Werewolves, Wings, and Other Weird Transformations:
Fantastic Metamorphosis in Children's and Young Adult Fantasy Literature

Shelley Bess Chappell
B. A. (Hons)

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ABSTRACT

My central thesis is that fantastic motifs work on a metaphorical level to encapsulate and express ideologies that have frequently been naturalised as 'truths'. I develop a theory of motif metaphors in order to examine the ideologies generated by the fantastic motif of metamorphosis in a range of contemporary children's and young adult fantasy texts. Although fantastic metamorphosis is an exceptionally prevalent and powerful motif in children's and young adult fantasy literature, symbolising important ideas about change and otherness in relation to childhood, adolescence, and maturation, and conveying important ideologies about the world in which we live, it has been little analysed in children's literature criticism. The detailed analyses of particular metamorphosis motif metaphors in this study expand and refine our academic understanding of the metamorphosis figure and consequently provide insight into the underlying principles and particular forms of a variety of significant ideologies.

By examining several principal metamorphosis motif metaphors, I investigate how a number of specific cultural beliefs are constructed and represented in contemporary children's and young adult fantasy literature. I particularly focus upon metamorphosis as a metaphor for childhood otherness; adolescent hybridity and deviant development; maturation as a process of self-change and physical empowerment; racial and ethnic difference and otherness; and desire and *jouissance*. I apply a range of pertinent cultural theories to explore these motif metaphors fully, drawing on the interpretive frameworks most appropriate to the concepts under consideration. I thus employ general psychoanalytic theories of embodiment, development, language, subjectivity, projection, and abjection; poststructuralist, social constructionist, and sociological theories; and wide-ranging literary theories, philosophical theories, gender and feminist theories, race and ethnicity theories, developmental theories, and theories of fantasy and animality. The use of such theories allows for incisive explorations of the explicit and implicit ideologies metaphorically conveyed by the motif of metamorphosis in different fantasy texts.

In this study, I present a number of specific analyses that enhance our knowledge of the motif of fantastic metamorphosis and of significant cultural ideologies. In doing so, I provide a model for a new and precise approach to the analysis of fantasy literature.

<u>Declaration</u>

I certify that this work has not been submitted for a
higher degree to any other university or institution.

Shelley Chappell

<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u>

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>

Children's and young adult fantasy literature is saturated with images of fantastic metamorphosis. Metamorphosis is a pervasive motif within fantasy literature for all ages and the concept of fantastic change even makes its way into realist fiction in the form of imagery, symbolism, characters' ruminations, structuring fables, and embedded narratives. Although P.M.C. Forbes Irving writes that metamorphosis is not "a fantasy associated with a particular time of life" (1990, 195), there is something about the appearance of fantastic metamorphosis in children's and young adult literature which is particularly apposite. This is because the motif of fantastic metamorphosis symbolises ideas of change and otherness that underpin many constructions of childhood and adolescence within Western cultures.[1] It is thus surprising that this prevalent motif has been little analysed in children's literature criticism.

The central argument of this dissertation is that the metamorphosis motif metaphorically conveys powerful, often naturalised ideologies about childhood and adolescence, the processes of maturation, and other significant aspects of youth experience. In order to investigate how this occurs, I develop a theory of motif metaphor. This theory enables a precise analysis of fantasy texts and highlights fantasy's positioning within the ideological environment, exposing its mystique as a domain of significant cultural implications. I isolate and examine several principal metamorphosis motif metaphors in contemporary children's and young adult fantasy literature — namely, metamorphosis as representative of childhood otherness; adolescent hybridity and deviant development; maturation as a process of self-change and physical empowerment; racial and ethnic difference and otherness; and desire and *jouissance*. Focusing upon particularly potent and

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[1] My use of 'Western' refers to Western European cultural groups. My conclusions are mostly limited to cultures which are predominantly Anglo-European (Britain, Ireland, North America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), but the importance of wider Western cultural influences (particularly from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Scandinavia) is implied in my use of the term. Other critics have used terms such as 'European and North American' or 'North' which are inappropriate when one is writing from an Australasian perspective, and I have correspondingly capitalised 'west' in order to illustrate that many 'Western' cultures are not located in the geographical west. Defining these cultures as Western is possible because they are linked by common ancestries, histories, customs, and political and economic systems. They thus share common metanarratives and ideologies (such as the Western metaethic — see Stephens and McCallum 1998). Individual cultural variabilities will always be kept in mind where possible.

comprehensive examples in contemporary children's and young adult fantasy texts, I examine how these motif metaphors convey topical controversial ideologies about youth, maturation, and subjectivity. I also illustrate how examinations of motif metaphors offer insight into the logic (or illogic) engendering various ideologies.

For example, in **Chapter One** I analyse how the restriction of fantastic metamorphosis to childhood in Kate Thompson's *Switchers* trilogy (1997-1999) conveys a popular Western ideology that childhood is a state of otherness opposite to adulthood, and I explore how this motif metaphor highlights the foundation of this ideology in common-sense understandings of childhood corporeal and cognitive distinctiveness; in **Chapter Five** I examine how the inability to attain a metamorphic body in certain selkie narratives conveys an ideology that maturity is achieved when *jouissance* is accepted as unachievable, and I indicate how the metamorphosis motif exposes the basis of this ideology in beliefs about adult separation from childhood pre-linguistic, animal experience. These and other analyses in this dissertation contribute to the field of children's and young adult literature criticism by advancing an effective analytical approach to fantasy literature, expanding academic knowledge of the motif of fantastic metamorphosis, and augmenting insights into various Western ideologies.

I further argue that examinations of metamorphosis motif metaphors and their resultant ideologies require interpretive frameworks appropriate to the concepts in question. I thus employ an eclectic use of theory in my analyses, including general psychoanalytic theories of embodiment, development, language, subjectivity, projection, and abjection; poststructuralist, social constructionist, and sociological theories; and wide-ranging literary theories, philosophical theories, gender and feminist theories, race and ethnicity theories, developmental theories, and theories of fantasy and animality. This methodology illustrates constructive ways of using theory to analyse fantasy motifs and promotes the contemporary tradition of using cultural theory to explicate children's and young adult literature.

1. Genric Parameters and Terminology[2]

i. Fantasy as a Genre

Contemporary works of fantasy literature are the object of critical attention in this thesis, and the key problems for any discussion of fantasy literature must thus be addressed — that is, defining the field and choosing a set of terms with which to delineate it. Few scholars concur upon the parameters of fantasy literature and some have argued for restricted definitions of fantasy in general (for example, Manlove 1975; Rabkin 1976). In this respect, the prominence in academia of Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1980 [1970]) has complicated already difficult discussions about the parameters of fantasy literature, for Todorov reserves the crucial term 'fantastic' for a narrow and specific definition which cannot be applied to most narratives understood as fantasy in popular parlance. Todorov suggests three terms for narratives incorporating impossible content: the uncanny, in which fantastic experiences are proven to have some natural explanation, such as the accidental ingestion of hallucinogens; the marvellous, in which fantasy content is proven to be truly supernatural; and the fantastic, which is defined by hesitation, as we are unable to determine whether the impossible content is uncanny or marvellous (1980, 25-26). Tom Shippey points out that Todorov "wrote in 1970 before the present avalanche of fantasy books," and it may be for this reason that he reserved the term 'fantastic' for a restrictive classification which cannot be applied to most contemporary fantasy narratives (2003, xi). According to Todorov's configuration, most of what contemporary readers distinguish as fantasy is equivalent to 'the marvellous'. This confuses discussions of popular fantasy because these 'marvellous' narratives cannot be understood through comments Todorov makes about the quite different narratives he defines as 'fantastic'. (This is also true for Rosemary Jackson's analyses of the fantastic (1981)).

Kathryn Hume argues that narrow theories of fantasy stem from a faulty assumption that the natural impulse of literature is mimetic and that fantasy is a separate,

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[2] My use of the term 'genric' is adopted from John Stephens and Robyn McCallum (1998). Stephens and McCallum in turn follow Mary Gerhart's use of 'genric', accepting her argument that genric emphasises "the functions of the concept of genre in interpretation," whereas generic "has come to connote aspects such as non-specificity and common variety" (1992, 228; qtd in Stephens and McCallum 1998, 23).

secondary phenomenon delimited by a few exclusive rules (1984, 8). Her definition of fantasy as a mode rather than a genre proposes an inclusive and flexible definition of fantasy, which would include manifestations such as the Todorovian fantastic and marvellous, magical realism, and other varieties of fantasy literature such as science fiction, Gothic narratives, horror, ghost stories, and general works of literature with fantasy elements. However, Hume's assertion that we cannot isolate fantasy as a genre or form detrimentally conflicts with the need to acknowledge the contemporary labelling of one particular form of the fantasy mode as 'Fantasy' (1984, 20). Fantasy is certainly a mode, in that many variable works of fiction have fantasy elements, but there is also a wide range of narratives that can be classified (according to modern publishing, reading, and filming phenomenon) as belonging to a fantasy genre.

As John Stephens suggests, a genre groups together a range of texts that can be:

> classified as a single kind because of their shared characteristics and conventions, comprising: subject matter, form and structure, language varieties, implied audience, and relationship and attitude of narrator to subject-matter and to audience. For readers, a genre constitutes a set of expectations used to help make sense of particular texts.
>
> (1992c, 148)

The main shared characteristic of the fantasy genre is its subject matter. All works of the fantasy mode have subject matter which "depart[s] from consensus reality" (Hume 1984, 21); as Gary Wolfe notes, most scholars say that fantasy is about dealing with the impossible (2004, 222-3). However, the fantasy *genre* deals centrally with impossible subject matter relating to marvellous, magical, and supernatural elements. The main shared convention of the fantasy genre is then the expectation that readers will suspend their disbelief and read about these fantastic elements as if they were real. This distinguishes the fantasy genre from other forms of the fantasy mode (such as magical realism) which maintain some hesitation about supernatural subject matter. However, it aligns fantasy as a genre with other genres of the fantasy mode that share this convention. As Veronica Hollinger notes of science fiction, for example, "the reading protocols … require that its imaginary worlds be interpreted 'literally,' as what they are, not as something else" (1992, 31). In both science fiction and fantasy genres, the reader suspends

disbelief and their knowledge of what exists and is possible in order to absorb the fantastic narrative as a story on a literal level, accepting that certain fantastic events happen to particular characters in certain places (see Bleiler 1983, vii; Miéville 2004, 337; Ivory 2000, 1-2; cf. Skulsky 1981, 12).

The distinctions between the science fiction and fantasy genres are significant enough, however, to divide the genres for study. Science fiction has different subject matter to the fantasy genre, as its departure from consensus reality relates to speculation rather than fancy, which requires from readers a different suspension of disbelief. In terms of subject matter, science fiction deals with technology and science, rather than magic and the supernatural, and its violation of consensus laws of reality is generally kept within the realm of natural laws, which are merely subject to conjecture (usually futuristic in nature). In contrast, the fantasy genre introduces magical laws which work regardless of (and sometimes contrary to) known scientific principles (Vogel 1987). These differences may result in characteristically different metaphors and ideological implications for each genre. For example, in the science fiction genre metamorphosis may frequently convey concepts of the post-human that are less common to the fantasy genre.

The genric differences between the fantasy and horror genres are also significant grounds for division in this study because a body capable of transformation in the horror genre may more often represent monstrosity, ontological unease, and the terror of a loss of boundaries than in fantasy, although these elements are by no means completely absent from the fantasy genre. What is notably different is the way in which such elements may be framed within each genre. Whereas the difference between science fiction and fantasy genres largely hinges upon subject matter, the distinction between the fantasy and horror genres predominantly relates to the construction of implied reader positions. Anthony J. Fonseca and June Michele Pulliam suggest that it is too simplistic to "state that horror is fiction that intends to horrify, or that has the effect of scaring the reader" (1999, 5). However, this seems to be the best definition for distinguishing the horror genre from the fantasy genre. While fantasy as a genre often depicts a struggle between good and evil which may incidentally horrify the reader, it often contains no horrifying elements at all, whereas the horror genre appears to pivot primarily upon the deliberate and sustained evocation of horror in the reader. This is an important genric distinction to make because

many critics, publishers, libraries, and readers classify any narrative containing a werewolf motif as horror fiction. As I argue in **Chapter Four**, this categorisation is inappropriate in the wake of the changing representation of werewolves over the last few decades. Werewolf narratives can be understood to exist on either side of the horror and fantasy border — not to mention the fact that they sometimes appear in science fiction (see Bourgault 2003, 2006, 130-149; Hall 2003).

A fantastic motif such as metamorphosis can thus clearly cross genric boundaries, but because I am dealing with the fantasy genre, I will not be exploring the gruesome and monstrous metamorphoses of the horror genre, nor the technological metamorphoses and medical graftings of science fiction. The differences between these genres can be blurred, as there are always books which transgress and/or hybridise genres, leading to 'science fantasy', for example, a category generally applied to narratives which have pseudo-scientific principles but are largely reliant on marvellous propositions, or to 'dark fantasy', which pushes the boundaries between fantasy and horror. Clear genric differences do exist, however, as is obvious in publishing phenomenon, and these differences are significant enough to divide readers of these genres into sometimes quite oppositional camps.

Texts within the contemporary fantasy genre are the focus of this study, and it is important to acknowledge that there are many different types of fantasy texts within this genre. As with genres of the fantasy mode, many sub-genres within the fantasy genre are potentially problematic to separate because their boundaries are blurred by individual narratives. However, two particular fantasy sub-genres are important to distinguish for a basic discussion of a range of narratives within the fantasy genre. These sub-genres are defined on the grounds of setting, and the terminology used to define them frequently differs between critics. My preference is to use the terms 'supernatural fantasy' and 'otherworld fantasy'. Supernatural fantasies introduce fantastic elements into a world which is otherwise true to our own, whether past or present. Otherworld fantasies are set in a different world than our own but are not scientifically explained as other planets. The settings of supernatural and otherworld fantasies may be discussed respectively in critical analyses as 'primary world' and 'secondary world', especially when some kind of magical crossing occurs between these worlds, but I have rejected these terms because the

categorisation is connotatively hierarchical and may lead to confusion when narratives involve crossings between multiple worlds, as in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (1995-2000). Plural world fantasy is an accurate term for fantasies which involve magical crossings between worlds; the worlds in question can then be defined according to an appropriate descriptive label, rather than an implicitly hierarchical relationship. Similarly, the use of the terms 'otherworld fantasy' and 'supernatural fantasy' eliminates a hierarchical implication while highlighting the key elements of each fantasy setting: the focus upon a world other than our own or the intrusion into the 'real world' of elements that cannot be explained according to accepted natural laws.

