

2010

Monstrous bodies: femininity and agency in Young Adult horror fiction

June Pulliam

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, jpullia@lsu.edu

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MONSTROUS BODIES: FEMININITY AND AGENCY IN YOUNG ADULT HORROR FICTION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by

June Pulliam

B. A., Louisiana State University, 1984

M. A., Louisiana State University, 1987

August 2010

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family for their patience as I completed this dissertation. In particular I would like to thank my husband Anthony Fonseca for suggesting titles that were of use to me and for reading my drafts.

I would also like to express my heart-felt gratitude to Professors Malcolm Richardson, Michelle Massé and Robin Roberts for their confidence in my ability to embark on my program of study. Professors Jacqueline Bach, Steven Bickmore and Sue Weinstein have all been instrumental in the development of my understanding of Young Adult fiction. Professors Joshua Gunn and John Protevi are also deserving of my thanks for enhancing my understanding of the uncanny and of Michel Foucault.

And finally, I wish to express my most sincere appreciation to Professor Robin Roberts for her patient midwifery of this dissertation. My labor was lengthy, and the end product would have been stillborn if not for her assistance and encouragement.

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Abstract

Young Adult horror fiction with female protagonists presents sympathetically the untenable situation of adolescent girls within society whereby they are increasingly pressured to embody a doll-like feminine ideal that deprives them of voice and agency. In Young Adult horror fiction, the monstrous Other problematizes what is presented to girls as “normal” and “natural” feminine behavior. As a double with a difference, the monstrous Other is an iteration of femininity whose similarity to the original implies the possibility of resisting restrictive gender roles. Because in Young Adult horror fiction the monstrous Other is nearly always a sympathetic character, it is fairly easy for the reader or viewer to identify with this character and thereby formulate her own strategies to resisting a restrictive gender role.

Monstrous Bodies: Femininity and Agency in Young Adult Horror Fiction examines three types of monstrous Others, each offering a different model of resistance to feminine subordination. In Chapter 1, the figure of the ghost reacquaints girls with strengths they have repressed in order to be conventionally feminine. The teen female werewolves in Chapter 2 refuse restrictive gender roles by accepting as strong and beautiful the parts of themselves that are at odds with normative femininity. And in Chapter 3, teen witches resist subordination when they can view the world holistically and so reject their cultures’ hierarchal and oppressive model of knowledge.

Young Adult horror fiction does not simply reproduce through the form of the monstrous Other sexist ideas about women. Rather, Young Adult horror fiction uses these tropes of horror to deconstruct sexist ideas about women’s supposed essential nature which have been used to justify feminine subordination. In this way, Young Adult horror fiction differs from mainstream horror fiction, which is as likely to affirm sexist ideas about women (as well as racist ideas about non-whites) as it is to challenge these ideas.

Introduction

Young Adult horror fiction provides an important site for exploring representation and resistance to restrictive gender roles for young women. Both horror and Young Adult fiction are genres that have received little critical attention. Through an analysis of gender in representative texts, this dissertation will demonstrate that both genres merit critical analysis, and that Young Adult horror fiction in particular deserves feminist scholarly inquiry because it uniquely explores the process by which teen girls become gendered subjects.

The form of the monstrous Other in Young Adult horror fiction does not simply reproduce sexist ideas about women. Rather, Young Adult horror fiction uses the tropes horror to deconstruct sexist ideas about women's supposed essential nature which have been used to justify feminine subordination. In this way, Young Adult horror fiction differs from mainstream horror fiction, which is as likely to affirm sexist ideas about women (as well as racist ideas about non-whites) as it is to challenge these ideas.

Horror fiction can be defined as work "that contains a monster of some type and . . . often [though not always] has the effect of scaring the reader" (Fonseca and Pulliam 3) and may contain supernatural elements such as ghosts, vampires, werewolves or characters with magical powers. The Horror Writers Association defines horror as having only one true requirement: "that it elicit an emotional reaction that provokes some aspect of fear or dread" ("Horror Writers Association"). In *Horror Fiction: An Introduction*, Gina Wisker defines the genre as embodying "what is paradoxically both desired and feared, dramatizing that which is normally unthinkable, unnameable, indefinable, and repressed" (8). Horror fiction has its roots in the gothic, which dates back to 1674 with the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*.¹ In my study of Young Adult horror fiction and gender, I examine works whose female protagonists have supernatural abilities. These abilities are horrifying because they dramatize what is normally "unthinkable, unnameable, indefinable, and repressed."

A defining quality of the horror genre has been its emphasis on difference, specifically sexual difference. For example, the werewolf as a type of monster is masculine in that the creature's hirsutism and appetites for sex, food and violence are all extreme versions of normative masculinity. The witch as type of monster, on the other hand, is feminine in that her connection to the natural world links her to some traits of stereotypical femininity. Also, most

¹ Horror fiction has its roots in the gothic, a type of fiction characterized by an atmosphere of mystery and terror. These elements are present in the first work of gothic fiction ever published, Horace Walpole's 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto*. The success of Walpole's novel spawned the publication of other works of gothic fiction including Ann Radcliff's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Gothic fiction would continue to be popular into the nineteenth century, when the work of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne would prefigure contemporary horror fiction (Fonseca and Pulliam 13). However, the horror genre with its pantheon of monsters would not emerge in its contemporary form until the 1930s, where it flourished in pulp magazines, film and horror comics. Universal Studios' horror films defined the images of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein monster, Bram Stoker's Count Dracula, the mummy (*The Mummy* 1932) and the werewolf (*The Werewolf of London* 1935). The figure of the zombie as a rotting corpse who lives beyond the grave that we are most familiar with emerged from the pulp magazines and horror comics. In the 1950s, writers such as Richard Matheson incorporated into horror elements of speculative fiction in works such *The Incredible Shrinking Man* and *I Am Legend*.

witches are represented as female. In his introduction to *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, Barry Keith Grant argues that horror film is always “preoccupied with issues of sexual difference and gender” (1). Grant views horror as a genre that is “useful in addressing dilemmas of difference” (9), particularly today, when “gender roles are being tested, challenged and redefined everywhere (11). Grant’s observations about the horror film also apply to the wider category of horror fiction, which includes films and graphic novels as well as literary texts. In horror, specific types of monsters are gendered, though the individual monsters may be male or female.

Young Adult literature is a much newer genre than horror fiction, emerging in the late 1960s or early 1970s.² Like horror fiction, Young Adult literature is broadly defined. Young Adult fiction is nearly always a type of *Bildungsroman* whose teen protagonists negotiate the familiar problems of adolescence in order to answer the question “Who am I and what am I going to do about it?” (Patty Campbell 485). Stories are most commonly related in the first-person by a protagonist who evolves “into a reliable narrator” (Nilsen and Donelson 27) after becoming more experienced. Because Young Adult fiction is concerned with development, it necessarily ponders the effects of power and subjectivity.³

Young Adult fiction, formerly termed adolescent literature⁴, grew out of both children’s literature and expanding psychological models of human development. The Victorians first envisioned childhood as a separate state of human development. At the beginning of the twentieth century, psychologist and educator G. Stanley Hall singled out adolescence as distinct from childhood and adulthood in his 1904 book *Adolescence: Its Psychology*. Yet institutional awareness of the literary needs of teens did not emerge until after World War II, when librarians began to discuss how to serve this group of patrons (*Cart Romance* 5). During this time, “there was no indigenous body of *young adult* literature,” so librarians “had to choose from among books published either for children or for adults” (*Cart Romance* 9). This situation persisted until 1948, when members of the American Library Association officially recognized that teens had no interest in reading children’s books. As a consequence, the American Library Association changed the name of their annual list of recommendations for this population to “Adult Books for Young People.” Selections on this annual list would be confined to adult titles until 1973 “when there would finally be a body of literature of sufficient size and literary

²In their textbook *Essentials of Young Adult Literature*, Carl M. Tomlinson and Carol Lynch-Brown point to the 1960s and 1970s as a time when “some of the early important works of young adult literature were published” (5). These works included S. E. Hinton’s *The Outsiders* (1967), Robert Lipsyte’s *The Contender* (1967), Paul Zindel’s *The Pigman* (1968) and *My Darling, My Hamburger* (1969), Judy Blume’s *Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret* (1970) and *Go Ask Alice* (1971), published anonymously by Beatrice Sparks.

³ In *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, Roberta Seelinger Trites says that the genre is not just concerned with intellectual growth, but with “what the adolescent has learned about power” (x) during the maturation process.

⁴ The term Young Adult emerged sometime in the 1960s when the term “adolescent” was perceived by teens as condescending and necessarily denoting immaturity. “Young people demanded to be heard and respected; they also demanded a literature that accurately reflected their lives. Publishers responded by creating the term ‘Young Adult’ and actively seeking writers who would address modern teen concerns” (Frey and Rollin 2).

significance, published specifically for adolescents, to warrant the inclusion of ‘young adult’ books” (Cart *Romance* 9). Librarian Michael Cart argues that Young Adult literature came of age in the mid 1990s as the volume of offerings in the genre and their quality increased exponentially (Cart “Michael Cart” 5).

Young Adult horror fiction exists at the intersection of these two genres. Young Adult horror fiction contains a monstrous Other and a teen protagonist (who are sometimes the same character) and explores issues that are of interest to teens such as sexuality and concerns about belonging. My survey of the genre reveals that the monstrous Other is nearly always a sympathetic character in Young Adult horror fiction. The reverse is true in horror fiction in general, which has its share of sympathetic monsters, but is still dominated by unsympathetic ones.⁵ Moreover, because many of these literary works are marketed by children’s publishers or children’s and Young Adult publishing imprints, Young Adult horror is generally not as gory or sexually explicit as mainstream horror can be. When a book is issued by a children’s publisher such as Candlewick Books, or under a Young Adult or children’s imprint such as Simon and Schuster’s Atheneum, Dell’s Delacourt Press, or Houghton Mifflin’s Graphia, it is marked as appropriate for this audience. Because Young Adult readers are not adults, those who purchase books for them such as librarians and bookstores are wary of complaints from parents about content they perceive as too “adult” for teens.⁶ As a consequence, publishers of children’s and Young Adult literature must consider two audiences when deciding what books to market.

Over the past two decades, horror has been the focus of scholarly attention, including publications by feminists who see value in the genre’s tropes. Gina Wisker’s *Horror Fiction: An Introduction* (2005), Mark Jancovich’s *Horror* (1992) and Noël Carroll’s *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990) are broad overviews of the genre. Studies of modern horror fiction include David J. Skal’s *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (1993), Tony Magistrale and Michael A. Morrison’s *A Dark Night’s Dreaming: Contemporary American Horror Fiction* (1996), James B. Twitchell’s *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror* (1985), Mark Jancovich’s *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s* (1996) and Thomas Fahy’s edited collection *The Philosophy of Horror* (2010). Examples of studies of horror by feminist critics include Barry Keith Grant’s anthology *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film* (1996), Carol J. Clover’s *Men, Women and Chain Saws* (1992), Rhona J. Berenstein’s *Attack of the Leading Ladies: Gender, Sexuality and Spectatorship in Classic Horror* (1995), Nina Auerbach’s *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1996), Isabel Pinedo’s *Recreational Terror* (1997), and

⁵ I am basing this assumption on material I have collected over the years while putting together *Hooked on Horror: A Guide to Reading Interests in the Genre*, Volumes 1-3. The volumes, which have been updated every four years, annotate approximately 1000 titles of horror in print that are owned by at least 50 libraries. My survey of the genre over the past 10 years demonstrates that while horror is full of many sympathetic monsters, many more are unsympathetic. Of course, I recognize that “sympathetic” and “unsympathetic” are potentially ambiguous terms, as one person’s sympathetic monster is another person’s malignant fiend. After all, even Patrick Bateman, the anti-hero of Bret Easton Ellis’s notorious novel *American Psycho* (1991), has qualities that can make him momentarily sympathetic. This trend, however, might be changing. Rick Yancey’s *The Monstrumologist*, a recent offering from Simon and Schuster’s children’s imprint BFYR (Books for Young Readers), contains descriptions that are as gory as those found in Thomas Harris’s *The Silence of the Lambs*. Perhaps the publishers believed that novel’s erudite neo-Victorian style would compensate for any graphic violence depicted in the novel.

Cynthia A. Freeland's *The Naked and the Undead: Evil and the Appeal of Horror* (2000). However, most of these studies, feminist and otherwise, are about horror film rather than horror literature.

The gothic, the genre that spawned horror, has received even more feminist critical attention, including Michelle Masse's *In the Name of Love: Women, Narcissism and the Gothic* (1992), William Patrick Day's *In the Circles of Fear and Desire* (1995), Joseph Andriano's *Our Ladies of Darkness* (1993), Eugenia C. DeLamotte's *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (1990), Diane Hoeveler's *Gothic Feminism* (1995) and Judith Halberstam's *Skin Shows: Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995). These texts provide valuable background for my feminist study of Young Adult horror literature since horror fiction is derived from the gothic, and gothic fiction deals "with women's fears of and confusion about masculine behavior in a world in which men learn to devalue women" (Modleski 60). However, none of these critics discuss Young Adult horror fiction.⁷ *Monstrous Bodies'* focus on the intersection between horror fiction and Young Adult fiction adds to the critical literature on both genres.

Young Adult literature has more recently become the subject of critical inquiry. Like horror fiction, Young Adult literature frequently suffers from an undeserved poor reputation among scholars and educators who view the genre as consisting of poorly written and formulaic texts for people who lack the literacy skills or taste to appreciate better quality "adult" literature. In their textbook *Essentials of Young Adult Literature*, Carl M. Tomlinson and Carol Lynch-Brown cite the negative perception of Young Adult literature frequently held by educators, who believe that only the "classics" are of any pedagogical value. Young Adult literature is frequently only begrudgingly incorporated into middle and high school curriculum for low to average ability students who are identified as "reluctant readers," or whose level of skill makes it difficult for them to read what others see as more challenging material (Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown 13). Sarah K. Herz and Donald R. Gallo explain that as middle and high school English teachers, they too initially had negative opinions of Young Adult literature, characterizing it as lurid and poorly written fiction whose only virtue was its ability to capture the attention of non-readers (Herz and Gallo 2). But Herz and Gallo had conversion experiences, which they document in *From Hinton to Hamlet*. Their students of all intellectual abilities soon taught them to appreciate Young Adult literature as something that could be worked into the curriculum in a number of ways. As a result, Herz and Gallo now realize that Young Adult literature can be extremely well-written and can "touch the hearts and minds of adolescents" (5) since it deals realistically with the problems they confront daily, and is narrated by characters close to themselves in age.

⁷ The first chapter of Carol J. Clover's *Men, Women and Chainsaws* examines gender in the slasher film, a genre whose works are sometimes called "teenie kill pics" because starting with John Carpenter's 1979 film *Halloween*, the slasher's victims went from being adults to adolescents. While Clover here does not describe the "teenie kill pic" as Young Adult fiction, I believe this subgenre of the slasher film is a type of Young Adult fiction because it contains teen protagonists who deal with the same themes of power and subjectivity that are central to the genre. So while Clover per se does not include a critical analysis of Young Adult horror fiction in *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, she is analyzing what I would describe as Young Adult texts.

Despite experiences such as Herz's and Gallo's, there are still relatively few book-length critical works written about Young Adult fiction, many fewer than there are about horror or gothic literature. Roberta Seelinger Trites' *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature* (2000) and Robyn McCallum's *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction: The Dialogic Construction of Subjectivity* (1999) are ground-breaking studies.⁸ And to date, only one book-length study has attempted to answer the question of why Young Adult fiction is an important area of inquiry for a feminist critic: Beth Younger's *Learning Curves: Body Image and Female Sexuality in Young Adult Fiction* (2009).⁹

Like *Learning Curves*, my dissertation also attempts to answer the question of why Young Adult fiction is an important area of inquiry for a feminist critic. However, while Younger's book focuses more broadly on Young Adult fiction, I confine myself to examining Young Adult horror fiction with female protagonists. The scope of my project is also broader in that I include film as well as novels in my analysis.

Roberta Seelinger Trites's *Disturbing the Universe* makes an important contribution to the study of Young Adult fiction in that it defines the genre as something more than coming-of-age narratives with adolescent characters. Trites sees the genre as one that necessarily explores issues of power and subjectivity. Adolescent characters in Young Adult fiction exist in what Foucault would describe as a "perpetual relationship of force" (Foucault *Power* 92) where the "institutions that constitute the social fabric" (Trites *Disturbing* 7) are constantly constructing their subjectivities. Thus, "much of the genre is . . . dedicated to depicting how potentially out of control adolescents can learn to exist within institutional structures" (Trites *Disturbing* 7) and the genre as a whole represents growth or maturation as "inevitably linked to what the adolescent has learned about power" (Trites *Disturbing* x).

While Trites' work is concerned with representations of power and subjectivity in Young Adult fiction, it is not primarily concerned with how gender affects this equation. In fact, gender has a profound effect on how the dynamics of power are represented in Young Adult fiction. Generally, male protagonists (white ones, anyway), will emerge from adolescence in these texts with adult senses of self that are grounded in the expectation that they will eventually have a great deal of autonomy. However, female protagonists face a more complicated situation. To develop similarly autonomous identities, young adult females must fight against cultural and institutional expectations which would deprive them of agency. Any simple efforts to move easily into the dominant culture thus falter, as girls confront the incompatibility between femininity and the "normal" course of adolescence. Only feminist analysis can fully explain the situation of Young Adult female characters. My dissertation explores how Young Adult horror

⁸ *The ALAN Review*, the journal of the National Council of Teachers of English's Assembly of Literature for Adolescents, publishes scholarly articles on Young Adult literature. However, children's literature receives much more scholarly attention, both as a broader category that encompasses Young Adult literature and as a distinct genre. Scholarly journals that regularly publish articles about Young Adult literature such as *The Lion and the Unicorn* and *The Children's Literature Quarterly* are not exclusively concerned with Young Adult literature.

⁹ While other book-length studies of Young Adult Fiction use feminist criticism to explore the genre, feminism does not constitute the authors' primary mode of inquiry.

fiction represents teen girls as struggling with institutional forces that attempt to coerce them into subordinate feminine subject positions.

For actual teen girls, the transition into adulthood is particularly difficult since the institutions that shape them into young women, such as the school, the family, organized religion and consumer culture, often accomplish this goal by limiting girls' mobility, silencing their voices and contorting their psyches. In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* described adolescence as the time when girls come to understand their relative lack of power in relation to boys. de Beauvoir's assessment of adolescent women still holds true: psychologist Mary Pipher observes that "girls are expected to sacrifice parts of themselves that our culture considers masculine on the altar of social acceptability and to shrink their souls down to a petite size" (39).

Other authors have recently documented the myriad ways in which teen girls are still expected to diminish themselves in order to "become women." In 1980, psychologist Carol Gilligan described how girls are encultured to value relationships over rules and are taught to be quiet and introspective (*In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* 1982). Gilligan built upon these ideas with Lyn Mikel Brown in *Meeting at the Crossroads* (1992), a book which illustrates how girls go from being confident and outspoken children to timid and silent adolescents. In the same year, the American Association of University Women published its report *How Schools Shortchange Girls* (1992), which documented how girls' self-esteem plummets during adolescence. Peggy Orenstein's ethnography *Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem and the Confidence Gap* (1994) reproduces the AAUP's findings about the oppression of teen and tween girls.

While Gilligan, Brown, Orenstein and the AAUP document how girls' self-esteem is diminished during adolescence, other authors focus on the cultural factors behind girls' plummeting self esteem. Joan Smith's *Different for Girls* (1997), for example, deconstructs media representations of female cultural figures, from Princess Diana to British serial killers Myra Hindley and Rosemary West. Lyn Mikel Brown's study *Girlfighting: Betrayal and Rejection among Girls* (2003) explores how relational violence hidden in girls' peer groups does the work of patriarchy by policing the borders of femininity in order to coerce girls into subordinate feminine subject positions. Joan Brumberg's *The Body Project: an Intimate History of American Girls* (1997) considers how over the past 150 years girls have been increasingly encouraged to focus on manipulating their physical appearance as the fundamental way of improving themselves. Like the girlfighting phenomena, the body project that Brumberg describes ratifies the interests of patriarchy by diverting girls' energy into obsessing over the minutia of their appearance, rather than cultivating skills that would make them strong and autonomous. Lynn Phillips's *Flirting with Danger: Young Women's Reflections on Sexuality and Domination* (2000) analyzes how popular magazines disseminate normative discourses of gender that perpetuate sexist stereotypes about men and women, sometimes while appearing to represent "post-feminist" and therefore liberated models of masculinity and femininity. In *Packaging Girlhood* (2006), Sharon Lamb and Lyn Mikel Brown consider how twenty-first century mass culture for girls similarly reproduces sexist stereotypes under the guise of promoting "girl power." And Catherine Driscoll's *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory* maps how girls experience themselves in relation to contemporary discourses of girlhood.

These studies of popular culture show how girls resist attempts to coerce them into subordination and how they are understandably angry about the limited role they are pressured to accept. Lyn Mikel Brown describes early adolescence as a time when girls “see the cultural framework, and girls’ and women’s subordinate place in it, for the first time. That their reaction to this awakening would be shock, sadness, anger, and a sense of betrayal is not surprising” (Brown *Raising* 16). More galling still is that girls are expected to disavow this very legitimate anger over their subordination. Brown observes that “since these strong feelings emerge just as girls move into the dominant culture, at the very moment when their anger is most disruptive to the social order, proponents of the status quo have much invested in covering or pushing these feelings out of public view.” (*Raising* 16). As Elizabeth Spelman argues,

the expression of anger is intimately tied to self-respect, to the capacity to realize and author one’s life fully. For this reason, women’s anger is often considered not only inappropriate but also an act of insubordination. (qtd. in Brown *Raising* 11).

As a result, reclaiming a lost voice is difficult for teen girls not only because we live in a sexist culture, but also because the institutional forces that oppress girls are invisible, or presented as natural, making it seem that the resulting subordination of girls is the product of an irresistible biological imperative rather than an effect of power which can be reversed.

The genre of horror presents the possibility for resistance to these seemingly untraceable institutional forces that oppress girls. The genre’s conventions permit it to reveal the genealogy of gender by exposing what is most disturbing about femininity to hegemonic culture. In *Recreational Terror*, Isabel Pinedo views horror as something that denaturalizes “the repressed by transmuting the ‘natural’ elements of everyday life into the unnatural form of the monster . . . [rendering] the terrors of everyday life at least emotionally accessible” (39) in a way similar to dreams, which “are unconscious attempts to express conflicts and resolve tensions” (Pinedo 40). Similarly, Barbara Creed sees horror as a process by which we can purify the abject and so redraw the boundaries between the ego and what threatens it (“Horror”). Creed interprets Julia Kristeva’s theory of the abject in *The Powers of Horror* as descriptive in that it attempts “to explain the origins of patriarchal culture” (“Horror” 47). As an art form, horror permits the viewer/reader to deconstruct and redraw the binary boundaries that perpetuate subjectivity. In this way art does what was historically the province of religion: it purifies the abject through a “descent into the foundations of the symbolic construct” (Kristeva qtd. in Creed “Horror” 46). For Creed, the purification of the abject is the central project of the horror film:

the horror film brings about a confrontation with the abject . . . in order, finally, to eject the abject and redraw the boundaries between the human and nonhuman. As a form of modern defilement rite, the horror film works to separate out the symbolic order from all that threatens its stability, particularly the mother and all that her universe signifies. (“Horror” 46)

Pinedo's and Creed's observations about horror film also pertain to Young Adult horror fiction. Horror as a genre of cinematic and literary texts "redraws the boundaries between the human and non-human" (Creed "Horror" 46). Yet this redrawing of the boundaries does more than merely perpetuate the structures of patriarchal culture. The process itself exposes these boundaries as constructed rather than natural, suggesting the possibility of resistance.

Horror redraws the boundaries between the abject and the subject, between human and nonhuman, through the figure of the monster, a type of Other and a double. Teen girls have first-hand experience with the Other: in a patriarchal culture, they *are* the Other, even when they successfully contort themselves into the prison house of normative femininity. The Other in its various forms is always a double. Robyn McCallum sees the figure of the double as useful in revealing how subjectivity is constructed dialogically. Because "an individual's identity is formed in dialogue with others and with social discourses, ideologies and practices," we "can never see ourselves directly." Instead, "we construct a sense of ourselves by appropriating the position of the other, outside the self. This means that subjectivity is grounded in an internal fragmentation and multiplicity" (McCallum "Other Selves" 17-18). It is fairly easy to understand the monstrous Other as double in Young Adult horror fiction since this character is nearly always sympathetic, and is frequently the protagonist.¹⁰ Thus, while the monstrous Other is represented as horrifying in the eyes of others, readers or viewers can identify with the monster and see how this creature is similar to themselves.

In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler argues that not just gender, but sex, is the result of disciplinary practices whose origins are rooted so deeply in the unconscious that they take on the appearance of nature. According to Butler, "gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*" and so it "ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow" (Butler *Gender* 140). The subsequent silencing of women is an effect of these stylized repetitions of acts by which gender and sex are naturalized. Because the genealogy of these acts is obscured, resistance to this silencing initially appears to be futile.

This double and monstrous Other also suggests possibilities for resistance because it is a reiteration of the original, but with a difference. Butler observes that "there is the potential for subversiveness in repetition, which has the potential to call into question the regulatory practice of identity itself" (Butler *Gender* 32). By way of example, Butler cites the ability of drag to destabilize the boundaries between male and female and expose the artificiality of sex. As a performative activity, drag reveals that "the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found precisely in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-formity, or a parodic repetition that exposes the phantasmic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction" (Butler *Gender* 141). Because "genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived," (Butler *Gender*

¹⁰ While the monster is always a sympathetic character in Young Adult horror fiction, the same cannot be said for the genre as a whole. Instead, the monster is often likely to be someone that the reader or viewer cannot possibly identify with as it is to be represented as someone whose anger is justified, or who is more sinned against than sinning and is so an object of pity.

141), their genealogy can be exposed through repetition which reveals that they are not natural and inevitable, but constructed and therefore open to reinterpretation.

If iterations of the monstrous feminine then can be understood as a purification of the abject that breaks down boundaries and calls their naturalness into question rather than reinforcing these boundaries, then horror is rife with subversive potential. Horror can thwart the ability of various institutional discourses about sex and gender to individualize and totalize subjects in order to more easily control them. Monsters were originally thought of as divine warnings: “the word ‘monster’ derives from the Latin *monstere*, meaning ‘to show’” (Fonseca and Pulliam 155). In horror fiction, the monstrous Other reveals that gender, and even sex, are constructed categories rather than immutable biological truths. This revelation is powerful because what can be done can also be undone. In *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler muses that rather than laboring to discover *what we are*, we should *refuse* what we are, a condition that is the result of how we have been individualized and totalized by the institutional discourses that enact our subjectivities. Instead, “we have to promote new forms of subjectivity thorough the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries” (Butler *Psychic* 101). The monstrous Other then points to ways we can “refuse what we are.”

My dissertation examines horror fiction populated by teen female characters with supernatural abilities. The texts I examine are feminist¹¹ because the main character transcends conventional gender roles while “embrac[ing] and celebrat[ing] certain characteristics traditionally linked to femininity” (Trites *Waking* 4-5). In other cases, I examine texts in which the main character’s experiences demonstrate the devastating consequences for women characters who are unwilling or unable to transcend conventional gender roles. This exposure of the devastating cost of traditional femininity draws on horror’s unique ability to highlight certain oppressive features of conventional femininity.

Because Butler sees both sex and gender as constructed through subjectivity, I pay particular attention to how each protagonist’s body is the site of her struggle against being relegated to a confining gender role. Many feminist theorists have observed how control of the body is at the center of women’s oppression. These theorists are particularly indebted to Foucault’s genealogical works such as *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* to describe how the regulation of the body through various disciplinary techniques produces subjects. Lois McNay, for example, sees Foucault’s theories of power and the body as useful to feminists for “placing a notion of the body at the center of explanations of women’s oppression that does not fall back into essentialism or biologism” (11). For these reasons, I too will rely on feminist interpretations of Foucault to explore subjectivity and gender in Young Adult horror fiction.

The definitions of Young Adult literature and horror fiction that I will be using in this study are based on critical traditions and marketing categories. In *Disturbing the Universe*, Trites defines Young Adult literature as fiction “with adolescent protagonists who strive to understand their own power by struggling with the various institutions in their lives” (8). This is the definition I employ to describe Young Adult fiction. My definition of horror fiction builds

¹¹ Most of the texts I examine fall within the parameters of Trites’ definition of a feminist children’s novel found in her book *Waking Sleeping Beauty: Feminist Voices in Children’s Novels*. This definition can also apply to Young Adult fiction, as children’s literature is an umbrella term that includes Young Adult fiction.

upon Kristeva's idea of the abject in *Powers of Horror*. Horror always includes a monstrous Other whose existence precipitates a redrawing of the boundaries between human and monster, ego and abject (Creed "Horror"). My definition of horror is as expansive as my definition of Young Adult fiction, allowing the inclusion in my survey of works of dark fantasy, contemporary gothic fiction and paranormal romance with substantial horror elements. After all, dark fantasy, paranormal romance and horror fiction are all born of the much older gothic tradition.¹²

Because the purpose of this study is to examine femininity and agency in this type of fiction, I have selected for inclusion horror texts containing female protagonists with supernatural powers or paranormal experiences, features common to many Young Adult works of horror. These texts show female characters at their most monstrous and powerful. Also, the protagonists in the texts I examine are all white, and the majority of them are middle class as well. While both Young Adult fiction and horror fiction deal with identity politics and anxieties about racial difference, Young Adult horror fiction to date is still populated exclusively by white protagonists.¹³

Finally, my study includes cinematic as well as literary works of Young Adult horror, as film is a central medium of the horror genre. In fact, in some subgenres of horror fiction such as the werewolf narrative, contemporary representations of the creature are derived equally from literary and filmic texts. More recent and expansive definitions of Young Adult fiction such as the one put forth by the Young Adult Library Services Association view the genre as one that is not limited to literary texts, but includes films marketed to adolescents with adolescent protagonists who deal with issues of growth and maturity (Cart).

My dissertation fills a scholarly void, as to date no one in the humanities has published a full-length critical study of Young Adult horror fiction. Studies of Young Adult horror have been done primarily by people in library science who are focusing on creating annotated bibliographies of available works for school and public librarians seeking collection development advice. Some examples of these studies include Cosette N. Kies' *Presenting Young Adult Horror Fiction* and Wayne Sawyer's broader reader's guide, *Access to Books 3: History*,

¹² Dark fantasy is loosely defined as fiction with supernatural elements where the overall effect is particularly frightening. Paranormal romance is romance fiction with paranormal elements such as the presence of magic or vampire or ghosts as characters. The paranormal elements in paranormal romance can also produce an overall frightening effect. Contemporary gothic fiction is loosely defined as a type of fiction characterized by mystery and terror.

¹³ While Young Adult horror is populated exclusively by white protagonists, this is not the case for adult horror fiction over the past 50 years. Some more notable non-white protagonists include Ben in George Romero's 1968 film *Night of the Living Dead* and the revenging revenant Candyman in Bernard Rose's 1992 film of the same name. Horror writers have been predominately white as well until the 1990s. Some better known African-American writers of contemporary horror fiction include Tananarive Due and Brandon Massey, who use the tropes of horror to write about racism. Of course, non-white authors often write about horrific themes and include supernatural elements in their work. However, their work is more accurately characterized as magical realism rather than horror as these supernatural elements are experienced by characters as a normal if disturbing part of the world rather than as something so outside of everyday experience that it must be eradicated.

Being Australian, Mystery, Crime, Spies, Adventure, Horror and the Supernatural.¹⁴ Two books by Scarecrow Press analyze the work of R. L. Stine¹⁵ and Caroline Cooney¹⁶, well-known writers of juvenile horror and thrillers, but these books, part of the Twayne Authors series, are also written primarily for librarians. While these studies contain some critical analysis of the authors' works, they are mainly concerned with familiarizing librarians with the particular writer's oeuvre and explaining its appeal to readers rather than doing the type of full scale explication more characteristic of literary scholarship. Furthermore, the authors of these studies nearly always take on the role of apologist for the genre, anticipating hostilities from parents, citizens, and even fellow librarians to genre-fiction as a whole and to horror fiction specifically, which has been vilified as a literature pandering to prurient interests in violence and gore.¹⁷

The only critical studies of Young Adult horror fiction are Rebecca Housel and J. Jeremy Wisenewski's anthology *Twilight and Philosophy*, a collection of brief essays about Meyer's vampire saga; an unpublished thesis about young adult horror fiction in general (*The Horror, The Horror: Young Adult Horror Fiction*, Stephanie Webb); an unpublished thesis about family dysfunction in Young Adult horror fiction (*Familial Dysfunction in Young Adult Horror Fiction*, Robert W. Lambert); and an unpublished dissertation about vampire fiction in adolescent literature (*The Evolution of the Vampire in Adolescent Fiction*, Gael Grossman) Thus, my research fills several gaps in the study of horror, Young Adult literature, and gender. Elaine J. O'Quinn touches upon Young Adult vampire fiction in her article "Vampires, Changelings and Radical Mutant Teens: What the Demons, Freaks and Other Abominations of Young Adult Literature Can Teach Us about Youth." However, O'Quinn's brief study is not concerned exclusively with horror fiction—it equally examines the related genre of fantasy.

This lack of critical attention to Young Adult horror fiction is unfortunate as it is a growing subgenre, and as Amy Luedtke points out in 2006 in two articles in *School Library Journal*, horror is extremely popular with teens. *The Monster Librarian*, a readers' advisory website focusing horror fiction, is further evidence of the genre's popularity among adolescents: part of *The Monster Librarian's* website is devoted to reviewing Young Adult horror fiction.

¹⁴ Shorter of studies of Young Adult horror fiction include "The Brood of Frankenstein: Great Literature? Maybe Not, but Teens Love Horror" and "Thrills and Chills," Amy Luedtke et. al; "Changelings and Radical Mutant Teens: Boundary Pushing In Adolescent Literature," Mark Vogel; "Things That Go Bump in the Night: Recent Developments in Horror Fiction for Young Adults," Lisa Christenbury; "Have No Fear: Scary Stories for the Middle Grades," Patrick Jones; "New Blood for Young Readers," Audrey Eaglen; and "Ghost Stories," Josephine Raburn.

¹⁵ Jones, Patrick. *What's so Scary about R. L. Stein?* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998.

¹⁶ Carroll, Pamela S. *Caroline Cooney: Faith and Fiction*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001.

¹⁷ In *What's So Scary About R. L. Stine?* Patrick Jones particularly takes on the role of apologist for horror fiction in general and R. L. Stine specifically. His overview of Stine's work is full of references to book review critics, parents, librarians, and teachers who characterize Stine's Young Adult horror novels as at best trash reading that is poorly written, and at worst, as how-to manuals for future serial killers.

My dissertation is divided into three chapters, each examining a different subgenre of Young Adult horror including the ghost story, the werewolf narrative, and stories about witches. I consider each type of monstrous Other in ascending order of how it represents teen girls negotiating subjectivities in which they are increasingly empowered.

I have divided the chapters by subgenres of horror because each category such as werewolf fiction and the ghost story has its own type of monstrous Other. By organizing each chapter around specific types of monstrous Others, I can evaluate common themes in this particular subgenre of fiction. Furthermore, though most monstrous Others can be either sex, our common idea of each is usually gendered. For example, the werewolf is generally thought of as an extreme version of normative masculinity, whereas the witch embodies negative qualities associated with women and femininity. As a result, in every chapter I examine how representations of each particular monstrous Other in Young Adult fiction with female protagonists either reproduces or inverts the more usual gendered representations of them.

I selected these three subgenres of horror fiction after making a broader survey of works of literature and film that can be defined as both Young Adult fiction and horror fiction. That investigation revealed the prevalence of three subgenres of horror in Young Adult fiction with female protagonists: the ghost story, the werewolf narrative and stories about witches. While there are a number of Young Adult vampire novels with female protagonists, I have not included this subgenre in my study as these texts are overwhelmingly paranormal romance rather than horror. For example, while Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Saga* has horrific elements, it is primarily a work of paranormal romance in that its main focus is the courtship of the mortal Bella and the vampire Edward. Furthermore, these novels often lack female protagonists who are either monsters with supernatural abilities of their own or are sufficiently affected by the work's supernatural characters that they too become monstrous. For most of the *Twilight Saga*, for example, Bella does not have any supernatural powers. Furthermore, her relationship with Edward does not make her monstrous in the same way that the haunted girl is made monstrous through the spirit who possesses her.

Finally, I have organized my chapters in ascending order of how each type of monster represents teen girls as negotiating subjectivities in which they are increasingly empowered. The girls in Chapter 1 who are haunted by spirits appear to outsiders as unproblematic models of white, middle class femininity. Each girl has repressed feelings and behaviors that are incompatible with conventional femininity. As result, she can be more easily manipulated by others. The ghost returns to the girl it haunts what she has repressed, which permits her to become a strong and autonomous woman. However, the ghost is able to help the haunted girl reincorporate the repressed in such a way that the change to her is not immediately obvious to those who at present still have the right to control her. In this way, the ghost enables the haunted girl to nurture her strengths in stealth to avoid being punished for stepping outside of her proscribed gender role. In Chapter 2, I examine teen female werewolves whose lycanthropy makes them unable to appear conventionally feminine. Instead of being smooth, weak, silent, and asexual, the teen female werewolf is hairy, strong and able to express her anger and sexual desire. In this way, she is more empowered than the haunted girls of Chapter 1, but she also must fear serious repercussions for not being both normatively feminine and normatively human. Chapter 3 investigates the figure of the teen witch whose epistemological perspective is more threatening than her body or even her magical powers. Because the teen witch

understands that all knowledge is constructed and the knower is an intimate part of the known, she is able to challenge patriarchal authority and encourage other women to do likewise.

