronic Hero suffers greatly, but even though we are over and over assured by the hero himself that, after losing the love of his love, he can never feel second love, we know this slumber of his, this depression and suffering, is self-afflicted. Compared to the Ricean vampires, the Byronic Hero has thus a great advantage: he can love again – if only he would let himself do so. The helplessness of the Byronic Hero then differs from the helplessness of the Ricean vampire, who is not even given the opportunity to refuse new love, and who is – against his own will – made passive to love by his vampire nature.

The Cascading Comparison of the Byronic Heroes and Ricean vampires

The innate inability to actively pursue the fulfillment of the essential human emotional needs alongside the internal suffering of Ricean vampires seems to be the trigger for the comparison between Byronic Heroes and Ricean vampires. As it has been already said, since such comparison strives for an ideal and balanced relationship between the two categories, it is based on similarities. But for the many similarities we can find, there is at least an equal (if not higher) number of differences. These differences can be described as having a cascading style. In other words, both the Byronic and Ricean texts can be contrasted on three levels: on the broad contextual level, on the narrow thematic level and on the merging character level. Regarding the broad contextual level, it is apparent that when compared to the Byronic Heroes, Ricean vampires are less (yet not ultimately) constricted by the period thinking²⁷. Realizing the differences between the Romantic and Postmodern era in which the texts originated, we can then proceed to the narrow thematic level – this approach is illustrated in the previous chapter dealing with the concept of Byronic love. The third level can be perceived as a merger of the previous two levels – a comparison of characters drawing on not only direct similarities and differences in the physiological and isolated psychological characteristics of the heroes, but also on their motivations, goals and actions/reactions as these rise from the philosophy of the world the characters are set in.

Lucifer and Cain

An essential part of Ricean vampire characteristics is the vampire's bitterness over his partial knowledge (does God exist?), over his exile from humanity (Eden), and his inability to love. Bitterness and despair, similar to that of Ricean vampires, can be also perceived in two Byronic Heroes: Cain and Lucifer. These two characters appeared in Byron's dramatic poem *Cain, a mystery* (1821), which drew on the Bible and on Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667). The poem focuses on Cain's murder of Abel and its

²⁷ In contrast to the literary Romanticism, Postmodernist texts are more likely to differ from one another in the means of characterization, narration and themes. They do not have to answer to any period philosophy or shared thinking of the era and are thus more of an authorial and unique expression. Thus, whereas we can name categories for the Romantic literary characters, we cannot do the same generalization in the vast scope of postmodern writings. Similarly, while the Byronic Heroes are apparently derived from the Romantic characters and are answering to a number of beliefs typical of the Romantic era, Ricean vampires are answering solely to the beliefs of Anne Rice. In other words, Ricean vampires do not subject to any higher philosophy, while Byronic Heroes – no matter how innovative they are – still heavily rely on the thoughts and beliefs of the Romantic period.

cause – a travel to the far realm of Death and the subsequent dialogue in which Cain’s bitterness is stirred up by Lucifer’s skeptical testaments. Both Lucifer and Cain seem to partially reflect the characteristics of Ricean vampires. Cain, a skeptical child of Adam and Eve, turns into a complete nihilist after his discussion with Lucifer, and as a consequence kills his brother Abel. The bitterness and fierceness, with which he condemns his parents for bringing sin upon their children, and his rebellion illustrate the uncontrollable, cold-blooded vampire nature, which inevitably leads to exile. However, Cain never stops loving his wife and repents after his crime, and is thus rather mirroring the rebellious state of mind of Lucifer than being a rebel himself. Described as a beautiful, yet demonic angel whose “sorrow seems/ Half of his immortality” (*Cain*) Lucifer corresponds to the Ricean vampires to a greater degree than Cain. Opposed to the repenting fallen family comprised of Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Adah and Zillah, Lucifer represents the ultimate nihilist, the demonic loner – the immortal Cherub who knows most and “loves not” (*Cain*). He is a chief example of an exceptional Byronic Hero who, “lacks that softness, that sensibility, which the true Byronic Hero is never without” (Thorslev 180). With his skeptical self-assertion, rebellious mind and his unwillingness to submit or yield to anything and anyone, Lucifer might easily represent the vampire conscience of Ricean vampires – the nature of a predator innate to every vampire. Lucifer’s “lack of sensibility” might be traced in a number of Ricean vampire characters. As an early example, we can take Louis who, despite being credited with the most human-like characteristics, at the end of *The Interview with the Vampire* without the slightest remorse turns against Daniel, the interviewer, “his face [...] twisted with anger” (*Interview* 366). His unconcerned behavior at the end of the novel – sucking blood out of Daniel and leaving him to his own fate – is shocking for those, who found themselves believing in Louis’s ability to partake in humanity. Yet, Lucifer’s lack of sensibility is even more apparent in Lestat, who in his self-assertion strikes fatally and without warning those who believe him – be it Louis, Claudia or, most importantly, David. Lucifer’s lack of sensibility is also apparent in Lestat’s mother Gabrielle, who sees no meaning in pursuing any kind of relationships, almost as if she was living according to Lucifer’s advice: “I pity thee who lovest [*sic*] what must perish” (*Cain*). Similarly, we can trace the lack of sensibility in Claudia, who was born to darkness a merciless vampire; or in the ancient vampire Akasha, the hard and cruel vampire queen acknowledging only herself and her goals. But no matter how many analogies we can find between Lucifer’s lack of sensibility and the vampire nature,

Ricean vampires – cursed with a parching thirst for humanity – reach far beyond the Byronic figure of Lucifer.

Giaour and Manfred

Similarly to the Ricean vampires, the Byronic Heroes Giaour and Manfred reflect upon their cursed lives. Giaour falls in love with Leila – a wife to a Turk. When Leila's husband finds out about their love, he kills Leila. Giaour then avenges Leila by killing her husband, retires to a church and spends the rest of his life mourning over the death of his beloved Leila. Similarly to Lucifer, Giaour is a rebel that refuses to conform; even though he lives in the church and clothes himself as one of the convent members, "he declines the convent oath" (*Giaour*) and never repents of his crime. As a result, despite his being a mortal, Giaour seems to the friars "an evil angel", who has "sorrow and disdain" written in his face (*Giaour*). Manfred's story is less organized and demanding than Giaour's. The main theme of the story, revealed through a series of dialogues and monologues, is again guilt felt over the death of a significant other. The play follows Manfred as he wanders the world and calls upon the spirits and natural forces, all in a vain search of an eternal rest. Both Giaour's and Manfred's story emphasize not only the sorrowful situation of the characters, and the heavy guilt they struggle with, but also the great, fateful love that inevitably changed their lives. For one thing, the love Giaour and Manfred experienced was passionate, fateful and unique – Manfred "wandered o'er the earth/and never found [his lover's] likeness" (*Manfred*), Giaour, on the other hand, never even thought about searching for another woman, since the dove taught him that each of us has "one mate, and one alone" (*Giaour*). With the deaths of their beloved ones – for which both of them are to be at least partially blamed – Manfred and Giaour find themselves cursed with an eternal guilt, sorrow and despair. Giaour is cursed after he kills the Turk and sends his head to the Turk's mother. Although he is famously cursed to become a vampire²⁸, who should "ghastly haunt thy [Giaour's] native place,/And suck the blood of all thy [Giaour's] race" (*Giaour*), the mystical, vampire curse does not become the main theme of the verse; rather, it becomes a literary means of enhancing the torment of Giaour. A similar mystical curse – executed by Spirits reacting to Manfred's poisonous life full of hypocrisy, falseness

²⁸ This curse is the passing reference, which gave rise to the Byronic-Vampire criticism, although as Thorslev reminds us, apart from this reference, nothing really points to the fact that Giaour is a vampire-lover (9).

and crimes – is found in *Manfred*. In both cases, the mystical curse compels the damned never “to slumber, nor to die” (*Manfred*) and always to suffer from his own “inward hell” (*Giaour*). The torment of Manfred and Giaour is thus internal, self-inflicted, and moreover eternal.

Although the Byronic torment seems to be similar to the damned fate of Ricean vampires, there are many subtle differences to be found. First, Manfred and Giaour are both descendants of the Romantic Hero who believes that no second love can be found; in other words, true love comes only once. If the hero’s first mate dies or is killed, then the Byronic Hero can only wait and become fulfilled after death when he and his beloved love become the transcendental one. Ricean vampires, on the other hand, do not believe in a transcendental, true love – they simply believe in love, in a human feeling promising affection, communication and overall fulfillment of their essential emotional need. Put differently, for Ricean vampires love is something unattainable, but promising – a means of coming to self-actualization. For the Byronic Hero, however, love is unique and when lost, it becomes not only unrepeatable, but also self-destructive.²⁹ Second, there is a great difference between the way Ricean vampires and Byronic Heroes perceive love and humanity. Where Ricean vampires desperately try to reclaim humanity and fulfill their human needs, the Byronic Heroes pursue the contrary – they shun other people, believing them to be mediocre. In other words, the isolation of Ricean vampires is usually passive and involuntary, while the isolation of the Byronic Heroes is active and most likely intended. Thus, Giaour is described as a man who spends the nights and days alone in his tower, while Manfred openly proclaims that he hated being mortal and tried to avoid their company, so that he did not feel “degraded back to them [people]” (*Manfred*).

Third, and most importantly, there is a difference between the natures of the Byronic/Ricean curse. As already pointed out, the Ricean curse stands for the strong will of the vampires to participate, yet at the same time their inability to partake in humanity. The Byronic curse, on the other hand, consists in the death of the ideal beloved one and the subsequent effort to arrive at transcendence with the dead one through an after-death reunion. The Byronic curse then causes a melancholic indisposition described by Manfred as “a blight of emotion, a coldness toward good, evil, and life itself” (McVeigh 604) and by Giaour as a state in which his memory “is

²⁹ Because the Byronic Hero believes in unique love, after his mate dies, the Byronic Hero cannot but wait and call upon his death – the only promise of a reunion with his female counterpart.

but the tomb of joys long dead” and his presence consists of “dull, unvarying days,/condemned to meditate and gaze” (*Giaour*). In both cases, neither powers, nor passions or the difference between good and evil are important anymore. The only passions left are the self-destructive guilt and burning love for a dead woman (McVeigh 604). It is obvious that this melancholic indisposition, this depression over one’s own self-inflicted fate, is quite dissimilar to the fate of Ricean vampires. What Ricean vampires suffer from is a fervent and unceasing fight between their cold-blooded vampire nature (Lucifer’s lack of sensibility) on one hand, and the remembrance and fight for regaining of humanity on the other. While then “the seeds of his [Manfred’s] humanity, his imagination and curiosity, are dead” (McVeigh 608), the humanity, imagination and curiosity of Ricean vampires is alive, yet painfully unreachable. However, although the reasons for and causes of the inability to love are different for both the Byronic Heroes and the Ricean vampires, they nevertheless share the same core – love is unattainable, yet also instinctively understood to be the only force of (Byronic Hero), or the next step in (Ricean vampire) defining oneself in the alienated universe.