Other critical terms for these different fantasy settings include 'sword and sorcery' and 'high fantasy' for otherworld or secondary world fantasy, and 'low fantasy' for supernatural or primary world fantasy. Besides the implied hierarchy of value in the terms 'high' and 'low', high fantasy is a limiting term in that it may be used to define an otherworld fantasy "entirely set in an archaic world subject to magical or supernatural forces" (Stephens and McCallum 1998, 128) or to denote only those otherworld fantasies which use a hieratic style to present an epic story about good and evil (Sullivan 2004; Lukens 1995, 20). Finally, 'sword and sorcery', an early term for otherworld fantasies, is no longer appropriate, both because it has become a somewhat derogatory term for fictions set in otherworlds which are considered to be poorly conceptualised and because there now exists a great variety and sophistication within this sub-genre (MacRae 1998, 22; Stephens 1992b, 129-130); not all otherworld fantasies now feature fighting and magic in archaic settings, and some even present fairly 'modern', post-industrial societies.

Unlike the differences between genres, the distinctive ideological resonances between supernatural and otherworld fantasies are not so significant that they necessitate a division of metamorphosis narratives for discussion (cf. Lassén-Seger 2006, 7). This is largely because in both settings metamorphosis is usually represented as outside anticipated realities and metamorphic characters as outsiders with an extraordinary skill, meaning that the constructions of accepted reality in supernatural and otherworld settings are frequently comparable in regards to the impossibility of fantastic metamorphosis. Ideological implications are thus not necessarily vastly different in fantastic metamorphosis narratives located within different settings of the fantasy genre and may

depend entirely upon individual textual contexts. Despite this, most of the texts discussed in this dissertation are supernatural fantasies due to the more common focus in such works upon individual lives and lifestyles rather than world-shaking events.

ii. Fantastic Metamorphosis Narratives

'Metamorphosis' is often defined very broadly, and the use of the term for a wide range of denotations other than fantastic metamorphosis can make bibliographic records hazy — as Maria Lassén-Seger notes, "the term can be made to signify everything and nothing in particular" (2006, 24). Many studies of 'metamorphosis' apply the term as a mere synonym for change (although it is usually intended to convey changes believed to be spectacular or drastic in some way). One way in which I delimit the concept is by defining it as a motif and specifying that the sort of metamorphosis I am interested in examining is 'fantastic'. For my purposes, 'fantastic metamorphosis' is defined as an impossible physical transformation and 'fantastic metamorphosis narratives' as those fictional narratives in which a material entity undergoes some kind of magical, physical transformation which is impossible according to the accepted laws of the contemporary reader's world. The specification of metamorph*osis* narratives is also important. Lois Kuznets (1994), Bruce Clarke (1995), and Clare Bradford (2001a) all discuss metamorphosis narratives as metamor*phic* narratives, a term which is potentially murky, as it may more precisely imply that *narrative structures* are metamorphic, rather than that narratives feature metamorphosis as subject matter (see Mikkonen 1997, 18-61).

Within the parameters of fantastic metamorphosis narratives, I only consider those stories which make metamorphosis the key focus of the narrative and consider its implications; I do not deal with those that use the motif in passing or employ it as "mere gimmickry" (Hume 1984, 165). Furthermore, I am not interested in fantasies which have a predominantly nonsensical, ironic, or parodic tone; I focus upon narratives which explore the metamorphosis motif seriously, as a realistic event which generates credible reactions and consequences. This is not to say that these narratives cannot incorporate humour, but such stories unfold with logical cause and effect and engage in an emotionally and psychologically real characterisation which enables them to carry and express particular ideologies about humanity. On similar grounds, I restrict my analyses to narratives

involving the metamorphosis of human forms as such stories carry a particular significance for ideologies relating to human existence. I further limit my examinations to the distinctive ideologies conveyed by human-to-animal metamorphoses. For this reason, I have included narratives in which characters are physically metamorphosed into hybrid part animal, part human bodies and excluded stories of gender transformations, spatial change (enlargement or shrinkage), animation, petrification, and arrested, accelerated, or regressive aging. I define hybridity as the static embodiment of two or more species, epitomised by fantastic figures such as mermaids and centaurs. Hybrid beings *born* into an unusual form are outside the range of my definition of metamorphosis, but it is quite common to find depictions of metamorphosis into a hybrid state.[3]

My interest in narratives which depict magical metamorphoses *of the body* excludes narratives of glamour, enchantment, or illusion, in which bodies only appear to change shape and never actually transform. It also eliminates those 'metamorphosis tales' which can be classified more accurately as narratives of metempsychosis, 'body-hopping', 'bodily exchange', 'body-swapping', 'body-sharing', or 'body-borrowing', in which consciousnesses, 'souls', or subjectivities migrate between bodies which remain physically stable (Langford 1997a, 642). The fantastic concept of spiritual movement between bodies encompasses typical body-hopping and body-swapping stories, as well as narratives of shamanistic experiences which do not involve actual bodily metamorphosis (see David Almond's *Secret Heart* (2001)), and stories of spiritual or astral projection into (self-)created external bodies (see Anna Ciddor's *Viking Magic* series (2002-2004)). One significant example of this latter motif can be found in Gillian Cross's *Pictures in the Dark* (1998), a narrative frequently analysed in discussions of fantastic metamorphosis, although no physical metamorphosis ever takes place (see Bradford 2001a; Lassén-Seger 2004, 2006). Scholars such as Marina Warner and Maria Lassén-Seger include metempsychosis narratives in their studies of metamorphosis in the belief that they convey similar themes and ideologies to narratives of bodily metamorphosis (Warner 2002, 17; Lassén-Seger 2006, 22-23). While I agree that there are thematic connections, I argue that metempsychosis and metamorphosis are distinctive motifs that have discrete ideological implications (see

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[3] My definition of hybridity can be compared with those of Caroline Walker Bynum (2001, 21, 29) and Maria Lassén-Seger (2006, 26, 48, 50, 245), both of whom apply the term to what I call 'dual-bodied' shape-shifters.

Chapter Three).[4]

Although any strict taxonomy is artificial and ultimately flawed, it is useful to have a set of working terms to discuss some of the different transformations possible within the parameters of fantastic, bodily, human-animal metamorphoses. Contrary to other critics who have attempted to develop a terminology by stressing the differences between the terms 'transformation', 'metamorphosis', and 'shape-shifting', I consider all three to be primary terms which can be used interchangeably in a discussion of metamorphosis (to do otherwise is problematic for a discussion of fictional texts which often use all three terms transposably).[5] Consequently, I have coined additional terms to use in the course of my analyses: 'dual-bodied,' 'multi-bodied,' 'replacement body,' and 'modified body'.

'Dual-bodied' metamorphosis denotes a transformation between two forms and usually involves the sense of an essential link and/or repeated metamorphosis between these forms. The most obvious dual-bodied shape-shifters are werewolves, but there are a variety of other well-known figures, including selkies and feline shape-shifters. 'Multi-bodied' refers to metamorphosis between more than two (and usually numerous) forms. Multi-bodied metamorphoses may be "self-willed" and "temporary" (Forbes Irving 1990, 170), but they may also occur against a subject's will (e.g. *Tam Lin*). They are common to the "fairy tale motif of the transformation contest" (Mikkonen 1997, 291; von Beit 1968), known in folklore studies as the motif of 'transformation combat' (see Thompson 1966, 2: 67; Garry 2005, 127). The term 'replacement body' refers to the metamorphic replacement of a subject's original form by another form. Caroline Walker Bynum uses the term 'unidirectional' for metamorphosis into a permanent replacement body (2001, 175), and Forbes Irving uses the expression 'terminal', which indicates how such metamorphosis often metaphorically signifies death (1990, 20, 96). Replacement bodies may be temporary, however, such as in the metamorphoses of a teenage boy and girl into a snake

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[4]The 'transformative body swap' is a rare metamorphic manifestation of the metempsychosis 'body swap' idea. In this paradigm, bodily forms are exchanged by simultaneous metamorphoses rather than the movement of 'souls' (for examples, see the metamorphoses of the dog and the prince in *The Tenth Kingdom* (2000) or the bird and the boy in Melvin Burgess's *The Birdman* (2000)).

[5] For example, contributors to *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1997), edited by John Clute and John Grant, suggest that: 'metamorphosis' refers to fantastic transformation which is involuntary and/or inherent in the subject's nature, but primarily denotes change which is extreme and permanent; 'transformation' is "inflicted metamorphosis," that is, metamorphosis imposed by an external magical agency; and 'shape-shifting' denotes a "reversibility and repeatability" of metamorphoses due to innate magic, talent, or breeding (see 641-2, 858, 960).

and deer in Lucy Sussex's *Deersnake* (1994). Finally, 'modified bodies' are those metamorphosed bodies which have only been partially transformed. Such changes are frequently enduring, involving metamorphosis into a permanently modified replacement body.

These different forms of metamorphosis may have their own ideological effects, but other factors in the way metamorphosis is framed in narratives are also ideologically significant. For instance, those narratives in which bodily transformation is due to external forces (often the result of magic curses or spells) have a very different tone and impact from those in which shape-changing occurs as the result of internal forces, as when a person is born with metamorphic abilities or gains the power to change shape at will. Important distinctions can also be made according to the purpose of a metamorphosis (punishment, exploration, self-expression), the method by which it is achieved (birthright or magical medium), and a shape-shifter's position as human or animal, alien or god, protagonist or antagonist, and child or adult. However, because the ideological effects of these distinctions, like those of a fantasy's setting, are invariably dependent upon individual context, I only attempt to draw conclusions about these factors where appropriate in the course of my analyses.

2. Literature Review

Fantastic metamorphosis is an ancient, widespread motif, and the cultural background informing modern metamorphosis narratives is therefore extensive. English-language metamorphosis narratives in the fantasy genre incorporate and transform facets of the metamorphosis motif from ancient Greek and Roman mythology; Norse and Celtic myths, legends, and folktales; and many other European myths, folktales, fairy-tales, and folklore.[6] These metamorphosis narratives are also influenced by elements from Christian demonology, ancient and medieval European entertainment literature, and discourses of

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[6] For specific discussions of metamorphosis in myth and legend, see Davidson (1978), Barkan (1986), and Forbes Irving (1992). For specific discussions of metamorphosis in fairytale, see von Beit (1978) and Lassén-Seger (2006).

orientalism, the gothic, and the grotesque.[7] The metamorphosis myths, legends, folktales, folklore, and written literature of other cultures are less commonly employed but are becoming increasingly influential, especially Native American and African stories and beliefs. It should be noted, however, that metamorphosis motifs brought into English-language metamorphosis narratives from non-Western cultures may be disconnected from their specific cultural significances and re-interpreted within Western metanarratives (see Stephens and McCallum 1998, 7).

Critical analysis of the motif of fantastic metamorphosis in literature is moderately extensive, mostly in the form of short articles and book chapters, although there is a significant body of full-length works addressing the motif. The various articles and book chapters are far too numerous to cover in this literature review and I thus only mention those which illustrate a general trend of analysis or are particularly significant in terms of my project. An example of the immense range (far from all-inclusive) is available in Dente et al., "Toward a Bibliography on Metamorphosis" (2005b, 257-273). While I will outline the general critical analyses available in English here, it must be remembered that children's and young adult fantasy literature is a separate and specialised literary genre, so the specific explorations and conclusions of these texts can only be laterally applied to a discussion of fantastic metamorphosis in this specific field.

Analytical approaches to fantastic metamorphosis may be broadly divided into those which explore the motif comprehensively as it is formulated in significant individual works of literature across time and studies of sub-motifs — that is, of common varieties of shape-changers, such as werewolves. Of the critical studies structured around analyses of individual works, the approach has usually been chronologically-based, and if analysis is not fully focused upon one work or era then attention will generally begin with how the motif is represented in ancient literature and mythology, followed by its appearance in early and medieval Christian theology and entertainment literature, and early modern, Romantic, Victorian, and twentieth-century literatures. Attention to Ovid's

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[7] For influences from demonology, see Otten (1986), Bynum (2001), Warner (1994a, 57-58, 2002), and Waddell (2003); for influences from the grotesque, see Bakhtin (1984), Merrill (1995), Trilling (1998), and Waddell (2003); for orientalist influences see Warner (2002, 2005) and consider the *Arabian Nights;* for Gothic influences, see the works on the grotesque and orientialism and consider Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).

Metamorphoses substantially outweighs the consideration of any other work — with good reason: as many have pointed out, Ovid's work has significantly influenced most Western literary representations of metamorphosis (Barkan 1986, 1; Asker 2001, 2; Bynum 2001, 167; Warner 2002, 3). Studies of Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* are also common, and some attention is given to the metamorphosis motif in Homer, Petronius, and Virgil. Early Christian discussions about metamorphosis are often explored, and metamorphic elements are considered in the works of Marie de France, Dante, Shakespeare, and others. [8]

An awareness of metamorphosis in Romantic and Victorian literatures has primarily centred upon the poetry of John Keats (Skulsky 1981; Clarke 1995), on Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, and on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Massey 1976). Studies of metamorphosis in twentieth-century literature have concentrated predominantly upon Franz Kafka's classic work, "*Die Verwandlung*" or "The Metamorphosis" (1916).[9] There has been increasing attention to metamorphosis in more recent literature (Mikkonen 1997; Ivory 2000; Asker 2001), particularly in Latin American magical realist texts (Diaz 1988; Gonzailez 1992), but such attention tends to focus upon contemporary 'literary' rather than popular forms of modern literature (see Mikkonen 1997, 271). There is still little written on fantastic metamorphosis in the adult fantasy genre and in children's and young adult fantasy literature.

The most important early book-length works available in English on metamorphosis in general are Irving Massey's *The Gaping Pig: Literature and Metamorphosis* (1976), Harold Skulsky's *Metamorphosis: The Mind in Exile* (1981), and Leonard Barkan's *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism*

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[8] For an introduction to work on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, see Tomlinson (1981), Skulsky (1981), Barkan (1986), Bynum (2001), and Warner (2002). There is a huge range of other Ovid-specific books and articles, too numerous to mention here. For a range of introductory commentaries to Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, see Massey (1976), Skulsky (1981), Bakhtin (1981), Clarke (1995), and Warner (2002). For readings of metamorphosis in Homer see Skulsky (1981) and Olmsted (1996); for an introduction to metamorphosis in Petronius and Virgil see the major critical works on werewolves (cited on page 15). For studies of theological discussions about metamorphosis, see Barkan (1986) and Bynum (2001); for studies of metamorphosis in Marie de France, see Skulsky (1981) and Bynum (2001); for studies of Dante, see Skulsky (1981), Barkan (1986), Bynum (2001), and Warner (2002); for introductory studies to metamorphosis in Shakespeare, see Barkan (1986) and Clarke (1995).