Chapter 1— Subversive Spirits: Resistance and the Uncanny in the Young Adult Ghost Story

In Chapter 1, I examine narratives with haunted protagonists through the lens of Sigmund Freud's essay "The Uncanny," applying his idea of the *unheimlich* to explore how the ghost is more than a dead or missing person. Instead, it is a "seething presence . . . that draws us affectively . . . into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition" (Gordon 7). For teen girls, these seething absences are quite literally the spirit of everything that they must repress in order to maintain an acceptable posture of adolescent femininity. In horror, haunting is experienced by disproportionately more women than men, which is not surprising since, as Ann Braude points out, haunting is a fundamentally feminine experience in that it mimics pregnancy: the haunted individual is a vessel or conduit for another entity. Braude's study of the American Spiritualist Movement examines how spirit mediums, who were usually female, could express what would be otherwise unacceptable sentiments while simultaneously conforming to prevailing ideas of femininity because the "ghost," rather than the medium, was the one doing the talking. The haunted female character in Young Adult ghost stories similarly occupies the subject position of the medium. Moreover, the experience of being a medium is different from the experience of full-blown possession in part because unlike pregnancy, being a conduit for the spirit world does not visibly transform the body. Instead, the haunted girl exemplifies Butler's ideas about performativity and gender—she is a sort of drag queen whose body is the picture of compliant womanhood, whereas the "spirit" who uses her body to speak is the antithesis of this quality.

What the ghost permits the haunted protagonist to articulate is also important. In the works I examine, both male and female ghosts encourage their hosts to reclaim their silenced voices. Ghosts in Nina Kiriki Hoffman's *A Stir of Bones*, Laura Whitcomb's *A Certain Slant of Light* and Phyllis Naylor Reynolds' *Jade Green* assist their hosts in surviving emotional and sexual abuse. And the post-feminist haunted girl in Kathryn Reiss' *Dreadful Sorry* is taught by her ghost to appreciate the freedoms won for her by her feminist foremothers. In this manner, the protagonists have relationships with their ghosts that are not very different from the relationship between spirit and medium as espoused by Spiritualism. Braude argues that it is no coincidence that American first-wave feminism and the American Spiritualist Movement were born in the same year (1848) and the same area in New York State. Spiritualism had a special affinity with women's rights. The movement was anti-hierarchical, insisting that individuals could come to know the truth through their contact with spirits, and while all women's rights advocates were not Spiritualists, all Spiritualists advocated women's equality. And in a time when the ideology of separate spheres discouraged women from speaking publically, mediumship gave women a voice which as the century wore on, increasingly became their own rather than the channeled opinions of a spirit. What Spiritualism did to promote women's rights and to give women the confidence to speak publically, the ghost does for its host in Young Adult horror fiction.

In this chapter, I only examine novels about haunted teen girls. While there are many literary and cinematic ghost stories, there are none with haunted female protagonist that could be considered Young Adult fiction.

Chapter 2— Blood and Bitches: Sexual Politics and the Female Lycanthrope in Young Adult Fiction

In Chapter 2, I examine narratives of lycanthropy where the protagonist's body is visibly endowed with supernatural powers, making it into a site of signification in a patriarchal society, expressing (often against the protagonist's will) feelings not appropriate to her age and sex. The teenaged female werewolf represents a liberated female sexuality that is often at odds with hegemonic culture because it visibly erupts the boundaries of normative femininity. Unlike the haunted protagonists in Chapter 1, the teenaged female werewolf has difficulty maintaining an acceptable pose of femininity because her budding lupine body will not permit her to groom it into culturally sanctioned boundaries: it sprouts hair in "unacceptable" places, and it is subject to "unfeminine" appetites for sex and meat. Instead, the werewolf's supernatural abilities are symptoms of that which must be disavowed as abject in order to maintain this pose. Because the werewolf has two forms, human and wolf, the protagonist maintains a hold in both worlds, one the domain of her own inclinations, the other the domain of hegemonic culture.

The works I examine in this chapter include the films *Ginger Snaps* and *Blood Moon*, and the novels *Blood and Chocolate* (Annette Curtis Klause) and *The Bleeding* (Patricia Windsor). The visual medium of film enables *Ginger Snaps* and *Blood Moon* to more fully explore how adolescent girls are pressured to meet impossible standards of beauty. In *Ginger Snaps*, the werewolf's bite transforms Ginger Fitzgerald from an outsider Goth girl who scorns normative femininity to a teen femme fatale killing those who anger her. In *Blood Moon*, Tara the Wolf Girl is afflicted with an extreme form of hirsutism that covers her body in silky fur, relegating her to living with a traveling freak show. Because she longs to be conventionally feminine, Tara embarks on a series of experimental depilatory treatments that change her into a smooth-skinned beauty who is more vicious than the animal she supposedly resembled before her transformation. Ginger's and Tara's enhanced bodies momentarily give them more agency than they previously had available to them. Yet eventually, both girls' changeable bodies are so out of control that they must be contained: Ginger is "put to sleep" for the greater good, whereas Tara wanders the landscape as a beautiful and dangerous predatory animal that will presumably be killed once her nature is discovered. Moreover, because *Ginger Snaps* and *Blood Moon* are films rather than literary works, Ginger and Tara are also contained within the male gaze of the medium.

Yet the teen female werewolf, with her threatening, mutable body, is not as easily contained in literary representations of her. Similar to Ginger and Tara, Maris in *The Bleeding* and Vivian in *Blood and Chocolate* have more agency than their human sisters, and their changeable bodies are also perceived by humans as threatening. Yet Maris and Vivian are able to survive into adulthood and pass among humans because of their hybridity. Similar to the haunted girls in Chapter 1, both Maris and Vivian understand the consequences of defying cultural norms. In fact, the consequences of defying these norms would be far worse for Maris or Vivian than for any of the haunted girls. While misbehavior on the part of the haunted girls

might get them institutionalized, Maris and Vivian, with their shapeshifting bodies that defy multiple categories of normality, might be killed for their failure to conform. As werewolves, however, Maris and Vivian are able to develop strategies for resistance that allow them to survive. Each girl is not so much an animal in drag in human skin, but instead, a combination of both animal and human that gives her the strength to resist subordination and the protective coloring to avoid getting her killed by calling attention to her defiance.

Chapter 3— “An Ye Harm None, Do as Ye Will”: Magic, Gender and Agency in Young Adult Narratives of Witchcraft

Like the werewolf protagonists of Chapter 2, the teen witches in this chapter have supernatural abilities that cause their bodies to visibly erupt from their culturally proscribed borders. However, the teen witch is different from her lupine sisters because she is at peace with her body and its abilities, even as it unsettles those around her. In fact, her body and her attitudes towards it often provoke what Lyn Mikel Brown terms girlfighting. While girls are pressured from an early age to adhere to a rigid gender script of acceptable femininity, more popular female peers are the ones charged with policing these borders. To that end, they engage in girlfighting, the bitchy, backbiting behavior so often believed to be ingrained in women. The ultimate goal of girlfighting is to win the competition for that limited resource, male attention. Through girlfighting, girls attempt to demonstrate through comparison how they are more pleasingly feminine than their peers, and so should be rewarded with male attention. In a patriarchal culture, this male attention is important for girls because it will ultimately give them access to resources controlled by men such as money, protection and status. On the losing end of girlfighting is the girl often labeled by her female peers as “bitch” or “slut.” These designations demonstrate to what degree she is not acceptably feminine and so should be subjected to scorn and social isolation. In short, the girls on the losing end of girlfighting are denied the limited agency that male attention might give them in a patriarchal culture. The teen witch is always the girl on the losing end of girlfighting encounters, and she is rendered even more threatening to society because she openly defies cultural conventions of femininity that would deprive her of agency. Ultimately the teen witch is persecuted both by peers and adults more because of this defiance than due to her magical ability.

The joy the witch takes in her body and its unique abilities are represented in horror as both frightening and thrillingly magical. However, the most powerful aspect of the teen witch is not her alluring body or ability to cast spells, but her epistemological perspective. The teen witch goes from being what Mary Belenky and her coauthors in *Women’s Ways of Knowing* describe as a received knower who perceives all authority as residing outside of the self to a constructivist who understands that “all knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known (Belenky 137). Women’s emerging constructivist perspective is particularly threatening to patriarchal order. Conventional femininity is predicated on women’s subordination, which is most easily achieved by keeping women in the received knowledge phase of development in which they dismiss their own insights in deference to the authority of others. Constructivism, on the other hand, is incompatible with normative femininity because it is an epistemological position from which one questions external authority.

For the teen witch, the transformation to constructivism is about more than forming her point of view in dialogue with other knowledgeable sources. It is about rejecting a hierarchal power structure that permits, among other things, the control of women by men. Belenky and her coauthors observe that constructivist women “insist on a respectful consideration of the particulars of everyone’s needs and frailties, even if that means delaying making decisions or taking action” (149). In this way, constructivism could be described as a distinctly feminine way of understanding the world in that the knower values multiplicity. The teen witch similarly sees the world in a way that considers the particulars of everyone’s needs and frailties and does not use her abilities to uniformly impose her will on others. The witch is subversive of patriarchy then, not because she can help other women procure abortions, see into the future, or affect the course of events with her spells, but instead, because her way of seeing the world enables her to refuse the subordinate position she is being groomed for by rejecting a hierarchal concept of knowledge. And the teen witch’s example is dangerously subversive in that it can encourage other women to similarly reject a hierarchal concept of knowledge and thereby reject their own subordinate positions.

In this chapter, I examine Libba Bray’s Gemma Doyle Trilogy, Andrew Fleming’s film *The Craft*, Julie Hearn’s *The Minister’s Daughter*, and Celia Rees’s Witch Child series. I have included series in this chapter because of this format’s prevalence in narratives about witches and wizards.¹⁸ The Gemma Doyle Trilogy, *Witch Child* from The Witch Child Series and *The Minister’s Daughter* are all historical novels, set in Victorian England, Puritan England, and Puritan New England respectively, while *The Craft* is set in the contemporary United States. Witches are similar to lycanthropes in how their supernatural powers invite harassment from others. However, witches ultimately have more agency in that they refuse to permit others to coerce them into a subordinate subjectivity.

My dissertation contributes to the study of feminist theory, Young Adult fiction, and popular culture, an area that neglected by critics. While people in library science have examined Young Adult horror fiction, their studies have been anecdotal surveys of the material based on word of mouth and personal experience since sources such as *Books in Print* and even amazon.com do not consistently identify this type of fiction. These writers’ studies are written to help readers’ advisors, public and school librarians who need to know more about the field in order to stock their shelves, and sometimes to justify their purchases of what can be seen by administrators and parents group as questionable works. To date, no one has done a *critical* study of Young Adult horror fiction, let alone examined female protagonists who can often be considered monsters due to their supernatural abilities. Furthermore, studies of horror fiction in general are overwhelmingly about gothic fiction or horror *film*, with some notable studies of various types of monsters such as the vampire (Nina Auerbach’s *Our Vampires, Ourselves* and Chantal du Coudray’s *The Curse of the Werewolf*, for example). My study continues in this tradition, examining how horror created primarily for adolescents illustrates the difficulties inherent in growing up female in a patriarchal culture while exploring possibilities for resistance.

The tropes of horror express how teen girls feel in a culture where women are still considered radically Other. More than realistic fiction, Young Adult horror fiction allows a

¹⁸ No comparable series exists depicting teen werewolves or adolescent haunted girls.

coded exploration of issues of gender, sexuality and agency. This coded exploration is particularly important for teen readers who do not have sufficient experience to be able to describe the incongruity between their own feelings and pressures to be “normal” girls in the way represented through contemporary discourses of gender. In his book *The Uses of Enchantment and Magic*, psychologist Bruno Bettelheim sees the unrealistic nature of fairy tales as an important literary device in that it makes obvious that the story’s concern is not useful information about the external world, but the inner processes taking place within an individual” (25). In this way, the fairy tale permits the reader to find her own solutions within the story. Bettelheim’s observation about the value of unrealistic literature can also be applied to horror fiction. The figure of the monstrous female Other, with its supernatural abilities, similarly enable the reader to resolve the incongruity between “what she is” and “what she ought to be,” as represented to her by her culture. The monster, like the drag king or queen, is an iteration with a difference, and that difference calls into question the naturalness of gender, and even biological sex.

Chapter 1

Subversive Spirits: Resistance and the Uncanny in the Young Adult Ghost Story

The figure of the ghost is ancient and common to most cultures: a disembodied spirit of someone who has died but who is unwilling or unable to quit this world completely because it has unfinished business. In this way, the ghost is a “liminal figure” who crosses fundamental boundaries, “between worlds, or between life and death” (Price 466). Yet the ghost is characterized by its relationship with the living as much as by what it is. A ghost does not truly “exist” unless it haunts someone.¹⁹ Instead, it passes among the living because it has unfinished business in our world. The ghost might be unable to rest in its grave because it must first right a wrong, as is the case with Hamlet’s father, or it is compelled to stop the subject of its haunting from committing a grave error, as the ghost of Jacob Marley must do to Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*. Or perhaps it does not fully understand that it is dead, as is the case with the wraiths that Cole Sear glimpses in M. Night Shyamalan’s film *The Sixth Sense* (1999) or the ghosts in Alejandro Amenábar’s film *The Others* (2001). Nevertheless, the ghost cannot complete its unfinished business alone: it requires the assistance of the human it haunts. Therefore, ghost stories are as much about those who are haunted and who bear witness to the ghost’s presence as they are about the ghost itself.

In this chapter, I examine four Young Adult ghost stories with female teen characters who are haunted in a variety of ways, ranging from communicating with wraiths to having their consciousness or their bodies possessed by a disembodied spirit. In each novel, the haunted character appears to the outside world as an unproblematic model of white, middle-class adolescent girlhood. However, the ghost’s activities reveal to the reader the difficulties of being a young, white female in various times and places.

While stories of ghosts are estimated to be as old as human civilization²⁰, the ghost story emerged as a distinctive genre in the mid-nineteenth century, evolving from the Gothic novel of the late eighteenth century. It enjoyed wide popularity in the nineteenth century, and even beyond the late Victorian and Edwardian period, if one takes into account the work of women authors of ghost stories whose writings had wide audiences, but have received scant critical attention (Carpenter and Kolmar 6). The idea of the ghost, as well as ghost stories, continue to be popular today, with the 1970s and 1980s not only witnessing “the resurgence of ghosts in popular genres such as in film and television, but the reentry of the supernatural into mainstream literature” (Carpenter and Kolmar 9-10) such as Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987) or

¹⁹ The figure of the ghost should not be confused with the haunted house. While a ghost may occupy a house where it haunts the inhabitants, a haunted house does not have to contain a wraith. Rather, “haunted houses are a sort of architectural version of abused children who lash out at the world, as in Shirley Jackson’s novel *The Haunting of Hill House*. Hill House is not haunted by any particular ghost; it is simply ‘evil’ because of the way it was built by the twisted, puritanical man who erected it.” (Fonseca and Pulliam 20).

²⁰ Melissa Mia Hall surmises that the figure of the ghost might be nearly as old as human civilization, citing as evidence an image in a cave painting in Lascaux in the Dordogne region of France. The painting depicts “in dark brown dissolving into white” a “ghostly horse [that] appears to be vanishing or materializing in the midst of an animal stampede.” Hall believes that this image might constitute “the first written record of a ghost story” (218)

Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976). This popularity continues into the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, with mainstream blockbuster films such as *The Sixth Sense* (1999), television shows such as *Medium* (2005), and the proliferation of romance and detective fiction containing ghosts.

Not surprisingly, ghost stories authored by women have different thematic concerns than those written by men. In *Haunting the House of Fiction*, Lynette Carpenter and Wendy Kolmar argue that while ghost stories authored by male writers perceive the world as dualistic, "defined by 'debates' between reason and unreason, science and spirituality, conscious and unconscious, or natural and supernatural" (11), ghost stories written by women "portray natural and supernatural experience along a continuum. Boundaries between the two are not absolute, but fluid, so that the supernatural can be accepted, connected with, reclaimed, and can often possess a quality of familiarity" (12). Perhaps this tendency can be traced to what Katherine Lundie observes about nineteenth century ghost stories authored by American women, that they "revolve very much around a female world" (1). Carpenter and Kolmar come to a similar conclusion, noting that generally, female writers of ghost stories "are the literary inheritors of key thematic concerns that come to them from substantially female genres, particularly the Gothic," from which "they inherited a series of themes and images—of women victimized by violence in their own homes, of women dispossessed of homes and property, of the necessity of understanding female history, and of the bonds between women, living and dead, which help to ensure women's survival" (10).

Many of the thematic concerns of the gothic are central to Young Adult ghost stories written by women, in texts where girls are nearly always subject to violence in the home. This violence, however, is represented as overregulation rather than physical abuse. In addition, girls in these stories are particularly vulnerable since they are frequently either orphans with no one to protect them, or are mothered by women who are themselves too brutalized to stand up for their daughters. Many of these narratives are also concerned with the importance of bonds between women, living and dead.

The tropes of ghost stories written by women illuminate adolescent girls' struggles against restrictive gender roles. The Young Adult ghost story in which a teen girl is the object of haunting differs from the ghost story in general in its emphasis on the painful process by which this haunted girl becomes a woman. The ghost is the uncanny representation of feelings that have been repressed by the haunted girl. In the Young Adult ghost story, the wraith evokes characteristics that the haunted female character must repress in order to be traditionally feminine. Before the narrative begins, this protagonist has already been transformed from a girl with the potential of becoming a strong and capable woman, to one easily manipulated by men. Ripe for victimization because she has maintained a traditional feminine subject position, the haunted female character exemplifies feminine subordination. But with the ghost's assistance, this character also resists subordination and exposes the dangers of traditional femininity for young women.

Typically, the haunted female character of the Young Adult ghost story is middle-class and white, perhaps because white middle-class girls are expected to be quieter and more controlled than their working class and non-white counterparts, resulting in their feeling "trapped in their own goodness and perfection" (*Raising Brown* 95) when they manage to successfully embody this ideal of femininity. Even their anger must be disavowed. Lyn Mikel

Brown's research about the politics of girls' anger reveals that white middle-class girls find it "transgressive to even speak their justified anger directly and publicly" (*Raising* 94). In this way, white middle-class girls moving into the dominant social construction of femininity are deprived of their voices.

Reclaiming this lost voice and the agency that comes with it are difficult for adolescent girls not only because they live in a sexist culture, but because the institutional forces that have contorted them into their uncomfortable feminine subject positions are invisible. As a result, their subject positions are often presented as the product of an irresistible biological imperative, rather than an effect of power which can be resisted—and potentially reversed.

But of course the repressed does not disappear; it seethes beneath the surface waiting for an opportunity to emerge. In the Young Adult ghost story, the repressed resurfaces in the unfamiliar figure of the ghost. Sigmund Freud understands the figure of the ghost as the embodiment of the uncanny, something "that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed" (147-48) and that returns in a disturbing and not wholly familiar form. As the embodiment of all which is repressed, the ghost can enable the haunted protagonist to resist her dangerous subordinate subject position by reclaiming her silenced voice. The ghost does this through reacquainting the girl it haunts with the repressed knowledge that will empower her to resist. In this way, the ghost is also her ally.

In the Young Adult novels that I examine, through the ghost's intervention, the haunted female recovers the repressed or disavowed knowledge she needs—and it saves her life—metaphorically in some instances and literally in others. To put it another way, the haunted girl is in danger of being extinguished not by the specter who haunts her, but by representatives of a patriarchal culture, such as her father or other male relatives. The ghost, as a double of the girl it haunts, becomes a co-owner of her disavowed knowledge; hence, it functions as what Freud calls "insurance against extinction of the self" (141-42). Via the ghost, the haunted girl has access to knowledge she must eschew in order to be normatively feminine. However, because the haunted girl receives this knowledge through the mechanism of haunting, she appears to be merely a passive conduit for the emergence of this forbidden knowledge. Forced to disavow knowledge and behaviors that would make them strong and autonomous, these adolescent girls are similar to the ghosts who haunt them in that they are pale substitutes for the selves they could be if untrammelled by the confines of traditional femininity.

These Young Adult ghost stories, then, reflect the larger purpose of horror, which is to illuminate the abject. Barbara Creed describes the monstrous Other as the embodiment of the abject. It crosses or threatens to cross the border between human and Other, thereby bringing about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability. "The monstrous is produced at the border which separates those who take up their proper gender roles from those who do not" (Creed "Horror" 40-41).

While the ghost in these texts does aid the female protagonist, there are limits to its intervention. The ghost that protects the female protagonist from being victimized by the extremes of patriarchal culture is a subversive rather than a revolutionary or radical figure. It does not encourage open mutiny against a hegemonic culture that authors oppressive models of gender. Instead, due to the ghost's intervention, the haunted female protagonist can continue inhabiting the subordinate subject position of normative femininity, but with a difference: her performance of gender is subtly altered so that she ultimately "has the potential

to call into question the regulatory practice of identity itself” (Butler *Gender* 32). The novel’s conclusion hints at greater changes to come in future when the protagonist is more mature and presumably has more autonomy. But for the moment, the ghost enables the haunted female character to nurture her strength through stealth, in ways that do not draw the attention of those with the ability to circumvent her efforts. In this way, the ghost is also a feminine figure, subtly influencing the girl it haunts rather than actively causing change to occur.

In this chapter, I examine four novels with haunted teen female protagonists. Each novel has achieved sufficient popularity to be described as influential and widely-known. Each is owned by at least 900 libraries worldwide, and Phyllis Naylor Reynolds’ *Jade Green* (1999) and Laura Whitcomb’s *A Certain Slant of Light* (2005) have been translated into several different languages.²¹

Two of the novels I consider, Reynolds’ *Jade Green* and Nina Kiriki Hoffman’s *Stir of Bones* (2003), are ghost stories in the female Gothic tradition, where domesticity imperils the heroine rather than protects her.²² In *Jade Green*, the orphaned Judith comes to live with her wealthy Uncle Geoffrey whose house is haunted by the ghost of his former ward, Jade Green. Unknown to Uncle Geoffrey, Jade was murdered by his lecherous son Charles when she resisted his attempt to rape her. Judith is so virginal that she cannot fully appreciate Charles’ menace when he makes double entendres or stands too close to her. Only Jade can protect Judith from being similarly victimized by Charles. Nearly every aspect of Susan’s life is controlled by her tyrannical and abusive father in *Stir of Bones*. If Susan fails to conform to her father’s wishes, he brutally beats his wife so that his daughter may see her own imperfections reflected in her mother’s bruised flesh. Susan can only find respite from the tyrannical gaze of her abusive father after she is befriended by the ghost of a boy who died 64 years ago.

Whitcomb’s *A Certain Slant of Light* and Kathryn Reiss’s *Dreadful Sorry* are possession narratives as well as ghost stories.²³ In *A Certain Slant of Light*, Helen, who has been dead for

²¹ *A Stir of Bones* is owned by 922 libraries worldwide; *A Certain Slant of Light*, 2053; *Dreadful Sorry*, 1109; *Jade Green*, 1988. Additionally, *A Certain Slant of Light* has been translated into Korean, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, and *Jade Green* has been translated into German.

²² The Gothic, a genre that spawned horror, has received a wide array of attention by feminist critics. Some examples include *In the Name of Love: Women, Narcissism and the Gothic*, Michelle Massé; *In the Circles of Fear and Desire*, William Patrick Day; *Our Ladies of Darkness*, Joseph Andriano; *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic*, Eugenia C. DeLamotte and *Gothic Feminism*, Diane Hoeveler.

²³ In the ghost story, a person, or a place, is haunted by the spirit of a dead person, or even a dead animal in some instances. Haunting itself takes many forms. Most typically, the ghost appears to those it haunts and communicates, as is the case with several of the spirits in Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* or the ghost of Sethe’s murdered daughter in Toni Morrison’s novel *Beloved*. Or the ghost can make its presence known merely by giving the object of its haunting an unsettling feeling as it does in Eugene O’Neil’s play *Desire under the Elms* or the film *What Lies Beneath* (2000). Alternately, the ghost can communicate with the living by actually taking over someone else’s consciousness or even inhabiting the body of the living. Examples of this type of ghost can be seen in two of the novels I examine in this chapter, *Dreadful Sorry* and *A Certain Slant of Light*.

In the possession narrative, a human subject is controlled by an outside force such as an ethereal being, the ghost of someone who has died, or a demon or an angel. One of the most famous contemporary possession narratives is William Peter Blatty’s novel *The Exorcist* (1971) in which thirteen year old Regan MacNeil’s body is possessed by a demon after she plays with a Ouija board. Alternately a human subject can be possessed via

over 150 years, possesses the body of Jennifer, a teenage girl whose overly controlling fundamentalist Christian parents have caused her spirit to flee Jennifer's flesh. Yet Jennifer's parents do not even realize that their daughter's soul is missing because without this part of herself, she is a model child who is quiet and obedient. Through Helen's assistance, Jennifer can eventually return to her body to reside in her flesh more comfortably. The teen protagonist of *Dreadful Sorry* is also possessed by a spirit: Molly has her consciousness hijacked by Clementine Horn, the ghost of a girl who lived in a time before women had the right to control their bodies and destinies. Through Clementine's intervention, Molly can finally understand and take advantage of all of the benefits she enjoys due to second-wave feminism.

The four novels that I study in this chapter are typical of other Young Adult ghost stories with teen female protagonists such as Joan Lowry Nixon's *Whispers from the Dead* (1991), Amanda Marrone's *Devoured* (2009) and Paula Morris's *Ruined* (2009) in which spirits similarly aid the girls they haunt.

Three of the four novels I examine are set either partially or entirely in the historical past, a device which denaturalizes the construction of gender by revealing how women in other time periods were coerced into occupying subordinate gender roles far more restrictive than contemporary ones. *Jade Green* is set in the late nineteenth-century American south, and part of *Dreadful Sorry* is set in 1915 before women had the right to vote, while *Stir of Bones* is set in 1981, 22 years before the novel's publication in 2003. The authors' use of historical settings makes it easier to demonstrate how normative femininity is a subject position that is interpellated through various cultural institutions. Convincingly situating these narratives in historical periods requires that the author do more than imbue her characters with the trappings of another time: she must also explain how the cultural institutions of the period employed unique disciplinary practices to manipulate women into restrictive subject positions.

Two of the four writers whose works I examine denaturalize the construction of gender by placing their heroines in extreme situations. Susan, Hoffman's haunted protagonist in *A Stir of Bones*, is dominated by an abusive father who keeps her isolated from her peers and who insists that she always dress and behave in an unambiguously feminine manner. Susan's father's version of femininity is at odds with normative femininity in the United States in 1981, the setting of the novel, in which changes precipitated by second wave feminism have nurtured a generation of girls accustomed to speaking their minds. In *A Certain Slant of Light*, Jennifer's fundamentalist Christian family requires that women demonstrate their piety by submitting themselves completely to their husbands or fathers. Through these extreme situations, both novels denaturalize normative femininity to reveal its constructedness.

The Erasure of the Self

The Young Adult ghost stories that I examine in this chapter follow the pattern described by Carpenter and Kolmer in their discussion of ghost stories authored by women.

supernatural agency by a powerful sorcerer who can manipulate his/her victim from afar. Examples of this type of possession include the 1931 film *White Zombie*, where a bokor uses Voodoo to manipulate the living by suppressing their free will and to also reanimate the dead.

Rooted in the gothic tradition, “the source of danger to women and children” in these narratives (4) is the family patriarch. The genre’s ghosts are in a position to know of this danger and so they warn the female characters about the perils of domesticity (Carpenter and Kolmer 14). In this way, the spirits in Young Adult ghost tales protect teen girls from being subsumed by a conventional femininity that is rooted in domesticity. While these dangers might seem obvious for female characters from the distant historical past, they are no less present for modern girls since even in the twenty-first century, contemporary discourses about gender²⁴ glorify feminine domesticity while obscuring its potential dangers.

The Effects of Discipline on the Body

The haunted girls in these narratives (as well as some of the female ghosts during their lifetimes) do resist being coerced into a subordinate feminine subjectivity. Yet in spite of their resistance, the haunted girls’ oppressors temporarily rob them of their voices in order to facilitate their subordination. As a result, the haunted characters are similar to the novels’ ghosts in that they frequently *feel* alienated from their bodies. Patriarchy predisposes teen girls to feel disembodied as their bodies mature. Brenda Bourdeau’s study of adolescent girls reveals that as a girl’s body takes on visibly sexed characteristics, it “becomes an obstacle to autonomy and self-agency as the girl tries to reconcile her body to the demands of a socially proscribed gendered identity, leading paradoxically, to feelings of disembodiment” (43). In *A Stir of Bones* and *A Certain Slant of Light*, Susan’s and Jennifer’s over-regulation of their bodies by their fathers build upon feelings already set in place by wider patriarchal culture, exacerbating the girls’ feelings of disembodiment.

In *A Certain Slant of Light*, Jennifer’s body has been so thoroughly regulated that she cannot exist as an autonomous subject. In fact, Jennifer’s “self” has been repressed so violently that she is only a minor character in the novel. What we are shown of Jennifer over the novel’s six-day time frame is filtered through the consciousness of Helen, the ghost who has taken over Jennifer’s vacant body. Helen is the novel’s actual protagonist. Helen, who lived some time before the American Civil War, had more freedoms in life as a woman than those allowed to Jennifer, a contemporary girl who should be the beneficiary of gains for women made by first and second wave feminism. In Jennifer’s skin, Helen exposes how Jennifer’s spirit has been eradicated. Given no place to be, Jennifer’s spirit has evacuated her flesh, leaving behind an empty and obedient vessel with a pleasing shape, her family none the wiser. This soul-less Jennifer is a sort of Stepford²⁵ child, who only speaks when spoken to, and then only mouths

²⁴ Discourses about gender that are perpetuated through popular culture hold that while modern young women have choices that their mothers did not, a “true” woman should *want* to give up her financial and emotional independence to become the present-day equivalent of the desperate housewives that Betty Freidan described in 1963 in *The Feminine Mystique* (Bennetts).

²⁵ My reference here is to Ira Levin’s novel *The Stepford Wives* in which men replace their wives with more compliant automatons. The automatons look and sound exactly like the original wives, but they no longer answer back or even have interests outside of the home. Levin’s 1972 novel is a horrific representation of men’s response to second wave feminist.

acceptably pious sentiments. Jennifer's resistant behavior resumed, however, when Helen takes possession of her body.

In *A Stir of Bones*, Susan's over-regulated body similarly "becomes an obstacle to autonomy and self-agency" (Boudreau 43). While Jennifer literally flees her body, Susan mentally disassociates herself from her flesh. She never feels pain, and can watch burns, cuts and scrapes "blister and bleed with clinical detachment, as if they were happening to someone on television" (2). Susan's ability to experience her body as something that can be manipulated for her own pleasure has been absent for so long that she does not even remember having much control over it. As a result, Susan cannot envision escaping her father's control until the end of the novel (70).

Common to all of these stories is the figure of the family patriarch (or his analog), who employs various micropractices of discipline that target girls' bodies. The family patriarch represents the wider patriarchal order, and his discipline facilitates an erasure of the self on which a subordinate subjectivity can be erected. This subjectivity, mired in domesticity and compulsory heterosexuality, necessitates that girls limit their mobility, smother their feelings and strangle their words. As a result, girls are put "in their places," either as wives and mothers, or in some instances as the type of woman whose treatment at the hands of men signals to many in a patriarchal culture that she deserves no respect. The characters in these novels are particularly vulnerable to the family patriarch's machinations because they have no one to look out for their best interests. Most are either orphans or are cared for by mothers or mother surrogates who have been co-opted into reproducing their own subordinate status as a result of the family patriarch's discipline.

The family patriarch is the enforcer of feminine subordination in *A Certain Slant of Light* and *Stir of Bones*. Jennifer's and Susan's fathers employ various micropractices of discipline that focus on their teenaged daughters' bodies in order to coerce them into subordinate roles which prepare them for a repressive womanhood. Both men control their daughters' bodies by limiting their mobility and deciding what they can wear and to whom they can talk. The family patriarch in these novels is aided by his wife in disciplining his daughter. Michelle Massé observes that women in the female gothic "do not merely reflect but help to shape [the] system" (5) that oppresses them through internalizing its values. Because Jennifer's and Susan's mothers have bought into the belief that feminine subordination is natural and desirable, they serve as both models for their daughters' behavior and as accomplices to their husbands' discipline.

In *A Certain Slant of Light*, Jennifer's father Dan applies various disciplinary techniques to his daughter's body in order to turn her into a docile Christian subject. Dan's obsession with how Jennifer's body is displayed derives from the family's Christian fundamentalism, which requires that women submit to men in all matters. One way that female members of the Thompson family's church demonstrate their faith is by dressing in attire that codes them as unambiguously feminine, and therefore, different and subordinate to men. As *pater familias*, it is Dan's job to ensure that Jennifer embodies their church's conception of Christian womanhood. For this reason, he inspects his daughter's wardrobe daily to insure that her body is acceptably concealed: there can be no jiggling or exposure of bra straps, and her hem line must be no shorter than an inch above her knees.

Dan also controls Jennifer's body through chronicling its rhythms and limiting its mobility. Even Jennifer's menstrual cycles are not private; he has directed Jennifer's mother Cathy to track them on a calendar, presumably to ensure that her reproductive capabilities are in working order in preparation for marriage and motherhood. Dan also limits his daughter's access to her peers. Although Jennifer is fifteen years old, she is not allowed to ride the bus to school, but must be delivered and picked up by her mother so that she has little opportunity to socialize. Jennifer is also not yet allowed to date. When Jennifer is eventually permitted to socialize with boys, her outings will not resemble the sort of free *mélange* of associations that characterize teen heterosexual relationships in the United States. Instead, she will only be allowed to socialize with boys who are members of the family's church, providing that both sets of parents approve of the relationship.

Dan's tight control over his daughter's body exemplifies attitudes towards women in his ultra-conservative religious community. Dan and his co-religionists interpret the Bible to justify feminine subordination. As Christian fundamentalists, they view the Bible as the literal word of God rather than a historical document. Using passages from the Old Testament that represent women as inherently inferior to men, Dan and his fellow fundamentalists hold that feminine subordination is a natural consequence of being female rather than a cultural construct. However, because the Thompsons live in a wider culture in which such extreme feminine subordination is no longer typical, more stringent measures must be taken to form Jennifer into someone who accepts that all authority resides in the hands of men. Dan's discipline of Jennifer's body, then, is calculated to form her into a woman like her mother, who blindly accepts her subordinate position within the family unit and their church.

In *Stir of Bones*, Susan's subordinate status within her family is similarly reinforced through discipline targeting her body. Throughout the novel, "Father" is the only name by which Susan's male parent is referred, emphasizing his role as family patriarch. Like Dan, Father also controls his daughter's appearance and limits her mobility and access to peers. Father makes the rules about what Susan must wear and how she must groom herself: he personally selects Susan's unambiguously feminine wardrobe and chooses her hairstyle. Appropriately, Susan thinks of Father as a "property owner" and of herself as a piece of land he manages (69-70). Hoffman represents this view as objectionable by immediately showing readers that Susan is pleased when Father's "property" is defaced in small ways. For instance, Susan is elated to see that she got a bruise on her thigh during gym class because the mark on her body is a way of temporarily disrupting Father's ability to enjoy the perfection of his "property."

This simile that Susan uses to illustrate her relationship to Father is also an apt description for his relationship with her mother, whose body he disciplines through violence. Whenever Susan does something to displease Father, Mother serves as a surrogate for punishment, and Susan is forced to see her own "flaws" illustrated in Mother's bruised flesh. Mother views these beatings as a legitimate disciplinary practice, demonstrating to what degree she helps shape the system that oppresses her. Mother goes so far as to describe herself to Susan as someone who deserves her husband's abuse because she is "stupid about things," and Father as a "good man at heart" (Hoffman 133). Statements such as this one reveal how Mother has been conditioned by Father to believe that *she* is responsible for his violent behavior. To Mother's way of thinking, her violent marriage has its compensating joys. Mother tells Susan that she has all she ever wanted as a girl: the family has "so many beautiful things,

and a housekeeper to keep them pretty” (Hoffman 133). In this way, Mother is Father’s accomplice in indoctrinating Susan into what he sees as her appropriate gender role—a model of delicate femininity, a woman with impeccable grooming who is *always* deferential to masculine authority. This model of femininity would precondition Susan to viewing abusive relationships as normal rather than pathological.

Father also disciplines his daughter’s body by limiting its movement. He sends her to private school not to give her a solid educational foundation, but to isolate her from the common public school children and to monitor her comings and goings. Each day, Susan must directly return home from school. She is not permitted to associate too freely with her more privileged peers outside of school since they could also induce her to resist Father’s authority. Like Jennifer, Susan has no expectation of privacy: her possessions are subject to search, and even her dirty laundry is periodically inspected by Father for evidence that she has left the house without permission. However, as we soon see, Susan does not completely accept Father’s regulation of her body. Instead, we see her formulating strategies for resistance at the beginning of the novel when she plans a research project for school so that the necessary gathering of information will require her to leave the house, unsupervised, for several hours a day.

In *Jade Green* and *Dreadful Sorry*, the ghosts rather than the living girls they haunt are the subjects of discipline targeting the body. Furthermore, when these ghosts were living girls, the disciplinary techniques used to regulate them are extreme rather than the typical disciplinary practices of a historical period. Because the ghost is a type of double for the object of its haunting, Jade (*Jade Green*) and Clementine (*Dreadful Sorry*) show Judith and Molly, the girls they haunt, what might be if corrective actions are not taken.

As orphans, Jade and Clementine are especially vulnerable, as they have no family fortune to support them once their parents have died. When eleven-year-old Clementine’s parents die, she is sent to live with her wealthy and sternly patriarchal Uncle Wallace, who takes control of her body as payment for his largesse: Clementine is to compensate him for her room and board by serving as the family’s unpaid governess until the last of the children leaves home. Over the next seven years, Uncle Wallace prepares Clementine for what he has decided will be her adult role, a lower middle-class feminine subject position with strictly regulated parameters. Thus she is permitted the luxury of receiving a high school education, but only so that she may more effectively serve as her cousins’ governess. Eventually, when her cousins no longer require the services of a governess and Clementine’s “debt” to the family has been repaid, Uncle Wallace will select a local boy for her to marry. In this way, Clementine is not that much different from Jennifer, whose family will exert a similar level of control over her adult life.