2.3 Trapped in a Loop

As I have argued throughout the previous sub-chapters, comparing Rice’s vampire characters and fiction to the generalized characteristics of the Gothic/Romantic/Byronic literary heroes and narratives raises more questions than answers. To further illustrate the case, I have attempted a brief analysis of the typical comparative approaches used in studies demonstrating the similarities between the Byronic/Gothic Heroes and Ricean vampires. Since I did not have enough space for a comprehensive analysis of all generalized Byronic characteristics usually mentioned in the comparative essays on Ricean vampires, I have decided to focus mainly on the theme of love, which is of the greatest importance for my thesis. This does not mean that I did not consider and study the differences between other themes and characteristics; rather, I want to emphasize that even a description of only one theme needs a lot of space, yet does not lead to the definitive answer saying: Ricean fiction is Gothic, Ricean vampires are Byronic characters. As a matter of fact, general comparisons between Gothic/Romantic/Byronic and Ricean should be treated rather carefully since in the long term they can do more harm than good. There are, of course, critics who know how to treat the terms – let me name at least Atara Stein, the author of an interesting study called *The Byronic Hero in*

Film, Fiction, and Television (2004). Yet even these critics, in their effort to connect every single aspect of the Byronic Hero with the Ricean vampire, often confuse the terms Byronic/Gothic/Romantic, neglect the apparent differences, and altogether fit the Byronic Hero on the Ricean vampire rather because they can than because it really fits. Thus, not only is the distinction between the character roles, relationships and behavior neglected, but the only vampires compared are usually Lestat and Louis, while for example the comparison between the Byronic Heroines and Ricean female vampires is deliberately omitted. Altogether, these omissions then create quite a convincing, yet overall false illusion in which the Ricean vampires fully subject to the values, beliefs, codes and themes typical of the Gothic and Romantic periods.

3. Ricean Vampires and Love

As the vampire character transformed from a folkloric, terrifying creature and a menacing blood-sucking nobleman into a domesticated fellow, the theme of vampirism accordingly grew, transformed and acquired new meanings and definitions. The folkloric, evil vampirism gave way to a metaphorical reading in which vampirism stood for social problems and diseases, only to be later on reborn as an eerie, melancholic condition curable by love. From an unacceptable threat to the society – a threat that has to be destroyed by any possible means – vampirism shifted to a more approved, if not even adored condition. What was once seen as a curse is now seen as a desirable condition promising immortality, family life and true love lasting forever. In other words, the vampire of today can meet both his vampire and his human needs. This, however, does not work in the world Anne Rice created, where the vampires lusting for both human blood and humanity itself are allowed the first, but never the second. The transformation from a mortal into a vampire does not only bring one a “more powerful and resilient immortal body” (*Queen* 490), ability to read thoughts, run faster and see and hear better than mortals, but it also brings uprooting from a society, loneliness, and the inability to meet one’s essential emotional needs. In the following chapters, I will argue that, unlike in the contemporary vampire fiction, love in Ricean universe is not a cure for all the vampire’s sufferings. On the contrary, I will argue that love, as one of the essential human emotional needs, not only cannot be attained, but, furthermore – because of its maddening inaccessibility – turns into the fundamental need of a vampire. I will deal with the theme on several levels: first, I will give a referential list of the most important kinds of love; second, I will compare the previously described types of love with the vampire’s attempts at establishing a relationship; third, I will conclude the chapter with a subchapter on the novel *The Tale of the Body Thief*, which offers a winding up of the theme of love.

3.1 The Many Kinds of Love

The word “love” proves difficult to interpret because of its many possible meanings. For example, the Oxford English Dictionary defines love as one of the “senses relating to affection and attachment”, and then provides a list of possible definitions: love is

“a feeling or disposition of deep affectation or fondness for someone,”³⁰ “strong emotional attachment”, “great liking”, “the affectionate devotion due to God from an individual”, or a “sexual desire or lust, esp. as a physiological instinct.” Even though they differ in intensity, all of these definitions are based on the psychological, biological and sociological concept of love, according to which love falls into the category of complex emotions.³¹ Love as an emotion can describe a relationship between at least two human beings, or between a human being and an object, activity, group of people, country, etc. But while in connection with non-living entities and activities love represents merely one, unique kind of strong emotion, when related to human beings it acquires also an additional sense – a sense describing the kind or type of love in question. Put in other words, love in its broadest sense could be described simply as an emotional attachment, but there are contexts in which we need to be more precise; contexts in which we have to state what kind of love we have in mind. The love between two brothers certainly differs from the love shared by a couple, or the love between friends. The following subchapters will therefore serve as a theoretic and referential frame for the future analysis of the kinds of love in Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles*.³²

³⁰ Under this particular definition we can also find motherly or brotherly love.

³¹ The distinction between the basic and complex emotions can become ambiguous, since there are still emotions we are unable to classify as uniquely human (such as love). Nevertheless, the basic emotions “appear to be emotional reactions that nonhuman primates have as well” (Matsumoto), while complex emotions are emotions presumably “truly unique to humans” (Matsumoto). Both the basic and complex emotions “allow for complex social networks and relationships, and enhance the meaning of normal, daily activities” and “drive us to pursue happiness” (Matsumoto). In other words, emotions are both the basis and the trigger for our pursuit of emotional fulfillment (our pursuit of self-actualization).

³² The following subchapters will deal with the basic typology of love (friendship, motherly love, etc.) and also with some more specific semantic kinds of love – i.e. love as a cliché. Since the typology of love seems inexhaustible and there are many points of view one can take when dealing with love – such as pedagogical, sociological, psychological, or philosophical, to name at least some of the most usual – I intend to focus mainly on the types of love most relevant for my analysis, i.e. motherly/fatherly love, erotic love, friendship, etc. Because the descriptions of certain types of love might differ from a philosopher to philosopher and from a sociologist to sociologist, I emphasize that for my thesis are crucial my descriptions. The terms – such as Agape, Eros, etc. – I use refer to the descriptions given in my referential chapter here and nowhere else.

3.1.1 Erotic Love (Eros³³/"Being in Love")³⁴

Eros is what every couple "in love" based their relationship on. In contrast to Storge or Philia, Eros is restricted to one specific person and is characterized by "the craving for complete fusion, for union with one other person" (Fromm 52). Often, falling in love has been called "true madness", since it sweeps one off his feet and leaves him wanting one specific person and nothing/nobody else. However, while Storge or Philia are known to be steady in their intensity, the intensity of Eros can have a falling tendency. The early stage of Eros – the burning passion and craving for the significant other – is only temporary and is known to weaken after the two people get intimate with each other to such an extent that there are no more barriers to overcome, no more deep and exciting intimacies to share. By "getting intimate" I do not intend to refer only to the sexual intimacy, but to one's own personal hopes, anxieties, dreams and experiences, which are not shared with just anyone and which have the tendency to make us feel terrifyingly vulnerable when shared with another person. According to Fromm, the weakening tendency of Eros is also linked with our sexual desire (called Venus by C. S. Lewis), which can either be a part of Eros (closeness and overall intimacy with a specific person is superior to the sexual desire), or it does not have to be linked with Eros at all (a one-night stand). Moreover, even a sexual encounter with no emotional investment may develop into Eros, while some types of Eros do not have to be linked with sexual desire at all.³⁵

Thus, Eros and sexuality can be closely linked, or do not have to be linked at all. When not linked with Eros,³⁶ sexuality can do more harm than good, because of its deceptive ability – the ability to create an illusion of union, which, nevertheless, lasts only for a moment and in the end leaves the sexual participants as alone as they were before the encounter (Fromm 54). In addition, the sexual desire which is not linked to

³³ Eros is the Greek term used to describe erotic love.

³⁴ Based on the point of view, Eros can be either seen as a low or dark kind of love (a superficial feeling based on carnal desire and animal attraction) or as a more complex love, which can or does not have to involve the sexual element. Since the first conception of Eros is tightly linked with Eros being a counterpart of Christian Agape (Eros is egocentric and physical – linked with matter, Agape is theocentric and emotional – linked with the soul). In the following subchapter, I will be predominantly concerned with the complex Eros, which does not automatically condemn the physical and sexual as a sin, but rather describes it as a carnal element.

³⁵ This applies to asexuality.

³⁶ Here I am talking primarily about encounters in which sexuality is purposely not linked with Eros, i.e. about one-night stands, and not about asexual relationships in which the link between Eros and sexuality is inherently missing.

Eros is selective and non-exclusive, but when linked with Eros, it becomes strongly exclusive and non-selective. In other words, we cannot choose with whom to fall in love, such as we cannot choose to love/stop loving our mother or father. Falling in love is therefore unintended; we cannot influence any of the when/who/why/for how long premises as we can in case of, for example, friendship. Falling in love is completely individual and unique and there is no fighting it – it is so strong that for a long time one cannot step out of it, nor look at it objectively. But no matter how strong and exclusive Eros is, one never gets separated from other kinds of loves. The self-love, motherly love and brotherly love is still very much alive and needed, even if we find ourselves – for some time – under the false impression that to be with our partner is all we need to feel complete.

Another important feature of Eros, mentioned in D’Arcy’s study, is the concept of giving and taking. According to D’Arcy, Eros requires “a duality, of which one aspect is negative as compared with the other: one gives and the other takes” (14). He further develops the theme with respect to the gender of the participants and says that both have a given role – the man possesses and takes, while the woman surrenders and gives. However, in contrast with animals – where the duality leads merely to a fulfillment of their nature – people have “personal dignity” (14), which allows them to respect each other’s role. In other words, animals feel no mutual respect or moral considerations and perceive Eros merely as an important element of their lives – a way of reproducing and continuation of their species. For people, on the other hand, Eros is not about fulfilling their roles, but about self-growth and mutual respect. In giving and taking they do recognize the value, beauty and importance of one another, and thus they elevate Eros to more than a carnal desire.

Dark Eros

In his study *Love in the Western World* (1956) Denis de Rougemont took the point of view according to which “Eros is the desire that needs reformation and Agape is the redeeming action of God” (Hamerton-Kelly). According to de Rougemont, Eros is the love of love, or rather “the love of death” – the love that revels in its own lack. In other words, Eros does not follow the Christian theory in which everyone becomes through God; quite the contrary, Eros revels in denying its dependence on God and becomes – vice versa – through self-love. Thus, Eros refuses the other person, seeing it as a mediator of God’s desire, which “flowing from the divine plentitude” could easily

fulfill the lack (de Rougemont cited in D'Arcy 39-40). While Agape is “the creative power that brings something out of nothing and satisfies all lack” (Hamerton-Kelly), Eros “chooses emptiness ... and rejects the divine plentitude” (Hamerton-Kelly). According to this point of view, Eros is then the kind of love that refuses one’s own natural desire for and need of God and instead ravishes in its own self-assertion. In this, there is an apparent connection to the Platonic love, in which Eros – in its first stage – is merely the love of physical beauty, which can be later on cast away in favor of the love of divine, the love of Absolute Beauty. However, while in the Platonic love, one has a possibility to cast away this low Eros and reach the highest state of Eros, which equals Agape, the dark Eros cannot become Agape. No matter what one does, it is still “the dark passion, man’s beguiler and destroyer” (de Rougemont cited in D’Arcy 309). It is the desire that takes and possesses, denies its relation to the divine, and seeks Death instead. The urge Eros expresses is therefore beyond the sexual love and, since “mortal joys only increase the wound”, it cannot be satisfied by anything this world has to offer (de Rougemont cited in D’Arcy 37).

