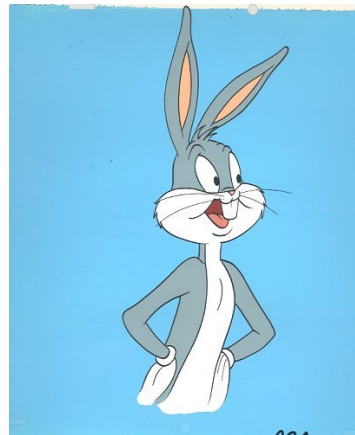
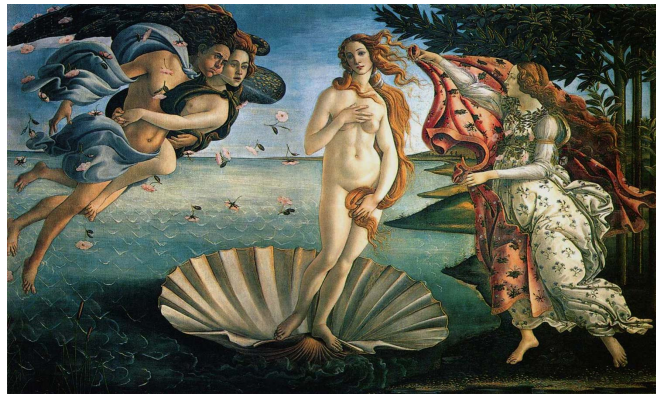


Introduction to Semiotics

Semiotics

The world is full of “signs.” Semiotics is the practice of reading and interpreting those signs.



Sign

- Something, anything, that carries meaning.

Semiotics

- The study of signs.



What meanings does this sign hold? What signs are within this sign?

The meaning of a sign can be found in its relationships with other signs within a **system.**



Questions to ask:

- What is its **explicit** meaning?
- What are its **implicit** meanings?
- How does the sign convey these meanings?

Cultural Mythologies

The lenses through which we view our world.

- Our beliefs are not objective “truths,” they actually reflect our cultural lenses.
- Remember, no cultural system can claim absolute validity or superiority.

What cultural mythologies shape your worldview?

For example:

Our understandings of gender are shaped by our cultural mythologies. Let's consider gendered behavior expectations in dating circumstances:

- How should a woman behave in dating scenarios?
- What should she do and say?
- How should she look and how should she behave?



- What basic assumptions about dating are contained in these signs?
- What gender norms are represented in these images?
- In the past, what was the role of the male? The female?
- How has that changed today?

Levels of Meaning

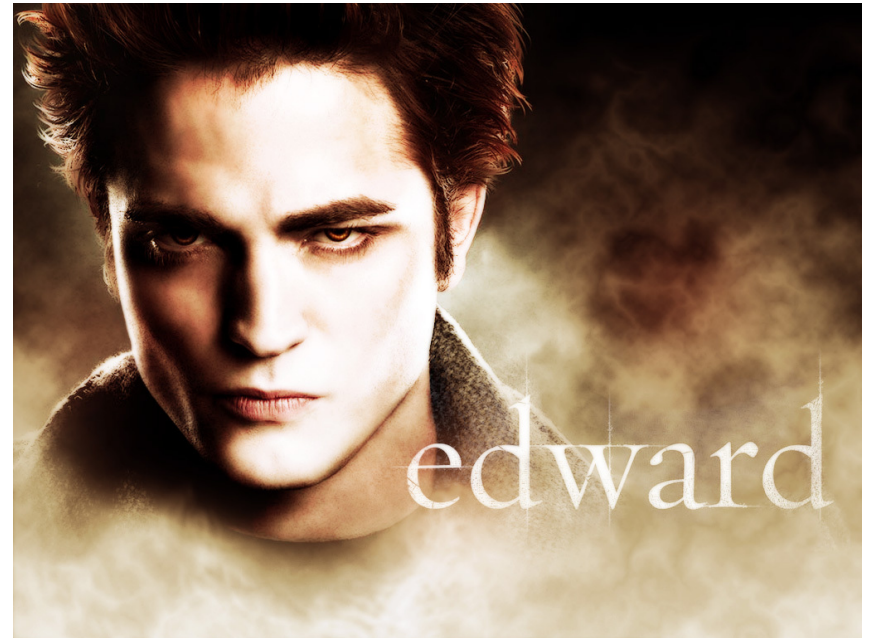
- Denotation:
 - **Explicit**
 - The first level of meaning
 - A sign's direct meaning
- Connotation
 - **Implied**
 - The underlying level of meaning
 - A sign's indirect meaning
 - Its political or cultural significance

