

Modern Fantasies on Love versus Classical Romances

Modern Fantasies on Love versus Classical Romances:

On the Success of *Fifty Shades
of Grey*

By

Ljuba Tarvi

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For Anna & Ana, my cool future.

An angry man, hungry woman
— James Taylor

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PREFACE

I feel naughty for enjoying this book so much.
—A fan’s comment on the *Shades* saga (Internet)

This project commenced with a Christmas present I got from a dear friend in 2019—three novels and three DVDs of E L James’s *Fifty Shades of Grey* series. With my predilection for literary classics, I tend to avoid mass-popular fiction, but I was asked to elucidate the gap between the universal acclaim of the saga and the overwhelmingly negative critical reaction. Dutifully, I started reading and soon became intensely absorbed, mostly because of the sickening feeling of an impending disaster in a sharp contrast to all the jazz of the novel’s surface champagne bubbling. After I read the remaining three volumes, the task of elucidating the controversial success of *Fifty Shades* became my very own challenging goal. The text appeal of this epic is clearly far beyond its sexual content and, despite its apparent kitsch and direct borrowings, the enslaving energy of this narrative is indisputable, which is evident in the Internet “trace” left by its fans.

Moreover, by the time I got involved in solving the mystery of *Fifty Shades*, I had been semi-consciously aware of other relevant texts that were “around” imposed by their popular movie and TV versions—Liza Smith’s *Vampire Diaries*, Joanne Rowling’s *Harry Potter*, Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight*, and Veronica Roth’s *Divergent*. In the course of about thirty years, from Smith (1991) to James (2011), five female authors around the globe published romantic fairy tales with a unique combination of protagonists in love—radioactively talented and deeply disturbed males (vampires, wizards, drug users, perverts) and compassionate virgin girls. Such a unanimous fascination of modern female authors with mixing the genre of fairy tales with romances—five bestselling novels in thirty volumes—definitely indicated a peculiar phenomenon and a certain stage in the genre of romance evolution.

There must be serious reasons to make millions of people to chime in emotionally with James’s two semi-orphans, who had no idea how lonely they had been before they shared the sweet anguish of love. These reasons have to relate to the universal human values that “shine through,” as Hegel would say, texts and coerce their readers into

submission. This novel sharply divided its readers into admirers and haters by creating a high-voltage contrast between the external verbosity of its endless talk of sex and the internal undercurrent of the dangerously powerful appeal of evil. By analogy with Gray's *Anatomy of the Human Body* (1858), *Fifty Shades* can be retitled *Grey's Anatomy of the Human Love*, since it attempts to expose the inner workings of one of the most powerful but totally uncontrollable human emotions.

While E L James's dream was to write a book everybody would want to read, my intentions are more modest: to provide philology students with a logic for envisaging methods of consilient text analysis based on texts themselves in *Book One: Love as Energy*; to elucidate the roots of the phenomenal success of modern romantic fairy tales in *Book Two: Text as Energy*; and to enjoy myself in the process. The method suggested here is token-based, metaphor-rooted, goal-oriented and logic-impregnated; it does not prescribe steps of analysis—instead, it shows plausible algorithms of research based on the interpretive logic stemming from triadic cognitive ideas that interrelate everything from galaxies through to subatomic particles.

The prime job of art is to entertain and engage by creating emotions. Just as *Fifty Shades* reminds its readers about the core role of sex in human life, my book calls them back to the roots of art in human life, since recreation, like creation, is a form of art. In terms of theory, my motto is 'Back to classics!' In terms of text analysis, it is "Back to logic!" In terms of the topic, it is "Back to nature!" My double tool for tracking down love in fiction is viewing energy as its underlying driving force and metaphor as a universal triadic linguistic tool of expression, cognition, and measure.

E L James deserves every praise for combining the eternal topic of the emotional (dis)balance of humans in love with glorifying creative sex that shapes their reconciliation at the times when the healthy aggression of primal sex is often replaced with the horrors of home abuse, work harassment, rape, violence, etc. When these two human passions—creation and procreation—are done with, i.e., when producing art and offspring is fully controlled by consciousness, then Freud's "life instincts" will be reduced to quenching thirst and hunger since, having lost interest in art and sex, we will be born old, if born at all.

INTRODUCTION

Doing research is combining your fantasy with that of the great minds who used their imagination to create their own vision of the world—it is playing *Glass Bead Game* with Hermann Hesse, *Nonnons* with Vladimir Nabokov, *Life and Death Instincts* with Sigmund Freud, etc. By plugging one's imagination to such a high-voltage area, one makes oneself vulnerable and exposed to shocks but it is the only way to appropriate, at least partially, the quantum leaps of past breakthroughs often distorted by interpretations.