3.1.2 Charity (Love of God/ Love of Others/Agape³⁷)

In contrast to the egocentric³⁸ Eros stands the theocentric love called most usually Agape, but also Charity, or Love of God. This type of love applies to both the Eastern and the Western religions, and differs with respect to the figure of God, the age of the individual, and the religious task it introduces to its believers (Fromm 67). The Eastern and Western Agape differs in the religious task it introduces; while the idea of the Eastern religions holds that action (a concentrated meditation) can lead towards the unity of man with the One;³⁹ the Western religion believes that one can find the truth – and consequentially also the unity with the One – in thought (Fromm 79). Thus, in the Western religious system, “the love of God is essentially a thought experience” (Fromm 80). This approach also marks a significant difference between Agape and Eros. While in case of Eros, happiness comes through the physical and emotional union of two people, Agape dictates that happiness comes not through Good

³⁷ Agape is a Greek term.

³⁸ Here egocentric means that through Eros one aims primarily at the fulfillment of his own desires – be it sexual or emotional.

³⁹ With the development of religion, the figure of God, which was once anthropomorphic, became purely monotheistic; accordingly, Agape transformed from love towards a personified God into love towards the nameless One – towards “the unity underlying the phenomenal universe” (Fromm 70).

(physical and egocentric), but through God. Happiness can therefore be achieved only through our mental fellowship with God, who is Good (D'Arcy 56). In still another words, God initiates Agape in people and thus replaces their egocentric self-love – Eros – with love of others (D'Arcy 310).

3.1.3 Self-Love

Self-love does not apply to another person, but to a man himself. Among philosophers this form of love is often perceived to be a bad, selfish counterpart of the love for others – Agape (Fromm 58). The amount to which philosophers reject self-love as heretic depends on their point of view on Eros and Agape. Those, who are in their studies influenced by Christianity and religion in general are more likely to reject self-love; those, who work with Greek terms and Greek point of view on Eros and Agape are more likely to admit that “the self is irresistibly borne along by the desire to perfect its own being” (D'Arcy 312). But even the most radical religious philosophers – such as Anders Nygren – seem to at least reservedly admit that self-love, as the Greek philosophy believed, is present in every love, including the religious Agape (D'Arcy 312). In contrast with the ambiguity of the philosophical point of view stands the psychological point of view, which states that one can never exclude himself from love, since one's love towards others is “rooted in one's capacity to love” (Fromm 59). If we do not love ourselves, we cannot love others productively. Thus, self-love is a premise for other types of love and is therefore entirely positive.⁴⁰

3.1.4 Motherly, Fatherly, Brotherly and Sisterly Love (Affection⁴¹/Storge⁴²)

This kind of love is perceivable between the family members. As the psychologist and philosopher Erich Fromm explains in his study *The Art of Loving* (1956), the love in family is passive and unconditional. Storge is the love that “ignores the barriers of age, sex, class and education” (Lewis), but also the love without a beginning; in other words, we cannot really say when exactly our affection started (but we can, for example, say when we made a new friend). Storge is also humble and often taken for granted. Yet it can be also terrifying because there is nothing we can do to enhance it – one either feels it, or not. We cannot demand our mother to love us, nor can we control her love. But in

⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the notion of self-love as something inappropriate and bad still survives in the meaning of Eros.

⁴¹ A term used by C. S. Lewis.

⁴² Storge is a Greek term for all kinds of love found between family members.

an ideal case, Storge is always present; it is felt consistently, regardless of the actions of one or another family member.

3.1.5 Brotherly love (Philia)

According to Fromm brotherly love is “the most fundamental kind of love, which underlies all types of love” (47). It is the love of other people – of our equals. Brotherly love is based on human solidarity, identification and compassion and is not exclusive. We are predisposed to love other people and help them when they are in need.

3.1.6 Friendship

Friendship – a relationship between two or more people who view one another as equals – is perceived as a form of love. Because of the relative closeness of friendship and love, distinguishing between the two can become quite difficult, hence the popular discussion labeled “can a man and a woman be only friends?” That is also the reason why studies focusing on friendship try to list both the differences and the similarities between friendship and Eros. Similar to Eros, friendship is regarded as a relationship between two individuals who – as a result of their relation – are perceived by the society as people withdrawing from the collective (Lewis). However, in contrast with Eros, friendship does not occur exclusively between two people, but allows for other people to step into the relationship, since “to divide is not to take away” (Lewis). Moreover, friendship is always mutual and reciprocal, as “one can hardly be a friend to someone who he or she does not regard as his or her friend” (Määttä 125), while love between exclusively two people can be one-sided (e.g. platonic love). Friendship starts with the discovery of having something in common⁴³ – an opinion on something/someone, a hobby, a taste, etc. and slowly develops and deepens with time. Falling in love, on the other hand, does not involve degrees, nor is its origin describable. It might therefore be said that friendship involves a degree of choice – we choose freely with whom we want, or do not want to be friends – while love simply happens – we cannot influence with whom we fall in love. Friendship also allows for a distance: friendship can survive even long distance in both time and place. Eros, on the other hand, requires the presence of the significant other/others. Similarly, there is a kind of psychological detachment between friends, while Eros is always in need of mutual affection and growing

⁴³ This is the reason why we are more likely to establish friendships with people of our own age and gender.

intimacy. “In friendship, both have their own space and place and although one could cross the line, it will be only temporary” (Määttä 124).

3.1.7 Two Platonic Loves

Apart from its primary meaning – that which describes Plato’s point of view on love – Platonic love nowadays acquired also a contemporary, fully different meaning. The primary meaning of Platonic love derives from Plato’s point of view on love as it is expressed in his major philosophical studies *Lysis*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*. According to Plato, love is desire springing from need (Toner 19). Falling in love is then “a moment of crisis in man’s mortal life” (Toner 21), a moment “in which man must choose to follow the way of heavenly *eros* [*sic*] in the highest form of friendship and philosophy or succumb to the stunted way of the vulgar *eros* [*sic*] in sensual love” (Toner 21, italics in original). Put differently, Eros is only a way of achieving one’s goal – the vision of Absolute Beauty.⁴⁴ It is obvious that the modern sense Platonic love acquired does not fully correspond to Plato’s philosophy, yet partially derives from it. We use the term Platonic love nowadays to describe love without sexual intimacy. It is a type of ambiguous love where the attraction never translates itself into sexuality. Platonic love can be found between two people (both of them are attracted to each other), or – and this happens more often – one can fall in Platonic love with someone who does not return his feelings, or does not even know he is being Platonically loved.

3.1.8 Love in American Culture

Since its very beginnings, America presents itself as a country of countless possibilities, a country – in contrast to Europe – full of optimism, happiness and freedom. Even though this romantic picture of America was shattered throughout the years, it is still very much alive and working. This is partly due to the fact that many travel agencies specialize in “selling” the American freedom and happiness through their work and travel programs, and partly due to the way America, even after its countless mishaps, presents itself. From the early childhood, American children are taught a set of national values built on national myths (Wherry 4); among these are also the love of one’s

⁴⁴ The Absolute Beauty refers to the eternal beauty of the soul. “The realization that Absolute Beauty is more valuable than beauty of the body” (Amir 9) can bring one’s soul close to immortality. However, to achieve this ideal, one has to first fall in love with the physical. In other words, one has to first feel the low Erotic love (Eros) – the appreciation of physical beauty (the body). Only then can one progress to the highest love – the love of the beauty and form itself, the love of the virtue.

country, the need of ever-present optimism and the carefully arranged set of life values – love being one of them. As Maryan Wherry points out in her essay, “Americans hold a fundamental belief in the concepts of falling in love and ‘true love,’ despite the ambiguous nature of the expression” (4). The American attitude towards love – one of the romanticized myths – is therefore repeatedly reflected in films, literature, advertisements, and radio. Similarly to patriotism or family life, love often gets to be presented in an unrealistic, exaggeratedly optimistic light – love “is always wholesome, genuine, uplifting, and fresh” (De Sales). Love is in every film, every novel and in every other song; it is an ever-present aspect of life, one of the goals a young American has to achieve to become happy. But achievement is not enough. To love in America means to express love and vice versa. The comment De Sales made in his essay from 1938 is still very much accurate: “in America the idea seems to be that love [...] should be sold to the public, because it is a good thing ... the very word [love], when heard indefinitely, becomes an obsession.” The word love, encountered countless times every day in media, and heard countless time mentioned by friends and even by complete strangers, who are just saying goodbye to their loved ones on the phone (“I love you too, bye.”), becomes merely an expression for a national optimistic value, not for an emotion.

3.1.9 Love as a Cliché

“Love is easily the most empty cliché, the most useless word, and at the same time the most powerful human emotion—because hatred is involved in it, too.”

– Toni Morrison

Cliché is an expression, which has been over-used, and as a result lost its meaning and intensity. Love as a cliché appears in expressions such as “love conquers all” or “love hurts”, but even “I love you” can be perceived as a cliché if used repeatedly. The usage of the word love as a cliché is a phenomenon most – yet not strictly – typical of American culture.

3.2 The Twisted Images of Love in The Vampire Chronicles

I have already outlined how the Ricean vampire’s dual nature – the clash between the vampire’s passive human and active vampire nature – came into being and how the vampire came to realize that the possibilities allowing him/her to partake in

humanity are scarce, if not almost none. This realization, however, does not stop the Ricean vampire from attempting at fulfilling his essential human needs. Since an inherent part of humanity is striving for self-actualization and for happiness, even Ricean vampires – partly supernatural, but partly human too – keep trying hard. The human essential needs, being at the apex of the vampire’s pyramid of needs, are what fuels the vampire’s life and creates challenges that cannot be fulfilled. It is not in the powers of a vampire to resist these calls of nature, and even though attempting to fulfill what is prone to never get fulfilled is hurtful, it is in his nature to at least try to do so. Thus, after fulfilling the basic needs for food and safety, vampires, alongside people, crave something else – love. However, while people are provided with people, social and soft skills innate to any human being and can thus – with more or less difficulty – pursue love, a vampire is provided only with an inherent feeling telling him that he *is* human, which he really *isn’t*. As a result, the vampire finds himself seeking love, unsuccessfully, on many levels. Each time one of the attempts fails, the vampire tries to apply another of the humanity concepts he vaguely remembers to have been using while still human. However, since the vampire’s humanity slowly wanes and his ability to grasp the human concepts is limited, he inevitably ends up – without his realizing it – creating a set of mirror types of love that are inherently passive and destructive.

3.2.1 Vampires and Self-Love

“I hated myself. And it seemed, lulled half to sleep as I was so often by their conversation – Claudia whispering of killing and speed and vampire craft, Madeleine bent over her singing needle – it seemed then the only emotion of which I was still capable: hatred of self.”

– Louis de Pointe du Lac, *Interview with the Vampire*

As I have already said, self-love is a premise for all kinds of love. If we do not know how to love ourselves, we cannot start loving others. Friedrich Nietzsche once famously said: “We must beware the man who hates himself, for we are sure to be the victims of his anger and his vengeance”. The vampires of Anne Rice certainly find it difficult to love themselves. In the citation above, it is Louis, who after transforming Madeleine at Claudia’s request muses on his impossibility to love himself (*Interview* 299). Similarly, Marius finds himself consumed by hate when preparing for a reunion with Armand and other vampires, “He hated himself. He tried to reason, but he couldn’t. Hatred poisoned him.” (*Queen* 316-317). Even Lestat, who never openly proclaims he hates himself, is

apparently struggling with what he feels towards himself. With his decision to be good at being bad, Lestat shows not self-love, but mere cold-hearted acceptance of his vampire nature. But in the long run, acceptance is even worse than self-hatred. With self-hatred, the vampires often seek to become good or at least not harmful. However, with acceptance, Lestat proves to be the most vengeful and dangerous of all the vampires – just as Nietzsche predicted.