While Uncle Wallace’s plans for Clementine are in keeping with a conventional idea of femininity for a girl of her race, sex and class in 1919, they are antithetical to Clementine’s ambition to continue her education and see the world, as well as antithetical to ideas of conventional femininity in 1996, the year that *Dreadful Sorry* was published. But as an orphan minor living in a time when even adult women had few rights, Clementine’s desire is easily thwarted by her uncle, who at one point imprisons her in the family home so that she cannot escape her “duty.” In this way, Clementine is a type of gothic heroine, a female whose house

becomes a prison from which only death will free her. Diane Hoeveler posits that lying below the surface of the female gothic novel

is the sense that middle-class women can only experience the male identified patriarchal-capitalist home as either a prison or an asylum. A woman is reduced in such a home to the status of an object, decorative or functional depending on her husband's class.
(19)

Clementine's Aunt Ethyl is an example of domesticity as prison. Her continuous pregnancies demonstrate her subordination to Uncle Wallace and make her doubly a prisoner, in her home and in her flesh: she is too weak to do anything more taxing than sipping tisanes in bed and so passive that she does not even read.

Jade is subject to more rigorous, and eventually, more sadistic bodily discipline than are her middle-class sisters. The daughter of one of the town prostitutes, Jade has to beg for food and sleep in the gutter. When Jade's mother dies, the town's religious community takes control of her so that she may be disciplined into a working-class femininity that will enable her to become a productive member of the subordinate classes. To this end, Jade is sent to live with Mrs. Hastings, Judith's Uncle Geoffrey's housekeeper who comments that "it was only with the greatest difficulty that [Jade] learned to live as civilized people do" (Naylor 37-38), and wear stockings and sleep in a bed. While Jade cannot be induced to attend school, she works well with her hands, and so excels in a relatively unladylike job deboning chickens in a butcher's shop.

Because the orphaned Jade has no one to protect her, she is subject to a particularly violent variety of discipline targeting the body. Charles, the lecherous, ne'er-do-well son of Uncle Wallace, subjects Jade to sexual harassment that culminates in her death when she attempts to fight off his sexual assault. Charles hacks off Jade's right hand with the meat cleaver she uses to defend herself against him and leaves her to bleed to death. Later Charles will similarly harass Judith, his orphaned cousin who comes to live with his father. Charles' behavior with Jade and later Judith are part of a wider culture in which sexual violence against women frequently goes unpunished because its threat ratifies the interests of patriarchy. This type of violence is what Foucault describes as an illegality, an illegal behavior that is tolerated by a regime in part because it supports its interests.²⁶

The threat of sexual violence is a micropractice of discipline that polices the borders of gender and class. On a personal level, sexual violence aims to put the individual victim "in her

²⁶ Examples of illegalities include poaching in pre-industrial times and the drug trade today. These behaviors, though illegal, are tolerated because they are too difficult to police, and also because they support the interests of the ruling classes. In pre-industrial societies, poaching was frequently tolerated on the King's lands since this activity helped feed his labor force, the peasantry. It also served as a valuable social safety valve. When peasants poached from the King's land, they had the opportunity to resist some of his power in a way that was not too threatening to the regime. In contemporary societies where drugs are illegal, the drug trade is frequently tolerated by the authorities because occasionally seizing the assets of dealers is a lucrative source of income for many police departments. (Foucault *Discipline* 84-87).

place” and to turn her into an example to others who might be tempted to escape their own subordinate positions. Arguably, this is why Jade’s death was not viewed as murder by the coroner, but rather, an improbable suicide by one of those “strange unaccountables” (39 Naylor), members of the subordinate classes who according to common wisdom are beset by inexplicable violent whims that resist interrogation. When sexual violence is viewed as a “natural” consequence of masculinity, the victim rather than the perpetrator is to blame. As a result, the threat of this violence serves as another institutional control on women’s bodies; it perpetuates the lie that if women regulate their appearances, curtail their presence in public spaces, and even limit their own knowledge of human sexuality, then they will be safe from harassment. Author Phyllis Reynolds Naylor emphasizes how this sort of violence is a type of institutional control in *Jade Green* by never representing the victims as being complicit in their fates.

In Naylor’s text, Jade is viewed as a monstrous Other, both by Charles, and later by those who refuse to investigate her strange and bloody death, because her failure to take up what others see as her proper gender role threatens the stability of the symbolic order. When Charles murders Jade, he has identified her as abject and subsequently cast her out, thereby buttressing the symbolic order. The example of Jade’s bloody abjection serves to reinforce a status quo that manipulates women’s behavior through the threat of sexual violence at the hands of an anonymous maniac.

It is less obvious how Judith’s body in *Jade Green* is the site of disciplinary practices that have contorted her into her subordinate feminine subject position, since she seems to willingly embrace her gender role. Rather, Judith’s acceptance of the crippling conventional femininity of her time is in part a function of the narrative’s setting, late nineteenth-century South Carolina, an era and setting in which woman’s subordinate status is rendered more erotic than disempowering, a phenomenon typical of the historical romance novel. Nevertheless, Jade’s example illuminates the dangers to women when they have been disciplined into a subordinate role. Prevailing discourses of gender suggest that feminine behavior would ensure that women are protected against sexual violence. Jade’s violent death exposes that protection to be illusory.

The disciplinary practices that have shaped Molly’s body in *Dreadful Sorry* are more subtle until she is haunted by Clementine. Clementine’s intervention will eventually help Molly appreciate the freedom and class privilege she has taken for granted, but she does not reveal the workings of discipline in Molly’s life.

The Effects of Discipline on the Mind

While most disciplinary practices in these novels target the body, others focus on the mind. Disciplinary practices connected to reading, writing, and learning from other media are commonly employed to silence many of these girls’ voices. In *Waking Sleeping Beauty*, Roberta Seelinger Trites discusses how feminist children’s novels focus on their characters’ articulateness (Trites 47), a quality that is equated with autonomy. Trites observes how some psychological theorists “consider cultural silencing to be one of the dominant forces that shape female growth” (47). In *Meeting at the Crossroads*, for example, Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan “describe the transformation of adolescent girls from being outspoken and confident at

the age of eight or nine to being so concerned with being socially acceptable that they have learned to silence themselves by the age of thirteen or fourteen" (47). Writing is a particularly important component of articulateness. Writing, "which has so much potential to help people understand their agency" through reflection and re-visioning, is one way that characters learn to use their voices. In fiction, "those who are denied speech, denied language" are also denied community, and subsequently, their full potential as humans (Trites *Waking*, 62, 63).

In *A Certain Slant of Light* and *Dreadful Sorry*, Dan and Uncle Wallace demonstrate their understanding of the subversive potential of reading and writing through their attempts to limit the literacy of their charges. Dan and his wife routinely search Jennifer's book bag and the contents of her room for unacceptable reading material. Even *Jane Eyre* is considered too disturbing for their daughter to read as it is about a governess's relationship with her married employer. Jennifer's personal reflections in her diary are similarly regulated. When her parents discover that she has expressed unacceptable thoughts in this medium, the pages are torn out, and they force her to use the rest of the book to copy biblical passages about obedience. The last date of Jennifer's expurgated diary entries coincides with the day her camera, another tool of self-expression, is taken away as punishment for her continuous questioning of the family's faith (217). It is not surprising that Dan would censor his daughter's diary since in this medium, even Jennifer's very private use of writing encourages her to see herself as an autonomous subject.

Uncle Wallace also feels threatened by women's literacy. When Clementine tries to run away, Uncle Wallace burns the atlas that belonged to her late father, the one book in her possession. Clementine used to look through this atlas and dream of all the places in the world she would like to visit. Uncle Wallace's destruction of this book demonstrates how he feels threatened by Clementine's reading: it has encouraged her to imagine a life beyond the narrow servitude he has in store for her.

The subversive potential of literacy is also a prominent theme in *A Stir of Bones*. Because Father recognizes that reading, writing, and even access to other media have the potential to incite rebellion, he monitors Susan's reading material, and requires that she show him all of her school work, as much to give him the opportunity to scrutinize her thoughts as to check on her academic progress. Father similarly understands the subversive potential of popular media since it creates a virtual community that permits people to realize their full potential as humans. To ensure that Susan's mind is untainted by influences that might make it less malleable to his will, he limits her access to popular culture: she can only watch public broadcasting—no MTV, cartoons, or even prime time dramas or comedies which might be potentially subversive in that they promote a model of femininity that is far less repressive than Father's conception of girlhood.

As a successful trial attorney, Father has a unique appreciation for the power of language to manipulate others. Susan describes this ability as "word magic," implying that he has some incomprehensible ability to transform reality through language. Father's "word magic" serves to further silence Susan. If Susan were to report Father's abuse of Mother to the authorities, she has every reason to suspect that her complaint would not be taken seriously since Father has previously demonstrated that he can convince emergency room personnel that his wife is merely clumsy on those nights when his violence necessitates she receive medical treatment. Father's "word magic" has similarly silenced a string of family housekeepers who

have witnessed the effects of his violence. When they attempt to speak out, their words are discredited, and Father has also threatened to deploy his “word magic” against them to invite harassment from the police. Father’s use of language to bully is typical of abusers, who often rely on male privilege and in some instances, class privilege, to negate the words of others, particularly women, whose words are frequently viewed as unreliable due to stereotypes about their sex.

In “The Laugh of the Medusa,” Hélène Cixous explains how writing and speech have been usurped and used in the oppression of women: “writing and speech have been one with the phallogocentric tradition . . . a locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated” by grossly exaggerating “all the signs of sexual opposition (and not sexual difference), where woman has never had her turn to speak (Cixous, Cohen, and Cohen 879). Father’s “word magic” then is part of this locus, which uses language to silence women. To resist patriarchal language, these Young Adult novelists counter with the power of ghosts in their fictional texts.

Most of the family patriarchs in these narratives also view women’s education as threatening because it encourages literacy and independent thinking. Uncle Wallace provides unequal educational opportunities for his sons and daughters: the boys all leave home to attend university, while the girls are sent to ladies’ finishing academies where they will be disciplined into a subordinate upper-class femininity. And while he permits Clementine to attend high school so that she can be a better governess to his children, he forbids her from attending college because to his way of thinking, higher education will turn her into “one of those ridiculous suffragettes” (Reiss 130) who agitate for the empowerment of women. Father and Dan are wary of the potential for school to undermine their authority with their daughters. Father monitors Susan’s homework in part to ensure that her instructors are not teaching her anything that might undermine his authority. Dan and Cathy are suspicious of the curriculum at Jennifer’s public school for similar reasons. When Jennifer brings home a copy of *Romeo and Juliet*, Cathy expresses displeasure about this text ever being taught in school since it is about rebellious teens.

Resisting Discipline

So far, I have discussed how the family patriarch or his analog attempts to discipline girls into a docile feminine subjectivity, which might seem to imply that these female protagonists are seamlessly cowed into submission. But that is not the case. Instead, when these protagonists realize that they are being groomed for positions in which they will have far less freedom than their brothers, they become angry and resist. However, open acts of defiance prove fatal for their perpetrators. The ghost’s intervention enables these female protagonists to successfully resist subordination through more subtle acts of rebellion.

That these Young Adult authors turn to the extreme and destabilizing figure of the ghost to combat patriarchy suggests how difficult it is for young women to resist traditional femininity as well as the importance of doing so. The ghost reveals that conformity can be a life and death struggle. Resisting patriarchal imperatives to conform to oppressive gender roles is so difficult that supernatural intervention is necessary. The non-realistic elements of the texts encourage the reader to remake reality in order to imagine alternatives.

In two of these novels, ghosts provide lurid examples of the fate of girls who openly defy patriarchal authority when they lack the financial, social and legal resources to be autonomous. When poor penniless Jade is murdered by Charles, his class privilege protects him from being held accountable for his crime. Clementine's defiance also results in her death. Desperate to escape Uncle Wallace, Clementine feigns love for a local boy and convinces him to elope with her before her absence is detected by her family. But on the stormy night when the two attempt to run away, their boat is capsized, and they drown. Jade's and Clementine's deaths warn readers of the very real dangers in openly defying rigid gender roles, but also set the stage for a more effective type of rebellion by the girls they haunt.

Two of the haunted girls, Jennifer and Susan, subtly resist their fathers by exploring in private how they have been made into disciplined subjects. Susan can explore this relationship only after she has a private space for self-expression, a place away from Father's jealous gaze. She does this by sneaking out of the house with her friends and exploring an abandoned house, where everyone can have "a room of one's own"²⁷ to do what is not possible at home. Susan's room is a space where she contemplates the parameters of herself as a disciplined subject, which ultimately enables her to formulate a more effective method of resistance. Nathan provides Susan with this space to explore methods of resistance. He permits Susan and her friends to have rooms in the abandoned house he haunts. Nathan owned this dwelling in life, and now that he is a ghost, no one can open the house's doors in order to enter without his permission.

Jennifer explores her subjectivity through photography. Hidden in Jennifer's room are self-portrait photographs documenting her oppression. If, as Pamela Bettis and Natalie Adams observe, "bodies prove that we are real," (12) then these photographs are signs of Jennifer's resistance, where she claims her body through self-representation. In this way, Jennifer is similar to other feminist artists such as Cindy Sherman.²⁸ Jennifer's photographs are disturbing in that they show her body with its soul inside. Trites explains that Young Adult novels employing photography "create many opportunities for characters to explore the relationship between subject and object, between acting and being acted upon" (*Disturbing* 123). Clearly Jennifer is exploring this relationship. In one photo, Jennifer is nude and in fetal position, representing how her relationship with her parents makes her feel infantilized. In another photo, captioned "the ghost waits," Jennifer has a sheet over her head and a suitcase at her feet, illustrating how she has been made a ghost of sorts by parents who demand she stifle not only all anger, but even all independent thought. Jennifer's self-portrait photographs represent her simultaneously in both the object position and the subject position: as the photographer, Jennifer visually represents what her parents have done to her.

However, these photographs do more than reproduce Jennifer's subordinate subjectivity: they allow her to meditate on her subordination in order to formulate strategies for resistance. The suitcase in the second photo, for example, foreshadows the possibility of

²⁷ I am referring here to Virginia Woolf's famous statement in her essay *A Room of One's Own*, where the author discusses the importance of women having the literal and psychological space to create art and to develop intellectually.

²⁸ Contemporary artist Cindy Sherman is best known for her self-portrait photographs in which she places herself in shots reminiscent of foreign films or photographs taken in different historical periods.

escape via the ghost. The third photo, a shot of Jennifer's face, taken in the dressing table mirror, where she looks to be "absolutely at peace" (178), is the most defiant of the collection, indicating that Dan and Cathy have not yet completely eradicated their daughter's stubborn individuality. In this picture, Jennifer is more than a subject who is acted upon. Here she is in the object position both as photographer and as a photographic subject who looks back at the viewer.

Yet Dan and Cathy momentarily succeed in disciplining Jennifer into a model of feminine subordination. When they take away from Jennifer even the most private places for self expression, her spirit flees her body and she becomes the daughter they have always wanted, one who obeys instructions without question and speaks only when spoken to. During the novel's six day time frame, Jennifer is an absence rather than a presence. We never see events through her perspective. Instead, we learn of Jennifer's story through Helen, the disembodied spirit who takes possession of Jennifer's uninhabited body for less than a week. Helen in this capacity is a sort of archeologist who pieces together the particulars of Jennifer's life through interacting with her family and examining artifacts she left behind after vacating her flesh. And as we discover, Helen's archeology helps make Jennifer's life livable for her.

The Return of the Repressed

While the haunted girl is deprived of her voice by the family patriarch, his success is only temporary. The repressed can never be completely banished; it always returns in some form, as we see with the haunted female characters of these novels. They have stifled so thoroughly those aspects of their selves that are incompatible with their families' or their culture's ideals of femininity that when what has been repressed resurfaces, it emerges as uncanny. The ghost, as "insurance against the extinction of the self" (Freud 142), is the keeper of this repressed knowledge to which the haunted character must have access, lest she also become a ghost.

However, reincorporating this knowledge is potentially dangerous to the haunted girl as it can cause her to overflow the boundaries of normative femininity, thereby calling attention to herself as someone who is actively resisting oppression. Thus, it is necessary that the haunted girl receive this heretofore repressed material from the ghost, rather than actively seeking it or having it supplied to her by another person. Because the ghost comes unbidden to those it haunts,²⁹ receiving this repressed knowledge through haunting permits the haunted girl to maintain a posture of normative femininity in that she does not appear to be actively pursuing knowledge that is antithetical with this subject position.

When the haunted girl gains access to this repressed knowledge, she is in a sense reborn. While the haunted girl appears to be no different than she was before her supernatural encounter, she has been subtly transformed into someone stronger, more resilient, and therefore better able to resist her oppressors now that she is in possession of this missing

²⁹ There are some instances in film and literature when humans actively pursue contact with spirits via a Ouija board or other means. However, successful contact is nearly always disastrous. Either the spirits maliciously mislead the human who has contacted them, as is the case with Dr. Montague's wife in Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, or the spirits are actually demons waiting to possess their human victim, as is the case with Regan O'Neill in William Peter Beatty's *The Exorcist*.

knowledge. Not surprisingly, the haunted girl's transformation is accompanied by birth imagery. Indeed, the condition of being haunted mimics pregnancy: to be haunted is to be a vessel for a spirit. Ironically, the haunted girl is not giving birth to the spirit, but is the one being reborn, from her own body.

In such narratives, the ghost is a type of double of the girl it haunts, a repetition. The ghost as double permits the girl it haunts to contemplate her subject position from a new perspective. This new perspective is necessary for understanding how to subvert the people and institutions that would deny her autonomy, to in a sense realize what Judith Butler argues of gender: that it should be thought of as "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*" rather than as "a stable identity" (*Gender* 140). While an illusion of the stability of gender is maintained through the constant repetition of stylized acts, these iterations also open the opportunity for transformation in how they can reveal "the arbitrary relation between such acts" through "the possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-formity, or a parodic repetition that exposes the phantasmic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction" (Butler *Gender* 141).

Robyn McCallum sees the figure of the double as useful in revealing how subjectivity is constructed dialogically. Because "an individual's identity is formed in dialogue with others and with social discourses, ideologies and practices," we "can never see ourselves directly." Instead, "we construct a sense of ourselves by appropriating the position of the other, outside the self" (McCallum "Other Selves" 17-18). To put it another way, the ghost as Other is a mirror of sorts. Its similarity to the girl it haunts permits her to see herself in the object rather than the subject position. The haunted girl's new perspective subsequently exposes how the limitations of her present feminine subject position are constructed and therefore open to disruption, rather than as boundaries that are natural and therefore unchangeable. This knowledge permits the haunted girl to formulate a strategy for resistance in ways ranging from small incidents of sabotage to larger acts of subversion.

Generally speaking, however, the haunted girl's resistance never constitutes a full-scale revolt. Instead, it manifests itself in subtle acts that serve to undermine the ability of others to deprive her of agency. After all, the haunted girl is an adolescent who is rarely in a position of sufficient power to completely resist societal or even patriarchal control, and outright rebellion would be suicidal given the power imbalance. For this reason, as mentioned earlier, when the haunted girl is in possession of what was once repressed, she still *appears* to remain within the boundaries of *normative* femininity—but she can no longer maintain a feminine subject position that is far *more* repressive than normative femininity. The important point here is that the haunted girl does not openly rebel against the wider patriarchal system that perpetuates gender inequality. Instead, the seeds of subversion have been planted by the ghost and the repressed material it supplies, and the narrative implies that in the future, the haunted girl will be in a position to more openly resist these forces. The reader, as well, has been presented with an alternative to subordinate feminine gender roles.

The Ghost as Double of the Girl It Haunts

The ghost is more than just an Other. It is also the *double* of the girl it haunts. In *Jade Green*, Jade is very clearly both an Other and a double of Judith. Though the terms "Other" and

“double” are often used interchangeably, I am making a distinction here between the two. While both literary figures represent disavowed or repressed aspects of the self, the Other’s striking characteristic is its *difference* from the original, which makes it monstrous. The double, on the other hand, is characterized through its uncanny *similarity* to the original. In life, Jade’s inability to strike a pose of conventional femininity due to her class status makes her an Other, particularly in relation to the gently-bred Judith. As a ghost, Jade’s grisly manifestation as a disembodied right hand further defines her as monstrous Other. Yet Jade is also a double of Judith: both are orphans, and we learn how each has been subjected to Charles’ harassment. Certainly Charles sees both girls as similar in his selection of them as targets for his abuse.

The ghost of Nathan in *Stir of Bones* similarly empowers Susan by serving as her double. Nathan represents all the masculine qualities that Susan is compelled to repress in the interest of embodying Father’s narrow concept of femininity. Nathan is a double of Susan in that she also experiences herself as a kind of ghost, one living under Father’s watchful eye. As McCallum notes, the figure of the double infers opportunities for resistance, for “the double represents another possible position that the character might occupy, an internalized aspect of otherness” (*Ideologies* 77). Hence, it is appropriate that Susan is haunted by a male rather than a female ghost since what has been most violently repressed by Father are those qualities of herself that are traditionally associated with masculinity, such as being independent and outspoken, as well as the ability to use her body in ways that would cause her to get dirty and disrupt the illusion of femininity that Father requires her to maintain. When Nathan reacquaints Susan with these repressed aspects of herself, she sees further possibilities for resistance.

Clementine is more than a double of Molly: she is her alter ego³⁰, living a life that Molly might have shared had it not been for first and second wave feminism. Via haunting, Clementine bestows on Molly knowledge of women’s history that was not repressed by her, but was simply not known. It is a past that Molly has never experienced, one where women lacked the right to vote, to control their bodies, or to have an independent existence apart from fathers and husbands. This knowledge of how feminism has altered her life for the better will permit Molly to take advantage of the opportunities afforded her by her relatively privileged upbringing. One of Clementine’s most treasured possessions during her life was her only doll, Mollydolly. Like most girls, Clementine projected all of her hopes onto her plaything. It is fitting then that Clementine chooses to haunt Molly, a girl with the name of her doll. In this way Molly too is Clementine’s alter ego, as she is able to do what Clementine never could.

In *A Certain Slant of Light*, Helen serves as a double of Jennifer. Both are distrustful of those who claim to know the fate of someone’s soul after death. Before Jennifer vacated her body, what her parents find most disturbing about her is that she questions the tenets of their fundamentalist faith, a privilege not even accorded to male members of their church. When Helen occupies Jennifer’s flesh, she too questions the family’s faith, challenging members of the congregation about their hierarchal belief that clerical intervention is necessary for individual

³⁰ An alter ego is a specific type of double. A double can be almost any dual, whereas an alter ego is the opposite of the original (Fonseca 188). For example, in Robert Louis Stevenson’s story *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the good doctor turns into the antithesis of his bourgeois Victorian self when he imbibes his potion and runs amok in the streets of London. The double, on the other hand, retains many salient qualities of the original, as is the case with Helen as a sort of double of Jennifer in *A Certain Slant of Light*.

salvation. Relying on her own authority as a spirit, Helen in Jennifer's body excoriates her family's co-religionists as presumptuous people who "have no idea what it's like to die or go to heaven or not go to heaven" (Whitcomb 248) and therefore cannot tell others who will be saved or damned.

Helen is also Jennifer's double as she reacquaints Jennifer with her sexuality. In that respect, the text defies the moralizing stance on sexuality that Trites observes is a staple of much Young Adult fiction. One of the major concerns exhibited by works in the genre regards the need to teach "teens to repress their liberated sexualities" (Trites *Disturbing* 92) through continuously reminding readers of the dangerous consequences of sexual activity—dangers ranging from a broken heart to contracting AIDS. Helen's relationship with Jennifer is contrary to this stance. Helen initially possessed Jennifer's body so she could consummate her relationship with James, another disembodied spirit who has taken up residence in a vacated body. As Helen uses Jennifer's body to express her love for James, she is also enabling Jennifer to have a relationship with a boy her own age, "normative" behavior for heterosexual teen girls in the United States in the twenty-first century. However, through this relationship, Jennifer will overflow the boundaries of conventional adolescent femininity, for she becomes pregnant during the sexual encounter. As a pregnant teen, Jennifer will quite literally exceed the boundaries of a conventional adolescent femininity that sees teen motherhood as evidence of moral turpitude. Yet Jennifer's pregnancy is not represented as a harbinger of her impending doom. Instead, it is implied that her pregnancy will be an event that will strengthen her relationship with her mother when Dan eventually abandons the family at the end of the novel.

Helen's relationship with Jennifer mimics the convoluted relationship between spirit and medium, or between the individual and God, as envisioned by Spiritualists. Spiritualism, which began in the 1840s, was an anti-hierarchical faith whose adherents believed that individuals could have direct access to divine truth through spirit communication. Unlike other faiths of the period, many Spiritualist leaders were women. Also, all Spiritualists were feminists in that they believed in equality between the sexes (Braude).

Ann Braude's history of the American Spiritualist Movement explains how women's relationships with the departed empowered them while allowing them to also be conventionally feminine: while "mediumship was closely identified with femininity" (Braude 23),

mediums did not model a simple abrogation of accepted feminine norms. Instead, mediumship gave women a public leadership role that allowed them to remain compliant with the complex values of the period that have come to be known as the cult of true womanhood [which] asserted that woman's nature was characterized by purity, piety, passivity, and domesticity. (Braude 82)

Even though the spirits might cause their hosts to make statements incompatible with conventional femininity, mediumship did not unsex women. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, merely the act of speaking publicly was believed to be antithetical to women's nature. Mediumship, however, "did not require a decision to rebel against a domestic role" (Braude 83) because Spiritualists believed that mediums did not consciously choose their roles; rather, they

were chosen by the departed to be their conduits. In this way mediumship mimicked pregnancy in that the medium was a passive vessel for the spirit.

The female medium then was not unsexed through her congress with the dead since her relationship with ghosts was an extension of normative femininity of the period. Rather, mediumship permitted women to subtly subvert prevailing notions of gender while appearing to uphold these conventions. While in the posture of normative femininity,

with the encouragement of spirits, [female mediums] did things that they themselves believed women could not do. . . [and spirit] presence helped women overcome internal doubts as well as external sanctions. (Braude 83)

The spirit, then, functioned as a sort of double for the medium. The medium, while possessed by a spirit, could publicly challenge a sexist culture that saw her as physically and intellectually unsuited for autonomy, while her behavior could be attributed to the superior intellect of the spirit rather than the feelings of the medium herself. As mediums, women could simultaneously critique their subordinate status while appearing to maintain the subject position of normative femininity. In this way, Spiritualism helped women reclaim their voices in order to subtly subvert existing power structures, while not openly appearing to threaten them.

The haunted female character in Young Adult ghost stories is frequently a medium, someone temporarily possessed by a spirit who speaks *through* her. As Helen's medium, Jennifer can reclaim her silenced voice. This does not imply that as Jennifer's double Helen puts words in her host's mouth; rather, Helen permits Jennifer to express herself more emphatically.

Rebirth and Agency

Through the ghost, the haunted girl is reborn—birth imagery abounds for this reason, both actual births and water. All four novels are either set near the sea or significantly make use of other water imagery, which represents parturition. Often the haunted girl is reborn in a feminine space—the haunted house, for example, in *Stir of Bones*, or the reclaimed house of the patriarchal family in *A Certain Slant of Light*.

Water imagery and the color green predominate in *Jade Green*. Uncle Geoffrey's house overlooks the Atlantic Ocean, and Judith will be within sight of this body of water when she is reborn as someone stronger. The color green, in this context, is another facet of the novel's birth imagery. Green is traditionally associated with spring and renewal, and it is also the color of the Atlantic. Green was Jade's favorite color, and its presence in the house where she died has the power to evoke her spirit. Judith will later be reborn in a sense when Jade comes to her aid in the novel's denouement, saving Judith from Charles so that she can live to eventually embrace a fairly conventional womanhood as a wife and mother.

Susan is reborn in multiple ways in *A Stir of Bones*. First, Susan is reborn through her relationship with Nathan, who empowers her by awakening the repressed knowledge of her own strength. After their first meeting, Nathan gives Susan a finger bone from his skeleton, a piece from a body part that represents human agency. This bone is a phallus of sorts that does not so much give Susan power as it reveals to her strength that she was previously unaware she

possessed. Nathan's gift demonstrates what Trites says of feminist power, that it "is more about being aware of one's agency than it is about controlling other people" (*Waking* 8). Once Susan becomes aware of her own strength, she can begin the process of reclaiming her silenced voice. This process commences almost immediately. When Susan's friend punches her arm, Nathan's bone in her hand grows hot, traveling up her arm and warming her vocal cords until she can tell her friend "Don't. Hit. Me" (Hoffman 63). Susan's ability to vocalize this objection surprises her since "at home there was nothing she could do about people hitting people," but "out here, where it was supposed to be safe, she didn't want anyone to hit her" (Hoffman 63).

Susan is further reborn through her newfound ability to see *how* Father is able to manipulate others. Nathan's presence in Susan's life occasions her contemplation of what she has always known but until now could not articulate: Mother participates in her own victimization. As a consequence, Susan realizes that Father cannot completely control her. Instead, Susan's "brain and all the landscapes and architecture in it belonged to her" (Hoffman 70). It is a space uncolonized by Father, and therefore the site of future resistance.

Stir of Bones is also full of water and nautical imagery suggesting rebirth. The novel is set in Washington State, near the Pacific Ocean, from which Susan has taken one of her most treasured objects, a smooth stone that she found when a visiting aunt took her to the beach. Five years later, the day stands out as memorable to Susan: her trip allowed her to momentarily defy father, who has never permitted her to go to the beach because he considers the sand to be too messy (Hoffman 12). Through this stone, which Susan keeps in her pocket, the sea persists as a significant theme: the stone has been worn smooth by the ocean, yet also contains a faint fossil of a shell, a spiral shape suggesting regeneration and eternity. As Susan comes to understand the constructedness of her subject position, the stone takes on new significance as something reminding her of her own resilience. The stone prompts Susan to consider that "things could survive a lot of grinding" (Hoffman 13). Susan ponders that maybe she "had some sand in her too" (Hoffman 13) since deceiving Father in order to escape the house has emboldened her to attempt other things she has never done before, such as making friends with kids her own age.

Susan's most significant and obvious rebirth experience occurs on Halloween night, when Nathan enables her to be quite literally reborn as a pre-discursive subject, someone whose body has not yet been inscribed by culture.³¹ On this night of the year, spirits have special abilities, and Nathan uses his to alter Susan. There, in Susan's house on Nautilus Road under the moon in the salt-soaked air, Nathan transforms her into what he describes as a reflection of her inner self. The name of Susan's street also suggests rebirth: the nautilus is a spiral-shaped sea creature. Susan's changed body is armored, a manifestation of what Nathan describes as her inner skin that keeps her alive and also alone (Hoffman 143), with arms and legs that feel stronger than they do in her other body (Hoffman 140). But most importantly, the reborn Susan is a sort of pre-discursive subject that is beyond gender: her transformed body is "a sexless thing" (Hoffman 142) with short hair. Susan's invulnerability in this body is *because* she has no sex on which a subordinate subjectivity can be erected. Unlike the gendered Susan,

³¹ In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler describes the pre-discursive subject as an impossibility as culture is such an overarching system that humans are inscribed by it at birth.

this Susan is not contained by any boundaries, including those of the physical universe. Ghostlike, Susan can pass through walls or walk on the surfaces of rivers.

However, because it is impossible to escape the ubiquity of culture, Susan's existence as this pre-discursive subject is unstable and cannot be maintained indefinitely. Thus, at the end of the night, Susan cannot keep her new body and leave the old one behind forever, since leaving her old body uninhabited could quite possibly cause both to dissolve (Hoffman 156). Instead, at the end of the evening Susan must return to her old body and find a more permanent way to be reborn in order to escape Father's oppression.

Susan can only be more permanently and effectively reborn as a *discursive* subject. This rebirth occurs within the feminine space of House, the abandoned dwelling where she and her friends first meet Nathan and where all have a room of their own where they can develop their talents. House is in marked contrast to the heterogeneous disciplinary space that she calls home. In Father's home, Susan uses her "house sense," an ability that helps her detect where anyone is inside the house so she can evade Father's gaze. Inside of House, however, Susan is most fully reborn. When Father discovers that Susan has been sneaking out, he puts an end to her outings. Despairing of ever being beyond Father's control, Susan contemplates suicide in order to eternally put her body out of his reach, and escapes to visit House one last time. But Susan's ghostly and living friends are there waiting, and they refuse to let her end her life. Instead, to make her life more bearable, they transfer some of their collective power to her via a magical ceremony. Susan will use this gift to subtly alter the balance of power in Father's home by undermining his ability to use Mother's flesh to illustrate Susan's presumed imperfections.

In *A Certain Slant of Light* and *Dreadful Sorry*, both the ghosts and the girls they haunt have a symbiotic relationship through which all are reborn, emphasizing the importance of sisterhood to girls' development. Clementine and Helen die watery deaths, only to be born anew as ghosts whose haunting empowers both themselves and the girls they haunt. Clementine's death emphasizes the severity of women's oppression in her time. Helen wanders the earth as a formless spirit because she is unable to completely relive the memory of her death by drowning, something she must do before she be reunited with her loved ones in the Light. For the next century and a half, Helen avoids the pain of being a bodiless spirit by attaching herself to a series of living hosts who are never aware of her spectral presence. When Helen's most recent host marries and begins to speak of having a child, the impending pregnancy prompts her to search for a new host. Instead, she finds James, another ghost who has taken possession of the body of a teenage boy whose spirit fled during a near-fatal drug overdose. James encourages Helen to take over Jennifer's uninhabited body so that she too can be reborn in this way.

While Helen and Clementine must die in order to be reborn, both Jennifer and Molly must have near-death experiences before they can undergo a similar rebirth. Through Helen, Jennifer is also reborn amidst water imagery and feminine spaces. When Helen enters Jennifer's vacant body, she is transformed yet again from the Thompsons' literally spiritless daughter to someone even more insistent on expressing herself. Jennifer will be reborn as someone who can comfortably inhabit her own flesh and reclaim her silenced voice now that she no longer has to repress so many of her desires that are not in keeping with her family's idea of Christian femininity. Jennifer returns to the newly feminine space of the Thompson

home, made so by Dan's departure earlier that day. Dan cites what he describes as his wife Cathy's "overly rigid behavior" as the reason for his abrupt abandonment of his family for another supposedly more compliant woman. Cathy is angered and confused by Dan's defection, since she had been upholding her end of a social contract that the church claimed would ensure his continual protection. Before Helen exits Jennifer's flesh, she engages in an act of sisterhood with Jennifer's mother, helping Cathy exorcise Dan's influence on the family home by destroying things that he left behind. In this newly reclaimed feminine space, Jennifer and her mother can nurture their own sisterhood. They will be free to explore their spirituality and repair their relationship, which was fractured by Dan's continued insinuation of himself in between the two.

But Helen also benefits from her possession of Jennifer's body. Like Susan after her Halloween night transformation experience, Helen realizes indefinitely inhabiting someone else's flesh is untenable. Helen and James' very adult love for one another cannot be expressed through bodies so tightly regulated by others. The couple cannot just run away clothed in this purloined flesh: since Jennifer is only fifteen years old, her parents have the legal authority to keep her from seeing other people. And when James quits his borrowed body to fully cross into the spirit world, Jennifer's body soon becomes a prison for Helen. When James leaves this world, Helen has no one in whom she can confide because she cannot tell anyone among the living who she actually is (Whitcomb 270). As a result, Helen resolves to leave Jennifer's body.

Helen's exit permits both spirit and medium to be reborn into their final incarnations, as one of the Light and as a growing girl with increased potential for agency respectively. But before Helen can leave Jennifer's skin, she must encourage Jennifer's spirit to return, lest her flesh be taken over by the "dark and nauseating" (Whitcomb 272) entity that waits to possess all uninhabited bodies so they can be used to carry out evil tasks. Helen accomplishes the handover of Jennifer's body to its original owner by attempting suicide while in the bath, an environment that suggests amniotic fluid. There is still more birth imagery when Helen feels a fluttering in Jennifer's abdomen and realizes that Jennifer's body has become pregnant while she used it to consummate her relationship with James. When Jennifer's body is between life and death, Jennifer's spirit returns and Jennifer is reborn as a stronger young woman.

Helen too is reborn when she exits Jennifer's body to face her hell of her own making that has caused her to wander the earth for the past 150 years as a disembodied spirit. She remembers fully the night that she died, trapped in a flooded cellar with her toddler daughter. The water in this small space also suggests a womb-like environment. After Helen allows herself to relive this event, she fully passes over to the other side to learn that was able to save her toddler daughter from the flood before she died. This knowledge permits Helen to be reborn as one of the Light who can be reunited with James and her now-departed family in the realm of spirits.

Both Clementine and Molly, the girl she haunts, are similarly reborn in *Dreadful Sorry*. Clementine causes Molly to have a near-death experience. Afterwards, Molly has a series of fugue states during which she experiences fragments of Clementine's thwarted existence. As a result, Clementine will live again, if only in Molly's consciousness, while Molly will be able to live her life more fully due to her better understanding of women's history.

Birth imagery abounds in this text as well. While Clementine lived with Uncle Wallace's family, she was not only responsible for caring for her cousins, but was also her aunt's midwife

during her numerous pregnancies. On the night that Clementine drowns at sea, Aunt Ethyl lay dying from her latest pregnancy. Birth imagery is also embedded in Molly's story. Molly's phobia of water is so severe that she cannot pass West River Academy's mandated swimming requirement and so is in danger of not graduating. During a party, one of the guests thinks to help Molly overcome what he sees as a baseless fear of water by throwing her into the swimming pool. Molly nearly drowns, and the experience prompts her first fugue state during which she sees not the blue and white tiles of the pool, but dark water, seaweed, and splintered bits of the wrecked boat and Clementine's hatbox floating above. Though Molly has no knowledge of Clementine's life at this time, serendipity will bring her to Hibben, Maine where Clementine lived out much of her brief existence. After nearly drowning, Molly elects to spend the summer with her father and his new wife Paulette, who have recently moved to Hibben and purchased Uncle Wallace's house. Here Molly is surrounded by water, and her dreams will become more like visions in which Clementine increasingly appropriates her mind in order to tell her life story. Against this backdrop is Paulette's own life-threatening pregnancy. But whereas Aunt Ethyl's repeated pregnancies signify an end of life, Paulette's pregnancy, freely chosen, is birth that will solidify her connection with her new husband and step-daughter.