[9] For examples of this extensive coverage, see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986) and Stanley Corngold's commentaries (1988, 1996). Note that Deleuze and Guattari have also theorised metamorphosis to a degree in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987), where they elaborate on their theory of 'becoming' (especially 'becoming-animal'). Their approach is divergent to my own.

(1986). However, attention to the topic of metamorphosis has grown over the last twenty years, and around the turn of the twenty-first century in particular a number of significant studies emerged (Forbes Irving 1990; Mikkonen 1997; Ivory 2000; Sobchack 2000b; Bynum 2001; Asker 2001; Warner 2002; Dente et al. 2005a). Together, these texts provide an extensive historical background to the motif of metamorphosis in contemporary fiction and offer a foundation of basic ideas about the purpose and operation of the motif of metamorphosis. Most critics note the obvious ways in which fantastic metamorphosis conveys and explores concepts of selfhood and identity, and Skulsky (1981), Ivory (2000), Bynum (2001), and Warner (2002) in particular base their analyses around this theme. Also commonly highlighted is the way in which the motif allows for an examination of what it means to be human and an exploration of the relations between humans, animals, and gods (see especially Barkan 1986; Asker 2001). Thematically, metamorphosis has been interpreted as a vehicle for concepts of punishment, powerlessness, escape, disguise, self-improvement, redemption, self-revelation, death, spiritual rebirth, and alienation, as well as anxieties about sexuality and bodily appearance and functions (see especially Bynum 2001; Warner 2002).

Many critics (Massey 1976; Todorov 1980; Jackson 1981; Clarke 1995) have discussed the metamorphosis motif as a tragic or ironic medium and have focused their analyses upon "dark and sinister" metamorphosis narratives (Lassén-Seger 2006, 258-9), but Leonard Barkan notes that "the metamorphic story does not simply rest in chaos and uncertainty. For every signification of metamorphosis that points toward fear and instability, there is a destination that is positive and life-confirming" (1986, 15). As Maria Lassén-Seger suggests, the tragic approach is of little relevance to the study of metamorphosis in children's and young adult fantasy fiction, in which metamorphoses may frequently be pleasurable and empowering (2006, 99-100, 245, 258-9, 264). A reading of metamorphosis as ironic, tragic, and monstrous offers little assistance for understanding metamorphosis in the popular fantasy genre and frequently limits our attention to the Todorovian fantastic and the horror genre.

Another prevalent contemporary approach to the concept of metamorphosis in literature has been the idea of metamorphosis as a metatrope (Clarke 1995; Mikkonen 1996, 1997). For example, many analyses of metamorphosis have focused upon how

fantastic metamorphoses may operate as "metaphors for metaphor" (Lydenberg 1978, 11-12; also see Sadlier 1980; Hogle 1980; Pucci 1982). Metamorphosis has been suggested to dramatise or actualise the process of metaphorical meaning and transformation, and there has been interest in metamorphosis as a trope or allegory of writing, writers, intertextuality, and translation (Tomlinson 1981; Clarke 1995; Mikkonen 1996, 1997). This focus on how metamorphosis may "make flesh of metaphors" (Barkan 1986, 23, 110) or act as a trope for transformative aspects of language, narrative, and reading processes (Clarke 1995, 2; Mikkonen 1997, 7) tends to limit the conceptual metaphors conveyed by the metamorphosis motif to linguistic matters. As I will discuss in the outline of my methodology, my own approach to metamorphosis as metaphor focuses upon how the motif may convey cultural ideologies relating to human society and psychology. It is worth noting, however, that the metamorphosis motif has also been interpreted as a metonymy (Jackson 1981; Mikkonen 1997; Lassén-Seger 2006), which suggests that metamorphosis may be conceived as a 'polytrope', a symbol which functions as a different trope according to different contexts (Ohnuki-Tierney 1991, 159; Friedrich 1991).

The second type of critical approach to metamorphosis, an analysis of sub-motifs, has predominantly focused upon werewolves, which are the major shape-shifting figures in the European imagination. There are a large number of book-length studies of the werewolf motif (for example, Baring-Gould 1865; O'Donnell 1912; Summers 1933; Copper 1977; Woodward 1979; Otten 1986; Douglas 1992; Bourgault 2006). Most of these explore the sub-motif chronologically and geographically, with a particular focus upon its early manifestations in Ancient Greece, Rome, and Scandinavia, and its theological, legislative, and folk developments in medieval Europe. However, werewolf criticism is also one of the few areas of metamorphosis studies which considers contemporary popular narratives (although the focus has been far more heavily centred upon films than written texts).

Works about werewolves also often discuss the possible reasons for the existence of the motif, and there has thus been a good deal of conjecture about the human perpetration of violent crimes, the mental illness of lycanthropy (whereby one believes oneself to be a wolf), and various physical diseases which are believed to have potentially generated or enhanced the werewolf legend. In addition to the book-length studies, there

are a large number of articles on werewolves in history and literature (for examples, see Lawrence 1996; Bourgault 2003). Werewolves in children's literature have not been widely considered, although there have been significant contributions to the topic from Jack Zipes (1983) and Peter Hollindale (1999). There has been a smattering of articles and several book-length studies of other metamorphosis sub-motifs, such as selkies (D.Thomson 1954; Asbjorn Jon 1998; Yolen 1980; MacAulay 1998) and the associated swan maiden motif (Leavy 1994). Other common figures of metamorphosis such as foxes and felines have received little critical attention until recently (Hall 2003; Waddell 2003). Studies of sub-motifs often take the largely non-critical form of the collection of tales and folklore, as in selkie collections by Dorsey Griffin (1985) and Duncan Williamson (1985, 1992).

Within the field of children's and young adult literature criticism, Maria Lassén-Seger is the primary prior researcher on the motif of metamorphosis. She has contributed several articles to the topic, most of which are presented in a modified form within her published dissertation about fantastic metamorphosis within children's literature, *Adventures into Otherness: Child Metamorphs in Late Twentieth-Century Children's Literature* (2006). (For this reason, I have not outlined her earlier articles here; they are noted in the bibliography). Lassén-Seger's interest in fantastic metamorphosis in children's literature is broad, and she has provided a grounding text for studies of the topic by referring to a wide range of primary texts and locating some of their common patterns. As the title of Lassén-Seger's study implies, 'otherness' is a central theme of her thesis, and she theorises otherness as profound difference which may be positively or negatively explored and experienced. Her theoretical focus, however, is primarily upon how the experience of metamorphosis may empower or disempower fictive child metamorphs and how a study of "the *uses* of metamorphosis" in children's literature may fit into a children's literature poetics (9, 19). To establish her conclusions about these issues, and "the nature of the metamorphic subject" (25), Lassén-Seger divides her analysis of child metamorphs into three broad categories: wild and uncivilised metamorphs; innocent, playful, and rebellious metamorphs; and victimised and lost metamorphs.

In the first of these categories, Lassén-Seger comments upon the way in which temporary "unpleasurable" transformations into monsters and inanimate objects may work

to socialise child metamorphs (97, 257-258), but she highlights that authors employ the motif for a variety of other purposes (258). Here, she also discusses the use of metamorphosis as a vehicle for the rite of passage or coming of age. Outlining her concepts of innocent, playful, and rebellious child metamorphs, Lassén-Seger argues that early literary fantasies rarely depict children's animal metamorphoses as pleasurable and instead represent transformation as a punishment or fall from grace (104). She incorporates theories of play and the carnivalesque to explore recent pleasurable metamorphoses and employs Foucauldian theory to outline the difference between power as a force of repression ('power over') and power as a source of subjectivity and agency ('power to'). Finally, in her discussion of victimised and lost child metamorphs, Lassén-Seger argues that narratives of irreversible metamorphosis appear in the late nineteen-seventies as a new trend which breaks a traditional circular pattern of metamorphosis in children's literature. She concludes that this trend is a *fin de siècle* phenomenon that illustrates a crisis in the conception of childhood at the end of the twentieth-century, changing ecological attitudes, and postmodern concepts of fragmented subjectivity (199-200, 251). Throughout her work, Lassén-Seger comments upon gender issues, arguing that the metamorphosis motif presents differently gendered paths of maturation and relationships with nature (45-59, 201-213).

A small number of other scholars have approached the topic of fantastic metamorphosis within children's and young adult literature. Arlene Wilner discusses the motif of metamorphosis in William Steig's fiction, using ideas about childhood from Jean Piaget and Bruno Bettelheim to explore how "Tales of Transformation and Magic" might represent childhood wishes and anxieties (1990). Lois Rostow Kuznets broaches the concept in *When Toys Come Alive: Narratives of Animation, Metamorphosis, and Development* (1994). Although she outlines the man-beast hierarchy in Western thought and the construction of the female animal, her work has limited application to an exploration of human-animal metamorphosis because she only discusses the metamorphosis of inanimate objects (toys). Clare Bradford's "Possessed by the Beast: Subjectivity and Agency in *Pictures in the Dark* and *Foxspell*" (2001a) is more comparable to my approach. Bradford stresses that all metamorphosis narratives offer metaphorical meanings because they are fantastic and she discusses the metamorphosis motif in terms of

how it is used as "a locus for treatments of subjectivity, agency, sociality, and masculinity" (163). Her analysis of the motif's metaphorical exploration of the postcolonial dilemma is particularly incisive.

A much-needed feminist analysis of the motif of fantastic metamorphosis has been provided by Marla Harris in her article on metamorphosis in Patrice Kindl's young adult fantasies (2003). Harris raises important issues about ideologies surrounding female adolescent embodiment and examines how contemporary metamorphosis narratives may rework metamorphosis pretexts and subvert conventional romance plots. Jo Coward's less polished article on "Masculinity and Animal Metamorphosis in Children's Literature" (1999) explores male adolescent embodiment, noting the ways in which metamorphosis may be used to explore ideas about culture and nature informing ideologies of male identity. Finally, Marina Warner has specifically explored metamorphosis within children's literature in an article which traces the motif "from the *Arabian Nights* to Philip Pullman" (2005). She outlines how technological developments have affected perceptions of magic, self, and time. Other children's literature articles only approach the metamorphosis motif tangentially, or they cover aspects which fall outside the parameters of my discussion (see Myers 1976; Stephens and Taylor 1984; Babbitt 1988; Thompson 1993; Easun 1994; Scott 1996-1997). There are also several works which consider metamorphosis in children's literature within a discussion of 'animal fantasy' (for example, Swinfen 1984; MacRae 1998; Cosslett 2006). Cathi Dunn MacRae's analyses are particularly pertinent, as she explores how fantastic metamorphoses may signify personal and social transformations. However, animal fantasy in general is outside my foci and I do not group metamorphosis narratives with animal fantasy, for, as D. B. D. Asker admits, "[u]sing an animal as a dynamic and highly charged symbol for some human activity or theme is not the same thing as a human becoming an animal" (2001, 17).

This dissertation is complementary to prior studies of metamorphosis in the children's literature field; it generates constructive new insights into the motif by focusing upon important but little-examined aspects of metamorphosis in children's and young adult fantasy literature, particularly its metaphorical operation. Topics of previous scholarly interest, such as gender, are thus only considered when they are significant to less well-contemplated facets of the motif, as in the incorporation of gender theory in the discussion

of metaphors of developmental regression and progression in **Chapter Two**.

This approach is distinctive from that of the other major study of metamorphosis in children's literature, Lassén-Seger's *Adventures into Otherness* (2006). While Lassén-Seger surveys basic patterns of metamorphosis in children's literature across time, including picture books, my focus is upon specific significant metamorphosis motif metaphors in contemporary fantasy for older children and young adults. Lassén-Seger and I share an interest in how metamorphosis narratives may "mirror and affirm" or interrogate social "stereotypes" (2006 32), but I examine exactly how the metamorphosis motif metaphorically conveys certain ideological structures and indicates the reasoning behind them, whereas Lassén-Seger focuses upon the implication of such stereotypes for child character (and consequently child reader) empowerment or disempowerment. Additionally, contrary to Lassén-Seger's contention that "what kind of shape … characters change into" is not important for understanding what metamorphosis "may tell us about … representations of fictive children and childhood" (2006 9), I argue that particular metamorphosis sub-motifs may convey common motif metaphors and ideologies about youth and their environment. Repeated fantastic motifs, such as werewolves, selkies, and the growth of wings, may carry recurrent implications, although any established commonality is always provisional, based upon the particular examples analysed.

These differences in foci are underscored by a divergence in methodology. I analyse fantastic metamorphosis using an original theory of motif metaphor and I distinctively incorporate psychoanalytic approaches within my methodology. My study of metaphorical structure, which integrates cultural theories and interpretive frameworks relevant to the various metaphors in question, is methodologically distinct from Lassén-Seger's utilisation of approaches to metamorphosis from general literary studies (see Lassén-Seger 2006 26).