3.2.2 Vampires and Storge, Agape and Philia

By detaching vampires from people, Rice likewise detached them from their ability to both feel and distinguish between Agape, Philia and Storge as well. Finding themselves detached from the world of men, vampires, as Louis describes it, see “all life as precious” (*Interview* 43). Yet, born without an obvious higher reason, unconnected to Devil or to God⁴⁵ and predisposed to kill people, vampires find it difficult to believe in redemption, or, as a matter of fact, in love that could lead to their salvation. Therefore, they do not see people as the images of God’s love, and likewise, they do not believe in becoming through Agape – through love of the Neighbor.⁴⁶ In other words, what the vampires appreciate is not a God’s reflection in people, but people themselves: they see and adore their differences, their faults, their warm bodies, their pulsing veins – and, above all, their fleeting lives. As Lestat tries to explain to his mother why he still cares about their family, he says, “why should I give them up now while I can still have them? I need these things, I tell you. This is what life is to me!” (*Lestat* 364). What then bounds the vampires to their family members is not love, but the link they perceive between the family members and their own slipping humanity. Put differently, the vampire realizes that with his family members gone, he will lose his only direct link to humanity. Thus, even though neither Louis nor Lestat seem to feel affection towards their family members, they are inclined to provide for them simply because their fathers, mothers and sisters are “shimmering, precious creature[s] soon to grow old, soon to die” (*Interview* 44) and soon to leave them to their loneliness and emptiness. Yet it proves difficult to provide for one out of selfish motives, and not out of love. Therefore, Lestat is described to be at times “gracious to the old man [his father], almost to the point of sickening one” (*Interview* 26), while at other times “he would bully the old man” (*Interview* 42). In these fits of rage one can see Lestat’s carefully masked

⁴⁵ In the first four vampire novels, there is no evidence of the existence of God or Devil.

⁴⁶ Here the word Neighbor is used in its religious meaning.

vampire nature surfacing: “Don't I take care of you in baronial splendor! [...] Don't I provide for your every want! Stop whining to me about going to church or old friends! Such nonsense. Your old friends are dead” (*Interview* 42). It is the vampire nature, which does not understand and cherish affection, and wrongly exchanges Storge for financial and material support of those, who must with time inevitably pass into oblivion and leave the vampire truly and deafeningly alone.⁴⁷

Transformation of a Family Member

In the first four Vampire Chronicles' novels, there is only one case in which a family member is transformed into a vampire by another family member. The example I am talking about is taken from *The Vampire Lestat* and describes the willing transformation of dying Gabrielle into a vampire. The one, who executes the transformation, is Lestat, Gabrielle's son. Instead of letting his mother die as he let his father,⁴⁸ Lestat decides, in a split of a second, to offer his mother immortality. Once again, this might be, wrongly, seen as a loving act of a son, who does not want to let go of his mother. But in reality, it is a desperate and selfish act through which Lestat preserves the life of a once close person – a person that gave him comfort when he was a mortal and who might, possibly and hopefully, do so even as a vampire. It is the first time Lestat creates a fledgling and it becomes a painful experience for both parties. With the transformation, nothing personal and human is preserved. On the contrary – everything that once was is lost as the vampire's human body dies and the new, strong vampire body takes over. As Lestat drinks the blood of his mother, he feels her to be “flesh and blood and mother and lover” (*Lestat* 174). With her bursting heart bursts also her soul and Lestat realizes that upon the transformation “there was no mother anymore [...] she was simply who she was [...] she was Gabrielle” (*Lestat* 174). The person standing in front of Lestat is not

⁴⁷ “And he [Lestat] seemed to me to push luxury upon his father to an almost ludicrous point. The old blind man must be told constantly how fine and expensive were his bed jackets and robes and what imported draperies had just been fixed to his bed and what French and Spanish wines we had in the cellar and how much the plantation yielded even in bad years when the coast talked of abandoning the indigo production altogether and going into sugar.” (*Interview* 41-42)

⁴⁸ Even though Lestat behaves abominably towards his father, he cannot force himself to kill him. It might therefore seem that even though Storge vanishes with the transformation into a vampire, blood still remains thicker than water. However, we are never told why Lestat did not kill his father. It might have been that something inside him – something in his human nature – forbade him to do so, but it also might have been that he subconsciously forbade himself to kill the father because he feared such murder would prove him a killer. It was also his mother, who – after he told her about his terrifying dream in which he kills all members of their family – told Lestat: “don't give in to the killer in you just because you hate them” (*Lestat* 48).

his mother anymore, but a vampire – a female vampire who feels little obligation and affection towards both her family members and strangers as well.

“[...] I care less about these creatures than I do about the trees in this forest or the stars overhead,” (*Lestat* 277) says Gabrielle to Lestat. The only link connecting her and Lestat is now the link of loneliness. This is apparent to Gabrielle, who in her references to the love between her and Lestat uses the past tense, “I have loved him as I have never loved any other being in creation” (*Lestat* 313); and less apparent to Lestat, who still has to understand that with the transformation, one is “utterly cut off from all living creatures” (*Lestat* 198) becoming “something that cannot be seen, cannot affect things” (*Lestat* 198). Not even after the transformation does the relationship between Lestat and Gabrielle conform to Storge. Instead of a mother, Gabrielle becomes “simply *she*” (*Lestat* 186, italics in original), a being equal to Lestat. As they hunt for Gabrielle’s first victim, Lestat describes themselves as “white-faced lovers” (*Lestat* 187). They can even kiss each other as two sharing Eros, yet their love is merely an illusion – a dream of Lestat’s. It is important to realize that the one describing their affection is Lestat, not Gabrielle. In fact, the relationship Lestat and Gabrielle share is prompted by need – the need to heal loneliness – rather than love. It is not until Armand unveils to Lestat some of the crucial details concerning the relationships between vampires that Lestat admits to himself how far Gabrielle actually is from being his comfort and his lover. Despite their traveling to a number of countries, they still feel as two individuals unbound to each other by anything else than simple feeling of pity – from Gabrielle’s side – and need – from Lestat’s side. In the end, their relationship leads only to disappointment, as Gabrielle leaves Lestat to ponder the wild nature, and Lestat finds himself, once again, alone.

3.2.2 Vampires and Platonic Love⁴⁹

Talking about Platonic love in *The Vampire Chronicles* proves problematic. First of all, Platonic love is a complex emotion similar to that of a friendship and described, most usually, as a nonsexual and/or nonromantic union between two people. But even though we know what Platonic love should look like (we know how to describe it), we cannot be sure two people share Platonic love if we are not one of them. *The Vampire Chronicles* make defining Platonic love even harder since – in case of Platonic

⁴⁹ Here I am talking about Platonic love in its modern sense.

relationship between two vampires – we usually have only one side of the story, or one of the sides of the story is much more developed than the other. As in the case of any other loves, the reliability of the narrator cannot be confirmed, nor can it be disproved. Moreover, we always have to bear in mind that what the vampire says is never untainted by his vampire nature. The words he uses – and among them even the word love – have to be approached with a certain amount of detachment and caution, because they can be unintentionally deceitful not only to the mortals/vampires in the narrative, but also to the vampire himself and to the reader as well.⁵⁰

Bearing all this in mind, we can still identify a specific type of Platonic love – or at least its reflections – between Lestat and mortals (one-sided Platonic love), and between Lestat and Marius (Platonic love from both sides). Lestat experiences the one-sided Platonic love right after Gabrielle leaves him. It is the time he starts leaving messages for Marius at different places all over the world, but also the time he finds himself developing, in his imagination, fantastic relationships with different mortals. About these he says:

I'd see a man, or a woman – a human being who looked perfect to me spiritually – and I would follow the human about. Maybe for a week I'd do this, then a month, sometimes even longer than that. I'd fall in love with the being. I'd imagine friendship, conversation, intimacy that we could never have. In some magical and imaginary moment I would say: "But you see what I am," and this human being, in supreme spiritual understanding, would say: "Yes, I see. I understand." Nonsense, really. Very like the fairy tale where the princess gives her selfless love to the prince who is enchanted and he is himself again and the monster no more. Only in this dark fairy tale I would pass right into my mortal lover. We would become one being, and I would be flesh and blood again. (*Lestat* 369)

⁵⁰ Everything the vampire feels towards both the vampires and the mortals is described in human terms and human concepts. Sometimes, the human and vampire emotions overlap (for example fear, hate, etc. do not significantly differ), but in case of love, the human terms are insufficient and often misleading. Because the vampire nature colors not only the biological and physical characteristics of a vampire, but also his mental and behavioral ones, the "human" vocabulary can at times prove lacking important terms. Sometimes, the vampires invent phrases, such as "born to darkness" (vampire's transformation), "the Savage Garden" (life full of beauty and death), "the ancient ones" (the original vampires, Akasha and Enkil), but more often they end up adopting terms they were using before their transformation. Love is among the terms that stay the same, yet acquire meanings entirely different from those we know and apply every day.

From this excerpt, one might say that Lestat is capable of Platonic love towards mortals. However, what he describes could not be more far away from Platonic love. First of all, he does not fall in Platonic love with the mortals he follows; he imagines falling in Erotic love with them. What he imagines does not only include a nonsexual and/or nonromantic deep, pure friendship, but also “intimacy”.⁵¹ In other words, he imagines not only establishing a close friendship, but, ultimately, a romantic/sexual relationship. In his imagination, he is offered “selfless love” – Erotic love – by a mortal and he accepts it. However, this selfless love does not stay selfless for long as he proceeds to “pass right into” the mortal, in order to pursue the selfish fulfillment of his vampire nature. Thus, even this imagined innocent love between Lestat and mortal would inevitably come to its dark and evil end – to the union of death, the only union through which a vampire can feel one with someone else.