When I commenced this project in January 2020, I intuited that in order to substantiate my subjective positive reaction to modern romances, I had to consider them within the tradition of romance fiction. To this end, I inscribed *Fifty Shades* into the following three concentric circles of comparison: *Shades* is the center of the inner circle of the closely related Female Romance Fantasies (1991-2021: *Vampire Diaries*, *Harry Potter*, *Twilight*, *Divergent*), together forming Block 3; surrounded by the middle circle of some great romances of the 20th century, Block 2; encircled by the outer layer of some famous romances of the 19th century, Block 1. As always in research, one knows what one wishes to elucidate, one vaguely envisages analytical ways of achieving what one sees in one's mind's eye, but one never knows the outcome of one's quest.

Female Romance Fantasies (FRF) are peculiar books where love mostly reveals itself through energy-related phenomena: electric charges, telepathy, auras, etc. The basic metaphor prompted by the energy-saturated FRF narratives, “Love/Text is Energy,” led me to looking for analogies in physics. In *Speak, Memory*, Vladimir Nabokov described the encounter of physical and metaphysical, observable and virtual, different and differential worlds in terms of topology: “There is, it would seem, in the differential scale of the world, a kind of a delicate meeting place between imagination and knowledge, a point, arrived at by diminishing larger things and enlarging small ones, that is intrinsically artistic.”

In the physical world, this “delicate meeting place” might be occupied by an elementary particle; in linguistics, as is suggested here, to a token (word), because both units embrace and exhibit, depending on the environment and the observer, both explicit and implicit properties and the ability to transform from a unit to a wave and back. While various kinds of

physical Energy are measured in terms of the work they produce, textual Energy is revealed in terms of the elusive effect it produces.

Now that the general approach is outlined, the structure of the book invites explanation. Since my research has two goals—to co-construct a research model together with my readers, and to apply it to the seventeen romances in forty-two volumes published during the last two centuries—it naturally falls into two parts.

Book One: Love/Text as Energy is intended for philology students, prompted by my desire to share my experience because, as a relatively recent student by my second tertiary education, I am well aware of their problems. The algorithm of text analysis is outlined as a series of metaphor-based logical stages of bringing together the three foci of any literary research—the text, the goals, and the method—into a mutually beneficial alliance.

To arrive at a unit of research, one has to co-measure its macro- and micro-scales. Since the basic metaphor of text analysis here is ‘Love/Text is Energy,’ our macro framework is that of classical physics and our micro scale is that of quantum mechanics. An elementary particle and a linguistic token are conjectured to be commensurable units of analysis, which allows one to correlate unquantifiable Love/Text as Energy and measurable Energy of the physical world. Such parallels led to dividing text information into bit-byte/qubit/gambit, which, in its turn, required specific means of registering potential qubit information via deciphered bit-bytes, such as the Nietzsche Test, Marx’s converted forms, bit/byte-filters, metaphors, etc. Any approach, aimed at finding formal markers in the linguistic chaos of texts, is inevitably biased, flawed and unfalsifiable but it has the right to be tried.

I started with looking for congruences between Energy/Love, Energy/Text, and Energy/Nature as expressed by laws of classical and quantum physics. The revealed isomorphism was used to establish parallels between Energy/Love and Energy/Text as information (Chapter 1), which led to a number of metaphors interrelating love, texts, and their ‘human users’ (Chapter 2). The next step was inscribing the obtained isomorphic parallels into the triadic tradition of reasoning: the global triune framework of physics ‘Energy (Work) Force,’ classical cognitive triangles reconsidered here into cognitive cones, A(B)C, some special cases of triune logic (Hegel and Nietzsche), and concise formulaic expressions readjusted here to describe text interpretation (Chapter 3). The obtained results were used to elaborate the Token Valence Method (TVM), a set of analytical filters to be applied to texts in order to reveal their differences in one and only parameter—the patterns of male-female

relations (apologies to the LGBT community for being an ignorant outsider) (Chapter 4). As a connection with *Book Two*, practically all the supporting quotes in *Book One* are from the list of the analyzed novels.