3. Methodology

My analytical methodology is grounded in a conglomerate use of theory; my focus is upon using the theoretical paradigms which will best elucidate the ideological implications of particular metamorphosis narratives. The use of a variety of different

theories to understand different elements and emphases of narratives is common in children's literature criticism, which thrives from interdisciplinary theoretical applications (Hunt 1992a, 10). It has also been acknowledged as necessary for the study of fantastic metamorphosis. As Leonard Barkan writes:

> [e]ven more diverse than the topics that metamorphosis touches upon are the different approaches necessary to do justice to it. Readers may find that among the six chapters [of his study] there are quite divergent, even perhaps incompatible, critical principles and presuppositions. (1986, xiii)

Metamorphosis narratives frequently carry similar themes, but different theoretical parameters offer insight into the varying ideological expressions of these themes. Beneath my engagement with a variety of different theories, my overarching methodological approach is ideological and grounded in a concept of fantastic metamorphosis as a metaphorical vehicle.

i. Ideology

Jonathan Hart suggests that "[i]deology may be the key term in literary criticism and theory" since the nineteen-eighties (1994, 191). This prevalence means that the concept of an ideological study is potentially loaded with a variety of connotations and theoretical connections. For the purposes of this project, ideologies are defined as "bundles of ideas about the world, about how it is or should be organized, and about the place and role of people in it" (Stephens 1992c, 14). As John Stephens has noted, ideologies are not necessarily undesirable — they are a system of beliefs by which people make sense of the world, and social life would be impossible without them (1992a, 8). Every culture is rich with a multiplicity of variable ideologies, but some ideologies take on prominence in particular contexts and become naturalised so that they appear to be 'truths' (Stephens and Watson 1994, 14). In this dissertation, I explore how the motif of metamorphosis works metaphorically to convey some of the ideological assumptions, beliefs, and paradigms of Western cultures. This is not a Marxist project; nor is it the kind of study which specifically endeavours to weed out "noxious ideologies" (Jenkins 1998b,

31). In the process of my analyses, I may question implicit ideologies or beliefs which appear to be insidious, harmful, or constraining, but my primary intention is not to investigate the social consequences and effects of ideologies. Rather, I am interested in examining how the motif of fantastic metamorphosis offers metaphors which allow us to recognise and interrogate the logic of certain ideologies.

ii. The Analysis of Fantastic Metamorphosis as Metaphor

a. Basic Approaches: Linguistic metaphors and the 'metaphoric mode'

Metaphor theory has a substantial history and is impressively vast. The topic is interdisciplinary and has been studied in fields as diverse as linguistics, psychology, philosophy, and anthropology.[10] There appear to be two poles from which to approach the study of metaphor in literature: through a micro-level focus on linguistic metaphors embedded in the language of a text and through a macro-level concentration on literary constituents which convey a metaphoric mode. The analyses of this dissertation have little to do with the micro-level approach, in which metaphor is perceived as an analogy working on the linguistic level of word, sentence, or phrase. In the fantasies I study, it is not the language of the text which is metaphorical — the language describing fantastic events is meant to be interpreted on a literal level, so that when we read about a human character being or becoming a lion this is not intended as a figurative expression of courage or a change of temperament or behaviour, but as a literal description of a fantastic event (cf. Black 1962, 33, 36). There may be figurative meaning in the event, but it does not take place at the level of the language used. It is thus not figurative *language* (word, phrase, or statement) which requires analysis in these narratives, but the figurative *thinking*, imaging, and visualising expressed through a fantastic motif.[11] My analysis of fantastic metamorphosis thus requires a consideration of the metaphoric mode as an

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[10] See Shibles (1971) and van Noppen et al. (1985, 1990) for bibliographies, and Fernandez (1991), Fludernik et al. (1999) and Francke (2000) for histories and outlines of metaphor study.

[11] My distinction here is not the same as the traditional distinction (attributed to Quintilian) between 'figures of thought' (tropes — when words or phrases are used in a non-standard way) and 'figures of speech' (schemes or rhetorical figures — when the departure from standard meaning comes through the syntactical order or pattern of the words). According to such a division, metaphor is a trope, a figure of thought, but it remains an example of figurative language rather than figurative thinking (Abrams 1993, 66).

expression of conceptual metaphor.

Conceptual metaphor has been an object of discussion since George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's pioneering work, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), although I. A. Richards signalled the direction of such research much earlier when he argued that metaphor may seem to be a verbal matter, a displacement of words, but is rather "a borrowing between and intercourse of *thoughts*, a transaction between contexts. *Thought* is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom" (1936, 40). Lakoff and Johnson, however, distinctively contend that metaphor is not a special phenomenon. They emphasise that "[o]ur ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (1980, 3). Significantly, they also argue that the 'conceptual metaphors' or 'metaphorical concepts' which structure the way we think (such as 'argument is war') are frequently evident in the specific linguistic metaphors we use (such as 'I've never won an argument with him'). Extended, continuous, or sustained linguistic metaphors arise when such "metaphors are continued in ensuing (semi-)independent clauses or sentences" (Steen 1999, 517). These linguistic metaphors can be significant to a fantasy work and its meanings, but fantasy motifs such as fantastic metamorphosis do not appear in fantasy texts as extended metaphors; they appear as literal plot constituents. Thus, in order to explore the metaphorical meanings of the motif of metamorphosis we need to approach the concept of metaphor on the macro-level rather than the micro-level.

On the macro-level, the concept of metaphor may be so broad as to appear interchangeable with similar concepts of symbol or a symbolic mode (Burke 1973). For example, as David Lodge argues, "[t]he literary text is always metaphoric in the sense that when we interpret it … we make it into a total metaphor: the text is the vehicle, the world is the tenor" (1977, 109; also see Frye 1957, 89; Massey 1976, 188). Paul Friedrich suggests that the idea that "every model is a metaphor of reality" is too vast a conception for efficacy and "[t]he workable or useful meanings of metaphor are more constrained" (1991, 39). One way in which to develop a more confined and potent discussion of the macro-level metaphoric mode is to note its special operation in regards to fantasy literature. Although the concept that metaphor is an exceptional phenomenon within literature has been undermined by assertions that ordinary language and thought is

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metaphorical (Fludernik et al. 1999, 384-5), a case for exceptionality can still be made for fantasy literature, in which conceptual metaphors may be conveyed in distinctive ways.

b. Fantasy as a Metaphoric Mode

It is well recognised that "[f]antasy … offers us metaphor" (McGillis 1996a, 72). While works of the fantasy genre convey literal stories which make sense according to the laws of their fictional worlds, they invite further readings of their "secondary or tertiary levels of meaning" (Bleiler 1983, vii). As Jill Paton Walsh writes, because fantasy is, finally, impossible, it "compels a reader into a metaphorical frame of mind" (1981, 38). Precisely how fantasy does this, however, appears to be implicit for many critics. For example, in *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture* (1997), a collection of essays edited by Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger, the fantastic motif of the vampire is openly discussed as metaphor, but usually in a general sense, without any theoretical framework for how such metaphor works (cf. Zanger 1997). Similarly, Katherine Hume merely suggests that fantasy says, "this is what life is like" in "the metaphoric manner" (1984, xi), and she offers no further explanation of this metaphoric operation.

John Stephens comes closest to explaining the "broadly figurative" secondary function of fantasy when he distinguishes fantasy as a predominantly "*metaphoric* mode" differing *in essence* from the "*metonymic* mode" of realism (1992a, 247-9).[12] Stephens writes that "[i]n a metaphoric mode something generally stands for something else," whereas in a metonymic mode any "stretch of text means what it seems to mean, and that meaning is complete. But it also forms a part of a larger signifying structure" (248). The meaning of a metonymic stretch of text "is essentially the same as the larger meaning" of a text (249). Stephens illustrates this difference by comparing E. B. White's fantasy, *Charlotte's Web* (1952), with Katherine Paterson's realist novel, *Bridge to Terabithia*

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[12] This type of division, based upon Roman Jakobson's work (1956), has been suggested elsewhere: David Lodge argues that prose tends towards the metonymic pole and poetry towards the metaphoric, the one emphasising contiguity, the other similarity (1977, 80). He also suggests that Romantic and symbolist writing is metaphoric while realist writing is metonymic. Somewhat similarly, Northrop Frye distinguishes been metaphor as a model of mythical literature and simile as a model of realistic literature (1957; also see Lodge 1977, 112).

(1978). In the first of these children's novels, a friendship between a pig and a spider can be read as a metaphor for human friendship; in the second, a scene in which the male protagonist runs through a field may provide us with metonymical clues about his economic status and subjectivity (see 248-249). Thus, whereas a realist text may clearly convey contiguous significance about real life, a fantasy text may convey metaphoric messages about experience.

The conception of fantasy as a metaphoric mode different to the metonymic mode of realism is a useful model with which to begin, but the development of a methodology for examining the operation of the metaphoric mode in fantasy is essential for any precise analysis. Stephens offers such a methodology by considering the fantastic elements of the metaphoric mode as signifiers. He suggests that dislocations of surface meaning in a fantasy text align fantastic figures with figurative language, in which "the signified points not to the referent, but to another signified" (247). He further notes that "the gaps between signifier and signified, and between sign and thing, mean that such equivalents are apt to be heavily imbued with connotation and thence with ideology" (247). Stephens's explanation is certainly useful in part for my approach, but as with analyses of metamorphosis as 'a metaphor for metaphor', the analysis of fantasy elements as signs would serve only to sideline my primary objectives. More useful than this semiotic approach is the application of particular ideas about the structure and functioning of linguistic metaphors to the concept of a fantasy motif. This approach allows for an appreciation of the specific ways in which fantasy motifs convey cultural ideologies.[13]

Before I outline my analytic approach to motifs as metaphors, however, alternative models for discussing a 'metaphoric mode' in literature in general, and fantasy literature in particular, must be addressed. The concepts of parable, fable, and allegory all account for conceptual metaphor on the macro-level of a metaphoric mode, but each of these are inadequate for my purposes. The concepts of parable and fable are unsuitable for an examination of the motif of fantastic metamorphosis for reasons to do with their denotative and connotative connections to allegory. M. H. Abrams defines allegory as:

> a narrative fiction in which the agents and actions, and sometimes the

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[13] I am indebted to John Stephens for initially pointing out this possibility to me.

> setting as well, are contrived to make coherent sense on the "literal,"
> or primary, level of signification, and at the same time to signify a
> second, correlated order of agents, concepts, and events. (1993, 4)

This may seem to parallel my description of the metaphoric mode in fantasy, but allegory is a less appropriate term for a variety of reasons, beginning with the fact that allegory in general suggests a superimposition which undermines the story-level signification of a work (which I have argued is important in a work of the fantasy genre). Angus Fletcher's characterisation of allegory as something which "says one thing and means another" indicates this erasure (1964, 2), as does Tzvetan Todorov's account of allegory as "a proposition with a double meaning, but whose literal meaning has been entirely effaced" (1980, 62). Accordingly, allegory suggests a deliberate and potentially explicit use of a fantastic motif in order to explore some other meaning (see Frye 1957, 90; Hollinger 1992, 31; Abrams 1993, 208; Todorov 1980, 63).

The intentionality of allegory means that it often carries the connotation of a moral or spiritual lesson conveyed through didacticism or satire (see Hume 1984, 33; Jackson 1981, 173; Swinfen 1984, 10). This may explain why an understanding of metamorphosis as allegorical leads Bruce Clarke to consider all metamorphosis narratives to be ironic or satirical (1995). Works in the fantasy genre are not necessarily consciously or overtly embedded with additional meanings, however, and fantasy motifs in general cannot be presumed to have moral or satirical functions. Furthermore, the implication that allegory is deliberate and explicit suggests a too strict and too encompassing correlation between figurative and literal elements in a fantasy text. Allegorical readings may limit the possible meanings of a fantasy, whereas metaphorical readings allow for multiple significations. Many critics and writers have noted that allegorical readings are reductive, limiting a story's meaning to "one-to-one symbolic correspondences" (Westfahl 1997, 917; also see Le Guin 1985b, 76; Sandner 2004b, 5; Wolfe 2004, 231). In contrast, "the metaphoric mode … bewilders us with a plethora of possible meanings" (Lodge 1977, 111). These multiple meanings can be productively explored, however, if the metaphoric mode is considered with precision through attention to the operation of fantasy motifs.

c. Analysing Fantasy Motifs as Metaphors

      I have coined the term 'motif metaphor' to allow for a detailed discussion of the operation of the metaphoric mode in fantasy and to account for the expression of a conceptual metaphor as a "textual entity" (Steen 1994, 242) or "textual unit" (Daemmrich and Daemmrich 1987, 188) on a level other than that of linguistic metaphor. A brief comment should be made here on the nature of the term 'motif' itself. Stith Thompson famously describes motifs as "those details out of which full-fledged narratives are composed" (1966, 1: 9). His study of motifs in folk-literature is relevant to my own approach, although Thompson was merely interested in compiling lists of motifs, not in examining their meanings and effects (1966, 1: 9, 23). For Thompson, a motif is "any item in tales" which is "out of the ordinary, something of sufficiently striking character to become a part of tradition, oral or literary" (1966, 1: 19; also see 1950, 753). As Jane Garry and Hasan El-Shamy elaborate, a motif can be defined as "a small narrative unit" which recurs in different texts (2005b, xv). However, Satu Apo states that Thompson's definition of motif has been "justifiably criticized" for being "both vague and ambiguous; it variously refers to theme, plot (tale type), actor, item (object), or descriptive element" (1997, 563-564).

      I contend that 'motif' is a useful term when it is separated from theme. M. H. Abrams notes that "[t]heme is sometimes used interchangeably with 'motif'," but his account allows us to conceptualise motif as something more tangible than theme (1993, 121). He describes *motif* as "a conspicuous element, such as a type of incident, device, reference, or formula, which occurs frequently in works of literature" and suggests that, contrastingly, *theme* is "more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader" (121). A motif may thus be conceived as a concrete textual element which acts as a plot mechanism for an abstract theme. This is certainly the sort of conception that Horst S. and Ingrid D. Daemmrich appear to attribute to the German critic, M. Lüthi.[14] They note Lüthi's belief that "motifs can support or portray themes succinctly" and that "[t]he motif is the concrete nucleus of a narrative; the theme (idea, problem) is the

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[14] As a monolingual scholar I am unable to access Lüthi's work for myself. Daemmrich and Daemmrich cite: Lüthi, M. 1962. *Märchen*, Stuttgart; Lüthi, M. 1975. *Das Volksmärchenals Dichtung*, Düsseldorf; and an article on motif in a German collection edited by A. J. Bisang and R. Trousson, 1980.

intellectual dimension" (1987, 188). There is thus a distinction between motif as a plot element or image at the level of story and theme as the concept a motif conveys at the level of significance.[15]

My proposition is that the basic structure of linguistic metaphors framed by I. A. Richards (1936) and developed by Max Black (1962) may be used to theorise motifs as metaphors. Following Richards, we can conceptualise linguistic metaphors as composed of three parts — the *tenor* (the literal meaning: "the underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means"); the *vehicle* (the figurative expression or conveyance), and the *ground* (the common signified or area of relationship shared by tenor and vehicle) (1936, 96-100). The meaning of a linguistic metaphor is a product of the interaction between the meanings of the vehicle and the tenor: "the co-presence of the vehicle and tenor results in a meaning (to be clearly distinguished from the tenor) which is not attainable without their interaction" (1936, 100).