If then Platonic love between a vampire and a mortal does not exist, we should concern ourselves with the possibility of its existence between the vampires. Again, we have to remember that the Platonic love refers to nonsexual and/or nonromantic love between two people. It has to stay nonsexual, but it can be/become romantic; however, it is important that neither of the two acts upon their attraction to the other. The best example in the first four books of the Vampire Chronicles is the relationship found between Lestat and Marius. After his unsuccessful imagined liaisons with mortals and

⁵¹ Defining intimacy may be even more problematic than defining love. As Malcolm R. Parks and Kory Floyd say, “closeness and intimacy are the two most common root terms in the study of personal relationships [...] yet the meaning of both concepts has remained elusive” (86). They offer a comparison between the two terms in order to make their meanings clearer. The research reveals that people are more likely to connect closeness with friendship and intimacy with erotic or sexual relationship. However, this distinction does not have to apply to literature in which writers themselves define the term and its senses. Thus, one writer can perceive the two terms as interchangeable, while another can see intimacy as a more narrow term typical of partnership rather than relationship. Throughout the first four novels of the Vampire Chronicles, Anne Rice is using both the terms intimacy and closeness. However, “closeness” is used only to describe nearness in space or time, not in the relationship. For Anne Rice, the term intimacy then seems to be covering both “the state of being personally intimate” (OED) or close with someone. However, “intimacy” is rarely used in the meaning of a friendly closeness. Most of the time, “intimacy” appears to be used in the meaning of a close union having the qualities typical of a sexual intercourse. In contrast with people, who can be intimate with another human when in Erotic love, vampires experience intimacy only when killing. They perceive the moment of killing – the moment in which they are flesh and blood with the soul of the victim – to be the most intimate, because it is the only moment in which they feel themselves “expanding, swallowing the death which, for a split of a second, blazes as large as the life” (*Queen* 4). As the sole act of blood-drinking/killing approaches, a vampire is described to have his heart “hammering with expectation” (*Tale* 365), and he has problems to speak or even think. Then, when he takes the victim, the “lush physical intimacy” (*Tale* 367) comes. In some cases – most likely in the cases when a vampire takes as a victim someone he had been dreaming of taking for a long time – he can even feel shy as one, who is about to have a sexual intercourse with his partner for the first time.

his unsuccessful search for Marius, Lestat decides to go into the ground. In the vampire jargon he commits a short-term half-suicide by refusing to live anymore, yet refusing to kill himself either, instead burying himself in the ground. After some time, Lestat is rescued by Marius himself. Since a long time before this, Lestat would be dreaming of meeting Marius, we might say he is Platonically in love with Marius. Lestat feels “an overpowering attraction to him [Marius]” (*Lestat* 400) and when their hands approach he even claims they “were connected in the touch” (*Lestat* 412). Moreover, Lestat says he feels “the possibility of an overpowering love” (*Lestat* 412). Even though all of these highly sensual descriptions of Lestat prove his attraction towards Marius, it does not confirm that there is a Platonic love between the two of them.

First of all, we hear Marius talk only through Lestat. We are never given his point of view on his relationship with Lestat. We know he has been watching Lestat ever since Lestat became a vampire, but we do not know why he did not – if he felt Platonic love towards Lestat from the very beginning (as he seems to be claiming) – search for Lestat sooner. Letting Lestat first suffer terrible loneliness, then suffer in an unfulfilling relationship with Gabrielle and Nicki, and finally letting him go into the ground seems rather cruel. We might ask ourselves why Marius – if he truly felt Platonic love for Lestat and knew what was happening to him – did not go and give him his advice sooner. Surely, a Platonic friend/lover would not let the other one suffer, but would rather come in a hurry to be there for his beloved one. Viewed from this point of view, Marius seems selfish and the rescue of Lestat as a pure calculation.⁵² For what we know, Marius might have waited for the right moment to enter Lestat’s life and claim his attention and his presence. It may even be that after leaving Marius and not seeing him for more than a hundred and forty years, Lestat realized Marius’s “love” was not Platonic, but intentional – it had a selfish undertone known only to Marius. Similarly, as Lestat later on in *The Queen of the Damned* calls Marius “the angry father” (*Queen* 457) and says that all vampires are actually brothers and sisters to him, we can see that even Lestat realizes he was never in Platonic love. The way he perceived Marius and the way he was perceived by him in return did not contain in its core a pure, deep feeling of compassion, attraction and union. From the very beginning, it was motivated by a want of something – Marius wanted an eager listener, a pupil; Lestat wanted all

⁵² It is Akasha, who calls Marius a coldhearted spectator and describes him as the one who has “been watching [the world] for two thousand years [...] as if it did not matter – the literal fact of suffering and death – as long as [he] was enthralled” (*Queen* 512).

the knowledge and power he could gain. This is proved when Lestat calls Marius “*my old teacher and mentor, the one who kept the historical secrets of our tribe*” (Tale 4, italics in original) and later on also “*the teacher, the parent, the high priest*” (Tale 400, italics in original) who, despite knowing of his suffering (of Lestat being mortal again) turned back on him. Thus, even the grandiose Platonic love between Marius and Lestat proves to be a mere illusion prompted by both Lestat’s and Marius’s selfish goals.

3.2.2 Vampires and Friendship

Friendship between a Vampire and a Mortal

A mortal and a vampire cannot establish a friendship because of their different positions and natures. First, the vampire is a predator at the top of the food chain. A mortal – being his prey – subconsciously feels the danger that emanates from the vampire, and therefore can never fully trust him or feel safe with him. The vampire, on the other hand, can never consider the mortal his equal. We can see an early example in Daniel’s first reaction towards Louis in *The Interview with the Vampire*. As he is interviewing Louis, Daniel is constantly nervously shuddering and sweating all over – all because of a nameless terror caused by Louis’s vampire nature. Second, the vampire does not understand what a human life is like anymore, while the mortal cannot be explained what it is like to be a vampire. This creates an unbridgeable gap between the two and forbids any mutual understanding, which – alongside trust and enjoyment of each other’s presence – lies in the foundation of friendship. Again, we can perceive this kind of mutual misunderstanding in *The Interview with the Vampire*. Right after Louis winds up his story, Daniel demands to be made into a vampire. Louis does not understand his plea – he would give anything for a human life – but Daniel insists, shouting at him: “You don’t know what human life is like! [...] You’ve forgotten!” (*Interview* 365). Third, a mortal might perceive the vampire as his way out of mortality, while the vampire can see the mortal as his way out of the miseries of immortality (as his only possibility at experiencing a union of two souls). Using the other in this way is a behavior totally unacceptable for a friendship in which one is supposed to help the other and not merely gain from him. Louis even describes how Lestat often establishes false friendships with mortals, simply for fun: “he [Lestat] played with his victims, made friends with them, seduced them into trusting and liking him, even loving him, before he killed” (*Interview* 141). Also, friendship is supposed to be a choice for all

people involved; yet from all the attempts at friendship in the first four novels of the Vampire Chronicles, it is apparent that it is either a vampire, who chooses to establish a relationship with a mortal, or it is the mortal himself (rarely). However, in both cases, it is the vampire who decides about the direction the relationship will take; it is therefore not friendship – a relationship in which all are equal and free (anyone can end the friendship). In one case, Lestat is also described to establish one of these “friendships” with a musician probably similar to Nicki. It is an unnaturally long “friendship”, but as unpredictable as any other vampire-mortal relationship. One evening, Louis bumps into the musician, who is madly searching for Lestat. When Louis asks him why he needs to see Lestat so desperately, the musician responds, “He was my friend!” (*Interview* 166). Upon that, Louis notices two bite marks on the neck of the young musician – not even a man similar to Nicki could become a true friend of Lestat.

Friendship between Vampires

As I have already discussed in the chapter on Platonic love, friendship between vampires is also highly improbable since vampires are highly individual creatures with selfish needs and goals. It is in the vampire nature to always take and need and never give. In other words, the vampire seeks to fulfill his own needs before fulfilling the needs of his potential beloved one. Therefore, a vampire cannot become a friend to another vampire. When Lestat asks Marius why vampires never got together to share their powers and stories, Marius explains:

Most vampires are distrustful and solitary beings and they do not love others [...] they wouldn't want to come together, and if they did ever overcome the viciousness and suspicions that divide them, their convocation would end in terrible battles and struggles for supremacy [...] We are killers. Better that those who unite on this earth be mortal and that they unite for good. (*Lestat* 521)

Nevertheless, attempts at friendship between vampires exist. Lestat tries to connect with Marius, Armand tries to connect with Lestat, even Louis – despite his ever present hate for Lestat in the *Interview with the Vampire* – realizes that, being of the same species, he and Lestat might have established a “sublime friendship” (*Interview* 70). But as neither of the vampires can suppress his/her needs, all the attempts eventually fail.

3.2.3 Vampires and Eros

The romantic/erotic relationship between a vampire and a mortal is a crucial one. First, it is a relationship which every forcefully newborn vampire tries to pursue; second, it is a relationship to which vampires repeatedly return, and which often becomes the basis for a creation of their new vampire companions. Moreover, Eros is by far the most fervently pursued kind of love, since – from the point of view of a vampire – it is believed to be the only way out of his exile and loneliness.

Eros between a Vampire and a Mortal

After failing to restore the relationships with his mortal family and friends, a vampire usually seeks love in a relationship with some carefully chosen mortal stranger. Yet even this attempt at experiencing a regular human Eros fails on several levels. First, the vampires cannot prevent seeing mortals as mere objects; beautiful and irresistible objects, yet objects that are still inferior to the vampires. The detachment vampire gains when becoming a predator allows him to become dangerously indifferent. Thus, Lestat has no regrets when leaving his victims slowly die in front of his eyes; while Armand, on the other hand, without the slightest remorse leaves Daniel to almost drink and starve himself to death before getting him on plane and finally giving in to his request. Second, a vampire usually finds himself searching for one specific human – an ideal mortal, who would accompany him in his immortal life and/or to whom the vampire would give immortality. If the indifference towards an object of love is unimaginable in Eros, then the search for an ideal lover is almost a blasphemy. For Eros presupposes that two people fall in love with each other, madly and without an intention to do so. It is therefore not a relationship based on choice, but a relationship based on – further unspecified – attraction between two people. Yet to experience the spontaneous falling in love is impossible for a vampire, who is for every mortal “the most overwhelming *experience*” (*Interview* 29) and for whom, on the other hand, all people are “warm and pulsing miracles of complication and innocence” (*Lestat* 128); “pulsing victims, not seen with that great love [...], but with some new detachment and need” (*Interview* 109). After his transformation, the vampire becomes indifferent to people, yet in his indifference he cannot stop looking for his human ideal. Alongside this hunt for his “type” he inspires desire in many mortals and kills mercilessly. Magnus, for example, kills a number of blond-haired men with blue eyes strikingly similar to Lestat before he

settles for Lestat, gives him immortality and commits suicide by burning himself to ashes. Lestat, on the other hand, searches for someone as human as possible and finally finds Louis. In all cases – as it was the case in “friendship” with mortals – the mortals become mere objects of vampire’s desire and as such have no power over their lives.

Third, Eros expects the two in love to become intimate with each other. In other words, Eros expects the lovers to share the deepest emotions and thoughts – to share a high level of intimacy in both the possible meanings already discussed.⁵³ The achievement of intimacy between two people (or a vampire and a mortal in our case) depends on good communication. Yet a vampire finds himself limited when it comes to communication. As Louis describes to Daniel, a vampire always feels “a desire for communication, stronger than any other desire [...] except for the physical desire for ... blood” (*Interview* 75-76). As I have already pointed out, a vampire has difficulties to understand, name, let alone share his feelings and thoughts with a mortal. Because he is partly a vampire and partly a human, half of his needs, feelings and problems do not correspond with those a human being has. Vice versa, the human being cannot understand the vampire. Moreover, the human being can never feel safe in the vampire’s presence. As a result, the communication between the vampire and a human can never be open and free as it is in a loving relationship. The lack of communication then forbids the vampire to develop a level of intimacy between himself and the mortal and, consequentially, forbids the two to create a loving and strong bond of Eros.