Book Two: Love as Text is text analysis proper: the Token Valence Method (TVM) is used to analyze the selected romances in terms of the patterns of romantic relations they offer. In Chapter 5, the Token Valence Method is applied to the outer shell of the three concentric circles of analysis—six great romances of the 19th century (mostly the books the FRF heroines like re-reading): *Pride and Prejudice*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. In Chapter 6, six great love stories of the 20th century are TVM-analyzed: *The Age of Innocence*, *Gone with the Wind*, *The Master and Margarita*, *Love Story*, *Lolita*, and *The Bridges of the Madison County*. In Chapter 7, the TVM is applied to the Female Romantic Fantasies, written exclusively by women and in many volumes: *The Vampire Diaries*, *Harry Potter*, *Twilight*, *Divergent*, and *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

The obtained patterns are reduced to a prevalent model for each block of texts. The revealed dynamics of romantic relations in fiction is alarming: from Adaptation (Block 1) to Alienation (Block 2), and to Imagination (Block 3). To ensure a happy end, the FRF authors had to augment, to the acclaim of reading public, their love models with such fairy tale elements as radioactively talented but profoundly unhappy wizards and their compassionate but tough virgin girlfriends.

Any book that sharply divides its readers into admirers and haters deserves research attention. The *Fifty Shades* saga is argued here to be not an erotic novel but rather a special case of an erotic romance. In erotic novels, abundant sex scenes are not necessitated by the plot; in *Fifty Shades*, the reader, like James's protagonist Anastasia, needs elucidation as to why real BDSM is no less dangerous than fictive vampirism. *Fifty Shades* is a phenomenon of its own, with its obvious irregularities and multiple 'sources' (Chapter 8), its convincing merits (Chapter 9), and the pure genius of its narrative scheme (Chapter 10). In Chapter 11, *Shades* is further associated with some novels by Alexander Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, and Vladimir Nabokov. The concluding Chapter 12 is aimed at correlating the obtained results with plausible directions of research on the topic.

To enjoy myself in the process, I intend to execute my project in a "semi-academic" way, with "academic" defined by Brian Boyd as "a way beyond the errors of thought and practice in much modern academic literary study, which over the last few decades has often stifled—and has even sought to stifle—the *pleasure*, the *life*, and the *art* of literature" (2010:11, italics original). If I mention a book, it means that I have read it,

if I quote somebody's idea, it should be referenced at least with name—that is my way to be honest. Since the books I have used in this project are mostly “difficult,” they are prone to multiple interpretations. I might be wrong in my interpretations, but they are entirely mine if not specified otherwise. And, above all, I intend to be emotive because I write about the books that made me emotional.

Academic matters can be adventurous! Let us go back to classics in theory, to “quantum” logic in practice, and to enlightened nature in love!

NOVELS STUDIED (ABBREVIATED TITLES)

Block 1: Cult Romances of the 19th Century

- PAP Austen, Jane. 2007 [1813]. "Pride and Prejudice". In *The Complete Novels of Jane Austen*, 233-472. Hertfordshire: The Wordsworth Library Collection.
- EO Pushkin, Alexander. 1990 [1837]. *Eugene Onegin. A Novel in Verse by Alexander Pushkin, Translated from the Russian, With a Commentary, by Vladimir Nabokov.* Volume I, Princeton University Press: Bollingen Series LXXII.
- JE Brontë, Charlotte. 2012 [1847]. *Jane Eyre*. London: Penguin English Library.
- WH Brontë, Emily. 2012 [1847]. *Wuthering Heights*. London: Penguin English Library.
- AK Tolstoy, Leo. 2016 [1877]. *Anna Karenina*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky). Penguin Books.
- TOTD Hardy, Thomas. 2012 [1891]. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. London: Penguin English Library.

Block 2: Cult Romances of the 20th Century

- TAOI Wharton, Edith. 1993 [1920]. *The Age of Innocence*. J.M. Dent – London: Everyman.
- GWTW Mitchell, Margaret. 1974 [1936]. *Gone with the Wind*. Pan Books in association with Macmillan London.
- TMAM Bulgakov, Mikhail. 2000 [1966 [1940]]. *The Master and Margarita*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larisa Volokhonsky. Penguin Books.
- L Nabokov, Vladimir. 1996 [1955]. "Lolita". In *Vladimir Nabokov. Novels 1955–1962*. The Library of America.
- LS Segal, Erich. 2020 [1970]. *Love Story*. HARPERPERENNIAL.MODERN CLASSICS.

- TBOMC Waller, Robert James. 1997 [1992]. *The Bridges of Madison County*. London: Arrows Books

Block 3: Female Romance Fantasies (FRF)

- Smith, Lisa Jane. *The Vampire Diaries* Novels
- S1 2010 [1991]. *The Awakening*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
- S2 2010 [1991]. *The Struggle*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
- S3 2010 [1991]. *The Fury*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
- S4 2010 [1991]. *The Reunion*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
- S5 2010 [2009]. *The Return. Nightfall*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
- S6 2016 [2010]. *The Return. Shadow Souls*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
- S7 2011. *The Return. Midnight*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
- Rowling, Joanne Kathleen. *The Harry Potter* Novels
- RJ1 1998 [1997]. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer Stone*, USA: Scholastic Inc.
- RJ2 1999 [1998]. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, USA: Scholastic Inc.
- RJ3 1999. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, USA: Scholastic Inc.
- RJ4 2000. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, USA: Scholastic Inc.
- RJ5 2003. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, USA: Scholastic Inc.
- RJ6 2005. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, USA: Scholastic Inc.
- RJ7 2007. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, USA: Scholastic Inc.
- RJ8 2017. *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, London: Sphere.