Meaning Changes

Vampires in the 1930s



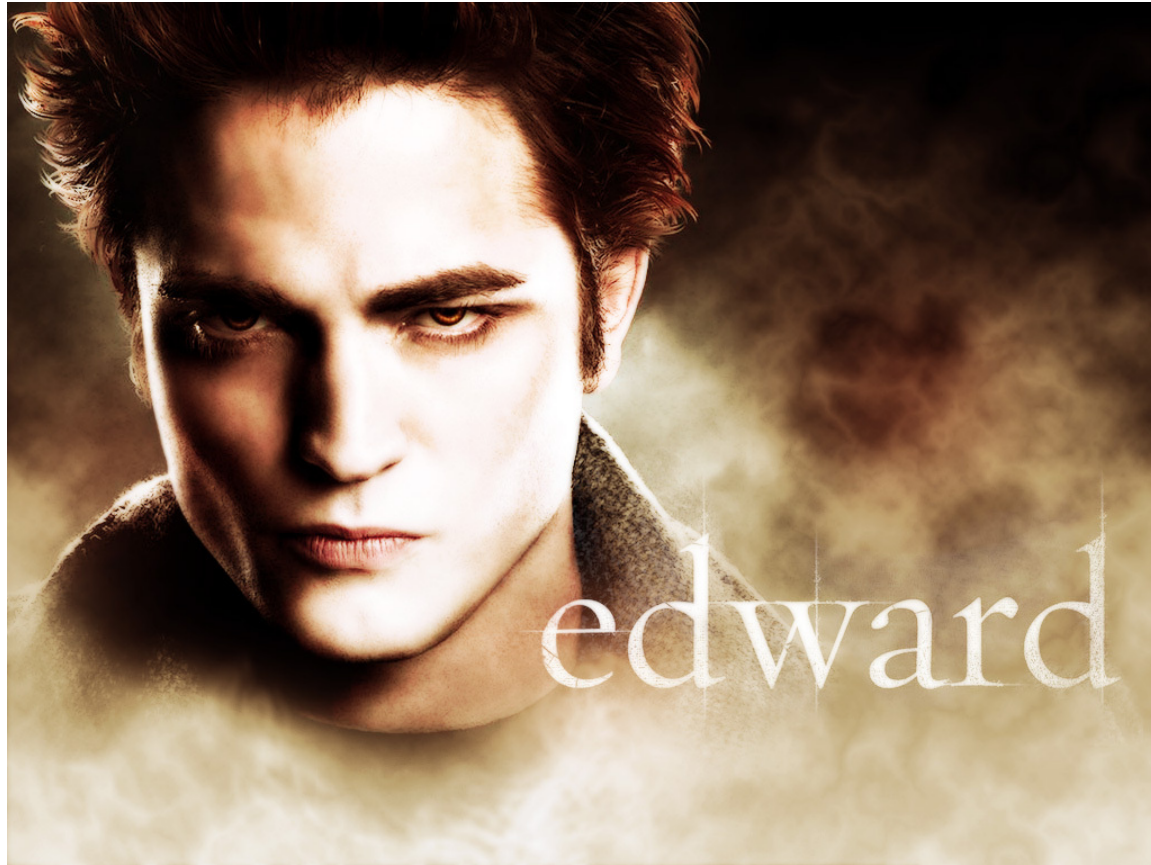
Vampires Today



Dracula's Characteristics?



Twilight Vampire Characteristics?



Get out a piece of paper...

- Vampires and zombies are very popular signs in our culture today. Why?
- Choose one of these signs (either vampires or zombies)
- Write a paragraph that explains why you think our culture is so obsessed with these figures. What do they represent? Why are they so appealing to our society right now?