Dark Eros

From all that was said before, it might seem that incapable of Storge, Philia, Agape and Eros, the vampire – with its dark vampire nature – may be at least capable of Dark Eros. Yet even Dark Eros is dissimilar to what a vampire goes through in his search of happiness. To begin with, Dark Eros revels in its own lack. It enjoys its search for fulfillment, it enjoys being independent of God. In other words, Dark Eros is love that consciously rejects the divine love and chooses to feel empty instead of full of God’s love. It is therefore the person’s choice to search love where it cannot be found. A vampire, however, does not choose willingly this emptiness he feels – this never-ending craving for communication and union. On the contrary, he suffers and wants

⁵³ That is in both the sexual and emotional meaning. Eros expects the lovers to be close to each other (as two people in friendship are) and also intimate with each other (romantically/sexually involved).

the emptiness fulfilled. Yet to him Agape does not exist – he is evil in its core and no God seems to exist in his universe. He is also not one of the humans and therefore not one of the God’s children; he cannot – even if he wanted to – become one with God’s love. To him, it is not natural to desire for God, but to desire for the fulfillment of his vampire needs – in the first place – and to desire for the fulfillment of his human needs – in the second place. Thus, he passively searches for the true human love (with his human nature), yet at the same time actively seeks to destroy any indication of it (with his vampire nature). In other words, his human nature seeks the highest of human loves (love towards a God’s child), while his vampire nature seeks the death of the God’s child. It is then not the death of himself a vampire seeks in order to become fulfilled (as one in Dark Eros seeks), but the death of a mortal being. It is “with a thrilling satisfaction in being the end of that [human’s] life, in having a hand in the divine plan” (*Interview 92*) that the vampire feels – for a fleeting moment – happy and complete, united with a mortal being.⁵⁴

The Outcomes of Vampire’s “Eros”

Pursuing any kind of human love proves not only frustrating and unfulfilling to the vampire, but it also proves fatal to the mortal being. Among the many possible endings of the “relationship” between a vampire and a mortal is death, madness, craving immortality, and, finally, the transformation into a vampire. Clearly, a mortal can become insane if a vampire repeatedly allows for an exchange of blood, i.e. the vampire not only drinks the mortal’s blood repeatedly, but also allows the mortal to drink the vampire blood. Both the blood-sucking and the blood-drinking are enough to make the mortal feel a pleasure beyond the imaginable. Lestat describes that a mortal not only feels “incorporeal” pleasure, but he also feels himself becoming incorporeal (*Lestat 99*). Blood-sucking is therefore not unpleasant or hurtful; on the contrary, it is amazing – better than every pleasure known by a human being. A few droplets of vampire blood

⁵⁴ Zimmerman even goes as far as to claim that “the act of making a new vampire is an act of love, in which both parties give and take” (109). However, I cannot agree with this point of view. Even though the transformation into a vampire brings about pleasure for the mortal, this pleasure is later on revealed to be merely an illusion – a way of seducing the mortal into willingness to die. The victim therefore does not “give” willingly and consciously as one in love does. The vampire, on the other hand, purposely “takes” away the life of the mortal and brings him to immortality even though he knows immortality brings about only despair and desires that can never become fulfilled.

cause feelings similar to those the mortal experiences throughout the blood-drinking.⁵⁵ If the blood-drinking and blood-sucking is repeated, the mortal can become addicted to the pleasure. The addiction is actually so strong that the mortal can experience stages of insanity and hallucinations. The life of the mortal is therefore fully in the hands of the vampire, who can either turn/kill him, or abandon him. As Zimmerman rightly says, the mortal's longing to become a vampire and the vampire's ability to either fulfill or deny the mortal's wish is "the essential conflict at the root of all 'mixed' [vampire-human] relationships" (114). Moreover, this conflict cannot be solved, since in either case the mortal is going to suffer. If the vampire refuses to give him immortality, the mortal becomes a lunatic; if he transforms the mortal, the vampire will earn from the mortal only ingratitude and more despair.

Right after the transformation, the newly-born vampire realizes that the previous feelings were simply an illusion – similar to venom that paralyzes spider's victim, so that it can be devoured – and that a vampire life is full of yearning, death and unhappiness. The vampire, on the other hand, finds out that the transformation did not bring the human being closer to him; on the contrary, it created a gap between them.⁵⁶ Becoming a vampire himself, the fledgling becomes the same predator with the same needs and with the same intentions at fulfilling his needs before fulfilling those of his creator. As well as the vampire who created him, even the newly born finds out he craves an ideal human being – and proceeds in his own search, abandoning his master. The time between the creation and abandoning may be short or relatively long, yet it always ends up the same. Thus, Gabrielle, Louis and Claudia all eventually abandon Lestat, while Louis gets abandoned by Claudia. As we can see from the previous examples, it plays no role whether the newly-born vampire was transformed willingly or against his will – the abandonment apparently happens in both cases. Whether the turning was forced or intended seems to be influencing only the time span between the abandonment. In other words, a vampire forced into turning might become scornful and hateful towards its creator and might seek to abandon him right away (this is the case of Louis and Claudia); while the vampire who wanted or accepted

⁵⁵ As Zimmerman describes, these occasional "sips" of blood can make "the mortal 'high' and even more obsessed" (114).

⁵⁶ In some cases the vampire can even resent the newly-born vampire, since he can see the changes in him. As Lestat says, "to see Nicki change had been to see him die" (*Lestat* 265). Thus, Lestat shuns Nicki because he sees not the mortal he knew and loved. Moreover, while the vampire can hear the thoughts of the mortal (have at least partial, one-sided communication with him), a "veil of silence" comes down between the two after a transformation.

the immortality may have more patience and may sustain in feeding the illusion of a union for some time (this is the case of Gabrielle). Overall, turning a mortal into a vampire proves a step towards still more loneliness and frustration. It does not bring the two into a loving relationship, but to an end of a fleeting, passionate illusion.

Eros between Two Vampires

[...] the mortal part of me was that part which had loved, I was certain. So what did I feel then for Armand, the creature for whom I'd transformed Madeleine, the creature for whom I had wanted to be free? A curious and disturbing distance? A dull pain? A nameless tremor?

– Louis de Pointe du Lac, *Interview with the Vampire*

Similarly to Eros between a vampire and a mortal, Eros between two vampires proves impossible. First of all, the ability to understand and constitute a human relationship is a privilege of mortals. Two vampires simply do not comprehend the meaning of Eros anymore as all the types of love are merged into one fundamental need – the need for fulfillment and union with a human being. A vampire cannot replace a human; he is too selfish and knows only how to take and how to pursue his own happiness/goals. But pursuing a relationship with a vampire proves more difficult than pursuing one with a mortal being. That is the reason why the relationships between two vampires display a high level of deceptiveness. In order to achieve an ideal relationship, the vampire is not afraid to trick, betray or even kill. Because two vampires can drink each other's blood and the vampires not linked by blood can even communicate in images and thoughts, a vampire – just like a mortal – can be tricked by the pleasure of blood-drinking and the illusion of intimacy it creates. Such illusion is, however, short-termed and when broken, only enrages the vampire, who was being tricked.

An example of the illusion described above can be found in *The Interview with the Vampire*; it is Armand⁵⁷ who creates an illusion of intimacy, elation and ecstasy in order to get Lestat kill Gabrielle and Nicki and stay with him. The illusion is intimate, audio-visual and promises “a sense of limitless possibility, of wonder

⁵⁷ Before using this final, desperate illusion, Armand also tries to trick both Gabrielle and Lestat into joining his convent, which was living under the Parisian cemetery. He tries to convince them that only he, Armand, and vampires similar to him, “can end the loneliness” (*Lestat* 221) Lestat and Gabrielle feel. At one point, Lestat describes Armand's illusion: “And [...] I felt such a longing for him, such a longing to fall into him and follow him and be led by him, that all my longings of the past seemed nothing at all. He was all mystery to me as Magnus had been. Only he was beautiful, indescribably beautiful, and there seemed in him an infinite complexity and depth which Magnus had not possessed” (*Lestat* 221).

and expectation"... "forgiveness" as well as knowing "the glory of the Dark Trick without the blood flowing" (*Interview* 275). The illusion saddens and enrages Lestat, yet right after he breaks it, he cannot help himself but want "that sense of possibility, that lovely flare" desperately back (*Interview* 276). Armand uses his trick more skillfully later on when he meets Louis. Yearning for a teacher, who would unveil to him the many possibilities of vampirism as Lestat never did, Louis falls for Armand's tricks and leaves Claudia to be with Armand instead. As a result of his decision, Claudia and Madeleine are both killed by the coven of Armand. As revenge, Louis kills every vampire in the coven except for Armand whom he warns beforehand. It is only then that Louis realizes Armand had planned the death of Claudia, Madeleine and all vampires long before to achieve his goal – to have his lover, Louis, all for himself. Yet Louis is utterly changed after he finds out that even Armand – the one to whom he trusted to help him become a true vampire – is capable of such cruelty. Thus, even the relationship between Armand and Louis turns out to be an unreal and cold illusion.

3.3 The Theme of Love in *The Tale of the Body Thief*

After a novel covering a monstrous fight with the evil vampire queen Akasha, Rice came back with a more subtle and personal theme – the theme of love and its meaning in both the vampire and the mortal world. In *The Tale of the Body Thief* we are once again to meet with the vampire Lestat and follow him on a journey in which he becomes a mortal man, experiences all humanity has to offer, and despite (or rather because of) it decides to become a vampire again. The story focuses not only on Lestat's struggles to get back his vampire body (as he switches his supernatural body with Raglan James, who does not intend to give him the body back), but also on Lestat's relationships with humans. First, there is the relationship between the vampire Lestat and the mortal David Talbot; second, there is a relationship between the mortal Lestat and the mortal David Talbot; and lastly, there is a relationship between the mortal Lestat and the mortal nun Gretchen.

3.3.1 The Vampire Lestat and David Talbot

[...] what desperate loneliness emanates from you. Don't you see I can't accept your gift, and if I did, what would you think of me? Would you still crave my company? Would I crave yours?

– David Talbot, *The Tale of the Body Thief*

The story of *The Tale of the Body Thief* continues to develop the relationship between Lestat and David Talbot – the seventy-four-year old head of the Talamasca Caste.⁵⁸ As David believes in vampires, Lestat thinks it fun to talk to him. Moreover, because of David's old age and his belief in vampires, it is a lot easier for both of them to communicate. Yet what we are shown is nothing else than the usual cat-and-mouse game of Lestat's. With his human nature, he likes spending time with David, but with his vampire nature he wants nothing else than to feed on him and turn him into one of the immortals. That is why he still pays David visits, even though he knows he has a bad effect on him (*Tale* 61). He also continuously tempts David with the gift of immortality, yet David does not want to accept it because he can see "what desperate loneliness emanates" from Lestat (*Tale* 34). Thus, because Lestat "cannot have [David] as [his] vampire companion" he – quite unusually – decides to instead try to know David as a mortal. In the meantime, Lestat is contacted by Raglan James – a man who convinces him to exchange bodies for a short period of time, so that Lestat can try to become a mortal again. However, Raglan James turns out to be a mere thief and runs away in Lestat's body. With the help of David, Lestat then tracks Raglan down, retrieves his immortal body and succeeds in acquiring the young mortal body of Raglan for David instead. Once he gets his body back, Lestat becomes the ruthless and indifferent vampire again and proves his comeback by turning David – in his new, handsome young body – against his will into a vampire. When later on asked by Louis why he did not pursue the mortal life when he had the chance every vampire merely dreams of, Lestat heatedly justifies his decision:

I didn't want the weakness; I didn't want the limitations, I didn't want the revolting needs and the endless vulnerability; I didn't want the drenching sweat or the searing cold. I didn't want the blinding darkness, or the noises that walled up my hearing, or the quick, frantic culmination of erotic passion; I didn't want the trivia; I didn't want the ugliness. I didn't want the isolation; I didn't want the constant fatigue. (*Tale* 406)

Ironically enough, the mortal life, so much cherished and believed to be beautiful by all the vampires alike, seems from Lestat's point of view more demanding, stressful and hurtful and less rewarding than the desperate vampire life. Upon being able to decide whether he wants to live one mortal lifetime full of love, yet also full of diseases, fears

⁵⁸ A secret society that keeps track of everything supernatural (vampires, werewolves, witches, etc.).

and anxieties; or an immortal span of lifetimes as a vampire, who can never experience human love, Lestat chooses the easier option – the option without complex feelings and emotions.