Max Black "expanded and refined" Richards' 'interactionist view' of metaphor (Abrams 1993, 68), but his replacement of the terms *tenor* and *vehicle* with a corresponding concept of the *principal* and *subsidiary* subjects of a metaphor introduces a hierarchy which may erroneously undermine or invert the relationship between story and figurative significance in a fantasy work.[16] The importance of Black's ideas for this study lies instead with his suggestion that the vehicle of a metaphor conveys a system of associated implications which serve as a filter through which to understand the tenor. Black highlights how a metaphor selects, emphasises, suppresses, and organises features of a tenor by implying that it is composed of the attributes which accompany a particular vehicle (1962, 44-45, 47). The statement 'man is a wolf' thus allows one to understand the tenor ((male) human being) through the filter of a vehicle (wolf). According to Black:

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[15] Northrop Frye's definition of motif as a "symbol in its aspect as a verbal unit in a work of literary art" (1957, 366) is alternative to my understanding, and his discussion of metaphor (1957, 122-125) should not be confused with my approach. Frye's definition of *archetype* as an image recurring across literary works is, however, similar in kind to my definition of motif (1957, 99, 365), and he briefly refers to fantastic metamorphosis as an archetype (1957, 144).

[16] A further set of terms, supplied by cognitive studies of metaphor, replace *vehicle* with 'source' or 'base domain' and *tenor* with 'target domain', while the concept of a shared 'ground' is replaced with the process of 'mapping' from source onto target. Monika Fludernik, Donald C. Freeman, and Margaret H. Freeman suggest that these terms have largely supplanted those coined by Richards (1999, 386-7). However, while it may sometimes be useful to refer to the different domains of a metaphor, the terms *tenor*, *vehicle*, and *ground* are valuable for a basic understanding of motif metaphors and remain commonly used in literary studies.

> The effect, then, of (metaphorically) calling a man a 'wolf' is to evoke
> the wolf-system of related commonplaces. If the man is a wolf, he
> preys upon other animals, is fierce, hungry, engaged in constant
> struggle, a scavenger, and so on. Each of these implied assertions has
> now to be made to fit the principal subject (the man) either in normal
> or in abnormal senses … Any human traits that can without undue
> strain be talked about in 'wolf-language' will be rendered prominent,
> and any that cannot will be pushed into the background. (1962, 41)

Certain conceptual metaphors may thus limit one's comprehension of certain tenors,
"result[ing] in a sort of cognitive myopia" (Ortony 1979, 6; see Schön 1979).

In fantasy literature, the vehicle can be conceived as the fantastic motif which is
read literally for the story but which often embodies secondary, figurative significance.
While such significance is usually implicit because the tenor is not specified, we can
deduce from the presence of a fantastic motif that literal tenors are potentially being
invoked, and a variety of textual elements and implications will suggest what those tenors
may be. Daemmrich and Daemmrich argue that a motif cannot be separated from the
subject matter or material content of a text because it "exists only in and through the
interrelations with other textual units" (1987, 188). An analysis of fantastic metamorphosis
as a motif metaphor must thus focus upon the ways in which the motif is conceived and
conveyed through elements such as language, plot, characterisation, and setting (including
fantasy laws). Examining the implications of narrative content indicates the ground for the
motif metaphor. However, rather than perceiving this ground as an expression of 'true'
similarities between fantastic metamorphosis and other cultural phenomena, we must
consider it to express significant cultural ideologies.

d. How Motif Metaphors Convey Ideologies

Nicholas Ruddick suggests that fantasy can "interrogate whatever is privileged by
the name of 'reality' by the cultural powers that be" and can "expose as ideology what is
presented as eternal truth" (1992a, xiii). However, fantasy as a genre is sometimes
justified by arguments that it offers access to transcendent and universal truths about life

and humanity. Sheila Egoff, for example, suggests that the purpose of fantasy is to "illuminate" reality and its "immutable truths" (1975, 67), and Gary Wolfe argues that a fantasy text's "surface impossibilities constitute a necessary strategy for approaching some profound and intense reality" (2004, 234). Fantasy may appear to access and express mysterious and transcendent truths simply because it conveys "metaphysical concepts as physical realities" and thus symbolises something which may be conceptually difficult to grasp (Swinfen 1984, 10). Everett F. Bleiler suggests that the supernatural is "a symbolization of something otherwise perhaps on the edge of ineffability" (1983, vii) and Ursula Le Guin writes that a fantasy "symbol is not a sign of something known, but an indicator of something not known and not expressible otherwise than symbolically" (1985b, 76).

Metaphor itself is sometimes conceived to have the same function. Some believe that "metaphors are an important means of expressing ideas for which the language may not have any literal terms available" (Ortony 1979, 13; also Gibbs 1994, 6), and the "insight" (Black 1962, 46, 237) afforded by a metaphor is similarly considered to transmit an "underlying truth" (Swanson 1979, 163). In both instances, however, the insights that are reached may merely be understandings about the way the world often works within a certain culture (Kittay 1987, 2-3). Thus, the powerful images, symbols, and 'archetypes' that fantasy so famously engages with are perhaps examples of a 'collective unconscious'. However, contrary to Carl Jung's theories (1959), this collective unconscious is not a site of elemental truths but of models and ideologies which have become so culturally widespread and ingrained that they appear to represent untrammelled reality (see Hourihan 1997, 32-3; Garry and El-Shamy 2005b, xvi-xvii; cf. Le Guin 1985a, 1985b).

The inference that fantasy and metaphor convey truth is not merely due to a sense that they provide insight into life's complexities, however. The logic of analogy may also cause fantasy motif metaphors to appear to express 'reality'. The metaphorical ground between a vehicle and tenor, or a fantastic and real-life domain, may appear to be obvious and "objectively given" (Black 1962, 37). Nevertheless, such taken-for-granted connections are often the result of cultural constructions rather than realities. Many theorists have emphasised that conceptual metaphor has a cultural basis and that people

acquire metaphors which reflect the thinking of their socio-cultural group.[17] The "deep logic" which metaphors appear to assert is thus merely a reasoning which is predisposed to converge into certain culturally determined patterns (McLaughlin 1995, 84, 86-88). Readers may therefore easily locate similarities between the two domains of a metaphor merely because the metaphorical alignment conveys ideas already operational in their culture. They do not have to share these ideologies in order to comprehend the motif metaphor unconsciously. However, by being consciously aware of the ground for a motif metaphor, readers are more likely to engage in a perceptive and potentially oppositional reading of the ideologies conveyed.

e. The Benefits of an Analysis of Fantasy as Metaphor

Because fantasy motif metaphors are usually implicit, it is possible that readers will not discern them. Gerard Steen argues that the availability and accessibility of underlying conceptual metaphors in a text differs between readers, allowing for variable, subjective readings of a metaphor (1994, 35-36). However, Steen also recognises that there is a "varying degree of acceptability of the resulting meaning construction" — that is, that certain readings are more appropriate than others given a particular context (35). Even if readers "skim along the tops" of metaphors and fail to recognise their ideological entailments, as Jane Yolen suggests is possible (2004, 328), certain ideologies *are* embedded in certain examples of a motif metaphor and coded messages about 'reality' are therefore being presented to readers. Yolen's description of reading past metaphors without noticing them suggests that child readers will not absorb ideologies they fail to perceive, but others fear that the potentially negative ideologies of motif metaphors may be insidiously absorbed on an unconscious level by readers (Gaston 1986, 127; Ruddick 1992a, xv; Stephens 1992a). One primary benefit of an analysis of fantastic metamorphosis as metaphor is thus the opportunity to recognise that cultural ideologies are at work in a fantasy narrative and that these may be problematic. As Warren A. Shibles notes, "[a] knowledge of metaphor … helps us to avoid being captivated by our metaphors

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[17] See Cameron 1999, 26; Kittay 1987, 20; Friedrich 1991, 40-41; Quinn 1991; Kovecses 1999; Eubanks 1999; Gibbs 1999b.

which we unconsciously thought were literal truths" (1971, 3).

The main benefit of my analyses of motif metaphors, however, is the opportunity to interrogate how certain naturalised ideologies are established and how they produce their "effects of truth" (Foucault 1980, 118). This is a useful process not merely because it is important to be aware of the operation of ideologies in individual works, but because the ideologies conveyed metaphorically in one specific text may be suggestive of wider cultural ideologies. Analyses may thus provide insight into the grounding nature of conceptual metaphors which have significant cultural influence. This in no way implies that the ideologies conveyed in one text are the dominant ideologies of a culture or the only ideologies that exist in relation to a particular tenor or fantastic vehicle. As Thomas McLaughlin highlights,

> our culture is not one unified system but rather consists of competing systems of thought, each with its own set of possible figures … The possibilities for combination are not limited to those with which we're familiar, and the value systems they imply need not be those currently in power. (1995, 89)

However, any particular fantasy work provides a representative example of ideologies which can be considered to exist more widely than in this single, specific manifestation because authors do not exist in a cultural vacuum and their works go through processes of production and reception which suggest that they are, in part, culturally approved (see Yolen 2004; Sandner 2004b).

Additionally, an analysis of fantasy motif metaphors allows us to perceive significant ideological changes in cultural perceptions of particular tenors. Max Black notes that writers can create their own "specially constructed systems of implications" to oust the "system of commonplaces" relating to a specific vehicle or tenor (1962, 43). Thus, as I outline in this study, what any motif metaphor conveys ideologically depends upon the nature of the similarities highlighted between semantic domains (Miller 1979, 240-242). Changing the system of associated commonplaces attached to a particular vehicle changes the ideologies conveyed by the metaphor (Kittay 1987, 6). A good example of this is the way in which the metaphorical link between human and wolf can have drastically different ideological implications according to what qualities are perceived

to be shared by the two beings — characteristics of greed, violence, and evil, or qualities of nurturance, protectiveness, and mercy (see my discussion of changing representations of werewolves in **Chapter Four**). Motif metaphors can thus be used to convey questionable implications as if they were realities, but they can also be used to question those implications and to oppose them with new systems of thought (McLaughlin 1995, 90). Analyses of fantasy motifs as metaphors therefore offer insight into significant cultural transformations.

iii. Relevant Interpretive Frameworks and Discourses of Otherness

There may be a variety of ideological implications expressed by any particular example of the metamorphosis motif within any individual narrative. In the course of my analyses, I highlight those ideologies which are most potent in specific texts and limit discussions of subsidiary ideologies in order to maintain a lucid analysis. Because the major ideologies conveyed in different texts do not constitute one overarching way of understanding the world, a single theoretical framework is insufficient for analysing a range of metamorphosis narratives. Different interpretive frameworks are required to explicate the different ideologies in different texts. In each chapter, I thus employ the particular interpretive tools which seem most productive for investigating particular motif metaphors and the ideologies they convey. Using a variety of interpretive frames to explore the form and nature of the ideologies embedded in particular metaphorical contexts prevents essentialist implications that one particular theoretical framework offers the correct way of understanding all metamorphosis narratives and instead allows for an appreciation and demonstration of the multiple theories needed to understand the manifold ideologies which permeate textual worlds.

The theoretical frameworks most relevant for understanding the major ideologies in the different metamorphosis narratives I examine include theories of the body, of identity, subjectivity, and subject-formation, of youth development and socialisation, of desire, and of social and psychological abjection. I approach such theories through key concepts rather than specific theorists and I may thus refer to later thinkers who have developed (and perhaps more lucidly or usefully applied) the concepts of primary theorists. For example, Elizabeth Grosz or Margrit Shildrick's development of Julia Kristeva's ideas on

the abject may offer a sharper and more pertinent articulation for my purposes than Kristeva's original statements. Similarly, a variety of theorists who develop and articulate the theories of Jacques Lacan may offer Lacanian-based models which are more useful for my literary, cultural analyses than Lacan's original, oblique discussions. Furthermore, my use of any particular theory aims to allow for a comprehensive analysis of the ideologies in particular texts and does not indicate a personal ideological commitment. For example, where I employ psychoanalytic theories, I do so not with the conviction that these ideas are 'right' (in the sense that they hold or explain some transcendent truth about the human condition and psyche), but with the belief that psychoanalysis is a useful medium for explaining and understanding the mechanisms of certain ideological viewpoints or paradigms about human nature. Psychoanalysis, and other interpretive frameworks, can thus be understood in one sense as expedient metaphors for deciphering and interpreting the motif metaphors of fantasy texts and the ideologies embedded within them.

Individual interpretive frameworks and theories will be broached and explored in each relevant chapter. However, my overall approach will be particularly grounded in theories of otherness, as I perceive some of the dominant metaphors of fantastic metamorphosis in children's literature to convey ideologies of otherness relating to bodily difference and change. 'Otherness' as a theoretical concept refers to a wide variety of signifieds within a range of disciplines (Van Pelt 2000a, 1). It has been used to describe desire, language, and the unconscious (among other things), but the most popular concept of otherness is drawn from a discourse of identity politics (Van Pelt 2000b, 139-143). This notion of otherness situates 'the other' as a person, race, or culture which is not-self. It was discussed at least as early as Plato's dialogue about a Stranger in the *Sophist* and developed over thousands of years in Western philosophical thought (Van Pelt 2000a, 1, 2000b, 137; Kearney 2003, 7). While such otherness may take positive connotations, and the other may be conceived as superior and excitingly exotic, otherness more frequently carries a negative sense and signifies inferiority and antagonistic forces. Drawing on concepts of binary opposition, exclusion, and xenophobia, this formulation of otherness commonly distinguishes the self as familiar, 'normal', and ideal, and the other as unfamiliar, 'abnormal', and undesirable.

In an attempt to avoid unintentional implications that any individuals or groups are

in fact other to some kind of 'essential norm', I distinguish between difference and otherness, the former signifying alterity as variable and equal, the latter as binaristic, essential, and hierarchical. This distinction is not necessarily employed in other theorists' discussions of otherness (for example, Nodelman 1992), but may be implicit in their attempts to understand how 'otherness' (as actual differences between individuals and human groups, as any experience beyond the inner self, and as an alienated inner self) may be feared and misrepresented. Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, for example, conveys a sense that projection transforms difference into a construction of otherness (1978). Projection is a psychoanalytic term which means "[t]he unconscious process or fact of projecting one's fears, feelings, desires, or fantasies on to other persons, things, or situations, in order to avoid recognizing them as one's own and so as to justify one's behaviour" (OED 1989). Reserving the term otherness for essentialising, binarising constructions of difference clarifies the ambiguities and projections at the heart of constructions of otherness and illustrates how different groups may define themselves by composing ideals and othering all those whom they perceive to exist outside the boundaries of such ideals (Said 1995, 332; Nodelman 1992, 34). Any representation of alterity outside a willingness to maintain authentic difference within a condition of equality is problematic, calling into question any genuine encounter with diversity. For this reason, discourses of otherness have been used extensively to discuss interpersonal relationships, racism, sexism, and prejudice in general.