The Transformation of the Haunted Girl

When the haunted girl is reborn, the transformation is not readily apparent to all around her since she seems to continue to inhabit a position of normative femininity. But the haunted girl *has* been altered by the knowledge that the ghost has supplied to her. She is no longer someone whose fate in a patriarchal society seems inevitable due to her sex. Rather, the haunted girl is now someone who understands the constructed nature of gender and of subjectivity, and who will be able to use this knowledge in order to eventually resist subordination more effectively.

The transformation of the haunted girl is least obvious in *Jade Green*, which exemplifies what Hoeveler terms gothic feminism, a passive-aggressive strategy employed by the heroine of the female gothic novel that permits her to survive while not being unsexed. In the female gothic novel,

women who ostensibly appear to be conforming to their acceptable roles within the patriarchy . . . actually subvert the father's power at every possible occasion and then retreat to studied postures of conformity whenever they risk exposure to public censure. (Hoeveler 6)

Hoeveler has come to describe this posture as gothic feminism,

a version of 'victim feminism,' an ideology of female power through pretended and staged weakness. Such an ideology positions women as innocent victims who deserve to be rewarded with the ancestral estate because they were unjustly persecuted

by the corrupt patriarch . . . The gothic feminist always manages to dispose of her enemies without dirtying her dainty little hands. (6-7)

Judith is an excellent example of a gothic feminist. Her seemingly unbelievable ignorance of male sexuality marks her as appropriately feminine while putting her in danger of being raped and killed by Charles. This potential for victimization further marks Judith as appropriately feminine.

Jade as monstrous Other possesses the knowledge of human sexuality that Judith *cannot* acquire because doing so would make her no longer conventionally feminine. The only acceptable way for Judith to have access to this knowledge is via Jade's haunting. Judith's dependence on Jade to communicate this material constitutes the passive aggressive gothic feminist strategy described by Hoeveler. It will be Jade, not Judith, who understands what Charles is planning and who in an act of sisterhood ultimately comes to Judith's rescue since Jade has already experienced Charles' violence. In the novel's denouement, Jade's hand that was cruelly hacked from her body materializes and strangles Charles before disappearing forever. Left behind is a tableau implicating Judith's would-be rapist and murderer while preserving Judith's innocence. Charles is dead with his trousers undone, clutching the knife with which he planned to murder Judith. Because he was killed by a ghost, the bruises on his throat disappear, and so his death cannot be possibly linked to Judith, a gothic feminist who survives to inherit the family estate. Jade's intervention has saved Judith's life, and she remains prime marriage material in a culture that prizes female virginity. Judith also remains "innocent" after her final encounter with Charles since it was not necessary for her to "dirty her little hands" with any unseemly knowledge of male sexuality or sexual politics to preserve her life.

As a result of Jade's ghostly intervention, Judith can subtly subvert the existing order. Creed observes that horror brings about "a confrontation with the abject (the corpse, bodily wastes, the monstrous-feminine) in order, finally, to eject the abject and redraw the boundaries between the human and nonhuman" ("Horror" 46). The novel concludes with Jade's hand, the symbol of her as abject, disappearing forever into the churning sea. In this way, the abject has been purged, and the symbolic order has been stabilized. However, the boundaries between human and nonhuman are not re-established, but re-*drawn*. While Judith might appear to be unchanged by her encounter with the abject, she has been transformed and subsequently empowered. She now has a better understanding of sexual politics, at least in its more dangerous forms, and will be in a better position to protect herself in future. The novel's conclusion implies that Judith will eventually inherit her uncle's sizeable estate. Wealthy herein, Judith will have more autonomy and control.

At the end of *Stir of Bones*, Susan too is transformed. As a result, she can subvert Father's ability to control her and he cannot detect how his influence has been diminished. Susan, for her part, still seems to be the same compliant daughter who can be cowed into submission. But Susan is different, stronger: she now has friends who can give her moral support and contradict Father's warped version of a normal family. These friends are a resource, people who are "ready to howl as necessary, or send her power" (Hoffman 209). Susan uses the magical gift given to her by Nathan and her living friends to confound Father's attempts to manipulate her through violence against Mother. After Mother has received a

particularly savage beating, Susan heals her bone-deep bruises with the gift she has received from her friends. When Father cannot see evidence of his handiwork on Mother's body, he is utterly confounded. Another sort of magic occurs when Father is "confused and uncertain" (Hoffman 208) since he appears to have lost the ability to control his daughter's body through beating his wife.

Jennifer has been more noticeably transformed through her relationship with Helen. Helen subtly augments Jennifer. On the first morning that Helen has invaded Jennifer's body, Dan notices that his daughter's dress fits a little too snugly for modesty, and her hem appears to be slightly more than an inch above her knee, suggesting that she has outgrown her clothes. Though Dan cannot prove this change with the tape measure he keeps for calibrating the appropriateness of his daughter's wardrobe, Jennifer appears to have been enlarged, which he finds threatening. Jennifer's almost imperceptible overflowing of her clothing on this morning indicates how she will soon overflow the limited confines of her subject position in a far more disturbing way.

Clementine's transformation of Molly is arguably the most radical. While other spirits in Young Adult ghost stories are the keepers of personal knowledge that the girls they haunt have been compelled to repress, Clementine is unique in that she is the repository of knowledge repressed by an entire culture. Clementine returns to Molly information suppressed by the media and the educational system in the interests of re-instituting the subordinate subject positions that women occupied before second wave and even first wave feminism.

Though Molly is the daughter of parents who have benefited from second wave feminism, she has no sense of the importance of sisterhood in permitting herself and other girls to take advantage of these gains. Neither of Molly's parents embodies traditional gender roles. Her mother is a successful attorney with her own male secretary, and she earns enough money to send her daughter to an expensive private school. Freed of the need to be normatively masculine, Molly's father displays emotion and is nurturing instead of sternly patriarchal. Yet Molly does not appreciate the advantages she has due to class privilege or changes made as a result of second wave feminism. Molly's ignorance of the fundamental changes that her parents' generation fought for is part of a post-feminist mindset which views feminism as unnecessary due to an erroneous belief that all of its goals have been accomplished. As a result, Molly (and other girls like her) is in danger of losing some of these privileges.

It is not surprising that Molly fails to appreciate the gains made by feminism since women's history is not very thoroughly taught in school, nor is it part of the popular consciousness. Instead, the project of feminism is frequently represented by the media as dead after either equality between the sexes had been achieved or after the wider population viewed the goals of feminism as unworthy.³² As a result, girls are often loathe to identify themselves as feminists, who are still characterized as rabid man haters who do not wear make-up or shave their legs. Nevertheless, young women who will not identify as feminists support

³² Susan Faludi's book *Backlash* analyzes how the media has fueled this post-feminist mindset by representing the gains of second-wave feminism as having ruined with its "false promises" of gender equity women's chances at happiness through marriage and motherhood.

feminist ideals of equality between the sexes and freedom of choice (Baumgardner and Richards).

Molly's initial reaction to Clementine's story could be characterized as post-feminist in the most common meaning of the term, that the goals of second wave feminism are no longer relevant. After experiencing Clementine's story, initially Molly is unchanged: she comments that Clementine was "the most selfish person [she's] ever met" (327) since her decision to run away cost her deluded beau his life, and she also left her Aunt Ethyl to die in childbirth rather than serve as her midwife once again. Molly's first reaction is not surprising since even after reliving Clementine's life, she lacks a contextualizing historical frame of reference. However, by the novel's conclusion, Molly's consciousness has been raised so that she can better understand the importance of sisterhood in helping women live their lives to their fullest potentials. Molly's stepmother puts her on the path towards third wave feminism by helping her understand that Clementine was not monstrously selfish. Instead, Clementine wanted "what all the girls I know today want for themselves—and expect they'll get . . . a good education . . . work that paid a fair wage . . . [and] an independent life" (328). With this realization, Molly comprehends how she has benefitted from both first and second wave feminism, and it is indicated that she is on her way to becoming part of the third wave of feminists who will use the gains made by their foremothers to work towards feminist goals.

Conclusion

In *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler muses that rather than laboring to discover *what we are*, we should *refuse* what we are, which is the result of how we have been individualized and totalized by the various institutional discourses that enact our subjectivities: "we have to promote new forms of subjectivity thorough the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries" (101). This refusal takes its form not through the repudiation of "what we are," but instead, through varying the repetition of "what we are." In *Gender Trouble*, Butler says that because "all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat" agency "is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition" (145). Horror as a genre is such a variation. If iterations of the monstrous feminine can be understood as a purification of the abject that breaks down boundaries and calls their naturalness into question rather than as something that reinforces these boundaries, then horror is rife with subversive potential, thwarting the ability of various institutional discourses about sex and gender to individualize and totalize.

The haunted girls in these novels are in the process of "refusing what they are," though that refusal is not always obvious to other characters in the novels. With the assistance of the ghost, the haunted girl has refused to repeat some of the stylized acts that perpetuate normative femininity. Due to the ghost's intervention, the haunted girl has reclaimed her voice and can subsequently engage her subjectivity, which can take many forms, ranging from a quiet but effective subversion of patriarchy to being a more active participant in her world.

In *Jade Green*, with the help of Jade, Judith refuses Charles' attempt to define her as abject and therefore worthy of harassment. When Judith fights back against Charles, she has "refused what she is" in that she varies some of those stylized acts of gender which have made her vulnerable to victimization. Judith has subverted one of the more pernicious forms of

patriarchy by which all women are controlled through the threat of sexual harassment and violence. Never again can she be so naive that she is easy prey for someone like her lecherous cousin, and her eventual wealth will insulate her from other situations in which she is put in peril due to financial exigency. However, while Judith has refused Charles' attempt to define her as abject through his actions, she has not refused the limits on her as a white, middle class heterosexual woman. The novel concludes with an indication that Judith's life will eventually culminate in the marriage plot.

Molly in *Dreadful Sorry* "refuses what she is" through maturing in a way that ultimately discards the classic representation of female maturity as linked to a rejection of the mother, who is often portrayed as someone "whose stifling presence must be escaped in order for the daughter to develop fully" (Trites, *Waking* 103). The novel opens with Molly blindly rejecting all her mother has to offer—she has the wealth to give her daughter an excellent education and is herself a positive role model of a strong woman. But because the possibility for agency lies in the variation of the repetition of stylized acts that perpetuate gender, Molly's growth will not be founded upon her rejection of her mother. Instead, her growth derives from sisterhood that includes maintaining her ties with her mother as well nurturing her relationship with her new step-mother and using women's history to understand her connection to other women through time. The novel concludes with Molly moving towards a different paradigm of female growth, one that allows "the daughter to mature without necessarily breaking from her mother," permitting "both mothers and daughters to be strong" (Trites *Waking* 103). Within the frame of this paradigm Molly will be able to vary the repetition of those stylized acts to not so much "refuse what she is" but alter what she is. After her experience with Clementine, Molly returns to her mother, resolved to conquer her fear of water so that she can graduate and embark on a future in which she has far more agency than Clementine ever had.

It is more obvious how haunting has transformed Jennifer in *A Certain Slant of Light* and Susan in *A Stir of Bones* in ways that have opened up possibilities for subverting the agendas of their more immediate oppressors as well as patriarchy as a whole. Susan's relationship with Nathan has radically altered her perceptions of power and subjectivity, giving her numerous opportunities to fail to repeat some of the stylized acts of gender that Father requires of her. As a result, Susan is in a stronger position to refuse what she is, according to Father, and according to the wider patriarchal culture. While Susan must live in the same house with her oppressor until she turns eighteen, for now, she can only reclaim and nurture through stealth those parts of herself that Father has attempted to eradicate. And for the moment, Susan has reclaimed enough of her own strength to make the remaining years in Father's home bearable for her.

Jennifer and her mother Cathy most obviously refuse what they are according to Dan's interpretation of Christianity. At the novel's close, Cathy too is now openly questioning the tenets of their religion which made it possible for Dan to manipulate them in the first place. Cathy tells Jennifer that she does not "even know what to think about God" any longer (268), and wonders if Dan lied when he used God as an excuse to control every facet of her existence. Every indication is given that Jennifer too will continue to refuse what she is, and explore along with her mother what each can be. Here too female maturation occurs not as an outright rejection of the mother, but instead due to the expansion of the mother/daughter relationship through which both can be strong. In fiction, female growth is so frequently represented as necessitating the repudiation of the mother that it is seen as a truism. The expansion of the

mother/daughter relationship is another one of those variations in which the possibility for agency lies.

As these novels show, the figure of the ghost provides an important tool in feminist Young Adult literature. Its function as a double of the self permits the author to denaturalize feminine subordination by laying bare its genealogy and causing the reader to wonder “if gender is constructed, could it be constructed differently” (Butler *Gender* 7)? This exposure opens up possibilities for readers to imagine their own strategies for resistance.

Chapter 2

Blood and Bitches: Sexual Politics and the Female Lycanthrope in Young Adult Fiction

Thousands of years old, the figure of the werewolf is unique among supernatural creatures: as a creature that is simultaneously human and animal, its monstrous Otherness is a part of its body rather than an external component. In this regard, the young female werewolf differs from the haunted girls I discuss in Chapter 1: while those protagonists have stifled all that their culture considers to be anathema to their sex, the female werewolf is incapable of suppressing feelings and physical traits considered incompatible with conventional femininity.

In this chapter, I consider two Young Adult novels and two films. The inclusion of films is central to my discussion since the figure of the werewolf as we know it which owes as much to its cinematic as to its literary predecessors. The films *Blood Moon* (2001) and *Ginger Snaps* (2000), Annette Curtis Klause's novel *Blood and Chocolate* (1997) and Patricia Windsor's novel *The Bleeding* (1996) depict the utility of the figure of the female werewolf for exploring women's situation. Like the ghosts discussed in Chapter 1, the werewolf offers resistance to feminine subordination. However, the figure of the werewolf represents a more physical and graphic manifestation of the Other than the figure of the ghost.

Young Adult werewolf fiction exposes the pressure that teen girls labor under as they attempt to be conventionally feminine, a subject position that necessitates they eschew their desires for sex, and sometimes even food, while simultaneously stifling the resulting justifiable anger. While the male werewolf typically exhibits behaviors that are well within the parameters of normative masculinity, the female werewolf represents heightened monstrosity because her lupine body puts her outside of conventional femininity, confirming patriarchy's worst fears about women's relationship to nature.

The werewolf is more animal than human, and is associated with blood and the moon. Susan Griffin explores how images of women in high and low culture represent them "as closer to nature and therefore lacking a spiritual dimension," an idea that "so pervades the imagery and language of civilization that the concept takes on an air of reality" (Griffin 26). In this way, the figure of the female werewolf is a continuation of negative associations of women with nature.

Other facets of the female werewolf's monstrosity are her anger and her desire for sex and meat. While these characteristics are compatible with normative masculinity, they are antithetical to normative femininity. When the female werewolf is angered, she will answer back to her antagonist and perhaps even become violent. Her sexual needs are so great that she is capable of taking on the role of sexual aggressor. Even her desire for meat is incompatible with conventional femininity—meat eating is more closely associated with masculinity, as Carol Adams points out in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (26).

Though the word "werewolf" can be traced back as far as the eleventh century, the concept of the creature is much older, dating back to Ovid and Virgil.³³ In the Middle Ages, the

³³ In Virgil's Eighth *Eclogue*, the poet describes how Moeris transforms into a wolf's form. Lycaon, King of Arcadia in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is changed into a beast by Jove as punishment. And Petronius' narrator in the *Satyricon* witnesses a man changing into a wolf. (Dziemianowicz 654-55).

werewolf was represented as a sympathetic monster who was more sinned against than sinning. By the nineteenth century, the werewolf was popularized in fiction as well as in accounts “developed by antiquarians, folklorists, mythologists, historians and other social commentators” (du Coudray 14) who rationalized earlier narratives about the creature by linking them to “the crimes of sociopaths, an atavistic craving for blood or human flesh” or Native Americans’ transformative practice of “donning animal skins to hunt, fight or dance” (du Coudray 2).

It was also in the nineteenth century that the werewolf began to resemble the creature that we are all familiar with today when it was established as “the beast within.” This trope was derived from the concept of the human mind as a conscious-unconscious duality, whereby the unconscious “was regularly associated with the bestial, instinctive life of the natural, material world” (du Coudray 66). In these theories, the unconscious mind always threatened to erupt, transforming the hapless human into a raging, uncivilized beast that lacks control over its baser desires.

But it was not until the twentieth century that the essential elements of the werewolf tale would crystallize. In contrast to other well-known contemporary monsters, such as the vampire or the golem, the werewolf is not derived from one text that serves as the basis of the whole mythology. For example, while most twentieth and twenty-first century versions of the vampire can be traced to Bram Stoker’s novel 1897 *Dracula*, the werewolf in its contemporary form derives from multiple sources, one literary and two filmic: Guy Endore’s 1933 novel *The Werewolf of Paris*,³⁴ and the Universal Studios films *Werewolf of London* (1935) and *The Wolf Man* (1941). These sources continue to represent the werewolf as “the beast within,” while evolving the popular mythology of lycanthropy.³⁵

Positive treatments of female werewolves appear in the early twentieth century. In the 1960s, some feminist writers used the werewolf as an affirmative “symbol of female identity.” (Dziemianowicz 680).³⁶ The female werewolf in these later works is still positioned within the

³⁴ *The Werewolf of Paris* was eventually translated to the big screen. The 1961 film *The Curse of the Werewolf* starring Oliver Reed is loosely based on Endore’s novel. Endore is listed as one of the writers for this film.

³⁵ *The Werewolf of Paris* (and the 1935 film *Werewolf of London*) “introduced the notion that lycanthropy is passed on by the bite of another werewolf, an idea which had never appeared in fiction or folklore before 1935” (du Coudray 76). *The Wolf Man* crystallized recurring themes in werewolf fiction such as the mental anguish suffered by the creature as a result of its dual identity (du Coudray 76-77) and also connected the werewolf with the pentagram, which appears both on the creature’s body and in the palm of his intended victim. *The Werewolf of Paris* and *The Wolf Man* also establish silver as the only substance capable of killing a werewolf. And the werewolf’s transformation is linked to the full moon (du Coudray 78) in the 1943 film *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman*.

³⁶ Some of the more notable works to treat this theme include Angela Carter’s “The Company of Wolves” (1975), Suzy McKee Charnas’s “Boobs” (1989), Melanie Tem’s *Wilding* (1992), and Kelley Armstrong’s *Bitten* (2001). Carter’s “The Company of Wolves” is a retelling of “Little Red Riding Hood” in which “the young girl’s grandmother is not a villain, but rather a symbol of her own sexuality” (Dziemianowicz 680-81). Charnas’s adolescent heroine of “Boobs” embraces her budding werewolf body as it affords her the ability to fight back against boys who have been tormenting her about her developing breasts. Tem’s *Wilding* “describes a matriarchal clan of werewolves who cherish the integrity and strength” (Dziemianowicz 681) of their lycanthrope children in spite of how it makes

nature/culture dichotomy, but nature and woman's alleged closer association with it are positively revalued, thereby challenging women's negative positioning as man's Other (du Coudray 130).

The trope of the werewolf mirrors those contemporary discourses of adolescence that characterize teens as hormonally-crazed savages who must learn to master their baser impulses before they can mature into productive adults. The werewolf's sudden growth of body hair and aggressive behavior, which can be linked to the changes associated with male maturity, particularly connect the creature with adolescence. Recapitulation theories of human evolution single out adolescence as "a crucial point at which an individual . . . leaped to a developed, superior Western selfhood or remained in an arrested savage state" (Lesko 34). In this way, the teen werewolf can be seen as an atavistic monster incapable of mastering its "primitive" emotions in order to become an adult. Tony Rivers, the hapless protagonist of the 1957 film *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*, fits this description. Tony's immaturity is demonstrated by his failure to control his anger, which constantly erupts into fights with his peers. Dr. Brandon, the therapist whose experimental treatments are supposed to help Tony manage his anger, instead causes his patient to regress to a primitive state of human development, exacerbating Tony's adolescent immaturity and transforming him into a dangerous werewolf who must be destroyed.

If the werewolf is a creature whose monstrosity derives from its propinquity to transgress the boundaries that allegedly separate human from animal, civilized from savage, and child from adult, then the female werewolf is doubly transgressive. While in her lupine pelt, the female werewolf is at odds with our concept of what it is to be both a civilized human *and* stereotypically feminine. The male werewolf is a monster because his desires for violence, sex and food are so intense that they fall well outside the concept of civilized humanity. Nevertheless, the male werewolf's transformation does not unsex him, for his propinquiries are all extreme versions of hegemonic masculinity, a subject position whose single most evident marker is violence (Kimmel 132). Therefore, both Tony Rivers and Larry Talbot, the werewolf protagonist of *The Wolf Man* (1941), are dangerously uncivilized, yet unambiguously masculine.

The female werewolf, on the other hand, is monstrous because her lupine body puts her outside of conventional femininity and confirms patriarchy's worst fears about women's supposedly closer relationship with nature. In the nineteenth century, female lycanthropy was represented as a demonized femininity, in response to how first wave feminism provoked anxieties about "sexuality, gender differences and reproduction" (du Coudray 46). The female werewolf was considered the inverse of the chaste Angel of the House: either a femme fatale who seduced her victims or a mother bent on destroying children rather than nurturing them.³⁷

them into openly sexual creatures who freely express their anger. And in *Bitten*, Armstrong's Elena Michaels is a female werewolf in a world where it was heretofore believed that only men could become lycanthropes.

³⁷ In this way, nineteenth century representations of the female werewolf are similar to nineteenth century representations of the vampire. Most notably, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* in his eponymous novella seduces her female victims, and Lucy Westenra in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is both a femme fatale and an un-nurturing mother who, in her undead incarnation as the "Bloofer Lady," drinks the blood of children rather than cares for them.

Additionally, the female werewolf recalls a “pervasive cultural association of femininity with nature, embodiment and biology” (du Coudray 112). These ideas inform most accounts of female werewolves.

Yet the female werewolf can do more than merely reproduce in monstrous form the sexist nature/culture dichotomy. Like the ghost, the werewolf is a powerful trope because it reveals the constructedness of gender. The werewolf is not so much an animal as it is *an animal in drag in a human skin*, a position that calls into question the parts of ourselves that we designate as animal Others. In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler muses on the ability of drag to expose the sex/gender link as constructed rather than natural (2). The werewolf’s shapeshifting ability similarly breaks both the sex/gender link and the human/civilization link. In her book *Pornography and Silence*, Susan Griffin explores the ramifications of commonly held beliefs that “women are closer to nature” than are men (26). To be normatively feminine then is also to repeatedly perform stylized acts that keep at bay a woman’s supposed animal nature. In this way, while some female werewolves merely confirm patriarchy’s worst fears about the supposed “nature” of women, other female werewolves expose how categories of gender are highly constructed subject positions rather than unwavering conditions.

The teen female werewolf is monstrous because her body cannot be contained within the boundaries of conventional femininity. The haunted protagonists discussed in Chapter 1 suffer because they succeed at maintaining a pose of stereotypical femininity. But the teen female werewolf’s budding lupine body will not permit her to be groomed into culturally sanctioned boundaries of femininity: it is strong and athletic, and sprouts hair in places where women are supposed to be smooth, and her “unfeminine” appetites for sex and meat make her incapable of acting like a good girl for long.

Perhaps this is why one defining feature of the female werewolf is her capacity for extreme anger, an emotion incompatible with stereotypical femininity. Lyn Mikel Brown explains how anger is antithetical to a conventional femininity that is predicated on self-abasement: “anger, *because* it is tied to self-respect, must be excised if a girl is to move seamlessly into today’s culture, that is, if the culture is to welcome her and remain unchanged by her presence” (*Raising* 12). While the haunted girl has disavowed her anger to the degree that she, like the haunting presence, becomes a sort of wraith, a pale substitute of herself, the female werewolf cannot stifle this emotion. Rather, the female werewolf experiences her anger as a normal and desirable attribute because it makes her strong and powerful. Moreover, the female werewolf is capable of acting on her anger. This representation of the female werewolf as strong and powerful because she does not suppress her anger opens possibilities for teenaged female readers who similarly struggle with cultural pressures to conform to a stifling subordinate feminine subjectivity.

A hybridization of human and animal, the female werewolf emphasizes the dangers of denying repressed emotions and desires to the point that the body is painfully contorted. Similarly, the trope of the female werewolf can transform a reader’s consciousness and permit her to “refuse what we are,” to borrow Butler’s idea³⁸, by reconstructing these boundaries. The creature’s ability to pass back and forth between the boundaries that supposedly separate

³⁸ *The Psychic Life of Power*, Judith Butler, p. 101

animal from human, and male from female, undermines these categories by revealing their permeability. The teen female lycanthrope, whose overt sexual desire and anger are essential facets of her being, can swallow these feelings only at her peril, thereby providing an object lesson to girls about the dangers of repressing feelings and denying the body in order to be normatively feminine.

In this chapter, I examine two recent Young Adult novels and two films where the central characters are adolescent female werewolves who resist restrictive gender roles. In the novels *Blood and Chocolate* and *The Blooding* and the films *Ginger Snaps* and *Blood Moon*,³⁹ the trope of lycanthropy is used to explore how girls are pressured to be conventionally feminine as well as how they resist the pressure to conform to this gender role. The texts I examine have achieved sufficient popularity to be well-known. *Blood and Chocolate* and *The Blooding* are owned by at least 800 libraries worldwide.⁴⁰ *Ginger Snaps* is included in my study of Young Adult werewolf narratives in part because it was well-received by critics⁴¹ and was the recipient of several awards.⁴² *Blood Moon* (also known as *Wolf Girl* in Canada, where it was produced) has received little critical attention, but is a cult horror classic.⁴³

³⁹ I have opted to not include books such as Edo Van Belkom's *Wolf Pack* or *Lone Wolf*, whose protagonists are a group of teen werewolves of both sexes rather than exclusively female protagonists. These books do not examine their female protagonists in any depth. I also do not examine Petru Popescu's *Weregirls: the Birth of the Pack*, which is not exclusively about werewolves, in spite of its title. I also do not include Maggie Stiefvater's novels *Shiver* (2009) or *Linger* (2010) since her female protagonist does not even begin to become a werewolf until the end of the second book.

⁴⁰ *Blood and Chocolate* is owned by 2446 libraries worldwide and was translated into Dutch and Spanish. *The Blooding* is owned by 825 libraries worldwide.

⁴¹ *Ginger Snaps* received critical acclaim. Dave Kehr, writing for *The New York Times* and Dennis Lim, a critic for *The Village Voice*, compare the film favorably to the work of Canadian director David Cronenberg. Ian Waldron-Mantgani of ukcritic.com, Sean Axmaker of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and Ed Gonzales of *Slant Magazine* all gave the film positive reviews. As of April 15th, 2010, *Ginger Snaps* also received an 89% fresh (positive rating) on the movie review website rottentomatoes.com, where the general consensus was that its "strong female cast and biting satire of teenage life makes [it] far more memorable than your average werewolf movie—or teen flick." Additionally, *Ginger Snaps* was highlighted as a film of the month by the journal *Sight and Sound* (Williams).

⁴² The most prominent of these was the 2002 International Horror Guild Award for Best Film. *Ginger Snaps'* screen writer Karen Walton received an award for Best Canadian Feature Film at the 2000 Toronto International Film Festival. In 2002, the film was also given a Saturn Award for Best DVD Release from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films. Successful DVD sales of *Ginger Snaps* lead to the back-to-back filming of a prequel and a sequel in 2003, *Ginger Snaps 2: Unleashed* and *Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning*. However, neither of these films was as popular as the original: *Ginger Snaps 2: Unleashed* flopped at the box office, and as a result, *Ginger Snaps Back: the Beginning* was released straight to DVD. For that reason, I am not including *Ginger Snaps 2* or *Ginger Snaps Back* in my study of YA werewolf narratives with female protagonists.

⁴³ Because *Blood Moon* was a made-for-television film, it has received little attention from professional film critics. However, it has a following among amateur critics who have posted their reviews on the internet and whose blogging often persuades horror fans to seek out the film. Some of these positive critical reviews include Tom (no last name posted) writing for epinions.com, Talltale (no real name listed) writing for GreenCine, and Paghat the Rat Girl writing for Wild Realms Film Reviews, as well as many positive customer ratings on amazon.com where the DVD is for sale.

Because of what was available to me at the time I wrote this dissertation, all of the protagonists I examine in this chapter are white. As of early 2010, I have identified no Young Adult werewolf narratives with female protagonists of color. However, unlike the haunted girls I examined in Chapter 1, most of these werewolf protagonists are working class. This representation of the werewolf as a member of the working class is not surprising as many nineteenth-century narratives of lycanthropy characterized the werewolf “as a threat emanating from the underclasses” (du Coudray 45). For Ginger (*Ginger Snaps*), the lone middle-class werewolf in my study, lycanthropy is an expression of her rejection of her family’s middle class values.

The films I discuss fit the definition of Young Adult fiction as a type of coming-of-age narrative with an adolescent protagonist whose development is connected to what she learns about power and subjectivity. Moreover, as I indicated in the introduction of this dissertation, Young Adult fiction is not limited to literary texts. Indeed, the Young Adult Library Services Association argues for a broader definition of the genre that includes visual texts such as “picture books, comics, and graphic novels” (Cart “Value”) in addition to literary works. Film certainly falls under this expansive rubric. Finally, my inclusion of film in this study is necessary given that the contemporary representation of the werewolf is derived from both literary and filmic sources. To understand the Young Adult werewolf, then, we need to examine both novels and films.

Because the monster we are most familiar with is derived from filmic more than literary sources, I begin my chapter by examining John Fawcett’s 2000 film *Ginger Snaps* and Thom Fitzgerald’s 2001 film *Blood Moon*. Both films represent the creature fairly typically as one that embodies the anxieties that patriarchy projects on women, particularly young women. *Ginger Snaps* follows “the basic formula for the horror film in which normality is threatened by the Monster” (Wood 117). The main character of the movie, Ginger Fitzgerald, evokes Carrie White, the eponymous heroine of Stephen King’s 1974 novel. Like Carrie, Ginger is an outsider who experiences late menarche: she is nearly sixteen years old when she finally gets “the curse.” Moments after her first menstrual flow unexpectedly courses down her legs, Ginger is attacked by a werewolf who is attracted by the smell of her blood. As a result, over the next lunar cycle, Ginger transforms from a human girl with no interest in boys or dating into a violent and sexually insatiable beast for whom desire and anger are inextricably linked. As a consequence, Ginger must be “put to sleep” for the protection of humans.

Blood Moon (2001) challenges viewers’ concept of the monster. Set in an anachronistic traveling freak show, *Blood Moon* bombards viewers with side show “oddities”—but these “freaks” are not the monsters of the film. Rather, the “normal” people who pay their money to gawk at them are the actual monsters, an idea derived from Tod Browning’s controversial cult film *Freaks* (1932). *Blood Moon* expands this idea to consider how women are made to feel monstrous if their bodies do not conform to an increasingly narrow standard of feminine beauty. Tara the Wolf Girl, the show’s main attraction, suffers from hypertrichosis, an extreme form of hirsutism causing her body to be covered in long silky hair and giving her a lupine appearance. Yet Tara becomes a monstrous Other only after she sheds her fur. After Tara partakes of an experimental depilatory drug, she transforms from a dog-faced vegetarian pacifist into a smooth-skinned beauty who dispenses violence to those who tormented her when she was a “freak.” This representation of woman as a potentially violent animal is not

new; rather, it is a strain of Romanticism, which Susan Griffin describes as “eros and nature” melded into “one simultaneously fatal and evil force” (13) that is personified as woman. *Blood Moon*’s treatment of issues of appearance and belonging is particularly relevant for female adolescents.

The second part of this chapter examines two literary representations of the werewolf, Patricia Windsor’s 1996 novel *The Bleeding* and Annette Curtis Klaus’s 1997 novel *Blood and Chocolate*.⁴⁴ Both novels envision the werewolf as a creature representing female freedom and power. *Blood and Chocolate* and *The Bleeding* draw on the genres of gothic and paranormal romance⁴⁵ as well as horror. Like *Ginger Snaps* and *Blood Moon*, these novels explore cultural prejudices about women that cause them to be viewed as more animalistic, and therefore less civilized than men. *The Bleeding* and *Blood and Chocolate* represent the female connection to the natural world as a strength and question the idea that woman’s presumed closer relationship with nature by definition makes her into an irremediable, abject Other.

The werewolf protagonists of *The Bleeding* and *Blood and Chocolate* have much in common. Both originally desire to be “normal girls,” but their lupine bodies cannot be conventionally feminized, nor can they control their “unfeminine” desires for meat or sex, or fully repress their anger. But most importantly, Windsor’s and Klaus’s lycanthrope protagonists exhibit hybridity: they are not animals trapped in human bodies, but powerful combinations of human and animal. Ultimately, this hybridity leads the reader to understand the constructedness of gender and question the naturalness of the gendered order. Ginger (*Ginger Snaps*) and Tara (*Blood Moon*), on the other hand, lack this hybridity, and so each girl eventually becomes trapped in one form.

In *The Bleeding*, sixteen-year-old Maris spends the summer working as an au pair in a remote English village. During the course of the summer, she becomes attracted to Derrick, her handsome and brooding employer who might have murdered his wife. Nevertheless, Maris ignores both her gut feelings and the advice of older women, refusing to believe that Derrick is dangerous and that she should avoid him. Instead, Maris lets Derrick turn her into a werewolf, which he does in order to make her more dependent on him and therefore easier to control.

⁴⁴ I am not including the 2007 film version of *Blood and Chocolate* in my study as the director Katja von Garnier transformed Vivian, the novel’s teen female protagonist, into a fully adult character. In von Garnier’s film, Vivian is nineteen, orphaned and living on her own, whereas in Klaus’s novel, she is a sixteen-year-old high school student living with her mother. Although Vivian is technically a teenager in von Garnier’s version, she has reached the age of majority and is subsequently independent from institutional and familial control, unlike most younger teens represented in Young Adult fiction. von Garnier’s Vivian is old enough to patronize bars, for example, and Aiden, her love interest, is a graphic artist who is old enough to be travelling alone through Romania (the film’s setting). As a consequence, von Garnier’s film lacks some of the typical elements of Young Adult fiction.

⁴⁵ Paranormal romance is a term describing romance fiction with the addition of supernatural creatures such as vampires, ghosts or werewolves. Romance fiction itself is defined as “a love story in which the central focus is on the development and satisfactory resolution of the love relationship between the two main characters, written in such a way as to provide the reader with some degree of vicarious emotional participation in the courtship process” (Ramsdell 5). Stephanie Meyer’s *Twilight* Saga, for example, is paranormal romance rather than horror since it is much more concerned with Edward and Bella’s relationship than with other elements of the supernatural. The *Twilight* Saga also follows the trajectory of the standard heterosexual romance plot where a plucky but virginal and inexperienced heroine becomes enamored of a brooding and more experienced hero

Maris's faith in Derrick in spite of evidence to the contrary follows the plot trajectory of the typical gothic romance. However, *The Blooding's* conclusion deviates from this plot in that Maris's own inner strength, combined with her newfound lycanthropy, enables her to avoid becoming a controlled and exploited gothic victim.

In *Blood and Chocolate*, Vivian is born a werewolf, and has always lived with other members of her species in an extended family pack. Initially, the adolescent Vivian is disdainful of lycanthropy: she sees werewolf culture as annoyingly sexist and lycanthropy as a condition that weakens werewolves, who must repress much of their anger and sexual impulses to pass among humans. Yet ultimately, Vivian learns to accept her lycanthropy, which includes coming to terms with her attraction for the pack's new leader. In learning to accept her sexuality and her anger, Vivian avoids the damaging repression of anger and other emotions detailed by Brown in *Raising Their Voices*.

While not all the protagonists in these narratives experience happy endings, each text highlights the pressures that human girls feel to feign weakness, repress their anger and deny their sexual feelings in the interest of being accepted as conventionally feminine.

The Lycanthrope as Femme Fatale

In *Blood Moon* and *Ginger Snaps*, the female werewolf is also an iteration of patriarchal fears about the "nature" of woman as a dangerous, sexually insatiable beast governed by her hormones, a characterization that justifies her subordination. For this reason, in the hostile patriarchal world she inhabits, the female werewolf must be controlled, or she must be destroyed. This summarizes Ginger's position in *Ginger Snaps*. Tara's transformation in *Blood Moon* is less straightforward. Tara knows too well that the world will ostracize her as a dangerous animal due to her hirsutism. As a consequence, Tara embarks on a series of experimental treatments that make her normatively feminine in appearance. However, the treatments have altered Tara's mind as well so that she is no longer the gentle vegetarian who refuses to eat "anything with a face." Now Tara is a feral animal in an alluring form who is more dangerous than she ever was when covered in fur. Ultimately, it is the demands of a patriarchal culture that force women to repress their feelings and groom their bodies into an acceptable veneer that is not threatening or "natural." If horror teaches us anything, it is that repression is dangerous: the repressed always returns, in monstrous form, to wreak havoc on members of the culture who have necessitated its banishment. If the figure of the monster is the horrifying representative of the abject, it is also a portent. "The word 'monster' derives from the Latin *monstere*, meaning 'to show'" (Fonseca and Pulliam 155). This return of the repressed then is more than retribution on the part of the monster; it is a warning about the dangers of disavowing certain knowledge or parts of the self. The female werewolves in the narratives I examine all show that normative femininity is not the natural consequence of being female, but instead a fragile construction that can be maintained only with a terrible cost to young women.