Meyer, Stephanie. The *Twilight* Novels

- M1 2006 [2005]. *Twilight*. London: Atom.
- M2 2007 [2006]. *New Moon*. London: Atom.
- M3 2007. *Eclipse*. London: Atom.
- M4 2008. *Breaking Dawn*. London: Atom.
- M5 2020. *Midnight Sun*. London: Atom.

Ross, Veronica. The *Divergent* Novels

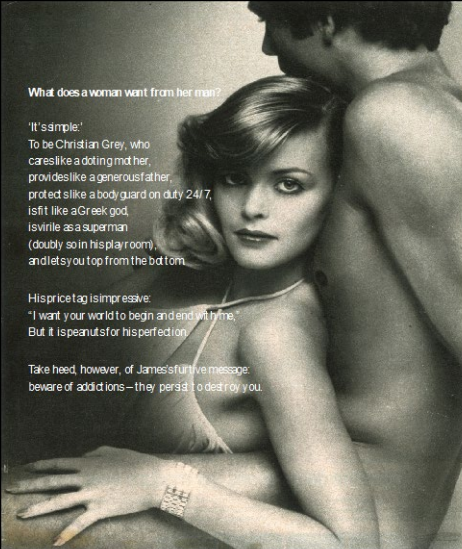
- RV1 2011. *Divergent*. HarperCollins Publishers.
- RV2 2012. *Insurgent*. HarperCollins Publishers.
- RV3 2013. *Allegiant*. HarperCollins Publishers.
- RV4 2021 [2014]. *Four. Revised Paperback edition*. Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.
- RV4 2021. *Four. A Divergent Collection Extras*. Revised Paperback edition. Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

James, Erika Leonard. The *Fifty Shades of Grey* Novels

- J1 2012 [2011]. *Fifty Shades of Grey*, London: Arrow Books.
- J2 2012 [2011]. *Fifty Shades Darker*, London: Arrow Books.
- J3 2012 [2011]. *Fifty Shades Freed*, London: Arrow Books.
- J4 2015. *Grey*. New York: Vintage Books.
- J5 2017. *Darker*. New York: Vintage Books.
- J6 2021. *Freed*. London: Arrow Books.

Sade, the Marquis de.

- S 2016 [1785]. *The 120 Days of Sodom or The School of Libertinage*. Translated and with an Introduction by Will McMorran and Thomas Wynn. Penguin Books.



What does a woman want from her man?

'It's simple.'

To be Christian Grey, who
cares like a doting mid tier,
provides like a generous father,
protects like a body guard on duty 24/7,
is fit like a Greek god,
is virile as a superman
(doubly so in his playroom),
and lets you top from the bottom.

His price tag is impressive.

"I want your world to begin and end with me."
But it is peanuts for his perfection.

Take heed, however, of James's furtive message:
beware of additions—they persist to destroy you.

BOOK ONE:

LOVE AS ENERGY

CHAPTER ONE

LOVE/TEXT AS ENERGY

Being in love is not wide-awake reality ... maybe,
the hereafter stands slightly ajar in the dark.
—Nabokov, *Look at the Harlequins!*

Love is simultaneously a gift from God and a joke by Satan; when it lasts, it is paradise, when it ends, sometimes abruptly, it is hell. As a verb, Love has no one-word synonym, and the greatest Love story is always your own. There are contradicting views on whether Love is a state or an action. For example, while Joseph Brodsky asserts that “Love, as an act, is verb-deprived,” Gary Chapman called his book *Love is a Verb* (2010). However, both claims can be argued to be valid. Since comparison is a driving force of cognition, one is inclined to weigh this greatest adventure of one’s life against other similar stories, and romances are hence a very popular genre.

Love is conjectured to stem from Libido that is “hardwired” into human psyche to facilitate procreation since times immemorial, but in fact it is a much more complex phenomenon, definitely affected by Logos. In his play *A Hundred and Four Pages about Love* (1964), the Russian playwright Edward Radzinsky elucidated human interest in Love in irrational terms: “Human beings younger than a hundred-and-two are prone to believe in a chance fate-changing meeting. Without such a hope, one would die of boredom,” while Robert Waller calls love “the high probability of the improbable” (TBOMC: 23).