Tamise Van Pelt notes that many who discuss otherness in terms of such identity politics attribute their ideas to the French psychoanalytic theorist, Jacques Lacan, usually by reference to his mirror stage essay (1977a), yet their use of the term 'otherness' can be quite different from the specific kinds of otherness Lacan theorised (Van Pelt 2001a, 1-2; 2000b, 138). While some of Lacan's early work does touch upon otherness as a possible interpersonal conception, he later revised his ideas and conceptualised otherness in far more complex and abstruse ways. Throughout his oeuvre he presents no single or overarching concept of otherness, and instead uses the term to designate any number of sometimes quite specific paradigms such as "death, the symbolic father, the role of the analyst, the locus of speech, [and] the unconscious" (Clark 1997, 6). This free variation on the meaning of otherness can create problems for Lacan's interpreters: as Van Pelt points

out, "Lacan's discussion of Otherness must be read with special attention to context," and his words can easily be misunderstood and misapplied (2000b, 137-138, 144-5). I engage with Lacanian theories of otherness relating to language and desire in **Chapter Five**, but my discussions of otherness throughout this thesis will generally draw upon popular, humanised conceptions and will especially focus upon otherness as it relates to concepts of the body. My concept of otherness therefore draws heavily upon Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject, in which bodies are perceived to threaten the stability of the self (1982).

I will express my understanding of otherness and its relation to embodiment and projection throughout, but it is important to note at the outset that fantastic metamorphosis is commonly used as a metaphor for otherness. Those who can shape-change are frequently imagined as foreigners from somewhere else and/or as outsiders within a community who are different from, and possibly dangerous to, society (Clarke 1995, 5; Ivory 2000, 149). Shape-shifters are often aligned with divinity, faery, and sorcery, and with consequential links to cruelty, indifference, treachery, and evil. However, by means of their difference to the social norm, shape-shifters are open to a range of representations of otherness: *superhuman* otherness — powerful, superior, godlike, beyond human understanding; *inhuman* otherness — malicious, dangerous, unfeeling, monstrous, evil; *prehuman* otherness — 'natural', unfettered, tempting, leading the human away from society; and *subhuman* otherness — inferior and abject. More importantly from an analytic point of view, the motif of metamorphosis can fantastically signify some of the motives for constructions of otherness by exposing a range of fears and desires about human embodiment and its relation to issues of individual and human identity. The metamorphic body interrogates concepts of individual identity by expressing bodily instability, ambiguous relationships between bodies, and the effects of embodiment upon self-definition and classification of the self by others. In some contexts, this exploration highlights anxieties; in others, it foregrounds questions of desire and freedom. In either case, metamorphosis enacts formlessness and transgresses borders in ways which question human identity and its relation to animal embodiment and spirituality.

In engaging with these thematics, many metamorphosis narratives navigate ideologies of the 'body as other' and the 'body as self'. These ideologies are representative of the opposing sides of debates about human subjectivity and embodiment. The first, an

ideology of the 'body as other', represents the concept that the subject is completely disengaged from the body it inhabits. It is part of a philosophical tradition beginning with Plato, but attributed to the early modern philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650), whose particular articulation of the concept of mind/body dualism has been influential. Descarte's thesis is that nature is a machine, devoid of spirit, reason, or feeling, and that human bodies as part of nature are organic mechanisms which merely house the human mind, spirit, or soul. Cartesian discourse thus dismisses corporeality as a component of human identity and establishes the interior, rational mind and unique human soul as the sources of subjectivity (Shildrick 2002, 48). This ideology is at the root of most concepts of animals as other. [18] Throughout Western history, and especially in a Judeo-Christian climate, humans have not typically been conceived as animals and have been considered instead to have unique attributes which not only oppose them to the rest of the animal world, but render them superior to it. Metamorphosis between human and animal forms thus blurs semantic categories and stirs up anxieties and desires relating to human self-definition and human animal embodiment.

Despite the prominence of the mind-body dichotomy in Western culture, an ideology by which the external body is considered representative of the interior self has always co-existed with Cartesianism. Myriad discourses on corporeality and subjectivity have highlighted how physical appearance may be perceived as emblematic of interiority (for my purposes, see, for example, Synnott 1993; James 2000, 32-33; Shildrick 2002). As Elizabeth Grosz argues, "Western body forms are considered expressions of an interior, of a subjectivity. … bodies are textualized, 'read' by others as *expressive* of a subject's psychic interior" (1995, 34). This 'body as self' ideology or belief in physiognomy or "appearance-based subjectivity" (Frost 2001, 35) has become particularly prominent in contemporary society, due to the importance of the body in late consumerist capitalism and postmodern medical and scientific developments (Featherstone 1982; Shilling 1993). It is also

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[18] The negative ecological implications of constructing animals as other have been explored at length within the field of human-animal studies (see, for example, *Society and Animals: Journal of Human-Animal Studies* (1993-), and a range of texts such as Midgley (1979/1995), Baker (1993), Birke (1994), Steeves (1999), and Bleakley (2000)). Because my primary focus is upon ideologies relating to childhood and adolescent experience, I have chosen not to explore metamorphosis from the perspective of animal studies or ecocriticism, although much remains to be investigated in these terms (see Simons (2002) for an introduction).

apparent in older phenomenological theories in which the body and the subject are a deeply integrated whole (Merleau-Ponty 1962). Phenomenological theories are less superficial in their careful considerations of how embodiment affects experience and thus subjectivity (Shildrick 2002, 49), but they may have equally negative implications, for the ideology of the 'body as self' is significant for constructions of otherness.

A belief in physiognomy allows for a perception that biological differences between individuals entail fundamental subjective differences. If individuals are then categorised into groups according to apparently shared biological similarities, essentialised interior characteristics may be applied to an entire group. This may obscure the biological and interior variabilities between the individuals in one group, and the resemblances between individuals across groups (Grosz 1990b, 72-74, 1994, x-xi, 1996, 59-50; James 2000, 23). Biological categories may thus be used as a basis for the application of constructions of negative otherness (which entail negative social status), or constructions of idealising otherness (which are frequently condescending and may be just as deleterious in effect) (Shildrick 1997, 9, 168).

I will return to these basic ideologies of embodiment and otherness throughout this dissertation as I explore the metaphorical implications of the metamorphosis motif.

4. Chapter Outlines

As a figurative vehicle, fantastic metamorphosis has a great many possible tenors. I have chosen to look at five broad tenors which embody particular contentious ideologies about childhood, adolescence, maturation, and other concepts considered important to youth experience, such as desire and racial and ethnic relations. These tenors can be labelled as: childhood otherness; adolescent hybridity; maturation or 'becoming adult'; racial and ethnic otherness; and the desire for *jouissance*. I use whatever interpretive frameworks are relevant for investigating these tenors within their specific metaphorical contexts. Similarly, I analyse whichever contemporary fantasy texts best encapsulate the motif metaphors in question.

The bulk of the thesis, constituting the first three chapters, focuses upon how the motif of metamorphosis may signify specific ideologies of childhood, adolescence, and

maturation. In **Chapter One,** I discuss how metamorphosis may act as a metaphorical vehicle for an ideology of childhood as a realm of otherness. I examine this motif metaphor as it appears in Kate Thompson's *Switchers* trilogy (1997-1999), a supernatural fantasy series set in modern Ireland. In order to elucidate this ideology fully, I employ a theoretical framework of social constructionism and psychoanalytic concepts of the abject, of projection, and of fluid and leaky bodies. Thompson's exclusive linkage of fantastic metamorphosis to childhood foregrounds how children's physical and cognitive differences are subject to othering constructions that exclusively align children with physical mutability, internal variability, animality, and the imaginative. Similarities to negative constructs of female embodiment are suggested by this representation of fluid and leaky childhood otherness, meaning that such childhood otherness may be ideologically categorised as abject. However, as Thompson's texts illustrate, constructions of childhood otherness are usually heavily redeemed from any potentially abject connotations by a variety of recuperative paradigms.

Continuing this discussion of constructs of otherness, in **Chapter Two** I outline how metamorphosis may metaphorically represent adolescent hybridity and the threat of permanent deviation at adolescence from a teleological paradigm which transforms childhood otherness into adult normality. Narratives of pubescents who grow wings may symbolise both the liminality of adolescent embodiment and experience and the potential for adolescent changes to threaten permanent, unredeemed otherness, leading to social abjection. Using sociological theories of surveillance, spectacle, stigma, and spoiled identity, I outline constructions of normative development and scopophobia relating to the development of difference in two supernatural fantasy novels set in contemporary America, Bill Brittain's *Wings* (1991) and Laurel Winter's *Growing Wings* (2000). I then discuss how the metamorphosed replacement bodies of characters that grow wings may represent ideologies of regression or progression out of adolescent liminality. Employing a variety of appropriate interpretive theories, including theories of development, play, class, and gender, I explore how such differing ideological implications result in opposing conclusions in these growing-wings texts about the necessity of normalisation or non-conformity.

Because of links to concepts of radical change, the connection between

metamorphosis and puberty may allow the metamorphosis motif to signify not merely hybridity but maturation or a process of becoming adult. In **Chapter Three** I thus examine how narratives in which bullied adolescents metamorphose into predatory forms symbolise the possibility of becoming monstrous through the development of a powerful adult embodiment. Comparing three supernatural fantasies set in contemporary America, Bruce Coville's *Russell Troy, Monster Boy* (2003), Susan J. Kroupa's "Tricky Coyote" (1999) and Sherwood Smith's "Monster Mash" (1988), I apply theories of intersubjective agency in order to explore the different ways in which such narratives metaphorically convey an ideology that interior moral constraints are a necessary complement to exterior adult powers.

In the second part of this chapter, I discuss how certain ideologies of maturation represent the movement between childhood and adulthood as a loss and recreation of identity that transforms child subjectivity into adult subjectivity. I specifically examine how metamorphosis may engage with such ideologies by metaphorically representing maturation as a process of becoming someone other. Employing philosophical theories of identity continuity and discontinuity, I compare American Tamora Pierce's otherworld tetralogy, the *Immortals* Quartet (1992-1996), with Melvin Burgess's British supernatural fantasy novel, *Lady: My Life as a Bitch* (2001). Analysis of these respectively multi-bodied and replacement-bodied narratives allows for an examination of the reasoning behind a common ideology that maturation may result in total identity change.

Moving on from the investigation of specific ideologies of childhood, adolescence, and maturation, the final two chapters of this thesis explore how the motif of fantastic metamorphosis may signify wider social and psychological phenomena considered to be of significance to youth experience. In **Chapter Four**, I examine how ideologies of otherness relating to racial and ethnic physical and cultural differences may be signified by the fantastic motif of the werewolf. Employing race and ethnicity theories, I examine a variety of werewolf schemata in order to illustrate how different representations of werewolves convey distinct ideologies about racial and ethnic differences. Using psychoanalytic theories of abjection and projection, I argue that these varying depictions of difference or otherness relate to changing ideologies of human animality, signified by the concept of the 'beast within'. I analyse a number of contemporary American and British

supernatural fantasies to illustrate these points, particularly Patrick Jennings' *The Wolving Time* (2003), Annette Curtis Klause's *Blood and Chocolate* (1997), Maggie Pearson's *Owl Light* (1996) and *Dark of the Moon* (1998), J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007), and a number of short stories from Jane Yolen and Martin H. Greenberg's *Werewolves: A Collection of Original Stories* (1988).

Although I argue in my discussion of werewolf narratives that physicality is often linked with the abject, it is also often linked with transcendent experience. Thus, in **Chapter Five** I examine how the motif of metamorphosis may metaphorically signify a tenor of transcendent otherness and *jouissance*. Using Lacanian and Derridean theories of language and desire relating to concepts of presence and absence, I analyse the figure of the selkie (a seal-human shape-shifter) in a variety of young adult narratives and relate the constructions of desire and transcendence in these texts to psychoanalytic concepts of development as a reconstruction of the subject's basic psychic registers. While referring to a variety of selkie narratives, I closely analyse Lilith Norman's supernatural Australian novel, *A Dream of Seas* (1978), British writer Jane Stemp's fantasy of contemporary Scotland, *Secret Songs* (1997), American Charlotte Koplinka's supernatural historical novel, *The Silkies: A Novel of the Shetlands* (1978), American Franny Billingsley's otherworld fantasy, *The Folk Keeper* (1999), and American Janni Lee Simner's supernatural short story, "Water's Edge" (2001). Grouping the selkie texts under scrutiny into categories according to their conclusions, I explore how different resolutions of desire, and thus dissimilar attitudes to the human achievement of *jouissance*, may convey distinct ideologies about maturation, subjectivity, and human nature in general.

In total, these analyses constitute an original study into certain common manifestations of fantastic metamorphosis and certain current ideological paradigms of Western cultures. By analysing the metaphorical operation of fantastic metamorphosis in a range of texts, this dissertation illustrates an incisive new method for reading works of fantasy, extends our knowledge of the motif of fantastic metamorphosis, and generates new insights into a variety of contentious Western ideologies.

CHAPTER ONE.

Fantastic Metamorphosis as Childhood 'Otherness'

In fantasy fiction for children and young adults, one of the most obvious potential tenors for the metaphorical vehicle of fantastic metamorphosis is 'childhood'. That fantastic metamorphosis may be a metaphor for the physical and cognitive changes which take place during childhood is well-accepted by others (Coville 1999, ii; Lassén-Seger 2000, 186; Tucker 2002, 57). I am specifically interested, however, in how the motif of metamorphosis may work as a vehicle for a tenor of 'childhood otherness' or 'childhood as otherness'. Maria Lassén-Seger has discussed some of the ways in which the link between fantastic metamorphosis and childhood highlights constructions of childhood as a site of otherness (Lassén-Seger 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006). Like many generic studies of childhood as otherness, her focus has been upon the ways in which such othering fosters power imbalances in the child-adult relationship (Nodelman 1992; McGillis 1997b, 1999). Complementing her work, my interest is in how an analysis of a particular paradigm of fantastic metamorphosis may highlight both the possible reasoning behind the conception of children as other and the ways in which childhood otherness is recuperated from negative connotations.