The Female Werewolf's Body

The female werewolf's appearance is the most obvious manifestation of how she is at odds with conventional femininity. In spite of the gains made by first- and second-wave

feminism, girls are still encultured to spend an inordinate amount of time grooming themselves to attract the attention of potential male partners.⁴⁶ Their bodies must be carefully controlled: regularly depilated, deodorized and dieted into a smooth, slender form that is graceful rather than strong. But the female werewolf breaks all these taboos. In her lupine form, she has hair where women are supposed to be smooth.⁴⁷ She possesses strength, and is often stronger than any human male in the narrative. This strength flies in the face of a patriarchal culture where women's participation in sports, particularly competitive sports or those that are not conducive to developing a lithe and petite female form, is still discouraged, in spite of changes ushered in by Title IX to encourage female athleticism. Competiveness and athleticism are still traits reserved for normative masculinity.⁴⁸

Beauty standards are part of a wider sexual politics that maintain feminine subordination. Susan Brownmiller observes that biological femaleness is not sufficient to differentiate women from men, and so it is necessary for women to perform their gender through a stylized repetition of acts that constitutes femininity. Femininity "constantly reassures its audience by a willing demonstration of difference, even when one does not exist in nature" (Brownmiller 15). Women are enjoined to construct their femininity by grooming their bodies into these aesthetic borders, and failing to fall within these parameters has serious consequences. Furthermore, women are increasingly valued according to their ability to fit into these nebulous standards. Naomi Wolf argues that in a post-second-wave-feminism world where men feel threatened by women's increased economic independence, beauty standards have replaced the feminine mystique as a way of controlling women.⁴⁹ Wolf terms these ubiquitous standards the Beauty Myth. Women who deviate from this feminine aesthetic are termed unfeminine, and as a result can be rejected by potential male mates, the eventual power brokers in a patriarchal society, and even shunned by their peers. Furthermore, a woman who does not conform to the cultural standards of beauty might find her employment opportunities limited, a consequence that significantly diminishes her ability to be autonomous (Wolf 20-57).

Not surprisingly, the contemporary Beauty Myth affects adolescent girls' feelings of self worth. Joan Jacobs Brumberg argues that this myth encourages adolescent girls to "make the body into an all-consuming project in ways young women of the past did not" (xvii). Both Wolf and Brumberg conclude that societal expectations that push women aspire to be beauties deprive them of agency. If women are kept occupied by a "body project" that necessitates

⁴⁶ See *Femininity*, Susan Brownmiller and *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf.

⁴⁷ "Hair on the face, or any part of the facial topography beyond the eyebrows and lashes, is definitely off-limits to the feminine woman" (Brownmiller 138).

⁴⁸ See *The Frailty Myth*, Colette Dowling.

⁴⁹ Wolf situates the Beauty Myth as part of the present hostile climate towards feminism documented by Susan Faludi in her 1991 book *Backlash*. "The ideology of beauty is the last one remaining of the old feminine ideologies that still has the power to control those women whom second-wave feminism would have otherwise made relatively uncontrollable. It has grown stronger to take over the work of social coercion that myths about motherhood, domesticity, chastity, and passivity, no longer can manage" (Wolf 10-11).

eternal vigilance against hairiness, odor, weight gain and aging, then they are less likely to notice, let alone challenge, cultural forces that perpetuate their subordination.

Young women pursue the Beauty Myth, in part, because it is represented by mass culture as something that will empower them. Trites characterizes Young Adult fiction as concerned with subjectivity and power: in the Young Adult novel, teens “learn to negotiate the levels of power that exist in the myriad social institutions within which they must function . . . including social constructions of sexuality [and] gender” (*Disturbing* 3). Given the centrality of the theme of power in Young Adult fiction, it is not surprising that the Beauty Myth is an important element of Young Adult texts with female protagonists. The Beauty Myth promises power to the girl who has dieted, exercised and manicured her body into a magical combination of perfection that will supposedly make her irresistible to all men—and the envy of all women. Yet the Beauty Myth cannot deliver this power, since the ideal can only be achieved by the genetically fortunate few. Furthermore, the aging process ensures that this ideal cannot be maintained indefinitely by anyone. Since beauty is a defining characteristic of conventional femininity, girls wishing to grow up into strong, autonomous adult women must learn to see through the fiction of the Beauty Myth. The Young Adult werewolf narrative with its exaggerated representations of gender can assist girls in rejecting the Beauty Myth, as well as other defining characteristics of normative femininity.

In the opening of *Ginger Snaps*, we see that Ginger and her sister Bea already have rejected the Beauty Myth. Before Ginger becomes a werewolf, the teen sisters set themselves apart from their peers with their dark-hued thrift shop finery and teased Goth hair, a sartorial defiance that is part of their larger rejection of hegemonic femininity and of the white middle-class values of their community. But everything changes for Ginger once she is bitten by a werewolf. Ginger suddenly buys into the Beauty Myth by changing her appearance to conform to a more conventional standard of teen female beauty that encourages girls to demonstrate their “maturity” by dressing in sexualized ways. The day after Ginger is attacked, she comes to school sporting a stylish hair-do and form fitting clothing, drawing appreciative glances from the boys and disapproving glares from other girls.

However, Ginger’s new conformity to the Beauty Myth also makes her monstrous in that she becomes a hormonally-driven, sexually-insatiable animal. Griffin notes that pornography is filled with associations between women and animals (24), a connection that permits men to deny what they perceive as their own bestial impulses by projecting these feelings onto the body of a woman. According to this logic, a woman’s body, by inspiring desire in a man, recalls him to his own mortality and subsequent vulnerability, an association which is terrifying for him as “nature can make him want. Nature can cause him to cry in loneliness, to feel a terrible hunger, or a thirst. Nature can even cause him to die” (Griffin 28). The sinister association of women with the natural world, however, is not limited to pornographic fantasy, but is also reproduced in high and popular culture. In *Ginger Snaps*, Ginger’s transformation is governed by the phases of the moon, an association that connects lycanthropy to menstruation and nature. As Ginger becomes more sexually desirable, she also becomes more animal and difficult to control, and therefore dangerous.

Tara in *Blood Moon* also turns into a monster due to her desire to conform to the Beauty Myth. Tara so craves the approbation that accompanies being a conventionally feminine beauty that she willingly destroys all that makes her a compassionate and autonomous young

woman. At the beginning of the film, Tara is stereotypically feminine in all but appearance. She is modest, shy, and so gentle that she is an ethical vegetarian. These qualities all lie at the heart of what Lynn Phillips terms the "Pleasing Woman Discourse," part of a set of "prevailing ideas or cultural messages" (16) about normative femininity and masculinity. Contemporary discourses about gender communicate that a "good" woman cherishes "the feminine 'attributes' of modesty, attractiveness, and sacrifice for others, particularly men" (Phillips 39). Though Tara is self-sacrificing and modest, her extreme hirsutism eternally bars her from being both normatively feminine and normatively human. The aesthetics of beauty impose "a childlike state of hairlessness" (Brownmiller 140) on women, and body hair outside of the female head represents an "animal-like aspect" that is characteristic of "werewolves, witches, barbarians and madmen" who all appear "uncontrolled and fierce" (Brownmiller 144). So the silky hair covering Tara's body signifies that she is not female and not human, negating any other behaviors or bodily characteristics that signify the opposite. As a result, Tara's hirsutism makes her an eternal outsider. During one of Tara's rare journeys outside of the freak show, she is recognized by two local boys who have seen her Wolf Girl performance. One of them tells Tara that she "looks really freaky" and that he "puked the first time" he saw her, a confession which only reinforces her status as abject Other.

Tara understands better than most girls the perils of not fitting into her culture's standards of beauty. In fact, she is lucky to be alive. As an infant, Tara was abandoned by her desperate mother to Harley Dune, the freak show's proprietor. Born in the aftermath of Ceausescu's Romania, Tara is nearly killed by superstitious villagers who believed that her hirsutism signified that she is Satan's spawn. Harley's freak show has at least given Tara a place to exist in a more enlightened culture, if only to occupy the subject position of professional Other. Furthermore, Tara is luckier than other "freaks" whose bodies do not fit into conventional ideas of beauty. One of the side show's attractions includes "the dime museum," a collection of preserved deformed infants known to fellow performers as "the baby show." Harley explains that "most freaks are killed as soon as they are born."

Tara and her fellow freaks make their livings as professional Others who reassure their audiences of their own comparative normalcy. If being normatively feminine, normatively masculine, or even normatively human are tenuous categories that must be continually constructed through a stylized repetition of acts, then these categories also need reinforcing through the presence of the Other, that personification of the abject. Building on Lacan's concept of the mirror phase, Creed describes identity as "a structure that depends on identification with another. Identity is an imaginary construct, formed in a state of alienation, grounded in misrecognition" ("Horror" 57). Because "the self is constructed on an illusion" (Creed "Horror" 57), it is always inherently unstable. Harley Dune's freak show, like the horror film, "puts the viewing subject's sense of a unified self into crisis, specifically in those moments when the image on the screen [or the performers, as is the case in the freak show] become too threatening or horrific to watch, when the abject threatens to draw the viewing subject" ("Horror" Creed 57) to that place "where meaning collapses," as Julia Kristeva would say. But meaning eventually reconstitutes itself when the spectator stops looking, in part to "reconstruct the boundary between self and screen [or performer, in the case of the freak show] and reconstitute the self that is threatened with disintegration" ("Horror" Creed 58).

Tara, however, no longer wants to be a professional Other. Instead, she longs to be a “normal” teen girl whose appearance draws admiring glances which would give her another sort of power. So when Dr. Klein’s son Ryan offers Tara the chance to test his mother’s experimental drug to cure hirsutism, she does not hesitate to try it, regardless of the possible dangerous side effects. Without Dr. Klein’s knowledge, Ryan injects Tara with the drug, which works as promised. After three treatments, Tara is a “normal” girl with smooth skin instead of silky fur.

But Dr. Klein’s drug makes Tara much more than “normal” or unremarkable. Instead, she is the embodiment of the Beauty Myth’s promise of power. Tara becomes a ravishing beauty whose looks give her a preternatural ability to hypnotize others. As Tara leaves the freak show for good, she comes upon Crystal, the ringleader of a group of local teens who have been heckling her at her Wolf Girl performances. Dr. Klein’s depilatory drug has so transformed Tara that Crystal does not recognize her as the Wolf Girl. Furthermore, Crystal is so enchanted by Tara’s beauty that she does not question why this seeming stranger is alone and naked in the woods in the middle of the night. Instead, Tara is similar to Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s Geraldine⁵⁰ or Joseph Sheridan LeFanu’s Carmilla,⁵¹ succubae who cast glammers on all who encounter them. Tara’s beauty permits her to similarly cast a glamour on Crystal, who shyly reveals her most closely guarded secret of how she too is not conventionally feminine: she is sexually attracted to girls. Crystal makes a pass at Tara, but when she leans in to kiss her, Tara has become so completely animal that she bites off and swallows Crystal’s tongue. This act deprives Crystal of agency by robbing her of the power of speech. Trites observes that cultural silencing “is one of the dominant forces that shape female growth” (*Waking* 47). When Tara bites off Crystal’s tongue, she makes her former antagonist more normatively feminine. Dr. Klein’s depilatory treatment has also deprived Tara of the power of speech, which makes her both more conventionally feminine and also more animal.

Relational Aggression and Sisterhood

Not only does the Beauty Myth divest women of agency by keeping them occupied pursuing impossible standards of physical perfection, it also deprives them of a collective strength in how it undermines sisterhood. Wolf observes that the Beauty Myth prevents sisterhood by encouraging women to “see each other as beauties first” (Wolf 56) who are in adversarial relationships with one another. The myth undermines solidarity and urges “women to believe that it’s every woman for herself.” (Wolf 56). Sisterhood is extremely threatening to patriarchy because a unified group of women is more powerful than any individual woman. United through sisterhood, women, who are the majority of the population, could undo the

⁵⁰ From the poem fragment “Christabel” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

⁵¹ From the novella *Carmilla* in the collection *Through a Glass Darkly* by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu.

effects of patriarchy in multiple ways and compel changes to the status quo that would give them truly equal opportunities.⁵²

The Beauty Myth is one factor that isolates Ginger and Tara from other women and encourages girlfighting, Brown's term for the bitchy, backbiting relational aggression that frequently characterizes girls' relationships with one another. According to Brown, "girls take out their anxieties and fears about matching up to or resisting ideals of feminine beauty and behavior on each other" (*Girlfighting* 32) by excluding from the group members of their sex who do not meet certain cultural definitions of girlness or femininity, such as those found in the Beauty Myth. The result is a "climate of division and distrust among girls [that] eventually undermines women's psychological strengths and their political potential" (Brown *Girlfighting* 33). In this way, girlfighting maintains the status quo—girls grow into women who see one another as rivals for the attention of men, the power brokers in a patriarchal society, rather than become women who question the value of this attention in the first place.

Even before Ginger was bitten by the werewolf, she and her sister Bea were the victims of girlfighting. The sisters' running feud with other female peers is established in a scene during gym class. Ginger and Bea make nasty comments about Trina St. Claire, one of the school's more popular girls, supposedly outside of her hearing. But Trina overhears the sisters' remarks, and the violence of her retaliation demonstrates the long-standing nature of their grudge. During a game of field hockey, Trina knocks Bea to the ground in a way that appears accidental from the gym teacher's distant perspective. Brown describes the hidden nature of girlfighting, which permits this relational aggression to fly under the radar of adults who could intervene in what they might see as bullying behavior: "Part of being an acceptable girl in a culture so deeply infused with white middle-class values" is to appear to be "nice." Thus, "girls who buy into prevailing views of femininity are likely to hide the 'bad' or 'shameful' parts of their relationships" (*Girlfighting* 6). This type of "accidentally on purpose" violence is one way that girls hide from adults their aggression towards one another.

When Ginger begins her period and is bitten by the werewolf, the power dynamic shifts between her and the girls who excluded her: while Ginger is still the target of girlfighting, she can now defend herself. Nevertheless, from her new position, Ginger still perpetuates these persistent divisions between women rather than attempting to overcome them. Because Ginger has gone from scorning beauty culture to being a beauty whose appearance gets her attention from boys, she is now Trina's rival. Soon after Ginger's transformation, she begins dating Jason McCardle, one of the more popular boys in school. While Ginger is now more like a "normal" girl, other girls are even less likely to feel any solidarity with her since winning Jason's attention makes her an even greater rival for someone whose popularity positions him as one of the school's power brokers. Furthermore, Ginger's changed status alters her relationship with Bea. While the two are still close, fights erupt because of Ginger's new interest in boys, an

⁵² For example, "collective female solidarity in the workplace might force the power structure to tackle the expensive concessions that many economists now believe are necessary if women are to have truly equal opportunity: day care, flextime, job security after childbirth and parental leave" (Wolf 56).

interest which causes Ginger to privilege her relationship with Jason over her relationship with Bea. In this way, Ginger becomes even more isolated from other girls.

Unlike Ginger, Tara has benefitted from a powerful intergenerational sisterhood with her fellow freak show performers. Yet as Tara becomes more of a beauty, she rejects the sisterhood of those who were part of her support system. In this way, Tara is both more conventionally feminine and more monstrous. Before Tara becomes a beauty, Athena the Fat Lady and Christoph/Christine the hermaphrodite serve as her mentors. Both women have a unique understanding of the Beauty Myth since their bodies lie so far outside the parameters of stereotypical femininity. Christoph/Christine encourages Tara to value herself and other people for qualities other than their ability to be “normal.” Athena tells Tara that the outside world, with its normal people, is highly overrated. Indeed, Athena’s act is all about inverting the Beauty Myth. During Athena’s performances, she wears sexy lingerie and is glamorously made up. Athena delights in how her 665 pound body frightens spectators because it quite literally overflows the boundaries of conventional femininity. After viewing Athena, the boyishly thin Crystal feels so insecure about her own ability to be stereotypically feminine that she puts her finger down her throat to purge the small amount of cotton candy she has eaten lest this morsel cause her to swell to Athena’s size.

As Dr. Klein’s depilatory treatment begins to transform Tara, she rejects this intergenerational sisterhood, distancing herself from both women, as well as from the other members of the freak show. In this way, Tara is policing the borders of femininity “by excluding and rejecting and ostracizing ‘other’ girls who don’t match up” (*Brown Girlfighting* 59).

At the end of the film, when Tara has been transformed into a flawless beauty, it is indicated that she will also be a sort of lone wolf, passing through a landscape where there is no one else like her. In the concluding scene, the Beauty Myth’s promise of power is revealed as hollow. In her new and “improved” form, Tara is isolated from all other members of her species, and she is mute, representing how she has been divested of agency as the price for feminine beauty.

Woman and Nature

Ginger Snaps and *Blood Moon* reproduce in monstrous form the Enlightenment nature/culture division whereby women are more closely affiliated with nature, while men are more closely affiliated with culture. Ginger and Tara are linked to nature because they are female—and they are werewolves.

Ginger’s lupine characteristics are closely linked with her becoming a young adult. At the beginning of the film both Ginger and her sister Bea scorn what they characterize as the “total hormonal toilet” of high school culture: neither girl dates nor demonstrates any romantic interest in boys or girls. The film implies that the sisters’ disdain for their peers is due to more than their intellectual superiority (Bea, the younger sister, is in classes with Ginger because her high test scores permitted her to skip a grade). Instead, this scorn is a product of their relative sexual immaturity: neither nearly sixteen-year-old Ginger nor her fifteen-year-old sister Bea has entered menarche, and their physical immaturity contributes to their outsider status. But when Ginger starts her period and is bitten by a werewolf almost immediately afterwards, she becomes simultaneously a sexually mature woman *and* a monster. In this way, the natural

world of the wolf and the category of woman are linked. As a result of her entering menarche and the werewolf's bite, Ginger suddenly becomes sexually mature, which is demonstrated by her newfound interest in boys. However, while her normatively feminine peers manage to keep their sexual desires under control, these feelings erupt violently in Ginger, who has been transformed into a teen femme fatale.

Although Ginger is dangerous while she is ovulating, she is even more dangerous on the night of the full moon, when she is about to menstruate for the second time in her life. On this night, when Ginger will change completely into a werewolf, she is also at her most sexually active: she attempts to sequentially seduce several men. Afterwards, Ginger will permanently become a werewolf, a metamorphosis that has been occurring over the past twenty-eight days. The relationship between the werewolf and menstruation is nothing new. Walter Evans sees the werewolf, regardless of its sex, as being related to the menstrual cycle because its "bloody attacks . . . occur regularly every month" (357). As a female werewolf, Ginger is doubly linked to the phases of the moon. Lunar cycles are generally associated with femininity as women's menstrual cycles loosely follow the moon's phases.⁵³

The werewolf's bite has made Ginger monstrous by altering her body so that it resembles what Kristeva terms the abject body, whose manifestation is "the feminine maternal body" (Kristeva 102). The feminine maternal body is the prototype of the abject body because its lack of corporeal integrity, demonstrated through the secreting of blood, among other things, signifying its link to the natural world (Creed "Dark Desires" 122). The combination of lycanthropy and menarche changes Ginger's body from a girlish one to a maternal one, whose behaviors are regulated by her menstrual cycle, which is in turn controlled by a lunar cycle. She goes from having no interest in dating to becoming a slave to the biological imperative to mate.

When Ginger is about to ovulate, she is so eager to lose her virginity that she sexually assaults her boyfriend Jason. In the back seat of Jason's car, Ginger's desire to have sex is so fierce that she starts ripping off Jason's shirt. When Jason encourages Ginger to slow down, reminding her "who's the guy here," she becomes enraged and pushes him into the car seat, ignoring his screams of protest.

Finally, Ginger's lupine body also links her to nature. Before Ginger fully metamorphoses into a werewolf, she is a seductive combination of woman and animal. In this hybrid body, Ginger represents what Griffin theorizes is all that men find bestial in themselves, and in pornography, have projected on to the bodies of women (24). Furthermore, in this context, Ginger's ability to incite desire in all men who come her way is as monstrous as her need to tear things apart. Unlike the woman of pornographic fantasy, Ginger cannot be controlled. Pornography that associates women with animals is created by a pornographer who "imagines himself in control. Where there is a horse, there is a rider. Where there is a lion, there is a lion tamer" (Griffin 28). But in horror, the monster is not so easily subdued—Ginger is not controlled by any of the male characters.

Tara's connection to the natural world is more complicated. Tara's name (which means "earth" in Latin) hints at her association with nature. Before her transformation, Tara appears

⁵³ The werewolf's transformation was first linked to the full moon in the 1943 film *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman*. (du Coudray 78).

to be more closely affiliated with the animal kingdom than with humanity as the hair covering most of her body gives her a bestial appearance. Yet in this form, Tara is more civilized than the “normal” humans in the film. Ferocity, a characteristic often attributed to animals, is not present in the vegetarian Tara. Rather, Tara is so gentle that when Crystal and her friends taunt her by pelting her with dog feces during her Wolf Girl performance, she can only cry and howl in frustration. Tara only becomes ferocious after exchanging her “animal” body for a “human” one. The film’s closing shots affirm Tara’s connection with the natural world in her new depilated body. As Tara recedes into a wooded landscape, we can see that she has lost the power of speech, no longer wears clothing and now walks on all fours. Her body posture indicates that she is comfortable in this environment and that some “natural” instinct has taken over to guide her in her new life. While those who may encounter Tara might not view her as horrible, the viewer, who has witnessed her savaging of Crystal and another one of her tormenters in previous scenes, knows that she is now a dangerous monster.

Lycanthropy as Drag

Ginger’s and Tara’s metamorphoses can be viewed as drag performances. The combination of the werewolf’s bite and hormonal changes brought about by menarche transform Ginger’s body, making it more masculine and animal. As a consequence, Ginger must labor to successfully pass as female and human. Tara has performed a type of drag all of her life. As one of Harley Dune’s oddities, Tara performs as animal, augmenting her body hair with prosthetic fangs and nails to give her a more bestial appearance. But when Dr. Klein’s depilatory treatment eradicates Tara’s hirsutism, she stops performing as an animal only to become a beast performing as a beautiful young woman.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler sees drag as a performance that can destabilize the category of gender by mocking “the notion of a true gender identity” (137). However, not all drag is destabilizing. Butler notes that “parody by itself is not subversive” (*Gender* 139). While some parodic repetitions are “effectively disruptive, truly troubling,” others “become domesticated and recirculated as instruments of cultural hegemony” (*Gender* 139). The latter is the case with Ginger and Tara in their monstrous forms.

Ginger’s lupine body is a monstrous perversion of the notion of a stable gender identity. As Ginger becomes more of a femme fatale, she is also more normatively masculine in some aspects of her appearance. She sprouts hair on her chest and grows dewclaws on her ankles, and her coccyx elongates into a budding tail, which is alarmingly erect, like a tiny penis. As the tail grows, Ginger must tape it to her leg in order to continue passing for human and female. Strapping down her new appendage in this way is similar to how drag queens tape down their penises to more convincingly create the illusion of femininity.

Arguably, this is one reason that Ginger in her lupine body is so threatening to others. Like the body of the drag queen, Ginger’s body also cannot be neatly categorized as male or female, human or animal, and so calls into question the stability of these boundaries, since Ginger is a creature that crosses borders. As Creed explains, “the concept of a border is central to the construction of the monstrous in the horror film.” Anything crossing this border, or attempting to cross it, is menacing because it brings about “an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability” (“Horror” 40-41).

Ultimately, Ginger does not even appear to fit into the category of nature, which makes her more fearsome. As a werewolf, Ginger is an animal that does not resemble any sort of creature found in the natural world. She is now a hairless, hideous grey beast who walks on all fours and is intent on destroying everyone she meets. As a result, she must be “put to sleep” for the protection of humans. In this way, Ginger is no different from her more famous lycanthropic cinematic counterparts such as Larry Talbot (*The Wolf Man*) or Tony Rivers (*I Was a Teenage Werewolf*), both of whom must be killed to protect humans from their menace. In this way, Ginger’s drag is merely an instrument of cultural hegemony, rather than one of those truly troubling iterations of a supposedly stable category that calls into question all assumptions that undergird it.

Tara too can be understood as a creature in drag, first during her Wolf Girl performances when she is a human performing as a beast, and later as an animal in drag as a beautiful young woman. Tara’s drag is also an instrument of cultural hegemony. Her performance as the Wolf Girl reinforces the imaginary boundaries between human and animal, male and female. As a cultural institution, the freak show embodies a sort of Otherness that reinforces the audience’s superior sense of normalcy. So when patrons view the Wolf Girl, Athena the Fat Lady, the Bearded Lady, or Christoph/Christine, they are reassured that they are well within the cultural boundaries that firmly establish them as human, of normal body weight, and unambiguously sexed, rather than challenged to rethink their ideas about these categories.

Tara’s performance as a beauty at the end of the film has the potential to be one of those “truly troubling” repetitions that Butler describes, but only if the audience can recognize that Tara is in drag, and understand what is so unsettling about her performance. After Dr. Klein’s treatments, Tara has gone from performing as an animal to being a full-fledged werewolf, a creature who is simultaneously animal and human. However, Tara’s lycanthropy reverses the subject position of the typical werewolf: Tara is a beast trapped within a beautiful human body rather than a human encased in an animal’s flesh. As a result, Tara is conventionally feminine: she now embodies what the pornographic mind has always believed to be true of women—that lurking behind the alluring form is an animal who can, and must, be mastered by man. But unlike the woman of pornographic fantasy, Tara cannot be mastered. She is a feral creature who in the film’s last scene cannot even recognize her own reflection in a pond. Rather, Tara has regressed to a state prior to the mirror stage and the formation of ego.⁵⁴ In essence, Tara’s monstrosity is a commentary on the category of conventional femininity, as only the viewer, who is privy to what brought Tara to this state, can recognize her for the dangerous creature that she is.

Although both Ginger and Tara struggle with the painful pressures girls face to be conventionally feminine, each loses the battle to break out of this constricting subject position. In her influential essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey explains that in film, women are “bearer[s] of meaning, not maker[s] of meaning” insofar as they are objectified by the male gaze (29). The male gaze not only recreates women as Other, as objects of desire who provide scopophilic pleasure, but also as harbingers of the castration fear due to their lack

⁵⁴ “The Mirror Stage As Formative of the I Function As Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,” Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006.

of a penis, a deficiency that “constantly endangers the unity of the diegesis and bursts through the world of illusion as an intrusive, static, one-dimensional fetish” (Mulvey 39). This is certainly the case for Ginger and Tara: their monstrosity is intimately connected to how they are assessed by the male gaze.

Vivian (*Blood and Chocolate*) and Maris (*The Bleeding*), on the other hand, can offer the reader possibilities for a liberated female subjectivity, partially because their narratives are not conveyed through a visual medium and so the reader cannot participate in the male gaze in the way she might through film. Outside of the visual realm then, it is easier for Maris and Vivian to escape being codified by the viewer as “static, one-dimensional” fetishes of the werewolf as imprinted into the cultural consciousness by *The Wolf Man* and *Werewolf of London* and their various iterations. Instead, Klause and Windsor are better able to explore the werewolf as hybrid of beast and human rather than ferocious animal Other. This hybridity is a quality that permits Vivian and Maris to pass back and forth between the categories of animal and human, male and female, a quality that ultimately makes it difficult to confine them to the object position as bearers of meaning.

The Werewolf as Model of Liberated Feminine Subjectivity

While Tara and Ginger offer a fairly conventional representation of woman as monstrous Other, Maris in Patricia Windsor’s novel *The Bleeding* and Vivian in Annette Curtis Klause’s novel *Blood and Chocolate* hint at possibilities for a liberated feminine subjectivity, which helps readers envision an alternative to patriarchy. Trites states that one of the most important functions of children’s literature is “to depict children who enact the agency that children in real life may not have” (*Waking* 29). This in turn enables the reader to imagine her own possibilities for agency. Trites’ observations about children’s literature can be applied to Young Adult fiction as well. *The Bleeding* and *Blood and Chocolate* emphasize the pressure that teen girls feel to embody a normative femininity that necessitates they disavow their desires for sex—and sometimes even food—while stifling the justifiable anger they experience as a result. Unlike Tara and Ginger, Maris and Vivian have successfully deconstructed this subject position.

Moreover, the fantastic elements of these narratives uniquely enable readers to imagine alternatives to feminine subordination. Bruno Bettelheim explains how fairy tales foster the reader’s ability to work out solutions to complex problems. The fairy tale’s unrealistic nature “is an important device, because it makes obvious that the fairy tale’s concern is not useful information about the external world, but the inner processes taking place in the individual” (25). Bettelheim’s observations about fairy tales also apply to other types of non-realistic fiction such as horror, the gothic and paranormal romance.

Paranormal Romance and Conventional Femininity

Both *Blood and Chocolate* and *The Bleeding* are paranormal romances, a hybrid genre that gives Klause and Windsor multiple strategies for exposing gender as constructed rather than natural and therefore immutable. Paranormal romance is defined as a narrative with supernatural elements where the love relationship between main characters is the focus of the

plot (Ramsdale 4, 221). *Ginger Snaps* and *Blood Moon* are not paranormal romances; though each protagonist has a male love interest, the relationships are secondary to the story. In *Blood and Chocolate* and *The Bleeding*, however, Vivian's and Maris's romantic relationships are crucial to the development of their emerging senses of self as adult women. Furthermore, these romantic relationships are altered by the figure of the werewolf. In the conventional romance narrative, the heroine must successfully reinterpret the hero's surliness as evidence of his affection rather than behavior that should drive her away. This semantic sleight of hand is not difficult for the heroine to perform (or for the typical romance reader to accept) since contemporary discourses of masculinity have already predisposed her to view his gruff, dismissive behavior as compatible with his gender.⁵⁵ The presence of a werewolf figure, however, transforms the typical relationship between the heroine and hero of the romance. Because the female werewolf is the embodiment of all that women are compelled to repress in the interest of being stereotypically feminine, the lycanthropic heroines of these paranormal romances can deconstruct conventional masculinity. As a consequence, they can avoid becoming entangled with someone who would deprive them of autonomy.

Harriet Margolis argues that romance fiction can be read as a type of female *Bildungsroman* in that "it considers questions of female identity, with a particular interest in the female protagonist's subjectivity" (124). Unfortunately, in the romance genre, these questions are usually answered in a way that represents the female protagonist as subordinated and effectively silenced. In the conclusion of most romance novels, the heroine's development is achieved after she finds her true love, with whom she will retreat into the domestic sphere and live a fairly conventionally feminine existence (Margolis 125). Paranormal romance, on the other hand, depicts alternatives for women to the typical marriage plot. Lee Tobin-McClain describes paranormal romance as a genre whose fantastic elements allow "for the exploration of unspeakable elements of contemporary gender identity and relationships" (300) such as women's anger and empowerment and feelings of desire. Lycanthropy enables Vivian and Maris to accept their anger and sexual desires and senses of themselves as powerful rather than experience them as abject qualities that must be disavowed. As a consequence, each girl can develop beyond the narrow confines of the typical romance novel protagonist. *The*

⁵⁵ Lynn Phillips identifies what she terms "The Male Sexual Drive" discourse, a description of "normal" masculinity disseminated by popular culture that represents men as having a sexual drive "that is inherently compelling and aggressive in its quest for fulfillment." This discourse normalizes a lot of masculine misbehavior, assuring "women (and men) that sexualized male aggression, from street harassment to gang rape, is neither a crime nor an act of violation, but just another case in which 'boys will be boys.' It is what tells us that 'working out a yes' from a nonconsenting woman is not rape, but merely what any 'red-blooded American male' would do when aroused. It is what allows defense lawyers to 'justify' such behaviors as fraternity gang rape on college campuses and acquaintance rape of women who are drunk or unconscious" (57-58). Additionally, "The Male Sexual Drive" discourse eroticizes these behaviors. "So pervasive is the privileging of male entitlement that aggression moves well beyond merely being naturalized as inevitable; indeed, male domination is often posed as something positive—erotic, flattering to women, an indication of the powers of desire. Such messages are communicated clearly—to women as well as to men—in the eroticizing of women's powerlessness and objectification in pornography" (59) as well as in romance fiction.

Blooding and *Blood and Chocolate* end with Maris's and Vivian's developing into strong and relatively autonomous women who will never quietly and completely retreat into the domestic sphere.

Moreover, the paranormal elements of *The Blooding* and *Blood and Chocolate* enable Maris and Vivian to deconstruct the romance genre's discourses of normative femininity that set women up for victimization. Both girls initially attempt to emulate the typical romance heroine's behavior, a behavior that is represented as typifying what it means to be a "good" and "normal" woman in our culture.⁵⁶ However, eventually each girl realizes that this behavior is self-destructive, in part because it is antithetical to her nature as a werewolf. As a result, both girls come to understand how conventional femininity is a confining subject position rather than a "natural" facet of adult womanhood.

Maris's ideas about adult heterosexual relationships have been shaped by gothic romance fiction. The reader learns that Maris "liked films where the man seemed remote and almost cruel, but softened in the end" (Windsor 62), a reaction that fits into Tania Modleski's theory of how romance fiction perpetuates "ideological confusion about male sexuality and male violence" by assuring women that a bullying man's meanness "is nothing more than the overflow of [his] love or the measure of [his] resistance to [women's] extraordinary charms" (42). In other words, Maris's exposure to gothic romance fiction has predisposed her to eroticize men's abusive treatment of women.

As a consequence, at the beginning of the novel, Maris actively participates in her own victimization. Michelle Massé describes the gothic heroine as someone who helps shape the system that oppresses her through internalizing its values (5). We see this propinquity in how Maris is all too willing to gloss over Derrick's dismissive treatment of his wife Barb. Initially Maris views Barb as a woman who is genuinely ill, rather than the chronic malingerer that Derrick believes her to be. But Maris's opinion of Barb changes momentarily when she becomes attracted to Derrick. Afterwards, Maris attributes the couple's fights to what she interprets as Barb's hysterical reaction to her environment rather than Derrick's failure to take over any of the childcare responsibilities or Barb's relative isolation in the family's country home.

Modleski observes how gothic romance fiction connects a woman's femininity to her ability to ignore the warning signs of abuse. When the gothic heroine is confronted with evidence that her beloved is a dangerous man, she labors to convince herself that her suspicions are baseless and that "she will have failed as a woman if she does not implicitly believe in him" (Modleski 59). Because *The Blooding* is told from Maris's point of view, we are privy to her internal struggles, so we see her inner battle to redefine Derrick as a brooding gothic hero, in spite of contrary indications. Like Jade's death, Barbara's death is also labeled a suicide, though her reputed means of dispatching herself are improbable—Barbara supposedly bled to death after biting open her wrists. After Barb's death, Maris works to convince herself that her suspicions about Derrick's involvement are unfounded. Maris persists in believing in Derrick's innocence, even after she learns that he is a werewolf who could easily have inflicted these wounds. Maris will only truly understand how abusive and dangerous Derrick is after she becomes the object of his affection. However, this realization will take some time given that she

⁵⁶ Lynn Phillips discusses how discourses of normative masculinity and femininity are perpetuated by romance fiction, as well as through other forms of mass media such as women's magazines.

has been preconditioned by gothic romance fiction to mistake some of the warning signs of abuse for affection.

The basic framework of *Blood and Chocolate* follows the trajectory of the Harlequin romance: a young, inexperienced woman becomes involved with an older man who is “mocking, cynical, contemptuous, often hostile” (Modleski 36), and his behavior confuses her since the man is obviously interested in her romantically. Vivian too is young and inexperienced in the ways of adult relationships (though it is implied that she has been sexually active). Gabriel, the man who will become her partner at the end of the novel, is older than Vivian by about a decade, strong, and more experienced than she. Although Vivian is initially attracted to Gabriel, she dismisses her feelings because of what she sees as his mocking, cynical and contemptuous behavior, especially towards her. In fact, at the beginning of the novel, Vivian wants nothing to do with the young men of her kind because their swaggering, vulgar, sex-crazed performance of masculinity leads them to attempt to dominate her. Vivian’s pursuit of Aiden, a sensitive human boy whose long hair and love of poetry makes him the polar opposite of her fellow werewolves, underscores how she has rejected the sort of masculinity displayed by the young men of her pack. Aiden’s interest in the occult and his poem about the beauty of a werewolf in her pelt leads Vivian to hope that he would love the beast within her rather than be repulsed by this facet of herself.

Instead, Vivian’s brief relationship with Aiden causes her to become ensnared within the parameters of stereotypical femininity. Because Aiden is a “meat boy,” as some members of her pack refer to humans to indicate that they are potential prey rather than the equal of werewolves, Vivian must perform a sort of double drag in his presence whereby she can pass both as human and conventionally feminine. As a werewolf living in a world where her kind is greatly outnumbered by humans, Vivian must always give a convincing performance as a human when she is not among the pack. When Vivian is with Aiden, she must also convincingly perform as normatively feminine so as not to frighten him, even though he is supposedly an enlightened man who does not subscribe to conventional gender roles.

Conventional Femininity and Victimization

While being conventionally feminine benefits Maris and Vivian in the short run, eventually it sets them up for victimization. Maris’s conventional femininity, which is manifested in her willingness to take on an increasing share of the Forrest household’s domestic labor after Barb’s death, leads Derrick to confess that he “needs her,” something that Maris reads at the time as proof that she’s a “mature woman” rather than the ignorant child that her mother and other older women believe her to be. Soon after Barb’s death, Derrick begs Maris to stay in England and help him with his children, particularly since his mother-in-law, who believes that he drove her daughter to suicide, has threatened to sue for custody. The language of Derrick’s request appeals to Maris’s need to feel valued and is calculated to manipulate her into making a dangerous and ill-informed choice. Derrick warns Maris that “helping [him] means giving up everything. There’s no way back, no way out, no way to undo it. Once it happens, it last forever” (Windsor 190). While Derrick is giving Maris a warning of sorts, he fails to give her all the information she’d need to make an informed choice. However, Maris has already been preconditioned to view the lack of information in this statement as a

declaration of love since what Derrick speaks of here can also refer to the idea of marriage as perpetuated in romance fiction. Only after Maris promises to help Derrick does he reveal his lycanthropy to her, and she agrees to be similarly changed as a way of “helping” him.