Romance is a popular genre of fiction which provides inexhaustible inspiration for Hollywood movies, but nobody in one’s right mind would have the courage to define Love as a concept or analyze it as a phenomenon. Even in this project, where the topic of Love is limited to the way it is depicted in fiction, its analysis is next to impossible. Love is not only complicated by necessitating the reevaluation of one’s own individuality, it is even further confused by the subsequent surrendering of individuality and acceptance of the inherent vulnerability it induces. As an emotion, Love controversially consists of mutually exclusive elements, “The feeling is sore and sweet and bold and gentle at once” (J1: 155),

which are always tight-spiral-connected: “Suppose I’ve said I hate him, or worse still, that I love him, in my sleep” (J1: 463). Romance bestsellers are products of sober experiences and sizzling imagination that magically turn quantity into quality. Deeply rooted in the ancient basic instincts of life united by the energy of Libido, Love, “this visceral, primal attraction” (J2: 15), is so many things that the metaphors suggested in Chapter 2 are just scratching the surface.

Love is a synthesis of physical and metaphysical, of conscious and unconscious, of emotions and thoughts. When, and if, a synthesis in Love is achieved, it comes close to merging: “... we have ceased being separate beings and, instead, had become a third being formed by the two of us. Neither of us existed independent of that being. And that being was left to wander” (TBOMC: 156). Grey also intuitively feels the presence of this “being:” “It’s almost a separate entity, it’s so powerful” (J6: 118). This “third being” is an enigmatic child of two humans in Love, a weird virtual creature that, like real children, lives a life of its own—it can either leave the two it created (or was it created by them?) by its own will, or it can be “left to wander” by (one of) those it united—but the short period when the trio coexists is a pure bliss.

One of Nabokov’s characters in his short story *Solus Rex* had a unique view on parenthood: “Indeed, in the heat of vexation good burgers found that the one-time scourge of the learned world, the now forgotten Professor von Skunk, did not err much when he affirmed that childbearing was but an illness, and that every babe was an “externalized,” self-existent tumor, often malignant” (1995: 523). This “third being” of Love can also become externalized, self-existent and even malignant, which explains why Love and tragedy often go hand-in-hand. In romances, Love is depicted at the point when “a third being” is under construction—another reason for the popularity of the romance genre.

Love is a vernicle: a *veronica*, a *sudarium*, an image of Christ that was not made by hand but raised; Love is mystery and cosmos, ecstasy and depravity, fantasy and tragedy, fairy tale and horror story, life and death, joy and disease, dancing with the devil and singing with angels, and much more. Love is utterly irrational: “The more you loved someone, the less sense anything made” (M2: 340); “The less we love a woman / the easier ‘tis to be liked by her” (EO: 177).

Love is an entity of *qualia*, a *quale* being a philosophical concept denoting any widely used but inherently ambiguous concept. As the philosopher and cognitive scientist Daniel Dennett asserted, *qualia* is an unfamiliar term for something that could not be more familiar to everybody—our subjective ways of seeing things. Therefore, the topic of

this project, Love, can be neither defined, analyzed or classified. These impediments preclude neither its existence nor attempts to cognize it. Love's essence can be only approximately delineated, if at all, exclusively via metaphors, which are viewed here as concrete cases of cognitive triads. Love is an impetuous and uncontrollable human emotion mixed with reason, with its powerful attraction gradually distorted by personal and social factors. Love is neither consciousness, nor will, nor Libido, nor Logic—Love is rooted in the natural urge to procreate, which explains its short-lived nature. Reason may affect Love by either prolonging or shortening its term, but it is unable to prevent it.

Creation and procreation are forms of artful expression, with art being a lie by its nature. As Paul Spector, the serial killer of the TV series *The Fall*, written by Allan Cubit, asserts: "Art is a lie. Art gives the chaos of the world an order that doesn't exist" (Series 1, Episode 5), a remake of Pablo Picasso's "Art is the lie that enables us to realize the truth." Indeed, art is a creative impression of the world, and any impression is a subjective vision additionally distorted by the means of its depiction, and, hence, a lie. The same seems to be true about Love as a temporary, alas, illusion of order in the chaos of human interpersonal relations.

The Fall (Season 1), which premiered in May 2013, and *Fifty Shades*, published in 2011 (the shooting of a film version started in December 2013), are closely related, not only by Jamie Dornan, who played the lead in both, but by a long list of common features shared by Dornan's characters: his protagonists were orphaned in early childhood, they are extremely private persons avoiding emotional attachment, they are fond of literature, they play piano well, they are hair fetishists, they like to tie their women to beds, and they both keep the record of their perversive actions—for Grey, it is portfolios and snapshots locked in his safe; for Spector, it is hand-made albums, adorned with stolen fetishized items, his drawings and snapshots, hidden in the attic of his house.