Love as a Hollow Word

Throughout the many visits and conversations lead with David, the vampire Lestat uses the word “love” countless times. Yet it seems he uses the word almost as a cliché, an empty container which has, over the centuries, lost all its human meaning. Thus, at one point Lestat claims that knowing of David’s past experiences and memories “sharpened [his] love for him” (*Tale 88*), while at another he spews out “I care about your vision because you saw it, and you told me, and I love you” (*Tale 78*). Each time he uses the word love it gets even more vacant until finally it becomes only a meaningless filling and nothing else. The use of the word love signals that Lestat does not comprehend its complexity – the many meanings it can have.

3.3.2 The Mortal Lestat and the Many Kinds of Human Love

When Lestat acquires the mortal body, and is thrown into the human world, he finds himself completely lost, confused and disgusted. Because he acquires a mortal body, but his soul keeps the vampire nature, he seems to ponder everything as a vampire. Seen through the dim mortal eyes, the human world does not glitter and shine anymore – it is dangerous, unpleasant, confusing and hostile. The bodily functions disgust him, the imperfection of his own moves and senses terrifies him, and the possibility of death scares him. Yet – even though he later on denies it – Lestat also experiences what all the vampires dream of – love. First, Lestat rapes a woman and finds out what sexual desire feels like, and then he comes to know Philia from the people in a hospital, where he lies with pneumonia, and especially from the nun Gretchen, with whom he falls in love later on. Finally, Lestat also finds himself falling in love with David.

Falling In Love with Gretchen

Interestingly enough, as a mortal, Lestat does not use the word love recklessly; on the contrary, he uses it scarcely and with a certain amount of anxiety and respect. It seems that being a mortal in a mortal world and experiencing the human love and its possible meanings allowed Lestat to understand love in its complexity. No more does he see it as a vacant word, but as a word loaded with meanings – as a word that has to be

used cautiously. Thus, instead of the word love, Lestat describes all the fundamental elements of love – the affection and intimacy he shared with Gretchen when they laid “wrapped in each other’s arms” and “all the world seemed warm and still” (*Tale 229*); “the wave of protectiveness” (*Tale 229*) he comes to feel upon looking at Gretchen’s sleeping face; and “the warm pressure of her [Gretchen’s] body” (*Tale 236*) beside him. He also cherishes the fact that he can feel her flesh “not for killing, but for kissing; not for possession, but for [...] brief physical union” (*Tale 238*). Yet he has problems grasping the complexity of a union that comes out of Erotic love, since he is used to seeing everything with clarity and detachment of the vampire’s eyesight. The union between two people is nothing like the union of a vampire and a mortal being in the act of killing. For Lestat, it is cloaked in a “clamorous silence” (*Tale 239*) and the feelings it produces in both people involved seem to him to be contradictory – both beautiful and frightening at the same time. Love, again meaningful and monstrous, becomes a rather terrifying word and an emotion to which even the powerful vampire Lestat is afraid to yield.

Vampire	Turned into a vampire by	Turned against his/her will/willingly	Mortal – mortal relationships	Mortal – vampire relationships	Vampire – mortal relationships	Vampire – vampire relationships
Lestat	Magnus	against his will	Gretchen, David	-	David, Gretchen	Louis, Claudia, Marius, Akasha
Louis	Lestat	against his will	-	-	Babette	Lestat, Claudia, Armand
Claudia	Lestat, Louis	-	-	-	Madeleine	Louis, Madeleine
Gabrielle	Lestat	willingly	Lestat	-	-	Lestat
David	Lestat	against his will	Lestat	Lestat	-	David
Daniel	Armand	willingly	-	Armand	-	Armand
Madeleine	Louis	willingly	-	Claudia	-	Claudia
Akasha	body entered by a spirit called Amel	against her will	-	-	-	Enkil, Lestat
Enkil	body entered by a spirit called Amel	against his will	-	-	-	Akasha
Khayman	Akasha	against his will	-	-	-	?
Maharet	Mekare	willingly	-	-	Jesse, Eric	Eric
Mekare	Khayman	willingly	-	-	?	?
Marius	God of the Grove (a vampire-druid)	against his will	-	-	Armand	Pandora, Lestat
Armand	Marius	willingly	-	Marius	Daniel	Marius, Louis

	Active – productive (Eros, Motherly Love)
	Active – destructive
	Passive – destructive

Table 1. A Visual Representation of the Relationships in the First Four Novels of The Vampire Chronicles

4. Vampires' Search for Love as a Metaphor to the Human Quest for Goodness

Anne Rice has a complex history when it comes to her faith. Taught from an early age the teachings of Catholics, she decided to quit the Church when meeting Stan – her future husband. Later on she would rejoice the Church, only to quit again after learning that Catholicism is strictly anti-gay. But while Rice's opinion on Christianity and the Church went through rocky phases, her faith in Christ seems to be stable. As the Catholic League in *Catalyst* scornfully comments on her 2010 leave of Church: "She wants Christ without the Christianity" (*Tragedy*). Rice's difficult relationship with Christianity winds not only through her life, but is also reflected in *The Vampire Chronicles*. Among other themes we can find Rice reflecting upon the tripatriate⁵⁹ (Body, Soul and Spirit) constitution of a man. This teaching perceives human beings to consist of three essential parts: of Body (matter), Soul (the invisible essence, which is not of God, but of life) and Spirit (a spiritual essence of God). The Body and the Soul constitute not merely humans, but also animals. The Spirit, on the other hand, is exclusive to humans. The Spirit can be either active or passive, according to whether one believes in Christ and the Church or does not. If one believes, then the Spirit can be said to constitute in him an invisible mediator, which helps him to retain balance between his Body and Soul. In other words, through God's Spirit, one can find temperance in both the spiritual and physical matters. Without the Spirit, however, one is exposed to both the right and wrong influences and – not having the Spirit to guide him – is more likely to choose the wrong paths in his life. Christianity believes that the Spirit is always of God, and therefore Good. In *The Vampire Chronicles*, however, Rice ponders what would happen if the instructing Spirit was not good, but inherently evil and – moreover – innately a part of one's Body and Soul.

⁵⁹ Theologians have been for years fighting to decide whether a human constitution is tripatriate (body, soul, spirit) or dipatriate (body, soul). Moreover, there are also different notions to be found as to what "a spirit" and what "a soul" is. Drawing on the concepts Anne Rice introduces in her *Vampire Chronicles*, I will use the term "Soul" in order to refer to the spiritual essence of both humans and animals and the term "Spirit" in reference to that which is beyond an animal soul (of God) and have the ability to mediate between God and the soul/body of a human being.

Amel – the Evil Spirit

In *The Queen of the Damned*, Rice describes the origins of vampirism as a form of violent intrusion into one's tripatriate/dipatriate constitution. As an evil, terrorizing Egyptian queen Akasha is killed by a group of traitors and her soul⁶⁰ rises, so that it might get to another realm, an evil spirit Amel intervenes. Before the soul of Akasha can escape the world of matter, it is seized by Amel. The spirit then becomes one with her soul and plunges both himself and the soul of Akasha back into her body. There the evil spirit merges with both the flesh and the soul of Akasha, disallowing the soul of Akasha to ever leave her body. As a result, Akasha becomes an immortal vampire.

The Evil Spirit and Love

All I learned from Armand, finally, was that immortals find death seductive and ultimately irresistible, that they fail to conquer death or humanity in their minds. Now I want to take that knowledge and wear it like armor as I move through the world

– Gabrielle, *The Vampire Lestat*

Before Amel seizes Akasha's soul, he is able to communicate with Mekare and Maharet, but upon his merging with the soul and the body of Akasha, he becomes simply the evil essence of vampirism. He is the core of the vampire nature – of the vampire's inability to feel truly human ever again. By possessing the soul and anchoring it to the body, he inevitably fuses what – according to the teachings of Christianity – is never to be fused completely. In case of vampires, we cannot talk about the low matter and the high soul, since matter and the soul are inseparable. Moreover, they are banished from God's good Spirit – the spirit of temperance. Since Amel *is* the core of vampire's body and a soul, and not just some mediator between the two, but an essential part, one cannot really stop listening to him. God's Spirit, on the other hand, cannot – by a rule – be present in someone, who willingly kills and drinks blood. Yet despite the fact that vampires are to be inherently evil, they still strive to find love. It seems that in her discussion on the constitution of a human/vampire being, Rice pondered more than just free will and the question of good/evil – she also pondered the way we respond

⁶⁰ When Anne Rice describes how the evil spirit Amel entered the Egyptian queen Akasha, she uses all of the three terms mentioned before; however, her distinction gets unclear as that of the Church, and so "the spirit" is sometimes called "the soul" and vice versa. However, it is apparent that same as in Christianity, the characters of *The Vampire Chronicles* – be it people or vampires – believe a vampire/human being to consist of the soul and the body.

to our inherent evils. By making her vampires evil and taking away their free will (vampires cannot choose other love than the love of killing), but not their conscience and their desire to find the true, good love, she created true metaphors to all of us. We, as well as vampires, are capable of evil decisions and no religion faith can spare us that. What is important is whether despite our evil doings we are still capable of believing in good – and in love.

Conclusion

In my thesis, I have illustrated the many ways in which the Ricean vampire's ability to love is limited. Among the critics of Anne Rice's vampire fiction, I have taken a rare stance, since the general assumption reads: the Ricean vampire is fully capable of love and loving. As a result, I had difficulties finding criticism either corresponding to my point of view, or at least reflecting upon the love theme in *The Vampire Chronicles*. Most of the criticism I have come over was unsuitable (there was only a limited number of passing references concerning the theme of love), while some of it depended too heavily on the biographical criticism. A large amount of criticism has discussed the Gothic/Romantic/Byronic elements of the Ricean vampire fiction. Because I have found so little on the emotional needs of the Ricean vampire, I have dedicated the first chapter of my thesis to a more detailed analysis of the humanization of the Ricean vampire. Using the Maslow's pyramid of needs as a model, I have made clear that the vampire's nature is dual, and that he is thus constantly torn between his vampire and human nature. This psychological approach allowed me to distinguish between the needs of a vampire (blood-drinking, safety needs) and the needs of a human (love/belonging, esteem, self-actualization).