After Derrick transforms Maris into a werewolf, she soon realizes that he has put her in a situation where she is extremely vulnerable. He has made her into a werewolf not in order to imbue her with supernatural abilities that would make her strong and autonomous, but to make her even more dependent on him. Not only is Maris a stranger in another country, but she is now a monster in a hostile human society. Beset by the unfamiliar new urges that are precipitated by lycanthropy, Maris must rely on Derrick to show her how to survive as a werewolf, as there is no other source of information from which she can learn how to change forms and hunt without being detected by humans. However, Derrick shares knowledge with Maris sparingly, making it difficult for her to leave the house and hunt on her own. After Derrick takes Maris out on an initial hunt, he instructs her to remain at the house to care for his children until he decides when she can hunt again. Meanwhile, Maris’s new urges make her a prisoner of her body when she is debilitated by her need to consume raw animal flesh.

Vivian too reaps short-term rewards for grooming her body into a conventional femininity—she momentarily becomes Aiden’s love interest. However, when Vivian finally decides to stop performing as conventionally feminine and human, the results are disastrous. On the night they are to consummate their relationship, Vivian reveals her wolf form to Aiden, hoping that he will see “something beautiful, and wild, beyond imagining” (Klaus 166). Instead, Vivian out of “drag” is so beyond Aiden’s concept of reality that he can only be terrified. When Vivian completes her change in front of Aiden, he begins to cry, then chases her from the room (Klaus 168-69).

Aiden’s reaction to Vivian’s lycanthropic body in effect punishes her for expressing her sexuality. Human females find male werewolves attractive, as their lycanthropy is an extension of normative masculinity, particularly as established by the conventions of paranormal romance. This explains some of Maris’s attraction to Derrick in *The Blooding*. However, human males find female werewolves repugnant, as they are the antithesis of conventional femininity. Days later, when Vivian corners Aiden to discuss their last encounter, he can only express loathing for her now that he knows her horrible secret: “Every time I think of kissing you I see that other face” and think “what has that mouth done?” (Klaus 194). Later Aiden is so horrified by Vivian that he shoots her in order to put her out of the misery he believes she must be suffering because she is a werewolf. Aiden’s actions, however, maintain traditional gender roles rather than protect Vivian.

As I have already noted in my introduction, the supernatural elements of horror denaturalize the repressed, thereby making accessible the terrors of daily life (Pinedo 39), as well as deconstruct and redraw the boundaries that perpetuate subjectivity (Creed “Horror” 46). In this way, *Blood and Chocolate* and *The Blooding* use supernatural elements to critique the sexist representations of erotic love that undergird the romance. Though Windsor and Klaus frame their heroines’ lives through the conventions of romance, both authors also manipulate these conventions of the genre in order to challenge its sexist assumptions. They do this in part through the use of paranormal elements more commonly found in horror.

Neither Maris nor Vivian can maintain a posture of normative femininity for an extended period of time, particularly as this subject position is represented in the romance

genre, since doing so deprives each girl of her own strengths to a degree that puts her in peril. Rather, Vivian and Maris cross boundaries, so they belong to the category of the monstrous even without their lycanthropy. Lycanthropy then is the physical manifestation of both girls' inability to remain within the parameters of normative femininity. Specifically, Maris's and Vivian's "unnatural" appetites and their inability to control their anger prevent them from being normatively feminine. In this way, Maris and Vivian are similar to Ginger and Tara.

Meat and Sex

Maris and Vivian have "unfeminine" desires to hunt and eat meat. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol Adams describes meat as "a masculine food and meat eating [as] a male activity" (26). In non-technological societies, "meat was a valuable economic commodity" (Adams 34) and men became the hunters who controlled this commodity and consequently achieved power. The female werewolf's ability to kill and eat her prey then demonstrates her bestial nature as well as incipient masculinity; she does not need to rely on a man to supply sustenance, as it were. In fact, her appetites can only be satisfied if she hunts her own prey.

In *The Bleeding* we see a power struggle over meat similar to the one that Adams describes as characterizing the distribution of this resource in non-technological societies. After Derrick has turned Maris into a werewolf, he does not want her to change into her lupine form and hunt without him. But the newly-turned Maris is beset by intense cravings for meat, and needs to hunt to supply her own sustenance since her new hunger cannot be satisfied by consuming the store-bought chicken in the Forrests' freezer. Maris's solo outings outrage Derrick, allegedly because he believes that she is too young and inexperienced to be discreet (and therefore runs the risk of exposing his own lycanthropy to a community that is already on edge because a "wolf" has been killing their dogs and livestock). But Derrick's anger is actually about control, as his relationship with Barb reveals.

Ironically, Barb was not a suitable partner for Derrick because she was *too* conventionally feminine and so could never fully transform into a werewolf. When Barb submitted to Derrick's bite, she did so merely to augment his affections for her: she had no innate longing to express the animal side of her personality. Eventually Barb's mental and physical state deteriorates because her body rejects her emerging lycanthropy. The novel implies that Barb's inability to fully change into her wolf form and hunt is related to her Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), which leaves her too enervated to do much of anything. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CFS "occurs up to four times more frequently in women than in men." ("Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Who's at Risk?"). To put it another way, Barb's CFS makes her the poster child for conventional femininity.

Vivian and Maris, on the other hand, love the hunt, further placing them at odds with conventional femininity. In general, girls "show higher levels of positive behaviors and attitudes towards animals" (Herzog 7) than do boys, including their attachment to pets, involvement in animal protectionism and aversion to hunting. While Aiden bemoans that his father tried to make him go hunting with him as a way of making him more normatively masculine, Vivian thinks that she would give anything to be able to go and kill something with her father again (Klause 79). After Maris is changed, she finds herself longing for "raw flesh and warm blood" (Windsor 235) and feeling a more intense desire to hunt than to eat (Windsor 236). However,

when Maris confesses this desire to Derrick, she is so outside the confines of normative femininity that even he seems to be repulsed by her (Windsor 236)

Another way that the female werewolf resists conventional femininity is her insistence on her own sexual pleasure. Vivian and other women of her kind openly desire sex. She longs to teach Aiden to be “less polite” when they have the chance to be intimate, and the fur on the back of her neck bristles when she smells Gabriel’s musk (Klause 52, 135). Maris too desires sex, which for her is connected to and supplanted by hunting. Her new longing to hunt is described in almost sexual terms. One night Maris is awakened by her own whining sounds, and the wetness she discovers around her mouth is a result of her own now razor-sharp teeth, which have cut her in her sleep and made her bleed. She can only conceive of this feeling as “I want. I need,” (Windsor 221), and so cannot stop herself from finding satisfaction by going out to hunt alone.

Anger

While Maris’s and Vivian’s aggressive desires are incompatible with conventional femininity, their expression of anger completely disqualifies them from fitting into this category. Brown characterizes anger as “the essential political emotion” in that “it is tied to self-respect, a sense of entitlement, and lucid thinking about wrong-doing” (*Raising* 10). Furthermore, “reasoned anger is critical not only to the healthy psychological development of individual women, but also to their capacity to recognize injustice and organize for change” (Brown *Raising* 11). For this reason, patriarchy needs to suppress women’s anger since it is also the catalyst for agency. While Ginger’s and Tara’s anger is merely proof that they are dangerously out of control monsters, for Vivian and Maris, it is something that puts them on the path to becoming autonomous adult subjects.

At the beginning of each novel, both Maris and Vivian have negative views of women’s anger. Maris’s family situation has predisposed her to view women’s anger as a personality defect rather than a logical reaction to injustice. Her mother is a bitter, seething woman who asserts control in their relationship through continually undermining her daughter. Maris blames her mother’s anger for driving off her father. On the day her father left, Maris observes that her mother had “wiped the smile off [his face], and replaced it with anger and pain” (Windsor 66). As a result, Maris grows up predisposed to see *all* women’s anger as an irrational response that destroys families and deprives any subsequent children of a nurturing environment.

Maris hopes that her job in England will let her participate vicariously in the sort of domestic life that she has never known since she views the Forrests as a normal family, which for her means that both mother and father are present, and there is more than one child. However, Maris soon learns that the Forrests’ relationship is far from idyllic. Instead, it is characterized by the couple’s frequent fights that are provoked by Derrick’s poor treatment of his wife. As a result, Maris has yet another opportunity to contemplate women’s anger.

Because Maris sees Barbara’s angry responses out of context, she does not perceive them as emerging from a sense of self-respect. Barb’s outbursts never resolve anything between the couple. Instead, after Barb shouts at Derrick about what he has done to upset her (such as undermining her authority in front of the children), he storms out of the house, and

she is reduced to tears. As a result, Maris views Barb's anger as irrational and believes that Barb participates in her own victimization. "Why did Barb put up with the fights," Maris wonders. "Why didn't she go home, back to the United States? Why live with arguments?" (Windsor 61). Later, when Maris returns in the wee hours after an evening outing with friends, Barb has a meltdown so severe that the doctor must be summoned to administer a sedative. What Maris does not know at the time is that Barb fears that Maris's late-night absence from the house indicates that she has suffered the fate of their previous nanny, Janice. After Barb's death, Maris learns from her deceased employer's diary that Derrick tried to seduce Janice in the same way that he has seduced her. When things did not work out, Janice suspiciously disappeared in the middle of the night. But at the time of Barb's meltdown, Maris's lack of context for her employer's reaction causes her to judge it, and Barb's anger in general, as further evidence of her mental illness rather than as an understandable response to her husband's mistreatment of her and others.

Maris is also fearful of her own anger, and labors to suppress it whenever it erupts. For example, Maris becomes irate after learning that her mother has actively prevented her father from visiting. Yet instead of confronting her mother with what she has discovered, Maris swallows her rage and says nothing, since "to accuse her mother and present concrete evidence meant that everything would be changed forever" (Windsor 68), a situation that would be infinitely worse than her familiar, though unpleasant circumstances.

At the beginning of *Blood and Chocolate*, Vivian too has a negative view of women's anger. Although Vivian belongs to a werewolf culture that views women's anger as healthy, and offers them several opportunities to express this emotion through violence, Vivian perceives anger as an emotion that is at best undignified and at worst extremely dangerous. For example, Vivian is mortified to learn that her mother Esmé has been brawling with Astrid, another female werewolf, over the affections of a man, though Vivian too has harbored the same violent feelings of jealousy. When Kelly, a rival for Aiden's affection, gives Vivian a dirty look, she momentarily contemplates brawling with the girl. But anger is also potentially dangerous, regardless of the sex of the person expressing it. For werewolves, anger is something that can wipe away the human part and permit the "animal to reign supreme" (Klause 171), which endangers the entire pack. A year previously, Vivian's father was killed and the pack forced to relocate because one of their members could not control his anger. As a result, he murdered a human girl, an action that revealed the pack's presence to the people of the community. Frightened humans burned the compound, and Vivian's father, the pack's leader at the time, died trying to save the others. Later Vivian's anger over Aiden's rejection of her prompts her to get drunk, break into Kelly's house, and trash her room. Vivian awakens the next morning with the taste of blood in her mouth and little recollection of the previous night, fearing that she has done more than damage property. When the mutilated body of a biker is found behind a local bar on the night of her blackout, Vivian fears that rage has caused her to behave as an animal who lacks the capacity to reason. Later, however, Vivian will discover that Astrid is responsible for the killing.

Eventually, Maris and Vivian come to reconsider their feelings about anger after they are put into situations where its expression is a consequence of their emerging feelings of self-respect. Maris begins to see the flaws in her negative judgment of women's anger after Barb's death and she is thrust into the role of wife and mother in the Forrest household. Suddenly,

Maris sees “things through Barb’s eyes” (Windsor 228). After Derrick changes Maris into a werewolf, she realizes that he has put her in a position where he has complete control of her. Maris’s lack of knowledge about lycanthropy combined with her lack of legal standing in a foreign country mean that “she had no power over [Derrick]. He could send her away with the snap of his fingers. He controlled her destiny completely” (Windsor 238). This realization gives way to anger, a catalyst enabling Maris to develop the required self-respect to fight Derrick’s attempts to manipulate her. Anger prompts Maris to rummage around the house in Derrick’s absence for information that might help her understand her lycanthropy. The search unearths Barb’s diary, which reveals how terrified she was of her husband, and how dangerous Derrick might be. Reading and writing are powerful tools that connect women to one another, even through time. After Maris reads Barb’s diary, she has a better appreciation of what provoked her deceased employer’s angry outbursts.

When Maris can see Barb’s anger as justified rather than an irrational response, she can begin to understand her mother’s point of view as well, a perspective that puts her on her way becoming an autonomous adult. Modleski observes that gothic fiction serves to “convince women that they are not their mothers” through enabling them to develop “an understanding of the mother’s difficulties” (71). This is precisely Maris’s situation. Maris’s anger towards Derrick leads her to realize that her mother might be right about some things, such as how “crazy people are unreliable” (Windsor 250), and that her father’s own unreliability, as revealed through his failure to make more of an effort to contact her after the divorce, supports her mother’s claim that he was manic depressive and too difficult to live with (Windsor 70). Once Maris can begin to appreciate some of her mother’s difficulties, she can begin the process of separation that permits her to see that she is *not* her mother, nor must she become her as she matures.

Anger is similarly tied to Vivian’s emerging sense of self respect, which prompts her to fight injustice. This emotion causes Vivian to take the swift action required to save her mother’s life and lets her find “the mate of her flesh.” In Klause’s werewolf culture, both males and females are encouraged to engage in physical confrontations with one another to settle differences. Pack leaders are chosen through violence rather than through acclimation. During the Ordeal, all willing adult male pack members fight in their wolf skins to determine the new pack leader. The Bitches’ Match is a similar method for settling who has the right to become Queen Bitch, the leader’s mate and the female head of the pack. Vivian’s mother and Astrid fight for the role of Queen Bitch. When Astrid badly injures Esmé during the fray, Vivian jumps in without thinking and saves her mother’s life by savaging her opponent. As a result, Vivian wins the contest that she has not even entered and accidentally becomes Queen Bitch.

But this is not the end of the fight for Astrid, who sets up Vivian so that she appears to be guilty of a recent string of murders that law enforcement believes have been caused by a wild animal that is mauling the victims. The pack, however, knows that the murders were committed by one of their own. Gabriel, the new leader, will be obligated to execute the perpetrator because his or her actions endanger the pack by threatening to reveal their existence to humans. Vivian eventually discovers that she did not murder the woman whose body was found on the night that she blacked out. Instead, Astrid engineered up the whole scenario to make it appear as if Vivian were the responsible party. She did this by arranging for one of the teen male werewolves to console Vivian after she was rejected by Aiden, getting her

drunk enough to forget her whereabouts that night. Vivian can only embrace her anger as a natural aspect of herself after realizing that it did not send her into a blind rage and cause her to kill someone. After this realization, Vivian can appreciate her anger as something positive that leads her to protect those she loves rather than an emotion that permits “the animal to reign supreme.” The novel concludes with Vivian’s learning that anger does not have to be a quality necessarily repellent to men. Gabriel, Vivian’s eventual romantic partner, is attracted by Vivian’s anger, which he sees as evidence of her fierce ability “to care” for those she loves. In this way, Vivian’s anger makes her *more* feminine in that it is linked to that stereotypical feminine affinity for caring and connection.

Hybridity

As werewolves, Maris and Vivian are more than animals in drag in human skin. Unlike Ginger or Tara, Maris and Vivian are true hybrids: they can *continuously* pass between the boundaries separating human and animal, male and female, and even adult and child, thereby revealing the permeability of these borders. As Butler notes, if “an illusion of the unity of gender is maintained through the constant repetition of stylized acts” (*Gender* 141), acts that reinforce difference, then the female werewolf’s hybridity undermines this illusion. Ultimately, this hybridity endows Vivian and Maris with agency that Ginger, Tara, and their normatively human sisters lack.

Klaus’s female werewolf invites readers to consider a subjectivity that transcends boundaries between male and female, human and animal, nature and culture. For the teen female lycanthrope, overt sexual desire and anger are natural facets that give her autonomy, rather than personality traits that must be repressed because they have the potential to unsex her. These feelings are so greatly a part of who she is that they can be disavowed only at her peril. In this way, the teen female werewolf provides an object lesson to girls about the dangers of truncating the self in the interest of normative femininity.

Klaus’ werewolves derive their power not from their animalistic natures, but due to the flexibility afforded to them by lycanthropy. Like Ginger, Vivian is also a monster because she crosses boundaries. However, this mutability gives Vivian more agency than she would have if she were a human girl. At the end of the novel, when Aiden shoots Vivian, she momentarily becomes stuck between forms. The resulting body is a chimera that deprives her of agency because her mismatched parts do not permit her to live comfortably as either a wolf or a human. Vivian can only regain her autonomy after Gabriel helps her understand that her hybridity is empowering. Humans too have “a beast within,” Gabriel tells her, yet they are weaker than werewolves because this beast will “break out in evil ways” (Klaus 261) if it is suppressed too fiercely. Werewolves, with their ability to cross the boundaries between human and animal, can give this beast a voice and make use of the strengths it affords them without necessarily losing touch with their own humanity. After remembering the strength inherent in her changeable body, Vivian regains her ability to transform along with the agency that this ability gives her.

In *The Bleeding*, Maris’s ability to shapeshift is a metaphor for another, greater type of malleability that gives her agency. “Could anyone or anything keep her now”? Maris ponders. “If she could change herself, she could change her life” (Windsor 233). The conclusion subtly

hints that Maris is on track to change her life, despite the humiliating circumstances in which she finds herself. When Derrick in his wolf form attempts to kill someone out of malice, Maris transforms to stop him. Both are shot before Derrick can murder his intended victim, and the injury causes them to revert to their nude human forms. Derrick dies and Maris is found unconscious in what seems to be an ignominious tableaux indicating that she and her employer were engaged in deviant sex. After a spate of humiliating questions, Maris is deported, and she dreads returning to her mother, who will see this experience as further confirmation of her daughter's inability to take care of herself. Yet there is hope for Maris, for whom "everything had changed" (Windsor 280). She is returning home much stronger than when she left, so much so that she wonders "how she was going to live two lives in the same body, how she was going to keep pretending she was only Maris Pelham when the gray wolf was alive inside of her" (280). For the time being at least, Maris will have to perform the sort of drag that Vivian performs daily. Maris "had to appear weak and ordinary, when inside she was fierce, strong, and cunning, perhaps even vicious" (280). Yet Maris also realizes that it is not possible to completely repress this side of herself that is wholly incompatible with conventional femininity. She knows that "there might be times when she would let the gray wolf out, when it would be necessary to do so" (Windsor 280-81).

Letting out that side of herself that is "fierce, strong and cunning" will not lead Maris into danger the way it did Derrick; rather it will augment her human personality. It was not Derrick's lycanthropy that got him killed, but his rigidity. For Derrick, lycanthropy is an extension of the worst traits of conventional masculinity, rather than a contradiction of them. If normative masculinity is characterized by violence (Kimmel 150), then Derrick is stereotypically masculine both in his pelt and in his skin. In his human form, Derrick is bullying and manipulative, characteristics that both Barb and Maris have been preconditioned to view in men as falling within an acceptable range of masculine behavior. As a wolf, Derrick is better able to express his more violent impulses that highlight the difference between himself and Maris, a difference that is demonstrated when he kills animals for reasons other than food or self defense and when he tries to murder a human. Not surprisingly Derrick speculates that a time will come when he and Maris "cannot resume human shapes" (Windsor 260). Certainly that time was near for Derrick, whose behavior grows less civilized with each passing day, and who has lupine traits even when he is in his human form.

Barb too cannot survive because she is not a hybrid. While Derrick believes that a time will come when he cannot resume his human form, Barb is too human to fully change into her wolf form. When she attempts to hunt with Derrick in spite of her limitations, she cannot kill her own prey, or even consume the flesh of the animals that Derrick brings to her. Barb's humanity is connected with the most negative characteristics of conventional femininity, and she lacks the physical and emotional resources to counter her husband's manipulative and abusive treatment of her. Because Barb too is limited by her femininity, she cannot survive.

Maris, on the other hand, is a hybrid, and her past actions hint at how the animal part of her will never erase the human part, nor will the normatively masculine part erase the normatively feminine part. Maris in her wolf form retains human sensibilities that permit her to consider the feelings of others. In her wolf form, she has stopped Derrick from wantonly killing another human, and she has also declined to eat the Forrest children's caged pet rabbit, in spite

of her hunger. As a hybrid, Maris has multiple strategies for dealing with the world. As a result, she is stronger than either Barb or Derrick.

Conclusion

The young adult female werewolf offers more powerful and vivid, even visceral versions of the dangers of traditional femininity. However, the novels and films I examine differ greatly in how they represent the consequences of girls “refusing what they are.” Ginger and Tara demonstrate how threatening a girl is to the dominant culture when she will not, or cannot, perform as conventionally feminine. Ginger ultimately becomes something so monstrous that she must be destroyed, while Tara outwardly conforms so well to normative femininity that it is difficult for others to see that she does not behave in other conventionally human ways, such as wearing clothing, or speaking, or walking erect. Ultimately both girls are locked into a type of stereotypical femininity: Tara is trapped in the body of a beauty whereas Ginger is confined to the body of a beast that is both connected to the natural world due to its animal form and a complete Otherness in that it is not like anything found in nature. As a consequence, each girl is deprived of the flexibility that hybridity might afford her.

Vivian and Maris, on the other hand, have rejected stereotypical femininity, and so more fully understand the dangerous consequences of repressing feelings and desires that are incompatible with this subject position. While the haunted girls in Chapter 1 were able to refuse what they are, Vivian and Maris are able to go a step further and accept what they are. As a result, Vivian and Maris are hybrids of human and animal, a state that gives each girl the resources to develop strategies that permit her to express these supposedly unacceptable parts of herself without provoking the wrath of members of the dominant culture.

Still, both the haunted girls of Chapter 1 and the teen female werewolves of this chapter are not completely autonomous. Because these characters are not legal adults, each must conceal her strengths from those who might be threatened by them until she is older and in a position where she has more autonomy. The teen witches of Chapter 3, on the other hand, will not, and cannot, conceal their strengths. For the teen witch, magic is an expression of her ability to enact her will.

Nevertheless, like the haunted girl, the female werewolf presents specific and unique qualities that can be used to expose and critique the situation of adolescent females. Through the female werewolf’s transformation, the young woman’s transformation is shown to be both empowering and traumatic, an event to be controlled. Portraying anger and sexuality as legitimate and powerful forces, these texts expose how young women are placed in the role of monstrous Other. If the appeal of the ghost is that the haunted girl is not fully responsible for her resistance to traditional femininity, so too the female werewolf is not responsible for her monstrous side. But while this side empowers her, it also limits her.

Chapter 3

“An Ye Harm None, Do as Ye Will”⁵⁷: Magic, Gender and Agency in Young Adult Narratives of Witchcraft

Like the ghost and the werewolf, the figure of the witch is also thousands of years old and common to many cultures. However, while the ghost and the werewolf have easily recognizable forms, the witch is difficult to define as it always appears human and can be any age or sex (though the figure we are most familiar with is usually female). Today the witch is stereotypically depicted as a loathsome crone with the potential to harm others. This characterization is seen in fairy tales (and Disney’s interpretations of them), and reproduced in Halloween decorations. Yet the witch is increasingly represented in fictional accounts as a “young and beautiful sexual temptress” (Ringel 1221) who may use her powers for good or evil.

Yet while the ghost and the werewolf are wholly fictional creations, the witch has many real-life counterparts that inform contemporary representations of her. Some of these counterparts include shamans and cunning women, traditional healers who used their knowledge of herbs and folklore to cure ailments, deliver babies, tell fortunes, make love spells and even protect others against black magic.⁵⁸ Other real-life analogues are those who were persecuted for sorcery in Europe and North America between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Still other correlates include Wiccans, practitioners of a neo-Pagan nature-based religion who describe themselves as witches and whose spiritual practices draw upon the idea of the witch as both historical and mythic figure.⁵⁹ Wicca, in turn, has influenced many contemporary fictional narratives of witchcraft that are set during the Burning Times, a Wiccan term for the Early Modern witch trials that occurred in Europe and North America between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. These narratives re-imagine those persecuted for witchcraft as proto-Wiccans in possession of supernatural abilities. Many of these fictional representations are mediated by feminist scholarship about those persecuted for witchcraft, such as Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English’s influential work *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (1973), which connects the persecution of women healers as witches to the rise of a male-dominated medical profession.

Although real-life analogues exist, the figure of the witch is similar to the ghost and the werewolf in that she has supernatural powers. Some of her supernatural abilities include conversing with magical creatures, traveling to other dimensions, seeing into the future, changing forms, talking to the dead and stopping time. Like the ghost and the werewolf, the

⁵⁷ The Wiccan Rede, which expresses the core belief of Wicca.

⁵⁸ Curanderas and traiteurs are also types of cunning women (and men). A traiteur is a Cajun folk healer who cures using a combination of herbs, Catholic prayer and laying on of hands. A curandera (or curandero) is a traditional folk healer found in Hispanic cultures in North and South America. For a fictional account of the curandera, see Rudolpho Anaya’s novel *Bless Me Última*. Glen Pietre’s excellent film *Belizaire the Cajun* depicts the life of an authentic traiteur.

⁵⁹ For a more thorough discussion of how neo-Pagans incorporate both historical fact and mythic representations of the witch into their own spiritual practices, see Judy Harrow’s essay “The Contemporary Neo-Pagan Revival” in *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*.

witch uses fantasy elements to expose the dangers of restrictive female gender roles. However, the witch is the most powerful of these three figures because she not only reveals the particular features of oppression, but also presents an alternative feminist worldview.

In this chapter, I examine one Young Adult novel, two Young Adult series and one film: Julie Hearn's *The Minister's Daughter* (2005), Libba Bray's Gemma Doyle Trilogy (2003, 2005, 2007), Celia Rees' Witch Child series (2000, 2002), and the film *The Craft* (1996). Collectively, these four works offer a representative sampling of the figure of the witch in her various modern incarnations as cunning woman, shaman, victim of the witch hunts and Wiccan. Common to all of these works, however, is a portrayal of the witch as the embodiment of female freedom and power nurtured by sisterhood. Most of the teen witches I examine in this chapter are white, a consequence of the types of characters represented in the Young Adult texts about witches that were available at the writing of this dissertation. However, while these teen witches are predominantly white, they are not all uniformly middle class, which *is* the case with the haunted girls I examined in Chapter 1. The two characters in novels set during the Early Modern witch hunts are members of the peasantry. During this historical period, poor women were more likely to be charged with witchcraft than were women from more privileged backgrounds.⁶⁰

Like the werewolf and the haunted girl, the witch is also a gendered monster. Though witches can be either sex, the figure that we are most familiar with is female since "the witch often represents female freedom and power, which is itself often the cause of ambivalent responses" (Bosky 699). The witch's Otherness is grounded in her female body and connection to the natural world, representing all that patriarchal culture negatively associates with women and femininity. She is an aging crone whose withered flesh recalls men to their own fearful mortality, or she is a beautiful young woman whose relatively free sexuality makes men anxious: they desire her, yet they also fear her because she is outspoken and independent, and so not easily mastered.

Additionally, the witch's Otherness is linked to her affinity with the natural world, which is also connected to her female body in that women's bodies are often represented as being more closely related to nature than are men's bodies. The witch is at home in the woods, can cure or curse with her knowledge of herbs, and can even control the weather in some instances. Susan Griffin recounts the cultural "idea that women are closer to nature and are therefore lacking in a spiritual dimension" (26) and its implications for how women are represented as dangerous Others in art and literature. From this perspective, nature is not a positive force, but instead something terrifying and chaotic that must be mastered as "nature can make [men] want. Nature can cause [men] to cry in loneliness, to feel a terrible hunger, or a thirst. Nature can even cause [men] to die" (Griffin 28). As a result, the witch's body, through its association with the natural world, is viewed by male characters as evidence of her monstrous Otherness because it represents all that men fear about themselves.

⁶⁰ In her history of the European witch hunts, Anne Barstow remarks on how most women accused of witchcraft were impoverished. "In most areas of Europe, the accused was very poor, and their accusers were better off than they. Even though most accusers were neighbors who also lived in poverty, still they possessed more goods than their victims" (26). Historian Carol Karlsen makes a similar claim about those accused of witchcraft in Colonial New England: "poor women, both the destitute and those with access to some resources, were surely represented, and very probably overrepresented, among the New England accused" (78).

The teen witch who appears in Young Adult literature authored by women also has a deep and abiding connection to the natural world, a place that is viewed with mistrust by other characters. Moreover, she is young, outspoken and independent. And the defining feature of the witch—that she has supernatural powers—is represented in a number of Young Adult texts as a positive quality that can be used for good.

The fictional teen witches I examine do not exhibit stereotypically feminine behavior. They have overt sexual desires, sometimes for men of different races; they revel in their physical abilities; or they are unconcerned with being beauties who compete for the attention of men. However, what is most important to a feminist critic is how these fictional teen witches' epistemological perspective enables them to resist a subordinate feminine subjectivity. The teen witch's constructivist perspective leads her to question authority and to help other women, which encourages sisterhood and collaboration. This epistemological position can be viewed as feminine⁶¹ in how it enables the witch to become more fully connected to the natural world and to others. As a result, the teen witch is subversive of patriarchal order, and her example encourages other women to similarly question authority and resist their own subordinate subjectivities.

The teen witch goes from being someone who Mary Belenky and her coauthors in *Women's Ways of Knowing* would describe as a received knower, perceiving all authority as residing outside of the self, to a constructivist who understands that "all knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known" (Belenky 137). The teen witch's intellectual sea change is not surprising as most developmental psychologists view this shift in orientation towards authority as one of the hallmarks of the adolescent's transition to adulthood and autonomy (Belenky 54-55). Moreover, this shift in orientation towards authority is also the defining feature of Young Adult fiction.⁶²

While developing a more sophisticated orientation towards authority is a necessary step in the maturation process, women have more difficulty arriving at this phase than do men because women's emerging constructivist perspective is particularly threatening to traditional gender roles, which uphold patriarchal order.⁶³ Conventional femininity is predicated on women's subordination, which is most easily achieved by keeping women in the received knowledge phase of development in which they dismiss their own insights in deference to the authority of others. Constructivism, on the other hand, is incompatible with normative femininity because it is an epistemological position from which one questions external authority. This questioning ultimately leads to rejection of a hierarchal way of knowing the

⁶¹ In *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Nancy Chodorow describes how women tend to experience themselves as connected to the world, whereas men tend to experience themselves as separate from the world. "Because [girls] are parented by a person of the same gender (a person who has already internalized a set of unconscious meanings, fantasies and self-images about this gender and brings to her own experience her own internalized early relationship to her own mother), girls come to experience themselves as less differentiated than boys, as more continuous with and related to the external-object world" (Chodorow 167).

⁶² This is the crux of Roberta Seelinger Trites' argument in her book *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*.

⁶³ For a more thorough discussion of how women's subordinate gender roles uphold patriarchal order, consult Judith Lorber's ground-breaking work *Paradoxes of Gender*.

world in which one perspective is imposed on others. Constructivist women resist making “premature generalizations about what they would do or what should be done, particularly about matters of right and wrong” (Belenky 149). Instead, they know the world more holistically in that they first insist “on a respectful consideration of the particulars of everyone’s needs and frailties” before taking action, “even if that means delaying making decisions or taking action” (Belenky 149).

The teen witch’s capacity to mature into a relatively autonomous adult is due to her emerging constructivist perspective, which is linked to her magical ability. Magic gives the teen witch more autonomy because it relies on the accomplishment of the practitioner’s will. Magic in these narratives is mediated through a Wiccan/neo-Pagan⁶⁴ perspective, which connects it “to an understanding of the workings of the mind”⁶⁵ (Adler 8). Sociologist and practicing witch Síân Reid explains that neo-Pagan magical practice is about issues of power and control: magic “is the projection of the Will in the world, in order to cause change” (150). The Wiccan/neo-Pagan conception of magic informs how it is represented in Young Adult texts. As a result, the adolescent female witch’s developing magical ability is connected to her own empowerment. Thus, as she comes to understand that the knower “is an intimate part of the known” (Belenky 137), her ability to transform her world through magical and conventional means increases.

In the texts I discuss, constructivism is the foundation of the witch’s magical abilities, which she employs as much through the strength of her will as due to her own supernatural powers. While the teen witch may have the innate ability to cause a rain shower or tame a tiger, she must develop the strength of her will in order to use these abilities effectively. Moreover, the teen witch does not use her magic to conjure material possessions or manipulate others. Rather, her magic is an extension of her agency in how she uses it to make choices that give her (and sometimes others) greater autonomy. In this way, the teen witch’s developing magical abilities are linked to her emerging constructivist perspective which causes her to consider the needs and frailties of others before taking action rather than using her powers to oppress others.

Finally, the teen witch offers readers the most realistic model of resistance to feminine subordination. While readers cannot hope to have the teen witch’s magical powers, all can cultivate her feminist worldview which would permit them to see beyond a hierarchal and oppressive model of authority.

The texts I analyze have achieved sufficient popularity to be described as influential and widely-known. Each of the literary works I have selected is owned by at least 1000 libraries world-wide. Bray’s Gemma Doyle trilogy has spent many weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller lists, and The Gemma Doyle trilogy, Julie Hearn’s *The Minister’s Daughter* and Celia

⁶⁴ The term “neo-Pagan” describes any adherent of a new-age spirituality that is a loose interpretation of older religious traditions. Wicca is one of these neo-Pagan religions.

⁶⁵ The English occultist Aleister Crowley famously defined magic as “the Art and Science of causing change to occur in conformity with the Will” (qtd. in Adler 8), while neo-Pagan author Isaac Bonewits defines magic as “folk parapsychology, an art and science designed to enable people to make effective use of their psychic talents” (qtd. in Adler 8).

Rees' Witch Child Series have been translated into numerous languages⁶⁶. I have also included the 1996 film *The Craft* in my survey of teen witches in Young Adult fiction. Young Adult fiction is characterized as having adolescent protagonists and a plot about "issues to which teenagers can relate" (Herz 10). The Young Adult Library Services Association argues that any definition of the genre must include more than just literary texts (Cart "Value"). *The Craft* has adolescent protagonists, is reasonably well-known, and has even garnered a few minor awards⁶⁷. But for my purposes, what is more important is how *The Craft* has influenced contemporary adolescent ideas about witches and witchcraft. Helen A. Berger and Douglas Ezzy's ethnography of Wiccan and neo-Pagan teens found that "mass media provides the cultural background that facilitates cultural orientation toward Witchcraft" (58). Their research singles out films such as *The Craft* as "orienting young people positively" (Berger 58) to witchcraft as it represents witches in an affirmative way.

The novels I examine are set in distant historical periods where women had few legal rights. Women in these times are legally characterized as perpetual dependents passing from the control of fathers and brothers to husbands and eventually sons. Two of the literary works I examine are set during the Early Modern witch hunts in England and North America respectively. Nell, the adolescent protagonist of Julie Hearn's *The Minister's Daughter*, is a midwife and healer during the English Civil War. Her abilities and independent spirit mark her as a witch in the eyes of the Puritan minister who has recently been assigned to the village church in order to eradicate the old pagan ways. Mary in Celia Rees' Witch Child series also serves as a midwife and a healer. Like Nell, Mary's skills and independence are so intimidating to the Puritan elders of her colonial American village that she is accused of witchcraft and must flee for her life. Libba Bray's Gemma Doyle trilogy is the only historical narrative I examine that is not set during the Early Modern witch hunts. However, Gemma Doyle, an upper-class Victorian girl, lives in a historical period that is also known for its subordination of women. While Bray's heroine does not have to fear being executed for witchcraft, as a woman and a minor in Victorian England, she has few legal rights and can be punished severely for refusing to be conventionally feminine.

As we have already seen in the female ghost stories I examined in Chapter 1, setting narratives in this historical past allows the author a unique way to illuminate the construction of gender. Setting a work in the historical past denaturalizes familiar elements of daily life

⁶⁶ The English language version of *A Great and Terrible Beauty* is owned by 2814 libraries worldwide; *Rebel Angels*, by 2279 worldwide; and *The Sweet, Far Thing* by 1678 libraries worldwide. In addition, all the novels in the trilogy have been translated into other languages. *A Great and Terrible Beauty* has been translated into Swedish, Danish, Spanish, Turkish, Hungarian and Dutch. *Rebel Angels* has been translated into Spanish and Swedish, and *The Sweet, Far Thing* has been translated into Spanish. Julie Hearn's *The Minister's Daughter* is owned by 1361 libraries worldwide The English language version of Rees' *Witch Child* is owned by 2290 libraries worldwide. In addition, *Witch Child* has been translated into Spanish, Swedish, Hungarian, Turkish, Finnish, Polish, French, Hebrew, Slovenian, German, Italian, Vietnamese, and Dutch. *Sorceress*, Rees' sequel to *Witch Child*, is owned by 1481 libraries worldwide and has been translated into Swedish, Polish, Finish, Hungarian, French, Hebrew, Dutch, German and Italian.

⁶⁷ These awards include an MTV Movie Award for Best Fight. *The Craft* was also nominated for Best Horror Film and Best Supporting Actress for the 1997 Saturn Awards, which are given by the National Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films

because they are now in a place and time that are unfamiliar to the reader. As a result, the author must explain to the reader how girls in other time periods have limits on their freedom that are unthinkable in the reader's own era. Readers can relate to the frustration these characters experience as a result of these limits, particularly as they are so extreme by contemporary standards. The historical novel in effect invites the reader to compare her own time period to the one being represented. This comparison can eventually show the reader how contemporary girls face similar limitations on their freedoms and are coerced into subordinate roles as well.

The Craft, the only work that I examine that is set in contemporary times, depicts the witch as someone who fights a more insidious form of sexism. As modern girls in a first-world country, Sarah and her friends are not in danger of being executed or consigned to a mental institution for practicing witchcraft. Instead, the limits to their autonomy are less visible. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, girls are more commonly trained to occupy subordinate gender roles by the media, who perpetually establish impossible norms of femininity that set women up for victimization,⁶⁸ and their peers, who police the borders of femininity by ostracizing those who fail to conform.⁶⁹

One way that girls are ostracized for failing to conform is through being labeled by peers as the "school slut." Emily White examines the figure of the school slut in depth, noting that every modern American high school has at least one girl who is cast in this role by her peers. The school slut is a type of abject Other who is put in this position by her peers more due to her inability and sometimes unwillingness to fit into their concept of stereotypical femininity than due to her sexual practices (White 9).⁷⁰ Like the witch, the school slut marks the boundaries of conventional femininity, and her treatment by others serves as a warning to every girl of the consequences of stepping outside of her proscribed role. After her first day in her new school, Sarah is labeled a slut when she refuses to sleep with one of the more popular boys. The school slut as social outcast then is combined with the figure of the witch in *The Craft*, tying this figure in to representations of her as a sexual temptress.