Love is an atavistic attraction of two individuals aimed by nature at procreation that can sometimes develop into a tragic myth of a global scale or into a social tragedy of a local scope. As such, Love is period- and society-independent and is, in fact, often in conflict with them. Human history is adorned with infrequent and hence impressive tragedies caused by an irresistible attraction of powerful men to low-status women: e.g., Count Sheremétev married his peasant serf girl, Peter the Great raised his servant laundress to an empress; Edward VIII abdicated to marry a twice-divorced woman, etc. All these stories ended in tragedy and deceit.

In this project, Love at the macro-level is viewed as a hypothetical "Third Being," a co-creation of Libido and Logos (Chapter

2). To monitor the undetectable vacillations of Love as a “Third Being,” a theoretical approach to embrace the physical and metaphysical levels of analysis will be developed (Chapters 3.) The method of analysis will be outlined (Chapter 4) as a “quantum,” metaphorical, and highly hypothetical “measuring device” designed to allow for differences in the patterns of the protagonists’ romantic relations.

Now that Love has been established to be non-measurable, it seems logical to start with a shortlist of some of its very few distinct types (1.1) and immanent qualities (1.2), registered in both fiction and nonfiction. After the list of romances selected for this study is outlined (1.3), we will recall Energy as a natural phenomenon that saturates descriptions of Love in the Female Romance Fantasy novels (1.4). Following the discussion of consilience as a general umbrella approach (1.5) that unites physics and linguistics as triadic structures, we shall discuss laws shared by soft and hard sciences (1.6) that correlate energy in physics and Love in fiction as commensurable phenomena (1.7).

The Love/Energy discussion will be completed with an overall model convoluting the co-relevant types of Love/Text/Energy into a metaphorical Russian Nested Doll (RND) model (1.8) and with correlating the three theoretically accepted Energy levels with bit-byte/qubit/gambit types of textual information (1.9). The concepts employed in the theoretical part of the project, whether borrowed or introduced, will be capitalized to underlie the fact that they are discussed as exclusively pertaining to fiction. Besides, personification allows one to avoid space-eating articles and utterly useless definitions.

1.1 Love in Fiction and Science as Generalizations: Impossibility

Fiction has depicted Love in all possible forms: from attraction to involvement to dependence to addiction to death; from obsession to illusion to hallucination to death; from young Love to adult Love to Love in marriage to Love in extra-marital affairs to death, etc. We are not going to recall the famous myths, mostly Greek, but the names of Zeus and Europe, Perseus and Andromeda, Apollo and Daphne, Odysseus and Penelope, Leander and Hero, Cupid and Psyche, Orpheus and Euridice, Paris and Helen, Adonis and Aphrodite, Tristan and Iseult, Osiris and Isis, etc., are part and parcel of human cultural history.

Fiction and science have registered a number of particular forms of Love; some of those I happen to remember will be recalled below. The list is far from complete, and it cannot be complete, but the paucity of

examples confirms that Love, whatever it is, is a “non-observable” on a par with Cosmos and subatomic particles.

1.1.1 Limerence

Limerence is a state of being infatuated or obsessed with another person, typically experienced involuntarily and characterized by a strong desire for reciprocation of one’s feelings and not necessarily via Sex. In 1979, the psychologist Dorothy Tennov coined the term “limerence” in her book *Love and Limerence: The Experience of Being in Love* to describe an involuntary state of being deeply addicted to another person. Limerence implies becoming emotionally dependent on the object of your affections, getting devastated if your feelings are not reciprocated, and experiencing fantasies about the other person that can border on extreme and elaborate. A limerent person can suffer from a “hyper-focus” on the other person to the extent that he begins to lose focus on his own life, with his addiction often heightened by fantasy.

The primary desire of a limerent individual is reciprocation of his feelings, rather than a sexual relationship. Unlike infatuation, it can happen even if you know the person’s flaws. Unlike love, there is a focus on winning the object of limerence over at all costs. Unlike a crush, limerence involves both obsessive and compulsive readings into the behavior and actions of the limerence object, often misinterpreting them. Evolutionists claim that a “limerence module,” arisen by a chance mutation in human brains, gives us a compulsion to mate with someone we intuitively find to have genes we want to combine with our own. Limerence seems to be an extreme mode of amorous attraction, but some of the characters of the novels chosen for analysis in this project are definitely limerent, which will be discussed.