In metamorphosis narratives, the tenor of 'childhood as otherness' is evident when fantastic metamorphosis is restricted to children and denied to adult characters. An overt restriction is rare, and this tenor is often only implicit in narratives that focalise through metamorphic child characters and fail to feature metamorphic adult characters. However, this constraint is delineated very clearly in Kate Thompson's *Switchers* trilogy, a supernatural fantasy series set in modern Ireland and consisting of the novels *Switchers* (1997), *Midnight's Choice* (1998), and *Wild Blood* (1999).[19] In Thompson's series, multi-bodied child shape-shifters, known as Switchers, can fantastically change into a diverse

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[19] For my discussion of the trilogy I will cite the title as well as the publication year of the novels I refer to. This is intended for reader convenience, partly because the discussion of three novels by one author is potentially difficult to follow and partly because my references are not to the original publications. I will maintain the practice of using both title and year for any further discussions of series fiction.

range of animal and imaginary forms. They must realise their power before the age of eight and finally lose their metamorphic abilities on their fifteenth birthday, when they choose which form will be their fixed body for the rest of their lives. All three novels are written in the third person and are primarily, but not exclusively, focalised through a female protagonist, Tess, who is thirteen at the opening of the series.

Switchers (1997), the first novel of the trilogy, tells the story of Tess's meeting with Kevin, an older Switcher who enlists her aid in dealing with a global weather crisis. They are taken by rats to meet Lizzie, an "eccentric old woman who had once been a Switcher herself" (*Midnight's Choice* 1999, 87). Lizzie warns them that the encroaching 'ice age' is being caused by Krool, ancient creatures that have woken from their slumber in the Arctic Circle and will turn the world to ice. Tess and Kevin go to battle the Krool and succeed by taking the forms of dragons, but on the dawn of his fifteenth birthday, Kevin is shot from the air by a mystified American air force crew as he and Tess return to Ireland.

Tess later discovers that Kevin survived a fiery death by taking the form of a phoenix, and in *Midnight's Choice* (1998) phoenix-Kevin is captured and held in the Dublin Zoo, where his transcendent goodness affects the population. However, an evil is also stalking Dublin's streets in the form of the Switcher, Martin, who has discovered vampire form and intends to permanently become a vampire. Friends with each boy, Tess finds both phoenix and vampire forms tempting, but ultimately inhuman, and is able to free herself from this binary pull between extreme forms of good and evil and return both boys to human form.

Wild Blood (1999) concludes the series by delineating Tess's final days as a Switcher and introducing an explanation for the special powers of all Switchers — a hereditary connection to the ancient Irish faery, the *Tuatha de Danaan*, a race of powerful "magicians … [who] could change their shape and work magic spells" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 131). Sent to stay with her aunt and uncle on their farm in the Clare countryside, Tess discovers that her Uncle Maurice's twin brother, Declan, chose to take the form of one of the *Tuatha de Danaan* on his fifteenth birthday and has since haunted the nearby woods. Tess, her young cousins, and Kevin all become embroiled in the hostility between the brothers. Their conflict, however, is resolved positively, and after sampling *Danaan* form at Declan's behest, Tess finally chooses to become permanently human, a choice which is

represented as the socially and morally responsible option.

The introduction of *Tuatha de Danaan* lineage theoretically limits Thompson's metaphor of childhood otherness, applying it only to children with Irish ancestry. However, this point is never raised in the texts, and the metaphor that 'childhood is fantastic metamorphosis' pertains broadly to all children in the trilogy, so that Thompson's series establishes a clear and explicit binary between childhood and adulthood. Pubertal changes are subsumed within the category of childhood, and cultural adolescence exists on either side of the significant fifteen-year-old age mark without disrupting this binary. Suggestions that Tess is no longer a child after her life-changing experiences with Kevin (*Switchers* 1998, 196; *Midnight's Choice* 1999, 40), and various universalising comments about the nature of teenagers (*Switchers* 1998, 99, 125; *Midnight's Choice* 1999, 43, 76) refer to cultural behaviour, as is evident in Lizzie's remark that "[s]ome people is teenagers all their lives" (*Switchers* 1998, 78).

Adolescence as an essential biological and cognitive difference is implied only when childhood otherness threatens to become permanent in non-animal forms. Thus, Martin's vampirism is represented as a threateningly permanent adolescent abjection caused by emotional and psychological distress. However, he is eventually restored to the trajectory towards normative adulthood and his adolescence is therefore finally subsumed within childhood.[20] Declan, on the other hand, remains "eternally young" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 160). He gains immortality with his transformation into a *Danaan* form and ceases to age, so that after twenty years apart from his identical twin brother, Maurice, they no longer look alike (*Wild Blood* 2000, 139). While he is adolescent rather than adult-like (as is evident in his flirtation with Tess and his angst-ridden harassment of his brother), Declan retains a metamorphic fluidity and connection to animality and the supernatural which permanently aligns him with childhood otherness in Thompson's construct.

The reasoning behind an ideology of childhood and adulthood as binary opposites can be incisively explored through an analysis of the metaphorical meanings of fantastic metamorphosis in Thompson's trilogy. Specifically, the semantic grounds for Thompson's motif metaphor suggest that constructs of childhood otherness may be distortions of 'self-

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[20] See **Chapter Two** for a discussion of adolescent abjection and the threat of permanent otherness due to a deviation from developmental paradigms.

evident' observations that children are corporeally and cognitively different from adults. To highlight the ambiguity between 'observations' and 'constructions' of childhood, I begin this chapter by locating my exploration of childhood as otherness within a broader analytic context of social constructionism. As I will illustrate, social constructionist examinations of childhood provide a theoretical basis for understanding the biological and cognitive foundations of constructions of childhood as otherness. However, the connotative consequences of transforming childhood difference into childhood otherness can then be best understood by drawing upon psychoanalytic feminist theories of projection, abjection, and fluid and leaky embodiment.

As I will outline, *fluidity* and *leakiness* refer respectively to internal physical changes and the movement of matter between inner and outer bodily boundaries, as well as to more metaphorical behavioural and symbolic movements between bodily and social boundaries. Using the ideas of feminists such as Elizabeth Grosz and Margrit Shildrick, I employ theories of fluid and leaky bodies to discuss how the particular distortions which transform childhood difference into childhood otherness lead childhood to be perceived as potentially abject. However, an analysis of Thompson's metaphorical mapping also highlights how childhood otherness is frequently redeemed from potentially negative connotations. I thus conclude this chapter by examining how childhood otherness may be recuperated by redemptive ideologies of normality, functionality, provisionality, malleability, and teleological development.

1. Analytic Context: Constructions of Childhood

Despite the existence of earlier works which raised questions about the universal characteristics of childhood or adolescence (Mead 1928; Elias 1939; Mead and Wolfenstein 1955), the historian Philippe Ariès is usually credited with initiating theories of the social construction of childhood in the nineteen-sixties when he famously argued that childhood as a social category did not exist in the Middle Ages in Europe, at which time children were simply treated as miniature adults, alike to adults in all respects but physical appearance (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 4). While the accuracy of his claim has since been brought into question (see Wilson 1980; Pollock 1983), the recognition that biological immaturity may be performed and interpreted differently according to cultural

and historical discrepancies challenged orthodox ideas about the nature and universality of childhood and initiated many investigations (see Kessen 1978, 1983b; Jenks 1982; Kessel and Siegel 1983; Cunningham 1991, 1995). The last two decades, in particular, have brought a major development in research and theory regarding childhood as a social construction that varies over time and space (see Holland 1992; Jenkins 1998a; Mills and Mills 2000; Kehily 2004). Current debates and research within the interdisciplinary field of "the new social studies of childhood" are particularly reflexive and stimulating, refuting assumptions that the universal reality of biological human immaturity results in essential childhood qualities and forms which are merely valued or contaminated by different cultures (James and Prout 1990/1997a; Qvortrup et al. 1994; Jenks 1996; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998; Holloway and Valentine 2000a).

Certain overviews of common Western constructions of childhood allow us to perceive some of the diverse ideologies of childhood circulating in Western cultures (Hendrick 1990/1997; Jenks 1996; Mills 2000). These ideologies include constructions of the Natural child, the Romantic child, the Evangelical child, the working child, the schooled child, the delinquent child, the social child, the developing child, the Dionysian child, the Apollonian child, the modern child, the postmodern child, the innocent child, and the child as savage, as blank slate, as apprentice, as person in their own right, as member of a distinct group, as vulnerable, as animal, as evil, as sinful, and so on. Many of these ideologies construct the child as other, as imbued with essential traits opposite to those of any 'adult'. All are evident in general literature, as literary investigations of images of childhood have illustrated (Coveney 1957/1967; Pattison 1978; Kuhn 1982; Brown 1993; Banerjee 1996; Pifer 2000). However, as numerous scholars have shown, children's literature in particular is a key site for varying constructions of children and childhood (see, for example, Rose 1984; Petzold 1992; Reynolds 1994; Rudd 1994, 2004; Sampson 2000; Coats 2001a; O'Sullivan 2004).

For an awareness of the specific construction of children as other in literature, Perry Nodelman's "The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature" (1992) is a frequent point of departure. Nodelman engages with Edward Said's (1978) work on Orientalism and uses Said's outline of the Western/Eurocentric othering of the East/Orient as a model for exploring the ways in which children are othered by adults. Roderick

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McGillis has significantly extended Nodelman's initial discussion of the 'colonisation' of children and childhood, sometimes integrating a postcolonial perspective with concepts of otherness from a psychoanalytic context (1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2004). The common use of a colonising analogy to discuss the structure and effects of the othering of children is problematic, however. As Clare Bradford has pointed out, an alignment of childhood otherness with racial or colonial constructs may undermine the seriousness of extreme, detrimental versions of otherness which have been applied to non-European indigenous groups (2001b, 11-12; also see Ramraj 2000, 263-264). An analogy with the historical treatment of women seems potentially more fruitful because, like women, children have traditionally occupied othered positions within the structure of the family (Hendrick 1997, 59). However, any analogy with another othered group is imperfect, because children are unique in their particular structural and biological position in relation to the dominant cultural group and because the prevalence of redemptive paradigms in ideologies of childhood otherness should always be kept in mind (Holloway and Valentine 2000b, 4; Aitken 2001, 7-8).

As a variety of theorists argue, some studies of constructions of childhood appear to suggest that the interpretive framework of 'childhood' is completely separate from biological children and shaped and animated only by adult ideas (Jenks 1996, 8; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 28, 147; Rudd 2004). My focus on the biological and cognitive grounds for constructions of childhood otherness should highlight the fact that social constructions of children are to some extent founded upon experiential understandings (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 63, 146-7). Such a focus raises its own potential problems, however, because it may seem to obscure the ways in which any 'foundational' differences between children and adults are themselves ambiguous. There are, of course, irresolvable tensions between nature and nurture, biology and culture, 'fact' and perception or projection (Hendrick 1997, 35). Furthermore, individual children and adults are variable within their own respective 'groups' due to factors of age, class, sex, gender, ethnicity, family grouping, locality, and other specific features such as individual personality (James and Prout 1997c, xiii; Qvortrup 1994, 5; Jenks 1996, 121-2). However, othering constructions of childhood often elide such differences by producing generalisations or stereotypes of children. In the following account, I highlight how 'common sense'

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understandings that children are generally different from adults in biological and cognitive terms may become entwined with constructs of generalised otherness, resulting in inadequate, essentialising perceptions of individual children.

2. The Grounds for Othering Childhood: Biological and Cognitive Differences

By establishing magical laws which limit metamorphosis to childhood, Kate Thompson's *Switchers* trilogy presents a motif metaphor which suggests that the semantic domains of metamorphosis and childhood hold certain attributes in common. Specifically, the 'set of associated commonplaces' accompanying the vehicle of metamorphosis imply that children are beings of change and otherness, characterised by physical fluidity, subjective potential, intellectual primitivity, and animal behaviour. The metaphorical grounds for Thompson's alignment of metamorphosis with childhood illustrate that these constructs of childhood otherness are grafted upon a belief in foundational corporeal and cognitive differences between children and adults.

i. Mutability: The Corporeal Basis for Childhood Otherness — Fluid Bodies and Subjective Potentiality

Thompson's overt restriction of fantastic metamorphosis to childhood points initially to the significance of *corporeality* as a foundation for the construction of childhood otherness (James 1993; Prout 2000b, 8). As Stuart Aitken has argued, "[t]he body is central to how hegemonic discourses designate certain groups as 'other'" (2001, 66). While size and muscularity may be perceived as the major physical differences between children and adults (Prout and James 1997, 26), Thompson's alignment of childhood with fantastic metamorphosis specifically highlights the ways in which children's bodies may be conceived to be foundationally different from those of adults in physiological terms (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 146).

Sociologist Allison James, one of the few leading figures in non-medical theorisations of the 'child body', suggests that in contemporary Western cultures the category of 'the child' is predicated upon the "peculiarity of children's physiology" (2000,

27).[21] Her focus upon the processes and functions of the child 'organism' characterises child embodiment as marked by accelerated biological change (2000, 23, 26). She notes that although adult bodies clearly display subtle signs of time passing, such as greying hair and lines of age, these cannot compare to the "intense and rapid 'whole body' change of childhood" (2000, 36). As in her earlier work with Chris Jenks and Alan Prout, James thus suggests that childhood "can be characterized by fluidity and movement" (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 88). In the context of Kate Thompson's *Switchers* trilogy, we perceive the metaphorical embodiment of such perceptions of childhood: if only children can metamorphose, as the fantasy laws of the trilogy assert, then only children are subject to rapid and extreme bodily changes, and adulthood is comparatively physically static. Thompson's fantasy law restricting metamorphosis to childhood thus foregrounds a cultural ideology that childhood is a state of exclusive corporeal mutability. It also highlights how this ideology incorporates constructions of childhood as a state of subjective potentiality.