The Teen Witch's Body

The teen witch's body falls outside the boundaries of her culture's concept of appropriate femininity. Her sexuality is not limited by the bounds of matrimony and

⁶⁸ Consult Lynn M. Philips' *Flirting with Danger: Young Women's Reflections on Sexuality and Domination* for a more thorough analysis of how the media circulates discourses of gender that set up girls for victimization.

⁶⁹ Lynn Mikel Brown very thoroughly describes the workings of this phenomenon in her book *Girlfighting: Betrayal and Rejection among Girls*.

⁷⁰ White's study of the figure of the school slut reveals that she is often not white or middle class in an environment where most of the student body falls into these categories. Furthermore, the school slut is not conventionally feminine in that her body has developed more rapidly than those of other girls her age or she refuses to passively endure the insults of her peers. She is frequently someone who experienced precocious puberty or who was not afraid of cussing someone out or who even merely transferred into school late in the term. (White 9).

monogamy. Instead, she desires men of different races, such as Mary in *The Witch Child Series* or Gemma in *The Gemma Doyle Trilogy*, or she is not interested in having a relationship with any man, like Nell in *The Minister's Daughter*. In fact, these teen witches care so little about the approbation of men that they do not expend much effort grooming or displaying themselves in way that men might find pleasing. Unlike Ginger and Tara in Chapter 2, Mary, Nell, Gemma and Sarah care little about being beauties who attract the attention of men.

Because her body and her sexuality are not easily mastered, the teen witch is often the focus of what Michel Foucault describes as “correct training,”⁷¹ a type of bodily discipline which aims to systematically master her unruly body. Yet the teen witch, with her magical abilities and constructivist epistemological perspective, can resist the subordinate subject position this training prepares her to occupy.

The Body and Conventional Femininity

The four female protagonists of *The Craft* are the school outcasts because they are not conventionally feminine. On Sarah's first day of school at St. Bernadette's, Nancy, Rochelle and Bonnie are pointed out to her by Chris, one of the school's more popular boys, as the “Bitches of Eastwick,” an allusion to *The Witches of Eastwick*,⁷² referring to both their practice of witchcraft and their outsider status. Chris then explains to Sarah each girl's shortcomings. Each is not conventionally feminine because of something about her that she cannot easily change: Bonnie's body is covered by scars that she conceals with long sleeves and dark tights; Rochelle is the only black girl in the predominantly white school; and Nancy, the leader of the trio, is one of St. Bernadette's few working-class students.

Chris's explanation about why each girl has been designated as a slut reveals the workings of the wider category of Other. Bonnie, Rochelle and Nancy have been designated as school sluts both because they are physically incapable of being conventionally feminine and because they choose to in effect answer back to their tormentors through their practice of witchcraft.

If we are to accept Chris's explanation at face value, then it would seem that the category of slut is marked by solid boundaries that “normal” people cannot cross. In this way, Bonnie, Rochelle and Nancy as Others are clear markers of the outer limits of femininity. Yet Sarah's experience on her first day at her new school reveals that slut is a category with no fixed borders, thereby deconstructing the wider category of Other. Unlike Bonnie, Rochelle and Nancy, Sarah *does* seem to be stereotypically feminine by the standards of St. Bernadette's student body: she is reasonably attractive, upper middle class, and white. Yet Sarah is quickly designated by Chris as a slut after refusing to sleep with him. If the category of slut was fixed to a girl's sexual practices, then refusing to sleep with Chris should ensure that Sarah would never be placed in this category. Yet Chris's popularity at St. Bernadette's gives him the power to brand Sarah as a slut to punish her for refusing to sleep with him. The next day, Chris tells his

⁷¹ *Discipline and Punish*, 170

⁷² *The Witches of Eastwick* is a novel published by John Updike in 1984 about four middle-aged women who make a pact with the devil and become witches with powers that give them an autonomy that threatens the male characters. *The Witches of Eastwick* was made into a film of the same name in 1987.

friends that not only did Sarah have sex with him, but she was also an inept partner. His words have the ability to quickly define Sarah as a slut in the eyes of most of her classmates. Sarah's rapid slippage into this category exposes how this designation lacks permanent or immutable boundaries. Instead, slut is a shifting and ephemeral designation that reaffirms the normality of those who have not been placed in this category.

Furthermore, Sarah's experience calls into question the solidity of *all* boundaries separating the normal from the Other. If someone like Sarah can be placed into the category of slut, then perhaps other categories such as those that separate reality from the impossible are equally ill-defined. In this way, the viewer can suspend disbelief in the story's magical elements. Also, now that the category of the Other has been deconstructed, Sarah is free to "refuse what she is" and re-imagine her subjectivity.

The Gemma Doyle trilogy also examines the solidity of the boundaries separating conventional femininity from abnormality. The corseted girl who graces the cover of each volume symbolizes how young women must often labor to repress their sexualities in the interests of being a good girl. In this image, we see little of the face of the young woman whose body is restrained by the corset. She has her back to the camera so the photograph emphasizes the garment's tight lacing and ability to contain rather than the more eroticized frontal image of the corset that would be familiar to most twenty-first century readers. Certainly it is difficult for Gemma and her friends to repress their sexual feelings in deference to their culture's sexless ideal of white upper class femininity. Gemma is in love with Katrick, an Indian youth who she would never be permitted to marry in her xenophobic culture. Gemma's friends Pippa and Felicity are lesbians, and her friend Ann is in love with Gemma's priggish brother, who would never consider having a relationship with the plain and penniless girl.

In *The Minister's Daughter* and the *Witch Child* series, both Nell's and Mary's lineage suggest that they will not be controlled by their culture's strict rules governing female sexuality. Both girls are born out of wedlock, evidence that their mothers' sexualities could not be kept within the bounds of marriage. In *Sorceress*, the second book in the *Witch Child* series, Mary weds Jaybird, a Native-American youth, demonstrating how her sexuality will also not be contained within the Puritan culture's rules governing female sexuality. Nell's lineage as a result of her birth is simultaneously threatening and empowering. Nell is a merrybegot, someone conceived during the village's annual May Day celebrations, a condition that endows her with unique supernatural abilities that will make her a gifted cunning woman. In this way, Nell is also the opposite of a bastard, a stigmatized child unable to make a claim to any of her father's wealth. Instead, Nell is valued by the grandmother who raises her and the other villagers who still adhere to the old pagan ways. Nevertheless, both girls' lack of a legal father makes them suspect to their villages' Puritan authorities for whom the patriarchal family is an indispensable tool for maintaining religious and social order.⁷³

⁷³ The Puritans saw the family unit as the place where the commitment to God's laws was inculcated, "under the guidance and watchful eye of the head of the household who conducted family prayer and instilled moral values in his dependants. . . . The family was also crucial as a symbol of a hierarchal society. Functioning as both 'a little Church' and 'a little Commonwealth,' it served as a model of relationships between God and his creatures and as a model for all social relations. As husband, father and master to wife, children and servants, the head of the household stood in the same relationship to them as the minister did to his congregants and as the magistrate did to his subjects" (Karlsen 163-64).

The Male Gaze

The teen witch's body is also not regulated by the male gaze. Laura Mulvey defines the male gaze as the overweening perspective of patriarchal culture whereby "woman displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle. . . . she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire" (33). But the teen witch does not connote the quality of "to-be-looked-at-ness" that Mulvey describes (33). Instead, the teen witch returns the male gaze. Stephen Heath describes the threat implicit in the female gaze in film: "if the woman looks, the spectacle provokes, castration is in the air" (92).

The menace of the female gaze in film is a modern day version of one of the abilities to do supernatural harm that women accused of witchcraft were purported to possess. Women accused of witchcraft were often reputed to be able to cast a spell with a glance, visualizing what they wished to achieve and sometimes giving the "evil eye" to the target of their magic. Alternately, they were accused of being able to cast glamours on others, a type of magic performed by looking directly at the victim and altering his or her perception of reality.

Nancy, Mary and Gemma can all cast glamours or perform magic with a glance in order to defend themselves or others from male violence. Nancy casts a glamour over Chris to punish him for scorning her and attempting to rape Sarah, which causes him to fall to his death. In *Sorceress*, Mary thwarts a man's attempt to rape her by causing him to see her as a wolf rather than a woman. And in *The Sweet Far Thing*, the last novel of the Gemma Doyle trilogy, with just a glance Gemma sets a room ablaze to prevent a roomful of powerful men from apprehending her and appropriating her magic.

The Teen Witch's Connection with Nature

While the teen witch's body falls outside the parameters of normative femininity, her connection to nature ties her to traits associated with conventional femininity. In *The Craft*, Sarah, Bonnie, Nancy, and Rochelle all practice Wicca, a religion rooted in a respect for and understanding of the natural world. Hearn and Rees represent Nell and Mary as practicing a type of proto-Wicca in which magic is similarly tied to a respect for and understanding of the natural world. Both girls wander the woods in search of herbs they can use to perform magic and to heal in a way that works with the body's natural processes rather than through the intrusive intervention more typical of modern Western medicine. Nell's and Sarah's affiliations with the natural world are underscored through the circumstances of their birth. Sarah is described as a "natural witch," meaning that she inherited a set of special powers from her mother that her friends do not have. And as a merrybegot, Nell is sacred to nature (Hearn 54). Gemma too is connected to the natural world. As a child in India, Gemma tamed a tiger who had previously attacked and killed several villagers.

Susan Griffin explains how some strains of Romantic thought negatively associated women with nature: according to this line of reasoning, eros and nature "are made into one force, and this force is personified as woman" (Griffin 13). But this force is simultaneously fatal and evil in how it reflects men's own frailties in spite of their having been projected on to the bodies of women. Griffin notes how even today these negative associations are reproduced in high and low art.

The Romantic conflation of women and nature colors how other characters view the teen witch's magical abilities, which are positively linked to the natural world. Both Nancy and Sarah can control the weather. Sarah can make it rain, and she is constantly attracting snakes, spiders, rodents and insects, animals viewed as inherently evil in Western culture and often associated with witches as a result. In antiquity, however, serpents were associated with various goddesses, representing their power to heal and prophesize.⁷⁴ This ancient connection is recalled in some Wiccan practices in which all creatures are sacred, including those that even many animal lovers find loathsome. Because *The Craft* is about Wicca, the writers are aware of this ancient positive association of serpents with various goddesses as well as more contemporary and better-known associations of serpents with evil. In *Witch Child*, Mary is condemned by Reverend Johnson for walking in the woods, a place he and his co-religionists view as teeming with savages who are waiting to murder Christians. And in *The Minister's Daughter*, the "old ways" that revolved around the worship of nature have been forced underground by Reverend Madden and his co-religionists who view the natural world as a diabolic force to be mastered by the godly.

The Teen Witch's Body as the Focus of "Correct Training"

Because the teen witch's body and sexuality defies proscribed boundaries of normative femininity, it is frequently the focus of what Foucault terms "correct training," which is accomplished through surveillance and normalizing judgments more than through physical coercion. Correct training is a disciplinary technique whose chief function is "to 'train' [the body] . . . to select and levy all the more" (Foucault *Discipline* 170) in order to increase its utility to those who control it. *The Minister's Daughter*, *The Witch Child* series and *The Gemma Doyle* trilogy show girls undergoing this sort of corporeal education, which stifles the intellect rather than develops it.

The Gemma Doyle trilogy is a school story, a type of *Bildungsroman* focusing on the protagonist's education, so Gemma and her friends are subjected to "correct training." Spence Academy, the finishing school where Gemma is sent to curb her hoydenish behavior, has a curriculum devoted to training students' bodies rather than developing their intellects. Classes are devoted to dancing and walking and curtsying before the Queen. Even classes in art and French are more about teaching students how to paint the "right" type of still life or say a few words in French to present the illusion of cultivation rather than to ponder the politics of representation. After experiencing nearly a decade of normalizing judgments, graduates of Spence will behave as if everyone is continuously watching them.

The role of surveillance in "correct training" is emphasized in *The Minister's Daughter* and *Witch Child*. The Puritan authorities in Nell's and Mary's villages are obsessed with using surveillance to ensure that young women become goodwives and good Christian subjects. Nell and Mary are similar to Susan (*A Stir of Bones*) and Jenny (*A Certain Slant of Light*) in Chapter 1 in that the smallest and most intimate details of their bodies are subjected to surveillance and normalizing judgments. Reverend Madden in *The Minister's Daughter* scrutinizes the conduct of

⁷⁴ In pp. 86-69 of *The Chalice and the Blade*, Riane Eisler discusses the serpent's association with various goddesses in Antiquity, contrasting the creature's later representation in Judaism and Christianity.

his parishioners inside and outside of church to ensure their piety. Beltane⁷⁵ and Christmas revelry are forbidden not just because they are “pagan” rites, but because they lead to “frolicking,” a joyous and uncontrolled use of the body that is not strictly utilitarian. And he puts Nell on notice to “mark well what [she does], for the Lord is watching,” (Hearn 27) and so is he. Nell is always potentially visible to Reverend Madden and subject to his normalizing judgment. The village is described as being full of the Watchers, bossy village mavens who “know best—or, at least, they think they do” (Hearn 10) and are always ready to report someone’s misdeeds to the minister. In this way, Nell’s village is a version of the Panopticon, a technology of power that makes individuals visible to normalizing judgments to such a degree that they eventually internalize this institutional gaze in order to regulate their own behavior. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault uses the metaphor of Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon to describe the role of surveillance in “correct training.” Bentham’s Panopticon was the philosopher’s concept of the ideal prison in which inmates’ behavior would be regulated by making them always potentially visible to their jailors. Because inmates had no way of knowing when they were being observed, they must always behave in the way their jailors thought appropriate. In this way, the Panopticon makes physical force unnecessary because “he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power” by “becoming the principle of his own subjection” (Foucault *Discipline* 202-03). In Nell’s village, the Watchers who could always be observing similarly encourage others to assume responsibility for the constraints of power.

Mary too is the subject of surveillance in *Witch Child*. Nothing escapes the notice of Reverend Johnson in Beulah, the small village where Mary resides. Beulah also functions as a Panopticon with its own population of Watchers. On one occasion after church, Reverend Johnson confronts Mary with what he has heard about her through these spies: that she wanders the woods and has much to say for herself (Rees 192). The residents of Beulah have no expectation to privacy, even in their own homes. Life inside of Mary’s household is also subject to the scrutiny of the community, and she is eventually forced to leave the collective household she shares with Martha, the village midwife and healer, and Jonas, an elderly apothecary. Though Martha and Jonas have complementary interests, they are not married to one another, nor is either related to Mary. When one of the community gossips brings this situation to the notice of Reverend Johnson, he compels Mary to move in with a more “suitable” Christian family who will make Mary more visible to scrutiny as the family’s servant.

It is not surprising that Reverend Johnson intervenes in Mary’s domestic arrangements since for the Puritans, the familial relationship was an important disciplinary tool. Historian Carol Karlsen describes the Puritan family unit as responsible for inculcating God’s laws “under the watchful eye of the head of household” (163). In this way, the family was another tool of surveillance. The teen witch, however, can use her magical ability to resist “correct training.” This magical ability is linked to her way of knowing, whereby she not only questions authority but also reconfigures the power relations in which she is embedded.

⁷⁵ Also known as May Day, this celebration takes place on May 1st.

Witches' Ways of Knowing

While the teen witch's body is stubbornly resistant to being trained into a restrictive gender role, her epistemological perspective or "way of knowing," which is intimately connected to her magical powers, is her most empowering quality. Knowing is more than the neutral acquisition of facts from authoritative sources. Rather, it is a dynamic process whereby the knower negotiates her subjectivity. Belenky and her co-authors explore the way that gender mediates how subjects answer questions such as "What is truth? What is authority? To whom do I listen? What counts . . . as evidence? How do I know what I know?" (3). Each woman's answers reveal her "basic assumptions about the nature of truth and reality and the origins of knowledge" (Belenky 3), which shape her definition of herself, how she interacts with others, and most importantly, her sense of control over her life.

Belenky et. al identify several ascending ways of knowing and their relationship to subjectivity. These epistemological perspectives range from silence, a position where subjects are nearly passive agents for whom knowledge is something situated outside of the self, to constructivism, a position in which subjects are active participants in the formation of knowledge. Developmental psychologists view the shift to constructivism as integral to maturity and autonomy.⁷⁶ Women's subordinate subjectivity, however, is an impediment to their making this shift.

During the course of the narrative, the teen witch progresses from subjectivism to constructivism. The subjectivist is similar to the received knower in that both are still rooted in a dualistic way of seeing the world where there are still "right" and "wrong" answers. Instead, what has changed for the subjectivist is the source of these answers: authority is now internal rather than external, a shift that merely reverses the order of the hierarchal structure of knowledge rather than transforms it. Constructivism, on the other hand, necessitates that the knower abandon a dualistic way of thinking of the world in favor of a more holistic way of seeing it.

For the teen witch, the transformation to constructivism is about more than forming her point of view in dialogue with other knowledgeable sources. It is about rejecting a hierarchal power structure that permits, among other things, the control of women by men. Belenky and her coauthors observe that constructivist women "insist on a respectful consideration of the particulars of everyone's needs and frailties, even if that means delaying making decisions or taking action" (149). In this way, constructivism could be described as a feminine way of understanding the world in that the knower values multiplicity. The teen witch similarly sees the world in a way that considers the particulars of everyone's needs and frailties, and so she does not use her abilities to impose her will on others. Rather, the teen witch uses her powers to foster sisterhood, which provides women with a support system that ultimately encourages them to similarly reject their own subordinate positions.

⁷⁶ "Developmentalists in the past have noted that this kind of shift in orientation towards authority—from external authority, which binds and directs our lives, to an adherence to the authority within us—is one of the central tasks of adolescence. Other psychosocial theorists, including Abraham Maslow and David Riesman, cite transcendence of social conventions and pressure as an achievement of the mature or 'autonomous' personality" (Belenky 54-55).

The Dangers of Subjectivism as a Way of Knowing

The protagonists in these texts all go from being dependent and childlike to become autonomous adults. The teen witch in each of the texts goes through her own subjectivist phase. However, she learns the perils of this epistemological position by seeing how others who are so mired in this way of thinking become as oppressive as the authorities that they reject. In *The Minister's Daughter* and *Witch Child* the perils of subjectivism are illustrated by Nell's and Mary's teen antagonists. Grace Madden in *The Minister's Daughter* and Deborah Vane in *Witch Child* demonstrate an acceptance of their subordinate gender roles by engaging in girlfighting. Each girl finds fault in other members of her sex as a way of maintaining her hegemony over her female peers. Deborah's and Grace's accusations of witchcraft against Mary and Nell can be seen as a type of girlfighting then in that their claims serve to police the borders of femininity, marking its outer limits. Furthermore, these charges are similar to the relational aggression characteristic of girlfighting in that they ultimately do the work of patriarchy by keeping women "in their place."⁷⁷

Both Grace and Deborah are young women who bristle at the restrictive gender roles that they are compelled by law to adhere to in their Puritan communities. Though both girls come from backgrounds of relative privilege, each is required to show her piety through extreme subordination to her male kin and to the clergy. Nevertheless, each girl has also arrived at a subjectivist way of viewing the world, and her rebellious behavior is a symptom of how authority has been defrocked in her eyes. Grace sneaks out of the house at night to tryst with Sam Towser, the blacksmith's son. Deborah clearly yearns for a life that offers her more interesting possibilities than continually praying, going to church, and performing housework. Not surprisingly, however, both girls are extremely reluctant to articulate their discontent, since doing so will provoke severe cultural sanctions. Claiming to be bewitched is a culturally acceptable way for Grace and Deborah to express their disgruntlement. Karlsen describes how in the seventeenth century, claiming to be possessed by a witch was both "a ritual expression of Puritan belief and . . . gender arrangements" and "an oblique challenge to both religious and social norms" (244).

In this way, the girl who claims to be possessed by a witch is similar to the haunted girls who serve as mediums for spirits. Bewitchment and mediumship permit both categories of girls to express what would be prohibited to their sex under other circumstances. The figure of the haunted girl is in a subject position similar to that inhabited by nineteenth century Spiritualist mediums. Ann Braude's history of the American Spiritualist Movement explains how mediumship enabled nineteenth century women to become sources of spiritual truth and assume the authority of religious leaders while the spirits spoke through them (84) without seeming to step outside of their gender role. The medium could speak in public, something that in the nineteenth century, women were not even believed capable of doing, and advocate for abolition or women's rights because in this pose, she was not really speaking: instead, the spirit was communicating through her. Possession by a ghost is similarly empowering for the haunted

⁷⁷ For a more detailed discussion of how charges of witchcraft served to coerce women into a far more subordinate position than they were forced to occupy in the Middle Ages, see *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts*, Anne L. Barstow.

girl characters I examined in Chapter 1 as the spirit can reacquaint them with knowledge that they have long repressed.

The girl who claims ensorcellment, on the other hand, experiences only a momentary freedom from her restrictive gender role. This is because belief in diabolic possession reinforces rather than challenges her culture's hierarchal power structure, whose linchpin is extreme feminine subordination. As a consequence, the girl who claims ensorcellment must return to her restrictive gender role once those she accuses of possessing her are brought to justice.

Deborah's and Grace's claims of bewitchment momentarily free them from their restrictive gender roles while simultaneously affirming the tenets of their fathers' faiths. When Grace becomes pregnant as a result of her dalliance, she claims that Nell, the cunning woman's daughter, has impregnated her with the Devil's seed, a story that positions Grace as a received knower who understands the world only through truths she has been given by others. So, while Grace's pregnant body defies social norms that stigmatize out-of-wedlock pregnancy, her explanation for her condition affirms Puritan beliefs that women are inherently weak: either their bodies are susceptible to being invaded by evil forces or they are so mentally feeble that Satan can easily convince them to do his bidding. As a result, Grace is exculpated by her improbable explanation for her pregnancy.

Deborah Vane's claim that she is bewitched similarly permits her to perform feelings she cannot publicly own while simultaneously upholding her community's religious beliefs. Deborah and her friends are frustrated by their powerlessness in their extremely patriarchal Puritan community where they are permitted virtually no type of self expression. Dancing and singing are not allowed, clothing must be uniformly bland and functional, and speaking during the community's many religious activities is forbidden to their sex. Desperate to express themselves in some way, Deborah and her friends meet away from prying eyes and pretend to be witches. Their interpretation of the figure of the witch involves dancing in the nude and chanting, something that Mary, who is an actual witch, never does. The girls' interpretation of the witch is in keeping with their culture's concept of this figure and symbolizes a female freedom and power that is demonized by the Puritan elders. Eventually the girls are caught cavorting in the nude in a neighbor's barn. In order to avoid punishment, Deborah convinces her friends to assert that they are not witches, but rather, bewitched. They augment their claim by continuing to behave as if they are possessed while in church, disrupting the services with giggling and screaming fits. Performing as possessed allows Deborah and her friends to appear conventionally feminine while protesting this restrictive subject position. As Karlsen describes, the woman who claimed to be possessed "could assert the witch within [and] rebel against the many restrictions placed upon" (247) her. Such an assertion allowed a woman to express "her *desire for* the independence and power embodied in the symbol of the witch and her rage at the man who taught her that independence and power were the ultimate female evils" (Karlsen 247).

However, claiming to be bewitched is not empowering ultimately. Instead, this claim further imprisons each girl within her very narrow gender role. While she can pretend to be ensorcelled, Deborah has a freedom of expression denied to her under ordinary circumstances. Yet she must eventually name her tormentor. After Deborah identifies Mary as the one who has bewitched her and Mary subsequently flees Beulah to avoid being executed, Deborah can

no longer maintain that she is under Mary's influence. As a result, Deborah must return to her restrictive gender role.

Grace's claim that she has been ensorcelled also restricts her to her very narrow gender role and deprives her of what little freedom she had before making her accusation. Claiming to be bewitched does enable Grace to avoid punishment for her out-of-wedlock pregnancy. But if Grace's father and the villagers are to believe her preposterous explanation for her condition, she will have to continue to play her part as the chaste minister's daughter by behaving as a received knower. Another irony for Grace is that claiming to be bewitched restricts her mobility even further. When Reverend Madden learns of Grace's condition, he confines her to her room for the duration of her pregnancy while gathering evidence that Nell has bewitched his daughter. While Reverend Madden will publically declare that his daughter has been ensorcelled by the cunning woman's granddaughter, he also understands that even his co-religionists in the village will be hard-pressed to view Grace's pregnancy as the work of Satan. As a result, he keeps Grace's thickening form out of public view so that it is easier for the villagers to believe that his daughter is bewitched.

Grace's and Deborah's claims of ensorcellment also highlight the wider perils of subjectivism. Neither girl genuinely believes that she has been possessed by a witch. Instead, both accuse others of witchcraft as a way of asserting their own way of viewing the world. One of the ways that subjectivism differs from constructivism is in how the subjectivist does not consider the frailties and needs of others before deciding on a course of action. And in some instances, the subjectivist is indifferent or even hostile to the frailties and needs of others. Both Grace and Deborah know that their false accusations will lead to Nell's and Mary's executions. Their callousness derives from subjectivism.

Reverend Madden in *The Minister's Daughter* and Reverend Johnson in *Witch Child* can also be described as subjectivists in that they interpret scripture in a way that preserves their power over others rather than in a manner that shows genuine concern for their parishioners' salvation. Each man's scriptural justification of witch hunting augments his power over his parishioners. To avoid the appearance of lawlessness, witch hunts operated by specific rules that included gathering evidence of diabolic influence. As ministers, each man has a unique authority in determining what seemingly ordinary events were actually infernally engineered. Only men of the cloth and witchfinders such as Matthew Hopkins⁷⁸, who is employed by Reverend Johnson, have the authority to adduce whether or not commonplace occurrences such as the sickening of a child or the curdling of a jug of milk are the work of witches. When only a few have the ability to determine what is fact and what is true, everyone else is positioned as a received knower who is wholly dependent on outside authority to determine a course of action.

Gemma too comes to understand the limitations of subjectivism, in part as she learns about her late mother as a teenager. In *A Great and Terrible Beauty*, the first novel in the trilogy, Gemma discovers that she is a powerful witch who is able to visit the Realms, another dimension filled with magic that she can bring in to our world. Gemma's mother Mary Dowd

⁷⁸Matthew Hopkins, an unsuccessful lawyer, found his calling as a witchfinder. Between 1645-1646, it is estimated that through the confessions he extracted, he caused "more people to be hanged in two years than had been hanged in the previous century" (Russell 97-98).

and her best friend Sarah Rees-Tooms were also powerful witches who were able to visit the Realms. But when Sarah's magical abilities suddenly vanish, she convinces Mary to help her regain some of her powers by sacrificing a Gypsy child to one of the Realm's more dangerous creatures. Emboldened by their previous experiences in the Realms, Mary and Sarah do what they have been taught is morally wrong as well as attempt an extremely dangerous ritual that more experienced witches fear to undertake. Mary's and Sarah's attempted ritual, however, goes horribly wrong when they accidentally kill the child while trying to keep her from struggling. The dead child is useless as a sacrifice. But now that the creature has been summoned, it cannot be sent back. As a result, the Realms must be sealed indefinitely to keep the creature from entering our world and destroying the fabric of reality. The Realms can only be opened again after a more powerful witch is born. Gemma is that hoped-for witch.

Gemma's mother's experience elucidates how subjectivism is not empowering, nor is it a feminist epistemological position because it offers no real alternative to patriarchy. Had the sacrifice been successful, Mary's friend Sarah would have been empowered through exploiting someone else, thereby duplicating the patriarchal oppression of those who are less powerful. Gemma, on the other hand, will not use the Realm's magic to have power over other people. Instead, Gemma's experiences in the Realms will enable her to develop a constructivist perspective that enables her to rely on herself rather than the Realms' magic to change her life.

The most emphatic example of how subjectivism oppresses women appears in *The Craft*. At the beginning of the film, Sarah, Bonnie, Rochelle and Nancy are all subjectivists. The girls' practice of Wicca shows how authority has been defrocked in their eyes and supplanted by their own way of knowing the world. Their spellwork, though guided by volumes from the local occult bookstore, is derived from their own intuition. This lack of a central authority is in keeping with Wiccan practice: Wiccans are encouraged by one another to rely on their own instincts more than they have been trained to do through their formal educations.⁷⁹ The girls initially dismiss their peers, their teachers, and even others more practiced in Wicca. Because women often come to subjectivism after a crisis of faith in male authorities, they begin to mistrust logic, which is unfairly conflated with oppressive patriarchal authority and so dismissed without a fair hearing. As a result, "subjectivist women's own experience and inner voice are the final arbiters. Although so-called experts may have done more thinking on a subject, subjectivists feel that they don't have to accept what they experts say" (Belenky 70).

At first, subjectivism seems to be a useful epistemological position for the girls: the results of their initial ritual appear to be relatively benign and empowering. Each girl implores Mano, the male deity that their coven worships, to grant her a specific gift which she believes will make her stronger. Bonnie wants her scarred body to be beautiful. Rochelle wants revenge against a racist classmate who taunts her about her "nappy" hair. Sarah wants Chris to be in love with her. And Nancy desires to be more powerful. After the ritual, three of the girls' wishes are granted. Bonnie's scars are removed by an experimental treatment she undergoes the next day, Chris is so besotted with Sarah that he follows her everywhere, and Rochelle's tormentor

⁷⁹ In *Drawing Down the Moon*, Margot Adler describes the anti-authoritarian nature of Wicca and neo-Paganism. While there are other anti-authoritarian religious groups such as the Unitarians and some liberal Christian denominations, "what's unusual about modern Pagans is that they remain anti-authoritarian while retaining rituals and ecstatic techniques that, in our culture, are usually only the province of small and forgotten tribal groups." (ix)

begins to lose her own hair. Only Nancy's wish is not fulfilled. She returns home to her family's squalid trailer, only altering her situation momentarily by causing a power surge that plunges the household into momentary darkness that conceals its ugliness.

Soon, however, it becomes clear that the girls' motivations are selfish. All of the girls have asked Mano to give them power over others. Trites describes feminist power as "more about being aware of one's agency than it is about controlling other people" (*Waking* 8). We see this principle illustrated in how the granting of each girl's wish does not make her any happier or give her greater control over her life. Bonnie can now revel in her body by dressing in revealing clothing, yet this only serves to reinforce her status as one of the school sluts rather than open her life to more possibilities. Rochelle's life is also not improved when her tormentor begins to lose her hair. Instead, Rochelle is ashamed of what she wished for after she finds the girl in the locker room, weeping over her lost locks. And Chris's newfound infatuation with Sarah does not improve her life. Instead, Chris becomes so obsessed with Sarah that he stalks her and eventually tries to rape her.

Subjectivists continue to reproduce the hierarchal power structure that oppresses them rather than transform these power relations entirely. Nancy's wish is finally granted during a second ritual during which she summons Mano and is possessed by his spirit. As a result, she has tremendous supernatural abilities. Soon afterwards, Nancy kills her lecherous stepfather, allowing her mother to inherit \$175,000 from a life insurance policy she did not know her husband had. The money alters the family's class status by permitting them to move into an exclusive high rise apartment building. Yet Nancy's new abilities do not make her any happier. Rather, as she begins to use her magical powers to manipulate others, she undermines the coven's sisterhood. Previously, the girls' friendship with one another was as empowering as any magic they could perform. The pain of being the school outcasts was minimized when they could depend on one another for support. Now, however, Mano's power enables Nancy to coerce her friends into doing as she says. We see how Nancy intimidates her friends as the four ride in her new car. Nancy speeds down the street and runs traffic lights that she changes from red to green only seconds before passing through the intersection, causing several cars to crash into one another after their drivers must stop short. Bonnie and Rochelle pretend that this car ride is an exhilarating demonstration of Nancy's power. However, they are secretly as terrified as Sarah is by their friend's recklessness. Afterward, Bonnie and Rochelle obey Nancy because they are afraid to cross her. Only Sarah is not cowed by Nancy's powers, in part because she is a "natural witch" whose abilities come from within. So when Nancy goes too far by using her powers to cause Chris to fall to his death, Sarah can leave the coven because she is able to defend herself in a way that Bonnie and Rochelle cannot.

Ultimately Nancy's power is tenuous because it is based on manipulating others rather than rooted in her own strengths. Nancy's magical abilities are derived from Mano, the male spirit who has possessed her, and replicate the hierarchal patriarchal power structure in which she is embedded rather than transforming it. Furthermore, Nancy's manipulation of others exemplifies the fundamental precept of Wicca, the Rule of Three,⁸⁰ a variation of the Wiccan

⁸⁰ The Rule of Three, or the Three-Fold Law, is a variation of the Wiccan Rede: "an ye harm none, do as ye will." The Rule of Three reminds practitioners that whatever good or evil they put into the world will return to them three times stronger.

Rede which enjoins practitioners to always be mindful of the consequences of their actions, which will always return to them three times stronger. In this way, Wicca is also a feminist faith in that it promotes respect for others. Nancy, on the other hand, is heedless of how her actions affect others, which is her undoing at the film's conclusion when she is completely devoid of agency.

Because subjectivists replace the authority of others with their own narrow perspective of what they believe to be true and right, they merely invert the hierarchal power structure of patriarchy rather than undermine it. As a result, they are not empowered in a lasting way. Lasting empowerment is only possible through constructivism, which is a feminist epistemological perspective in how knowledge is formed through considering the needs and frailties of others. This holistic way of knowing the world does not reproduce patriarchal power structures because it is anti-hierarchal.

Magic and Agency

The teen witch can only be empowered after transforming her relationship with the institutional forces that shape her life. The alternative perspective of constructivism is fostered by sisterhood, something that the teen witch experiences through mentoring by older women and through friendship with girls her own age. Sisterhood gives the teen witch access to multiple perspectives from which to consider a problem, as well as the love and support of other women, which emboldens her to challenge authority. Moreover, sisterhood is linked to the teen witch's magical powers and her emerging constructivist perspective. Reid describes magic as it is practiced by Wiccans as holistic in that it is based upon the idea that "everything is connected to everything else by an assortment of material and non-material 'levels'" (158). This is a particularly feminine perspective, exemplifying what Nancy Chodorow describes as characteristic of the basic feminine sense of self in which women experience themselves as more connected to the world than do men.⁸¹ The teen witch comes to understand that everything and everyone are connected through sisterhood. This realization is connected to her emerging constructivist perspective through which she views the world holistically, considering the needs and frailties of others before taking action since everything and everyone are connected. From her constructivist perspective, the teen witch discovers that the most empowering use of magic is not to manipulate others for her own personal gain, but instead, to help others, which in turn engenders more sisterhood with other women, thereby perpetuating a cycle of female empowerment. As a result of her constructivist perspective, the teen witch is better able to resist a subordinate feminine subjectivity, and her example encourages other women to do likewise.

Sisterhood and Empowerment

Sisterhood empowers women in multiple ways. Through sisterhood, women give each mentor one another and exchange emotional support. Sisterhood fosters connections among

⁸¹ *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1978.

women, enabling them to compare notes about the particulars of their lives and formulate strategies to resist injustice. For this reason, many laws and social customs separate women from one another and undermine their ability to partake in sisterhood. For example, in contemporary times, discourses of conventional femininity encourage women to view themselves as beauties in competition with other women for the affections of men, the power brokers in their society, rather than as allies who might work together to combat sexist practices that maintain women's subordination. Cultural ideas about women's beauty initially make it difficult for Gemma in *The Gemma Doyle Trilogy* to find supportive friends at Spence, whose graduates are trained to be professional beauties who will make their debuts in order to find wealthy husbands. In *The Craft*, Nancy, Rochelle and Bonnie are cast in the role of school slut by peers in part because their appearances do not fit within the parameters of conventional femininity. And for Nell and Mary in *The Minister's Daughter* and *Witch Child*, the persecution of women for witchcraft fosters a hostile climate that similarly works to undermine sisterhood. Women accused of witchcraft were often tortured into naming other women as their accomplices. Historian Anne Barstow observes that as a consequence of this practice, during the Early Modern witch hunts, women had difficulty trusting "other women, for what woman might not be called up before the judge and start blabbing?" (148).

In spite of impediments to sisterhood, the women in these texts are able to have meaningful relationships with members of their sex. These relationships enable the teen witch to develop her inherent magical abilities. All participate in a limited mentoring relationship with older women who help them better understand their paranormal abilities. In *The Minister's Daughter* and the *Witch Child* series, the successful healer must do more than merely master a set of skills in order to practice her craft. Instead, to heal she must develop her innate magical ability which. For that reason, Nell and Mary are apprenticed to older cunning women who mentor them so that each girl can better understand and control her unique abilities.

Sarah and Gemma have less formal mentoring relationships with older women, which is perhaps why these relationships are not terribly effective in helping each girl understand her powers. When Sarah needs help mastering her supernatural abilities in order to protect herself against Nancy's magic, she briefly seeks the advice of Liro, the New Age witch who runs an occult bookstore. But Sarah quickly learns that Liro's counsel is inadequate, and so she must devise her own strategy for fighting Nancy.

Gemma also has difficulty finding a mentor to help her understand her budding magical ability. Gemma's mother dies before her daughter's supernatural powers surface, so she is not available to help Gemma understand the significance of the visions she begins to have on her sixteenth birthday. Instead, Gemma is left to figure out her emerging powers with little guidance. Gemma's situation makes her vulnerable to manipulation by her mother's former friend Sarah, who has assumed the name Hester Moore and has been taking teaching positions at girls' schools all over the United Kingdom in order to search for that hoped for girl who can open the Realms. When Gemma arrives at Spence, Miss Moore recognizes her power before she understands it herself, and so positions herself to be a mentor to Gemma and her friends. Miss Moore quickly becomes the girls' favorite teacher, and takes their class on outings to the caves outside of Spence. There she beguiles them with stories about the Order, an ancient group of witches who once controlled the Realms' magic and took lovers among members of the Rakshana, the all-male group of magical adepts sworn to protect members of the Order.