Limerence may be regarded as a particular case of what is called an expansive schizoid premorbid state of metaphysical intoxication characterized by fixation on something. Although Lord Tennyson never heard the term “limerence” in his day, it seems that his poem *The Lady of Shalott* is a case of limerence: the tragic lady kills herself even though she never met the object of her limerence, the bold Sir Lancelot. Personally, I am inclined to attribute this kind of Love to the fans of popular singers, actors, and other famous media personalities, albeit not always.

1.1.2 Amok

Unlike limerence, this type of fixation is Sex-related. The narrator in Stephen Zweig's short story *Amok* (1922) becomes limerent, gets rejected, and starts running amok. Having spent eight years in a Dutch colony, he suddenly desires a white woman who came to him as a doctor for a discrete abortion, and demands not money but Sex for his services. When the woman laughs at him and leaves, he follows her and nearly kills the boy servant she sent to distract him so she could escape.

The next day, the narrator arrives to the town where she lives, is not received by her, and later in the evening appears at the governor's ball, where they meet again, and she performs her social role impeccably. Their third and last meeting occurs later that same night, after she, dying of a dirty illegal abortion, sends for him. Before she died, she had time to beg him to keep her secret from her husband, who was due to return the next day after a half-year absence. The narrator agreed and kept his promise at the cost of his own life. Is it love? Passion? Sexual desire? Crazy? Limerence, perchance? What could induce this state of a sudden mindless attraction to an unknown person, and result in such a powerful outburst of libidinal obsession? Probably, the narrator's behavior might be associated with yet another feature of a premorbid state of schizophrenia—sudden and powerful changes in one's energy level.

1.1.3 Imprinting

This type of Love was outlined by Stephenie Meyer in her series *Twilight* as an involuntary mechanism by which a very specific human brand of Quileute shape-shifters finds their mates. As Jacob explains to Bella: "There is nothing *romantic* about it all ... When you see *her*, suddenly it's not the earth holding you here anymore. She does. And nothing matters more than her. And you would do anything for her, be anything for her. ... You become whatever she needs you to be, whether that's a protector, or a lover, or a friend, or a brother." (M3: 156). When imprinting happens, everyone else becomes secondary, and only the imprintee matters, leaving the imprinted with a deep need to do anything to be with and to protect his partner.

The imprintee can be of any age: Sam Uley, Paul Lahote and Jared Cameron imprinted on teenage girls or young adults, Quil Ateara V imprinted on a young child, and Jacob Black imprinted on a new-born baby, Bella's daughter Renesmee. In any case, from the moment the imprinted shape-shifter sees his imprintee, he will never leave her side—as

a guardian, God-father, best friend, lover, whatever she needs him to be. If the feelings do not develop to be mutual, the imprinted is unable to love any other women, he does not “see” the others—like Kincaid after he met Francesca, like Cullen after he saw Bella, or like Grey after Anastasia fell into his office.

James mocked this peculiar brand of Love in *Shades* by creating Mia, Grey’s younger sister, the third of the adopted children of the Grey-Trevelyan family. When half-a-year-old Mia was brought home, it was an emotional shock for Grey, who started talking after two years of silence with pronouncing her name. She became the first step in his recovery and Grey proved a devoted nanny: “I hold her and hold her. She is safe when I hold her. Elliot is not interested in Mia. She dribbles and cries. And he wrinkles his nose when she does a poop. When Mia is crying Elliot ignores her. I hold her and I hold her and she stops” (J4: 296). Imprinting? Absolutely not, because a grown-up Mia is irritatingly insensitive and loud-mouthed, and Grey has to repress his dissatisfaction with her ways: “She can be exhausting” (J4: 218); “Christ, she can be really irritating” (J4: 337). Emotional and spoilt, Mia is not popular among her male coevals, and only in the concluding volume James hints that Mia finally has a boyfriend.

1.1.4 BBF (Bound by Fate)

The pattern of male-female relationship offered by Rowling in her *Harry Potter* is a kind of gradual imprinting: starting at an early age, future partners grow and evolve together, sharing the same values and fighting for the same goals. In the beginning of the novel, the main participants meet on the train platform 9¾ in London: Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley, all eleven-year-olds, and Ginny Weasley, Ron’s ten-year-old sister. In the last novel of the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Hermione and Ron are married with two kids, Ginny and Harry are married with three kids. Ginny joined her brothers at school a year later with her mind set on her goal—Harry, which reminds the story of Kate Middleton’s gracefully navigating Prince William into matrimony.

Ginny fell in love with Harry at the “second” sight, after she heard that the boy who she just met was the famous Harry Potter: “Oh, Mum, can I go on the train and see him, Mum, oh please ...” (RJ1: 97). After the train begins to move, Harry sees Ginny “... half-laughing, half-crying, running to keep up with the train until it gathered too much speed, then she fell back and waved” (RJ1: 98). This quote is symbolic of their relationship, with Harry doing what he was supposed to do, and Ginny

trying to grow up and to reach his level. Ginny's pursuit of Harry was a complete success: each of them had a couple of teen-love infatuations, but nothing serious jeopardized their imminent union. Ginny studies well, she excels as Harry's partner in Quidditch, she becomes a successful sports journalist, just doing the best she can while waiting for Harry.