Being at the apex of Maslow's pyramid of needs, the human need of love – as the next step in self-actualization – proved to be the central need of vampire's emotional life, desperately sought to become fulfilled. After proving the importance of love in the life of the vampire, I have moved on to the chapter dedicated to the separation of the Ricean vampire from the Gothic, Romantic and Byronic literature and characters. This chapter proved to be the most challenging one, since it required deep knowledge of the Gothic and Romantic literary heroes. As I have expected, the separation of the Ricean vampire from its Romantic predecessors proved crucial for my future analysis of the love theme. Without a careful division between the Romantic/Ricean character types, the love theme in Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* might still be seen as conforming to the values and beliefs of the Romantic period. Even though I have successfully proved my point – that the Ricean vampire does not subject to the Byronic definitions in terms of love – I do acknowledge other similarities may be found between the characters. Yet I still think comparing Ricean fiction to the Romantic literature is outdated and often rather enforced.

From the comparison between the Ricean vampire and the Romantic/Gothic and Byronic Heroes, I have proceeded to the very analysis of the theme of love. Because The Vampire Chronicles consist (so far) of ten books and I was being limited by the scope of my thesis, I have decided to deal in my thesis only with the first four novels from the series. Even though I believe the first four novels are enough for a broad analysis of the theme of love, I do think a further analysis of the theme in the rest of the novels would add significant details to my study. I have decided to start the chapter with a theoretical and referential subchapter describing philosophical, psychological and semantic approaches to love and its many meanings. This subchapter has then served as a source of referential points to which the vampires' attempts at love were compared. I have tried to create a varied typology that would show not only the vampire's inability to love, but also his inability to distinguish among the many types of love there are. However, I do believe another typology might work better, or work just as well, or might – if cleverly argued – even try to prove me wrong. Because love, sociology, psychology, philosophy and even biology are unable to find one, functional definition for love, the meanings hidden behind the word seem to be countless. As a matter of fact, I do believe one could say that the vampires' inability to love is a subtype of love in itself – a doomed love, if you want. Yet to describe the fundamental emotional need of vampires in this way would also deliberately omit the fact that love (if we are not talking about unrequited love) is overall a positive emotion and a foundation for all satisfying relationships. After all, even Dark Eros allows the person to find an eternal happiness in his union with death. The Ricean vampires, however, prove to be unable to experience any kind of a long-term union, from which deep fulfillment and happiness would arise.

As Bette B. Roberts remarks in her study of Anne Rice's body of work, "studying a living novelist is hazardous, since the last word cannot be written [...] yet, there is the advantage of being able to witness the writer's evolution" (1). When I started my research on the Ricean vampires, I had not the slightest doubts that *Blood Canticle*, published in 2003, was going to be the last vampire novel of The Vampire Chronicles. Then, in less than a year, Anne Rice released the big news: a novel called *Prince Lestat* is going to be published in October, 2014. As thrilling as it gets, the publication might considerably affect the already written criticism, since new themes, new philosophies and new ideas will be certainly pondered. The Anne Rice of the past ten novels of The Vampire Chronicles differs significantly from the nowadays

Anne Rice, who decided to come back to her beloved creatures; after all, there is an eleven years stretch between the publication of *Blood Canticle* and the announced publication of *Prince Lestat*. Yet even though the readers, as well as the critics, cannot be sure what to expect from the mischievous vampire Lestat this time, one thing is sure – Anne Rice has earned a prominent and lasting place among the writers of supernatural. The theme of love, which I have decided to ponder in my thesis, will be – by all means – considerably affected by the new publication as well. Yet it will also become broader and even more enticing. And, with a certain amount of luck, the publication of *Prince Lestat* might even lead to a new set of vampire studies in which the theme of love in Anne Rice’s Vampire Chronicles will finally get recognized to be just as crucial as the themes of evil, or morality.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se zaměřuje na téma upíří lásky tak, jak se objevuje v prvních čtyřech upířích románech Anne Riceové (*The Vampire Chronicles*). Práce si klade za cíl vyvrátit všeobecně zavedený mýtus, podle kterého jsou upíří Anne Riceové schopni milovat. Práce je členěna do čtyř kapitol. První kapitola se věnuje uvedení do problematiky vývoje a proměn upířího charakteru od počátků po současnost, zvláštní pozornost je pak věnována upírovi Anne Riceové. První podkapitola sleduje vznik literární upíří postavy a proměny upířího charakteru jak na poli literárního romantismu, tak na poli viktoriánské literatury. Druhá podkapitola popisuje zlomový příchod polidštěného upíra sedmdesátých let – upíra Anne Riceové. V rámci několika kratších podkapitol je popsána rozpolcená povaha upíra, tzv. duální lidsko-upíří povaha (*dual human-vampire nature*). Rozpolcenost upíří povahy a potřeby z ní vyplývající jsou pak dokázány na modelu Maslowovy pyramidy potřeb. Zatímco spodní část Maslowovy pyramidy vyplňuje upír potřebami upíří povahy, vrchní část Maslowovy pyramidy zůstává lidská, a tedy i potřeby z ní vyplývající zůstávají lidského charakteru. Z podkapitoly o polidštěném upírovi pak vyplývá, že upír zásluhou proměny z člověka na upíra sice pozbyl své aktivní lidskosti a schopnosti uchopit lidské koncepty, zároveň mu však byly ponechány tři stupně lidských potřeb (potřeba lásky/přijetí, potřeba uznání a potřeba seberealizace). Tyto potřeby jsou však pro upíra – který už není člověkem – nesplnitelné. První kapitola je zakončena krátkým srovnáním polidštěného upíra Anne Riceové s domácími upíry ze současného žánru young adult/adult supernatural, důraz je přitom kladen především na schopnost/neschopnost milovat.

Druhá kapitola se vyhrazuje vůči ustálenému spojení upíří literatury Anne Riceové s Gotickou, Romantickou a Byronovskou literaturou, a především pak vůči přirovnávání upírů Anne Riceové k postavám Lorda George Gordona Byrona. V první podkapitole je řešeno několik základních vztahů mezi upířími romány Anne Riceové a Gotickou literaturou. Druhá podkapitola se věnuje bližšímu porovnání Byronovských modelů hrdiny a upírů Anne Riceové, prostor je dán nikoliv podobnostem – jak bývá často zvykem – ale naopak zdůraznění rozdílů mezi různými typy a podtypy postav. Větší pozornost je věnována především porovnání upírů Anne Riceové s Cainem, Luciferem, Giaourem a Manfredem. Kapitola zdůrazňuje nejenom to, že Byronův hrdina a milovník žen není předobrazem upíra Anne Riceové, ale také to, že oba diskutované typy jsou ve svém základu variabilní a unikátní, a nikoliv všeobecně

uplatnitelné a rigidní postavy vhodné k všeobecnému přirovnání. V jednotlivých podkapitolách, jakož i v samotném závěru kapitoly, je pak zdůrazněna nelogičnost těchto přirovnání a častá zaslepenost kritiků vůči rozdílům mezi Byronovskými a Riceovými typy postav. Kapitola upozorňuje na nutnost odstupu od přirovnání Byronův hrdina – upír Anne Riceové, protože takové přirovnání vnucuje čtenářům chybnou perspektivu na vztahy mezi postavami a jednotlivá témata upíří fikce Anne Riceové, a to včetně tématu lásky.

Třetí kapitola se věnuje samotnému problému lásky v upířích kronikách Anne Riceové. Kapitola skrze analýzu a následné porovnání jednotlivých případů z románů s koncepty lásky z oblasti psychologie, filozofie a sociologie sleduje několik vzorců typických pro nastolování nefunkčních vztahů mezi upírem a člověkem, upírem a upírem a v neposlední řadě unikátním vztahem mezi upírem-člověkem a člověkem. První podkapitola se pokouší uchopit mnohovýznamovost slova *láska*, a představuje tak několik referenčních druhů lásky, ke kterým je v průběhu analýzy lásky v románech Anne Riceové odkazováno. Následující podkapitola se zabývá jednotlivými pokusy upíra milovat. Skrze případové studie z románů a jejich porovnání s druhem lidské lásky, kterou se upír pokouší aplikovat, je opakovaně dokazováno, že nedochází k nastolení láskyplného vztahu a ani k naplnění potřeby, a tedy je podpořena hypotéza o neschopnosti upíra milovat. V rámci podkapitol je dokázáno, že upír po přeměně ztrácí schopnost milovat jak sám sebe, tak i své bývalé lidské přátele a členy rodiny, ke kterým získává s přeměnou znatelný odstup (je navozen vztah predátor vs. kořist). Přítomnost základních lidských potřeb – a tedy potřeba lásky – však upíra neustále podněcuje k novým a novým pokusům o navázání láskyplného vztahu. Veškeré pokusy ale selhávají, protože v základu upíří podstaty je upíří-já, které snahy o lidskost vyvrací a zabraňuje jakémukoliv naplnění. Život upíra tak sestává z neustálé touhy naplnit potřebu lásky a zbavit se samoty a prázdnoty. Krátkodobě dochází upír naplnění pouze skrze zabití smrtelníka. Stav splynutí při saní krve a zabíjení smrtelníka je ale ve svém jádru iluzivní a prchavý a nevede k dlouhodobému uspokojení ani k dlouhodobému vztahu. Neschopnost upíra milovat je ve svém jádru představena jako neschopnost vytvořit podhoubí pro láskyplný vztah, a to jak se smrtelníkem, tak s upírem.

Důležitou podkapitolu analýzy lásky pak tvoří třetí a závěrečná podkapitola věnující se tématu lásky v rámci románu *The Tale of the Body Thief*. Podkapitola se zabývá dvojím pohledem na lásku upíra a představuje vyústění nastolených konceptů. Upír-Lestat je představen jako zástupce rozpolceného upíra, který chápe lásku pouze

jako vyprázdňené slovo. Upír-Lestat v lidském těle je pak představen jako zástupce rozpolceného upíra, kterému je dáno opětovně vyplnit vyprázdňené slovo *láska* mnoha významy. Na základě vztahu mezi Lestatem a Davidem, a Lestatem a Gretchen je pak dokázáno, že upír ve své podstatě používá slovo *láska* lehkomyšlně a nechápe ho jako významotvorné, zatímco člověk chápe slovo *láska* ve všech možných odstínech, a používá ho proto s větší opatrností. Podkapitola vede k závěru, že upír nemůže lásku naplnit významy, protože již není schopen milovat. Poslední, čtvrtá kapitola se pokouší vysvětlit upíří neschopnost milovat a zároveň neschopnost přestat hledat lásku jako metaforu k nikdy nekončícímu vnitřnímu souboji člověka mezi tím, co je dobré a tím, co je zlé. Kapitola vysvětluje ideu, podle které Anne Riceová skrze svůj autorský triadistický koncept (tělo-duše- duch) člověka/upíra, vyvrací křesťanskou víru v dobro ducha a duše, a naopak tíhnutí těla ke hříchu. Upíra totiž ke hříchu neshodí pouze tělo a duše, ale i samotný duch, který je tvořen zlým duchem Amelem. Přestože však upír Anne Riceové není veden duchem Božím, a je tak sváděn ke hříchu a zlu tělem, duší i duchem, nevzdává svůj vnitřní boj se zlem a neomylně bojuje za to, co je dobré – za lásku. Riceová tak dokazuje, že nás zlým či dobrým nečiní naše podstata ani naše víra, ale naše vlastní rozhodnutí a morální soudy.

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