When Gemma eventually discovers her ability to visit the Realms, she finds her dead mother waiting for her in this dimension. In the Realms, Gemma's mother is able to mentor her in a limited capacity in that she can reveal to her some of the secrets of the magic. However, because Gemma's mother is no longer of our world, she is unable to protect her daughter from her former friend or even adequately warn her about the danger. Gemma's resulting lack of dependable mentoring ultimately puts her in danger of having her magic appropriated by rogue members of the Order and the Rakshana, who scheme to use Gemma's powers for their own ends.

Gemma's relationship with Miss Moore also emphasizes the student/teacher relationship as a type of mentoring. Although Miss Moore's pedagogy is calculated to win Gemma's trust so that she can appropriate her magical powers, Miss Moore's is also empowering in that it encourages Gemma to view the world holistically. The other teachers at Spence engage in what Paulo Freire terms the banking model of education whereby students are positioned as empty receptacles waiting to be filled with knowledge by their instructors. Most of the teachers at Spence instruct their students in the "right" version of historical events or the "right" way to interpret a poem. This model of education is the opposite of a mentoring relationship, which is necessarily fluid and reciprocal. Rather, the banking model of education is a type of "correct training" that reinforces the student's subordinate relationship with the teacher while serving the interests of the oppressors "who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed" (Freire 54). Miss Moore's teaching, on the other hand, is an example of what Friere terms the problem-posing model of education "which breaks the vertical patterns characteristic of banking education" (61) by making students "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (62) rather than docile listeners. The problem-posing model of education fosters a holistic way of viewing the world that "considers neither the abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world" (Friere 62). Miss Moore and her students become critical co-investigators when she takes them outside to draw instead of keeping them in the classroom to paint yet another still life. In this unrestricted environment, Miss Moore encourages her students to select something that they feel moved to draw and to use whatever techniques they find appropriate to render the image, inviting her pupils to decide for themselves what is art rather than have the "correct" answer supplied to them. In this way, Miss Moore encourages her students to see themselves as knowers who are an intimate part of the known.

Some teen witches also experience sisterhood through friendship with women their own age. As apprentices to cunning women, Nell and Mary rarely find female friends among their peer groups. During the Renaissance and Enlightenment, midwives and healers were particularly open to charges of witchcraft because they seemed to have the power of life and death over their patients. As a result, girls near Nell's and Mary's age are distant towards them lest they too be accused of being witches due to their association. Nell has no female friends her own age. Mary has one teen female friend, but the repressive Puritan culture of Beulah keeps women so tightly controlled that it is difficult for these bonds to flourish.

For Gemma and Sarah, sisterhood with other teen girls helps develop their magical abilities. Though Gemma has some inkling of her supernatural gifts before arriving at Spence, her friendship with Ann, Pippa and Felicity precipitates her discovery that she can enter the Realms. Inspired by Miss Moore's stories, the girls steal a bottle of brandy and sneak to the

caves in the middle of the night. In this private space where they can experience momentary freedom from the rules of Spence and the greater world, they have a sort of slumber party. Intoxicated by the alcohol and their brief freedom, the girls decide to form their own Order and join hands to perform what they believe would be an appropriate magical ceremony to mark the occasion. Yet the ceremony is more powerful than any of the girls imagined it might be. Strengthened by her connection to her new friends, Gemma is suddenly able to the door to the Realms, bringing her friends with her into a dimension she never knew existed.

The Realms is a place that nurtures sisterhood. In this dimension, the girls can better explore their friendship with one another in an alternative, non-patriarchal space. In the Realms, the girls are not divided from one another as beauties competing for the attention of men. Instead, because all in the Realms can partake of its magic, the girls are equal to one another and therefore free to nurture their friendship. In this way, the Realms is a place of feminist power, which is “more about being aware of one’s agency than it is about controlling other people” (Trites *Waking* 8). As we will see later, this friendship is instrumental in allowing Gemma and her friends to discover their own strengths that are even more powerful than the magic of the Realms.

Magic similarly fosters sisterhood in the beginning of *The Craft*. If Bonnie’s, Rochelle’s and Nancy’s outsider statuses brought them together, then their mutual interest in Wicca augments their friendship. However, their magical abilities are not terribly strong because their practice of Wicca requires four people in order to effectively cast a spell: one to call on the powers of each of the four directions of the compass. Sarah is this needed fourth person. When she becomes part of the group, the girls’ sisterhood and magical abilities flourish. The connection between sisterhood and magic is apparent in a scene where the girls are having a sleepover at Sarah’s house. They play the childhood game “light as a feather, stiff as a board,” where participants place their fingers underneath a prone member of the group and lift her into the air. Supposedly this task can only be accomplished if all participating can convince themselves that the prone person is indeed light as a feather and stiff as a board.⁸² But in this instance, the girls’ collective efforts become magical: they lift Rochelle, and she remains suspended in the air as each girl withdraws her hands. This scene is similar to the one in *A Great and Terrible Beauty* where Gemma discovers that she can enter the Realms. Sarah and Gemma might have innate magical abilities, but female friendship is the catalyst allowing their powers to flourish.

However, unlike Gemma and her friends’ earlier experience in the Realms, Sarah and her friends’ magical experience does not lead to feminist power. Buoyed by their success at levitating Rochelle, the four then cast a spell on Laura, the racist classmate who taunts her. Earlier in the day, Nancy has pulled a piece of Laura’s hair from her head. In Sarah’s room, they weave the hair into Rochelle’s locks to complete the spell. This scene replicates the hairplay that girls often engage in during slumber parties, further emphasizing the connection between their magic and their friendship. Yet this scene also bodes ill for their friendship because the girls’ newfound magical abilities are being used to manipulate others.

⁸² It is actually possible to lift the prone person during this game if enough people participate, since a heavy weight distributed among several people is fairly easy to raise.

When each girl has roughly the same amount of magical ability as the other, their friendship continues to nurture all members of the group. But their friendship deteriorates after Nancy appropriates Mano's power and uses it to manipulate others. Sisterhood is a relationship that encourages sharing and caring, which mutually benefits the participants. This mutuality is also present in women's relationships that are based on mentoring, as it is implied that mentoring relationship will come full circle when the mentee eventually mentors another woman. Nancy's use of her powers to intimidate other group members destroys their sisterhood because it obliterates the mutuality of their relationship.

Literacy and Self-Knowledge

While female friendship fortifies the teen witch in multiple ways, she must develop the strength of her will in order to be able to perform magic. She hones this strength in part through getting to know herself better. One way that the teen witch develops self-knowledge is through literacy, something she has in common with some of the haunted girls in Chapter 1. Both reading and writing enable the knower to synthesize the perspectives of others along with her own insights. In this way, literacy is also a tool that enables the user to develop a constructivist way of understanding the world.

Mary develops self-knowledge through writing. Mary's story in *Witch Child* is told through her diary, a private space where she can contemplate her baffling magical abilities that would lead to her being executed for witchcraft if certain members of her community were to learn about them. Mary is careful to hide her diary for this reason. But even if Mary had not written about her magical abilities in her diary, she is wise to hide this document anyway because Reverend Johnson and his congregants are suspicious of female literacy. The religious of Beulah equate female literacy with evil because reading and writing have the potential to encourage independent thinking. For this reason, Reverend Johnson is wary of Mary after learning that she can read and write in both English and Latin. Later, one of the community gossips objects to Mary's living with Jonas and Martha, an elderly couple who are not married or related to her, because Mary is transcribing Jonas's book instead of performing the usual domestic tasks that are relegated to women in their community. The illiterate woman asserts that "inky fingers on a girl are far from natural" (Rees 169). These attitudes lead Mary to conceal her diary by sewing its pages inside of a quilt that will eventually be found by Alison Ellman, a twentieth century anthropologist who comes into possession of the textile. Literacy is also powerful because it allows for communication through time. Mary will finally have some of the voice she was denied in life when the anthropologist publishes the diary as *The Mary Papers*, the fictional manuscript at the heart of *Witch Child* and *Sorceress*.

The Mary Papers encourages in its actual and fictional audiences the development of self-knowledge through literacy. In *Witch Child*, *The Mary Papers* are concluded with a note from Ellman asking readers who might have any further information about the people in this account to contact her as she is desirous of continuing her research (Rees *Witch* 261). Alison receives a reply in *Sorceress*. Agnes Hearn, a Native-American university student, recognizes Mary's story as one her Aunt Miriam has told her about an ancestor. Agnes contacts Alison with the intent of putting her in touch with Aunt Miriam. Instead, when Agnes returns home to broker a meeting between the two women, Miriam, who is a tribal shaman, puts Agnes in a

trance where she channels Mary to learn the what happened to her after she left Beulah and married into one of the Native-American cultures. This channeled narrative is the main story in *Sorceress*.

Agnes is similar to the haunted girls I discussed because she too is channeling a spirit. Like most adolescents, Agnes is searching for the self-knowledge necessary to understanding how she can make a meaningful contribution to the world. After Agnes emerges from her spirit trance, she is initially disappointed because she feels “bereft and even more lost than she did before” (Rees *Sorceress* 309) rather than a sense of closure. Aunt Miriam, however, helps Agnes put her experience into context. She likens Mary’s story to one of the beads on a wampum belt, an article of clothing that does not represent an individual’s wealth, as many white people erroneously believed, but instead carries the tribe’s history and law. Each bead of the wampum belt is significant, yet it is also meaningless outside of the context of the whole. Miriam sees Mary’s story as like one of the beads on a metaphorical wampum belt representing Agnes’s life: “Mary, the people in her life, the folk Alison has found out about, Alison herself—we’re like the beads on this belt. Look at us apart and you can’t tell a lot. But put us together and then you can read the whole story” (Rees *Sorceress* 310). In this way, Mary’s spirit has helped Agnes develop the self-knowledge preliminary to deciding how she will fit into the world. Additionally, the meta-fictional structure of the Witch Child series encourages the reader to contemplate how she too fits into the world.

Constructivism and Agency

While the witch must have some innate magical abilities, she can only perform effective transformative magic after she sees the world through a constructivist perspective. This perspective helps her realize that because everything is connected, her actions can have profound unforeseen consequences if they are not carefully considered beforehand.

Mary’s, Sarah’s and Gemma’s emerging constructivist perspectives unfold during the course of the narratives. Mary’s emerging constructivism is implied in *Witch Child* through how she becomes an independent thinker as she practices her healing arts. Though Mary’s mentor Martha knows a good deal about herbs, she is not a skilled midwife. Moreover, each pregnancy presents a unique set of challenges that requires the midwife to adapt her technique. Thus, when Mary is called upon to help women in childbirth, she must combine what she learned from her deceased grandmother with what others have taught her in order to decide how help each woman. In *The Craft*, Sarah’s constructivism is demonstrated by how she considers what action to take to protect herself after she leaves the coven. We see her continue to consult books on magic as well as seek the advice of Liro. And in *The Gemma Doyle Trilogy*, Gemma’s constructivism develops as she struggles to understand the best way to prevent her magical abilities from falling into the hands of those who would use it to manipulate others. Gemma seeks advice from many humans and supernatural beings before making her decision.

Nell’s emerging constructivist perspective is more fully explored in *The Minister’s Daughter*. The structure of *The Minister’s Daughter* emphasizes how this perspective is developed dialogically. Unlike most Young Adult novels, *The Minister’s Daughter* is not a first-person narrative. Instead, it is a frame tale told by a now elderly Patience Madden, Grace’s younger sister who remembers how her father and sibling fabricated evidence against Nell.

Patience relates this story to the court in Salem, Massachusetts fifty years later, by way of exonerating herself of an accusation of witchcraft by demonstrating that her sister Grace is actually a witch. Yet Patience's narrative is not related wholly through her perspective. Instead her story fades into an omniscient third-person voice through which multiple characters view the same events in profoundly different ways—Nell's magical, pagan perspective and Patience's fearful Puritan way of seeing things. For instance, the night that Nell is taken away by a fairy on a black horse to deliver the Fairy Queen's baby is related through both Nell's pagan way of seeing the world and Patience's Puritan point of view. In Nell's account, the horse and its rider are a wondrous part of the supernatural world as experienced by those who follow the Old Ways, but in Patience's account, the same horse and rider are the devil come to dupe a willing village maid.

Nell's emerging constructivism is also linked to the alternative education she received from her grandmother who mentored her in the healing arts. When Nell's grandmother is still alive, Nell is called upon with increasing frequency to do the healing and spellwork that allow them to earn a living. Nell can no longer dependably turn to her grandmother for help because she suffers from dementia so she often forgets the complicated spells and recipes that are part of the healer's art. Neither woman is literate, so Nell's grandmother has imparted her wisdom to her orally. Thus, if Nell cannot remember a spell or recipe and cannot consult her grandmother, she must draw upon multiple perspectives of others in order to understand what to do.

The most powerful example of Nell's emerging constructivism is her handling of Grace Madden's request for an abortion. When Grace realizes that she is pregnant, she visits Nell and her grandmother for a tonic to end her pregnancy so that her father will not learn of her dalliance with the blacksmith's son. Nell and her grandmother are not opposed to abortion on principle and have helped many women end their pregnancies with an abortifacient tonic they concoct. However, because Grace became pregnant during the Beltane frolicking, her fetus is a merrybegot who is sacred to the Powers, the amorphous supernatural force revered by those who follow the old pagan ways. For this reason, Nell tells Grace she cannot help her terminate the pregnancy as doing so would be an affront to the Powers, though she will help her through her pregnancy and labor. Nell's refusal to help Grace terminate her pregnancy prompts the minister's daughter to publicly accuse her of being a witch.

At first, it might appear that Nell's refusal is borne of subjectivism—while Nell may believe that it is wrong to end this pregnancy, Grace does not feel this way, and so it seems like Nell's refusal is rooted in her own subjective way of viewing the world. However, the reader sees Nell carefully considering the perspectives of others, weighing the advice her grandmother would give along with how it must feel to be in Grace's position, before arriving at her decision. While constructivists carefully consider the perspectives of others before arriving at a decision, this position does not necessitate that they always choose a course of action that would make others happy.

The witch is subversive of patriarchy then, not because she can help other women procure abortions, see into the future, or affect the course of events with her spells, but instead, because her way of seeing the world enables her to refuse the subordinate position she is being groomed for because she rejects a hierarchal model of authority.

Constructivism and Sisterhood

Eventually each girl learns enough about herself to hone the strength of her will in order to perform powerful transformative magic. Yet she initially uses this magic to transform others rather than herself. This use of magic is in keeping with Wiccan spiritual practices. A perusal of neo-Pagan literature indicates that neo-Pagan witchcraft “is usually not directed towards immediate personal material gain” (Reid 157), but is instead worked for the benefit of others. Constructivist women are similar to neo-Pagans in how they too tend to employ their will in the service of empowering and improving the quality of life in others (Belenky 152). Helping others engenders sisterhood (and brotherhood, in some instances), which undermines the ability of others to keep the teen witch in a subordinate gender role. In this way, teen witch, with her constructivist epistemological perspective, is especially threatening to the status quo. The strength of her will makes her resistant to patriarchal control, and her example is threatening to patriarchy in that it encourages other women to similarly resist being controlled. Moreover, sisterhood gives the teen witch a social capital she can draw on for help with situations that exceed her magical abilities.

As healers, Mary and Nell both use their magic to help others more than themselves. Nell’s selflessness ultimately permits her to be relatively autonomous. When Nell finds a dying soldier who is a stranger to her, she uses her most powerful and valuable magical object, the fairy placenta, to save his life. This object can heal any injury, but can only be used once, so Nell’s decision to use it on a relative stranger reveals the depths of her selflessness. The man she saves is actually Bonny Prince Charlie in disguise, hiding in the country to help the soldiers who are trying to subdue his father’s enemies who will eventually execute the king as part of their revolution. As repayment for her good deed, Prince Charles will later stop Nell’s execution for witchcraft and gift her with a cottage by the sea where she can live out her days, healing all who seek her assistance. While Nell is dependent on the king’s continued good will in order to live this life, she is more autonomous than she might be if she had married or remained single and had no one to protect her from harassment.

Nell’s willingness to help others also encourages sisterhood. Mistress Bramlow, a woman whom Nell and her grandmother helped through a difficult childbirth, feels so indebted to both that she stands up for each woman as she is accused of witchcraft. When the villagers kill Nell’s grandmother by ducking her in the pond to ascertain whether or not she is a witch, Mistress Bramlow shames them into leaving gifts of food for the orphaned Nell, whose grandmother was proven innocent after she did not float. Later, as Nell is led to the gallows, Mistress Bramlow risks punishment to sneak to her a pack of powerful narcotic herbs that she can ingest to be insensible during the execution.

Sisterhood has a powerful transformative effect on Mistress Bramlow, eventually emboldening her to refuse the subordinate position that Reverend Madden tries to impose on his congregants, in part to compel them to view his daughter as bewitched rather than pregnant. When Grace gives birth, Reverend Madden directs his housekeeper to leave the infant in the snow outside of the village where it will not be easily connected to his house and will die of exposure. Mistress Bramlow finds the baby and rescues it, then visits the minister ostensibly to make arrangements for the supposedly parentless child’s baptism so she can formally adopt him. However, bringing the baby’s attention to Reverend Madden is also a

powerful act of defiance on her part. She is confronting Reverend Madden with the evidence of his attempted infanticide, which calls into question his claim of moral superiority that is the foundation of his authority as a minister.

Mary's skills as a witch and a healer also allow her to develop powerful bonds of sisterhood with other women. In *Witch Child*, witches have a bond with one another that encourages them to help their sisters, through stealth if necessary. The novel opens in England as Mary's grandmother is seized as a witch by the local Puritan authorities, who hang her without a trial. As Mary watches the only family she has ever known come to a violent end, a strange woman whisks her away from the crowd before they turn on her. The novel indicates that this woman is actually Mary's mother, who could never openly claim the daughter she bore out of wedlock. Because in the *Witch Child* series witchcraft is a hereditary gift passed from mother to daughter, we can assume that this woman is also a witch. The woman, who is now married to a prominent member of Oliver Cromwell's government, uses her wealth and influence to arrange passage to America for Mary where she believes she will be safe from the witch hunts of England. There is further evidence of sisterhood among witches when Mary is sailing from England. As Mary's ship leaves her native country, she can see women along the cliffs who seem to be other witches offering her benedictions.

Mary's healing powers foster bonds of sisterhood with some of the women of Beulah. These bonds are important later on as they save Mary's life. During the journey to America, Mary assists Mistress Rivers during a difficult birth, breathing life into the child that all believed was stillborn. Mary's actions earn her the undying gratitude of Mistress Rivers and her daughter Rebecca, who is about Mary's age. At the end of the novel, when Reverend Johnson and a band of witch hunters come for Mary, she is able to hide in Rebecca's birth chamber long enough to escape—custom dictates that Puritan men cannot enter a woman's birth chamber because it is unclean.

Gemma's gifts also nurture sisterhood, and are at their strongest when she is helping others. Gemma's attempts to assist her friend Ann demonstrate the limits of magic and the power of sisterhood. Unlike the other wealthy girls at Spence, the orphaned Ann lacks a fortune. Instead, her aunt and uncle have paid for her education on the condition that she return to be their children's unpaid governess. Because Ann is also plain, there is little chance she can escape this fate through finding a wealthy husband who might be willing to overlook her poverty. Her only hope is that her extraordinary voice can land her a career in the theater. Gemma casts a glamour over Ann, transforming her into a ravishing beauty. In this guise, Ann successfully auditions for a role on stage. Yet because the magic cannot permanently alter her appearance, Ann is fearful that if she takes the position she auditioned for while in this guise, she will be fired after she reverts to her own form. Gemma can only help Ann by enabling her to refuse the subordinate subject position she is being groomed to occupy, a feat accomplished more through sisterhood and encouragement than through magic. When Gemma can finally convince Ann that she has a right to happiness and autonomy, she auditions for a role on stage in her own form. Ann's extraordinary voice earns her the leading role in a musical, establishing her career on stage and subsequent independence. In this way, Gemma has helped Ann see that she has the ability to change her life. As a result, Gemma better understands the strength of her own will in effecting change in the world.

The Gemma Doyle trilogy concludes with the most emphatic example of the connection between sisterhood and magic. Helping Ann teaches Gemma about the possibilities of resisting feminine subordination. Sisterhood helps Gemma to understand how to keep the Realm's magic out of the hands of those who would use it to oppress others. The Realms, like our world, is made up of many classes of people with varying degrees of access to resources. Some groups such as the Order have historically controlled the lion's share of the Realms' magic, while other groups constitute an oppressed underclass because they have access to precious little magic. As a constructivist Gemma can weigh the voices of others with her own instincts to dispose of the magic in a way that inverts the Realms' hierarchical power structure. She distributes the magic among all who live there, something that grants agency to members of the most disenfranchised groups rather than permits some to manipulate others. The results of this decision in turn permit Gemma to process the advice of others along with what she feels to be important and useful in order to decide how to direct her own life.

Gemma's experiences hone the strength of her will and help her understand how she can make a significant contribution to the world, even without the magic that she has returned to the Realms. The trilogy concludes with Gemma standing up to her family to tell them that she has no intention of marrying, ever. As a consequence, she forgoes her debut, the event in her life that would signal to her family's peers that she was on the marriage market. Gemma then convinces her father to give her the share of her fortune that would have come to her after marriage so she can use it to instead attend university and learn to support herself. In the novel's last scene, Gemma prepares to leave for college in the New York, where she hopes to encourage sisterhood on a broader scale by working for women's rights.

Because Sarah has carefully considered the needs and frailties of others when deciding on a course of action, she can refuse the subordinate feminine subject position that girls at the close of the twentieth century are still being groomed to occupy. Unlike Nancy, Sarah still believes in the power of sisterhood (although she can no longer trust her former coven members). Sarah's belief in the power of sisterhood causes her to reject the sexual politics of girlfighting, which she demonstrates through her refusal to retaliate against Nancy, Bonnie and Rochelle for trying to kill her. Instead, Sarah uses her powers to bind them from doing harm to others or to themselves. Girlfighting, after all, gets girls to do the work of patriarchy through perpetuating petty quarrels that maintain persistent divisions among women. The film concludes with Sarah still in possession of her magical abilities though without close friends at the moment. Defeated, Nancy is stripped of all autonomy: she has gone insane and has been committed to an asylum where is strapped to a gurney and shot full of psychotropic drugs while she raves about being able to fly. Meanwhile, Bonnie and Rochelle approach Sarah, as much to make sure that she will not try to kill them as to apologize and renew their friendship. While Sarah assures her former friends that she forgives them and will not try to harm them, she raises a gust of wind to demonstrate that she is still in possession of her powers. As a constructivist, Sarah's magical abilities will continue to develop and strengthen her into a woman who does not need to manipulate others in order to be able to control her life.

Conclusion

Of all the types of monstrous Others I have examined in this dissertation, the witch is the most powerful figure. A feminist, she supports other women characters. She benefits from sisterhood and fosters sisterhood among other women. Unlike the figure of the haunted girl, the witch never accepts a subordinate feminine role. Nor has she ever been so potentially out of control and violent that she must be destroyed. Instead, the witch retains control of her body, unlike the ghost and werewolf. And finally, unlike the haunted girls or the female lycanthropes, the teen witch matures into a strong and autonomous adult woman.

At the end of The Gemma Doyle trilogy, *The Minister's Daughter* and *The Craft*, the protagonists have all matured, becoming strong and autonomous adult women. At the conclusion of *Sorceress*, the final novel of the Witch Child series, we learn that this is indeed the case for Mary, who has married into a Native-American tribe where her healing and supernatural abilities are valued rather than scorned as diabolical. Similarly, we learn that Nell in *The Minister's Daughter* ends her long life in a cottage by the sea, protected by the prince who becomes Charles II and healing all who seek her assistance.

On the other hand, we cannot completely assume that Vivian (*Blood and Chocolate*) and Maris (*The Bleeding*), or Judith (*Jade Green*), Jennifer (*A Certain Slant of Light*), Susan (*A Stir of Bones*) or Molly (*Dreadful Sorry*) will become autonomous. *Blood and Chocolate* and *Jade Green* conclude with a version of the marriage plot where the heroine is poised to wed in an extremely patriarchal society. One can only hope that Judith and Vivian are strong enough to resist being subordinated by their mates. Susan in *A Stir of Bones* and Maris in *The Bleeding* must still live with their controlling parents until each girl is of the age of majority, and so there is a chance that either girl could be browbeaten into submission before she can escape her repressive environment. *Ginger Snaps* and *Blood Moon* end badly for Ginger and Tara—both girls become monstrous Others rather than strong and autonomous young women.

The teen witch then offers the strongest example to readers of how to resist feminine subordination. Her greatest strength is her feminist worldview rather than her magical powers. This perspective encourages the teen witch to view the world holistically and to consider multiple perspectives before taking action. In this way, the teen witch's worldview has the potential to undermine patriarchal order which is based on a hierarchical way of knowing the world. While readers might not be able to communicate with spirits, change into werewolves, or cast spells, they can change how they look at the world. In this way, the teen witch's example shows how changing one's perspective can be empowering.

Conclusion

Monsters Are a Girl's Best Friend

Young Adult fantasist Ursula K. Le Guin describes non-realistic fiction as a valuable tool for helping adolescents understand their world. Non-realistic fiction trains the imagination and opens alternatives to reality (Le Guin 133). As a variety of non-realistic fiction, horror also trains the imagination and opens alternatives to reality. The supernatural elements of horror denaturalize the repressed, thereby deconstructing and redrawing the boundaries that perpetuate subjectivity (Creed "Horror" 46). In a world where girls can converse with spirits, change into wolves or cast a glamour with a glance, the solidity of the boundaries separating the living from the dead, human from animal, and the possible from the impossible are called into question. Through the use of fantastical elements, normative masculinity and femininity are similarly revealed as constructed subject positions rather than boundaries that are the "natural" consequence of biological sex. As a consequence, stories about ghosts, werewolves and witches allow girls to imagine alternatives to the subordinate roles they are being groomed to occupy as adults.

Young Adult horror, like mainstream horror, illuminates the formation of the abject. Barbara Creed describes the monstrous Other as the embodiment of the abject. It crosses or threatens to cross the border between human and Other, precipitating an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability such as those who are not conventionally masculine or feminine. "The monstrous is produced at the border which separates those who take up their proper gender roles from those who do not" (Creed "Horror" 40-41).

Horror redraws the boundaries between the abject and the subject, between human and nonhuman, through the figure of the monstrous Other. Teen girls have first-hand experience with this Other since in a patriarchal culture, as females they always occupy the position of Other, even when they are conventionally feminine. The monstrous Other in the texts I have examined is always a double of the teen girl.

In Young Adult horror fiction, female protagonists reject traditional gender roles. These protagonists discover their voices, explore their sexuality and act independently of male authority. They problematise what is presented to girls as "normal" and "natural" feminine behavior, which can help readers to understand that much of what has been presented to them as reality has actually been made by someone else. Because feminine subordination is frequently represented to girls as an immutable consequence of being female, this realization is an important aspect of identifying gender roles as restrictive and damaging.

The monstrous Other is useful in helping other characters, and even the reader, to identify these roles and understand their cost and constructedness because it is a double with a difference. In *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler argues that resistance to gender roles takes its form not through the repudiation of "what we are," but rather, through varying the iterations of "what we are." The monstrous Other in the texts I examine presents an iteration whose similarity to the original implies the possibility of resistance to that which has been presented as "natural" and unchangeable. Moreover, because in Young Adult horror fiction the monstrous other is nearly always a sympathetic character, it is fairly easy for the reader or viewer to

identify with this creature. The monstrous Other then can be a useful tool in helping the reader formulate her own strategies to resisting a restrictive gender role.

In the twenty-first century, girls still need help resisting feminine subordination and “refusing what they are.” Perhaps this is because as Mary Pipher, Peggy Orenstein, Naomi Wolf and Joan Jacobs Brumberg point out, girls are increasingly pressured by the media to embody a doll-like feminine ideal in which they are deprived of voice and agency.⁸³ Moreover, the more contemporary “together woman”⁸⁴ and “riot grrrrl”⁸⁵ varieties of femininity are not improvements on older more restrictive models, but are instead the same old model in a new package. Therefore, monsters are a girl’s best friend in that they “explore and problematise what is considered normal and what troubles us” (Wisker 13) and in some instances, they can foil the effects of discipline.

Each of the types of monstrous Others I examine in this dissertation offers a different model of resistance to feminine subordination. The haunted girls I examined in Chapter 1 are reacquainted with their own strengths through their relationship with a spirit. The haunted girl has originally repressed knowledge of her own strengths and desires in the interests of being conventionally feminine. In fact, she has repressed these qualities so thoroughly that she is in danger of being victimized. However, the ghost who haunts her is not the source of this threat. Instead, the haunted girl is in danger from the family patriarch or his analogue who will exploit her weaknesses in order to pressure her to eradicate her self. The ghost’s intervention, however, saves the haunted girl by enabling her to see alternatives to the crippling feminine subject position that she has been forced to occupy. Because the ghost’s intervention is subtle, it is able to assist the haunted girl in such a way that she does not appear to be radically departing the boundaries of conventional femininity. The understated nature of the ghost’s intervention is particularly important as the girl it haunts is not a legal adult, and so is at great risk of being dominated. The ghost’s subtle intervention enables the haunted girl to nurture her strengths in stealth until she is no longer subject to her guardians’ intervention.

The teen female werewolves in Chapter 2 expose what happens to girls who are unable to “refuse what they are.” Both Ginger (*Ginger Snaps*) and Tara (*Blood Moon*) are trapped within different stereotypes of femininity by the end of each film. As a werewolf, Ginger is all that is negatively associated with femininity: a creature who is completely controlled by her hormones rather than reason. Ultimately Ginger becomes the wild animal that patriarchal culture has always claimed lurks inside of all women and justifies the subordination of their sex. As a consequence, Ginger must be “put to sleep” for the good of other humans. Tara, on the

⁸³ Mary Pipher (*Reviving Ophelia*) and Peggy Orenstein (*Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem and the Confidence Gap*) document how girls’ self esteem is diminished in adolescence as they are pressured to sacrifice “parts of themselves [considered] masculine on the altar of social acceptability and to shrink their souls down to a petite size” (Pipher 39). Naomi Wolf (*The Beauty Myth*) and Joan Jacobs Brumberg (*The Body Project*) examine how cultural standards of beauty are implicated in girls’ diminished sense of self.

⁸⁴ See Lynn Phillips, *Flirting with Danger: Young Women’s Reflections on Sexuality and Domination*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

⁸⁵ See Sharon Lamb and Lyn Mikel Brown, *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers’ Schemes*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006.

other hand, appears to embody normative femininity: she is silent, seemingly passive, and conventionally beautiful, qualities she has cultivated by actively suppressing parts of herself at odds with this subject position. At the end of each film then, neither girl can “refuse what she is”: while werewolves are usually shapeshifters, Ginger and Tara are eternally trapped within their respective bestial and female forms. Maris (*The Bleeding*) and Vivian (*Blood and Chocolate*), on the other hand, are able to “refuse what they are.” Each girl accomplishes this refusal by accepting as strong and beautiful the parts of herself that are at odds with normative femininity rather than succumbing to sexist ideas about woman’s alleged inferior and dangerous animal nature. As a consequence, each girl has a hybridity that gives her the strength to resist being “put in her place” by others.

The teen witches I examine in Chapter 3 offer a strong theoretical model of resistance. The teen witch “refuses who she is” not by nurturing her strengths in stealth, or even by accepting those parts of herself that are incompatible with stereotypical femininity. Rather, the teen witch resists subordination through her constructivist epistemological perspective. When the teen witch comes to understand that the knower is part of the known, she can reject her culture’s hierarchal and oppressive model of knowledge. As constructivist, she also views the world holistically and sees herself connected to others rather than isolated from them. As a result, the teen witch will always consider the needs and frailties of others before deciding on a course of action that might affect them. Also, the teen witch uses her magic to help others more than herself. Moreover, the teen witch’s constructivist perspective is not a liability that would keep her perpetually in service to others at the expense of her own independence. Rather, her constructivist perspective is empowering. The teen witch’s holistic way of viewing the world nurtures bonds of sisterhood with other women, which empowers all parties. One of the effects of discipline is that those on whom power is exercised “tend to be more strongly individualized” (Foucault *Discipline* 193) and experience themselves as isolated from others whose common condition might encourage them to collaborate in order to resist oppression. Constructivism then has the potential to undo some of the individualizing effects of discipline because it is a position from which the knower experiences herself as connected to others. In this way, the teen female witch presents a positive paradigm of female freedom and power.

In *Learning Curves*, Beth Younger describes Young Adult literature as representing a “feminist continuum of resistance to the discourse of dominant culture” (132). This continuum of resistance is also evident in Young Adult horror fiction. At one end of the continuum are texts that specifically educate readers about feminism as something that empowers women. The Gemma Doyle Trilogy concludes with the heroine rejecting her role as a cosseted beauty who in the normal course of events would land a wealthy husband to protect her. Instead Gemma’s emergent constructivist perspective leads her to forgo this role in order to attend university in the United States with the goal of supporting herself and working for women’s rights. And in *Dreadful Sorry*, the ghost of Clementine Horn educates Molly about how first- and second-wave feminism have given her possibilities that were never available to Clementine.

At another end of this continuum are texts espousing feminist principles such as the necessity of giving women the social and intellectual freedom afforded their brothers, the value of sisterhood, and the importance of viewing a problem from multiple perspectives. This is the case in *Stir of Bones*, *Dreadful Sorry*, *A Certain Slant of Light*, *The Bleeding*, *Blood and Chocolate*, *The Minister’s Daughter*, The Gemma Doyle trilogy, The Witch Child series and *The Craft*.

Stir of Bones, *Dreadful Sorry*, *A Certain Slant of Light* and The Gemma Doyle trilogy each represent how painful it is for women to lack the freedoms and opportunities given to men. Susan (*Stir of Bones*) is denied so much autonomy by Father that even her flesh does not feel as if it belongs to her. Instead, Susan thinks of herself as a piece of property that Father manages but that she cannot control. Clementine Horn (*Dreadful Sorry*) and Gemma's friend Pippa Worthington (The Gemma Doyle trilogy) are willing to die in order to have the same autonomy and opportunity for intellectual development given to their brothers. When Pippa's family forces her to marry a wealthy man twice her age, she commits suicide to remain forever in the Realms rather than be sold into a loveless marriage. Clementine elopes by sea on a stormy night when sailing is inadvisable so she can have a chance to escape a life of virtual slavery in her uncle's house and instead see the world and continue her education. And Jennifer (*A Certain Slant of Light*) dies for all intents and purposes when her parents thwart at every turn her attempts to express herself. Because she cannot even be comfortable in her own flesh, Jennifer's spirit abandons her body.

The value of sisterhood for promoting women's growth is emphasized in *A Certain Slant of Light*, *Jade Green*, *A Stir of Bones*, *The Craft*, *The Minister's Daughter*, *Witch Child* (the first book of the *Witch Child* series) and The Gemma Doyle trilogy. In most of these texts, individuals and/or cultural institutions make it difficult for women to partake of sisterhood because when women collaborate and support one another, they are better able to resist subordination. Male religious zealots in *A Certain Slant of Light*, *The Minister's Daughter* and *Witch Child* undermine sisterhood by keeping women isolated in the home. Prevailing discourses of femininity that encourage women to think of themselves as beauties who are in competition with each other for the affections of men make it difficult for Gemma (The Gemma Doyle trilogy) and Sarah (*The Craft*) to have meaningful friendships with other girls. The ghosts in *A Certain Slant of Light* and *Jade Green*, on the other hand, help the girls they haunt out of a sense of sisterhood. And sisterhood is linked to empowering women individually and collectively, as we see throughout The Gemma Doyle trilogy and in the beginning of *The Craft*.

The protagonists of The Gemma Doyle Trilogy, the *Witch Child* series, *The Craft* and *The Minister's Daughter* come to view the world more holistically in that they understand the importance of considering how one's actions affect others before making a decision. Gemma, Mary, Sarah and Nell carefully consider the effects of their actions on all parties involved before using their magical powers. Moreover, this holistic way of viewing the world is specifically feminine and feminist in that it encourages women to think of themselves in connection with others rather than isolated from them.⁸⁶ Finally, this holistic way of viewing the world promotes sisterhood among women because it encourages them to see one another as friends rather than rivals for male attention.

Young Adult horror fiction uses fantasy to present sympathetically the untenable situation of the adolescent female within society. Young Adult horror fiction does not simply reproduce through the form of the monstrous Other sexist ideas about women. Rather, Young Adult horror fiction uses the tropes of horror to deconstruct sexist ideas about women's

⁸⁶ This holistic way of viewing the world is similar to what theorist Nancy Chodorow describes in *The Reproduction of Mothering* as the basic feminine sense of self, a subject position whereby women think of themselves in connection with others rather than as separate from them.

supposed essential nature which have been used to justify feminine subordination. In this way, Young Adult horror fiction differs from mainstream horror fiction, which is as likely to affirm sexist ideas about women (as well as racist ideas about non-whites) as it is to challenge these assumptions.

My hope is that this dissertation demonstrates the value of feminist analysis of Young Adult horror and that it encourages others to consider facets of this genre that I have not examined such as representations of normative masculinity or the numerous vampire and zombie narratives. Because I believe that horror is useful in presenting alternatives to feminine subordination, I also hope to encourage librarians and booksellers to offer more works in the genre for their patrons and educators to bring horror into their classrooms. Monsters are a girl's best friend, and they have a lot to teach us.

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Vita

June Pulliam received her doctorate in English from Louisiana State University in 2010, where she has been an instructor in the department of English since 1987. She has taught everything from introductory composition to courses in Young Adult literature and horror fiction. She has also written numerous articles on the horror genre and children's literature, and co-authored with Anthony Fonseca *Hooked on Horror: A Reader's Guide to the Genre* (Volumes 1-3) and *Read On . . . A Guide to Reading Interests in Horror*.