In *The Cursed Child*, Harry is thirty-seven years old and a high-ranking officer at the Ministry of Wizardry. As might be expected, he is still carrying on his shoulders the burden of the horrific ten years at his aunt's place and no less difficult seven years at school culminated in the battle he could have lost. Ginny explains why she is in Love with him: "People think they know all there is to know about you, but the best bits of you are—have always been—heroic in really quiet ways" ((RJ8: 286). Harry is equally overwhelmed with Ginny's inner strength, telling their son Albus, "Actually, you're more like your mum—bold, fierce, funny ..." (316). When Potter asks Ginny, "I'm lucky to have you, aren't I?" she replies, "Extremely" (287). This dialog is echoed by Grey and Anastasia in *Shades*: "God. I'm a lucky son of a bitch," I whisper in awe.—"Yes, you are" (J6: 364).

Another couple in the novel, Hermione and Ron, are more traditional, but they also conform to the law "what fires together, wires together." They have been through a lot together, and they seem to be still going strong: "... the truth is—I bloody love you Hermione Granger" (RJ8: 232). Like Ginny and Harry, it is as if they were intended or betrothed by the very fact that they studied at the same school and were overcoming the same hardships. Not all BBF protagonists, however, benefit from such a bond, as is bitterly testified by Heathcliff and Catherine in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*.

Fiction and science have offered certain peculiar "generalized" types of love, a tiny portion of which has been recalled above. Love and "classification," as it seems, are incongruent, since each single instance of human Love is as unique as one's fingerprint, one's ear shape, or one's genitalia.

1.2 Love in Fiction and Regularities of Nature

Without any claim to completeness, let us recall certain inherent qualities of Love that may sound commonsensical and pessimistic simultaneously: Love is finite (1.2.1), Love is inequality (1.2.2), and Love is ownership (1.2.3).

1.2.1 Love Pulls but Cools: the “Universal Sinusoid” of Love

Happiness in Love is, alas, a temporary state, and people tend to register the bliss of fresh amorous emotions: “It’s a new feeling, new and shiny” (J4: 109). Like youth or beauty, Love is doomed to fade away: in *Lolita*, Humbert, by pursuing Lolita, is in fact looking for his lost youth; Pushkin called Love “the occupation of youth;” Elena Lincoln of *Shades* complains, “Nothing lasts,” albeit trying to regain the past. In her romantic novel *The Rose and the Yew Tree* (1948), Agatha Christie (under the penname Mary Westmacott) gives a potent metaphor of impermanence of Love: “Roses do not look right when growing ... A rose wants to be by itself, in a glass—then it’s beautiful—but only for a very short time—then it drops and dies” (2017: 173). All these grievances make the end of *Romeo and Juliette* seem happy.

Human emotions are bright and colorful, like flowers, but they are equally short-lived. The need for fresh emotions is probably one of nature’s ways of ensuring procreation. “This too shall pass” is an ancient wisdom that, no matter what is currently happening, everything is ultimately temporary. Unlike evasive Greek philosophers, modern poets express the idea of impermanence more concisely: “Everybody loves somebody sometime” is the first line of the popular song (Irving Taylor / Ken Lane, 1947) made famous by Dean Martin. Such is the transient nature of reality, whatever it might be, and time and patience help us overcome difficulties. By the same token, Love’s transient nature amplifies suffering because one, like Faust, wishes to retain one’s fleeting emotions. The lesson of impermanence and the law of entropy teach us to experience the moment as it is—not clinging to good or running from bad but accepting everything with calm and equanimity: “If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster / And treat those two impostors just the same” (Rudyard Kipling, *If*, 1895).

All this is, in its turn, closely related to the idea of equilibrium suggested in the General System Theory (GST), which describes complex systems as “organized complexities” (Bertalanffy 1969: 19) or “sets of elements standing in interrelation” (38). In open systems, i.e., those that both affect their surroundings and are affected by them, any disturbance results in a temporary loss of equilibrium, which leads to regeneration (124), aimed at restoring it (122). The process of striving for equilibrium, or, in terms of quantum mechanics, for restoring symmetry, as states requiring a minimum energy, is universal, while the amplitude of the “pendulum swinging” is individual. Therefore, any open system, such as a human being, is rhythmic by nature in the mode of a sine wave, with its individual rhythm defined by its functionality and viability.