The concept of children as physically mutable beings may be accompanied by a belief that children possess a unique interior fluidity (Lassén-Seger 2006, 116, 123). Clare Bradford writes that "[t]he very fluidity of the metamorphic moment is itself a metaphor for the shifting and uncertain subjectivities which it encodes" (2001a, 162). This is evident in many of the scenes in Thompson's metamorphosis trilogy in which the protagonist, Tess, takes on other animal forms. Tess's many animal bodies are all unique versions of herself, and the extreme mutability of her body concurrently suggests a selfhood that is amorphous and unsettled, as her changing embodiment offers constantly "altered perceptions" and ways of being-in-the-world (*Wild Blood* 2000, 95). Furthermore, each time Tess changes her shape, she alters her overall subjectivity:

> her ability to experience the lives and beings of other creatures had an
> effect upon her personality as a human being. Each time she changed,

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[21] As Allison James and Alan Prout note, "there has been a lack of interplay between the two rapidly expanding topics of sociological enquiry of the body and childhood" (1997a, xii; also see Prout 2000b). Scholarship on children's bodies has primarily focused upon the presentation of natural and inevitable 'facts', usually within medical and pedagogical contexts which obscure the ideological parameters to any construction of biological development. However, there has been a movement towards more theory-based explorations of childhood embodiment in Foucauldian discussions of the schooling of the child body (see Gore 1998; Simpson 2000) and other important interdisciplinary works (for example, Armstrong 1983, 1995; Wallace 1992; James 1993, 1998, 2000; Murcott 1993; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998; Prout 2000a; Aitken 2001; Frost 2001; Bridgeman 2002; Mallan 2003).

> something of what she learnt of the animal character stayed with her.
>
> (*Switchers* 1998, 94)

Each animal Tess becomes offers attributes and experiences that have a cumulative effect upon her personality, and her radically shifting embodiment thus signifies a fluctuating inner self.

Vivian Sobchack suggests that figures of metamorphosis interrogate and destabilise the Western metaphysical concept of discrete and essential identities by reminding humans of their physical instability, which she describes as "our physical flux, our lack of self-coincidence, our subatomic as well as subcutaneous existence that is always in motion and ever changing" (2000a, xii). However, when extreme bodily and subjective changes are explicitly restricted to childhood, continuing adult instability and flux is denied. Because adults cannot Switch and gain access to other consciousnesses in the way Tess does, Thompson's construction that children have a fluid character is accompanied by a common binary-based conviction that adults have a "fixed" character (see Bridgeman 2002, 95; Spacks 1981, 4). Such an ideology is also evident in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (1995-2000), in which metamorphosis is similarly limited to childhood. Although humans do not metamorphose in his series, the daemons attached to children undergo a constant, "protean metamorphosis" (Warner 2002, 206). Daemons fluctuate between animal shapes in correspondence with their children's interior identities, and their resolution into one fixed form when children enter puberty suggests that in adulthood "identity gels" (MacRae 1998, 352; see Pullman 1995, 167). A restriction of the motif of fantastic metamorphosis to childhood thus reveals how foundational physiological differences between adult and child corporeality may be othered — binarised, essentialised, and believed to bear interior correspondences.

ii. Primitivism: The Cognitive Basis for Childhood Otherness — Primeval Minds and Leaky Animal Bodies

In addition to foregrounding how a basic *corporeal* difference between children and adults may be transformed into a construction of otherness, the exclusive restriction of fantastic metamorphosis to childhood highlights how foundational *cognitive* differences between children and adults may be othered. Othering implications are again conveyed

through the fantasy laws of the fictional world of Thompson's series, because if children alone can magically transform into animals and imaginary creatures, then, metaphorically, only children are animal and only children have access to an imaginative magic. This metaphor is clearly based upon a perceived cognitive difference between children and adults because the implication that children are more open to animality and otherness suggests that the child mind is developmentally closer to nature than to culture, more primitive than the adult mind, and more willing to believe in the supernatural. This has a reverse effect to the movement I described in the prior section: where before I discussed how the body is believed to affect interiority (in that fluid embodiment renders a fluid subjectivity), here interiority has effects upon the body (in that a cognitive openness and 'primitivity' has leaky effects at the level of bodily behaviour and expression).

Ostensible cognitive differences between children and adults are frequently understood to be biologically determined, however. Developmental psychology contends that cognitive competency and characteristics are based upon biological age. Jean Piaget, for example, delineates a hierarchy of developmental stages ranging chronologically from "low status, infantile, 'figurative' thought to high status, adult, 'operative' intelligence" (Jenks 1996, 23-24; see Piaget 1977). He assumes that the features of childhood he isolates are 'natural' to all children (Prout and James 1997, 11; Aitken 2001, 52) and implies that cognitive processes develop in an inevitable movement towards a "pre-stated structure of adult rationality" (Jenks 1996, 27). Piaget's research has been extensively reviewed and debated, and fundamental objections have been raised to the idea that there is a universal, standardised, and inevitable programme of developmental stages (Sutherland 1993; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 18-19). However, Piaget's theories remain influential in common-sense understandings of how children differ cognitively from adults (Prout and James 1997, 9, 11; Jenks 1996, 27).

Given the complexity and ambiguity of biological and cultural interactions, it is difficult to resolve whether cognitive differences in children are biologically determined past infancy (James and Prout 1997b, 5; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 171). One of the major oppositions to Piaget's point of view is the clear possibility that the basic 'cognitive' differences between Western children and adults may have a cultural rather than biological basis. In other words, children's cognitive differences from adults may be due to a lack of

experience and familiarity with certain ideas or thought processes rather than an inborn inability to comprehend certain ideas at certain ages (Hendrick 1997, 52). The way in which unfamiliarity with a culture's language, customs, social values, and laws may be misconstrued as a cognitive deficiency rather than a cultural difference or a lack of cultural knowledge is obvious in certain Western constructions of non-Western peoples. David Archard's criticism of Piaget has pointed out that his ideal of adult cognitive competency is an ideal of certain Western systems of thought (1993, 66). As Archard argues, because Piaget's end-point of cognitive development is "an ability to think about the world with the concepts and principles of Western logic," particularly by using "Kantian categories of space, time and causality," "there is no reason to think it conforms to the everyday abilities of even Western adults" (1993, 66). Thus, differential cognitive characteristics may be determined by cultural learning, rather than biological capacities (Archard 1993, 66; Aitken 2001, 57). Despite this possibility, however, attempts to ground cognitive development in social experience rather than biology have frequently been obscured (Prout and James 1997, 11; Hendrick 1997, 52).

Beliefs that children's minds are at a developmentally 'lower', inferior level to those of adults (rather than merely lacking cultural knowledge) construct the child mind as more heavily controlled by biological instincts than rational thought. This suggests that, in comparison with adults, children's minds are more 'natural' than cultural and children are thus more 'animal' than 'human' (Myers 1998, 21-29; Aitken 2001, 127; Cosslett 2006, 114, 126; Lassén-Seger 2006, 115-6, 118). Some socialisation theories therefore place children outside humanity, with suggestions that they are "beings who have the potential for being slowly brought into contact with human beings" (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 24; see Elias 2000, 442). Such constructions of childhood stem from the fact that children's bodies are initially unencumbered by the civilising rules which attempt to separate humans from their animal origins (Elias 2000, 60, 78-88). Because children have not yet fully mastered their culture's "techniques of bodily control" (Elias 2000, 160), their bodily behaviour may be linked to animal practices, and, through a different cognitive bodily use, children may appear to be animalistic — untamed, wild, free, leaky, and transgressive (Mills 2000, 26-28). Maria Lassén-Seger's discussion of what she labels the "myth of the animal child" has dealt with some of these implications in relation to the alignment of metamorphosis with

childhood (2004, 2006, 34-39). The full significance of a metaphor of childhood as animality in Thompson's trilogy will be discussed in the next segment.

It is important to note here, however, that the restriction of fantastic metamorphosis to childhood also suggests that the child mind may be perceived as primeval in terms of social rather than physical evolution — that is, in a way resembling 'primitive' human societies rather than primordial human animality (Lassén-Seger 2004, 36, 2006, 35-36, 114-115, 131). According to recapitulation theories, which align children's biological and cultural development with humanity's 'progress' through the centuries, 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny', meaning that the development of the individual repeats the development of the human species (Archard 1993, 32-34; Matthews 1994, 20; Berzonsky 2000, 11). The chronological advance of human history has supposedly been a progressive movement from barbarity to civilisation, which places the child in conjunction with primitive, Stone Age, and Bronze Age societies; 'barbaric', superstitious, and 'irrational' ancient civilisations; and pre-industrial indigenous tribes. The 'savage' and the child are thus both seen as the precursor of 'civilised', adult human beings and each are compared with the other in ways that justify beliefs about each group's moral and intellectual capacities (see Rose 1984, 50-51; Jenks 1996, 4-6, 27; Prout and James 1997, 10-11; Hendrick 1997, 48; Elias 2000, xi; Cosslett 2006, 125-126).

Most significantly for this discussion, children's cognitive characteristics are aligned by such analogies with the assumed pre-rational animism and paganism of 'primitive' human societies, which implies that children possess an ingenuous willingness to believe in the magical and mystical, especially in relation to the powers of nature and animals (Ariès 1962, 116; Tucker 1985; Prout and James 1997, 10; O'Sullivan 2004, 14; Lassén-Seger 2006, 34). This ideology depends in part upon constructions of 'primitive' peoples as naïve ingénues and 'noble savages'. The noble savage ideal is often traced back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose concept of a primitive connection with nature is a background to William Wordsworth's Romantic ideologies of a spiritually endowed Nature and of children in tune with Nature and God (Cunningham 1991, 98-101; Archard 1993, 22, 39; Myers 1998, 24-26). Wordsworth also articulated the ideology that childhood has exclusive links to the imagination (Coveney 1957, 5-6; Carpenter 1985, 7-10; Kuznets 1994, 35, 45; Warner 1994a, 33-48). Beliefs that children are naturally more imaginative

than adults elide any awareness of how such constructs may be culturally influenced, given that Western culture has generally forbidden adults the right to imaginative play outside formal structures such as gaming, sport, drama, and literature; those adults who transgress are threatened with social abjection in the form of accusations of immaturity, madness, or retardation.

In Thompson's *Switchers* trilogy, the cognitive basis for childhood otherness is evident in how Switching does not just require a mutable child body, but a 'primitive' and untrammelled state of mind which can both imagine and believe in the possibility of metamorphosis. This mind is open and willing to be animal, with all the chaotic potential that entails. It is thus the "combined use of will and imagination" that enables Switching, "a combination … which, the old people knew, was called magic" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 150, 156). The idea of exclusive childhood links to the imaginative and the magical are emphasised by the restricted ancestral connection between children and the magical race of the *Tuatha de Danaan*. This connection is biologically based, because the "*Danaan* blood" in children's "veins" disappears at the age of fifteen, unless children choose to permanently become *Danaan* (*Wild Blood* 2000, 133). However, it is never a purely biological link because it is only an imaginative openness to otherness which enables children's latent magical powers to function.

Such openness is depicted as cognitively non-adult-like. Tess's discovery of her Switching power at the age of "seven or eight" (*Switchers* 1998, 19) comes in tandem with the knowledge that adult rationality makes metamorphosis a skill unsuitable for the adult world: "[c]hanging into bears just wasn't the kind of thing that adults did. They would be far too worried about what other people were thinking" (*Switchers* 1998, 22). It is not until later that Tess discovers adults cannot metamorphose for biological reasons, and her insight here suggests that adults are also incapable of fantastic change because they have a self-conscious embodiment stemming from an adult cognitive state. Thompson's restriction of fantastic metamorphosis to childhood thus reveals how the basic unacculturated cognitive characteristics of children may be perceived by others to indicate exclusive, essentialist links to animality and primitivity. Such perceptions transform childhood difference into childhood otherness.

3. A Potentially Abject Otherness

The particular form of childhood otherness mapped by Thompson may have detrimental implications because concepts of exclusive fluidity and animality contain negative connotations of the abject. Notions of fluid and leaky embodiment developed in theorisations of the female body are thus potentially useful for understanding this construct of childhood otherness. Such theories illustrate how basic corporeal (and possibly cognitive) differences between the sexes may be distorted by the application of paradigms of fluidity and leakiness to women that deny comparable fluidity and leakiness in men. Children's actual biological and cognitive differences from adults may be similarly othered by the restriction of fluid and leaky paradigms to children. In both cases, such paradigms align the other with the abject.

Drawing on the work of Mary Douglas (1966), Julia Kristeva (1982), Luce Irigaray (1985a, 1985b), and others, feminists such as Elizabeth Grosz and Margrit Shildrick have employed fluid and leaky body theories to discuss the constructed embodiment of women throughout Western history (Grosz 1994, 192-208; Shildrick 1997, 2001). Such theories illustrate Western humanism's conception of ideal subjectivity as inviolable and invulnerable, independent of the body it 'inhabits' and separated from the bodies and subjectivities of other beings (Grosz 1994; Shildrick 2002). This ideal subjecthood depends upon a conception of the subject's body as a bounded container, a smooth, closed-up, and impermeable surface which acts as a "suit … of armour protecting a core self" (Shildrick 2002, 71; also 5, 51-4; Kristeva 1982, 102; Sheldon 2002, 24). Such idealised concepts of subjecthood and embodiment are tenuous, however, and can be sustained only by processes of abjection.

In contemporary theory, the terms 'abject' and 'abjection' have gained specific connotations from Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982). For Kristeva, the abject is "the jettisoned object"; it is what is "radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva 1982, 2). As Judith Butler explains, "[t]he 'abject' designates that which has been expelled from the body, discharged as excrement, literally rendered 'Other'" (1990, 133). Specifically, the abject is linked to "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966, 35), in terms of both the uncategorisable and in-between, and the bodily substances that cross bodily boundaries into the world (Kristeva

1982, 71). The abject theoretically evokes physical and psychological sensations of disgust and horror, yet simultaneously exerts a hypnotic attraction (Kristeva 1982, 2; Braidotti 1997, 65). It also signifies metaphorically, so that bodily margins are representative of all other margins and whatever leaks between them is abhorred because it threatens the dissolution of social boundaries and the pollution of cultural categories (Douglas 1966, 115, 121; Kristeva 1982, 70; Shildrick 2002, 81).

'Abjection' has two primary meanings in this context. Karen Coats indicates the more common of these when she writes that "[a]bjection is the process of expulsion that enables the subject to set up clear boundaries and establish a stable identity" (Coats 2004, 140; also see Weiss 1999, 57). It is the assertion of a boundary between the "clean and proper body" and the abject, between inside/outside and self/other (Kristeva 1982, 7, 71-73, 75, 101-102). The lesser meaning of abjection refers to the state of psychological self-abjection, which occurs when the process of abjection encounters difficulties, and a subject becomes "haunted" by abjection (Kristeva 1982, 1). This separates subjects from themselves; they feel placed "beside" themselves and become "deject[s]" (1982, 1, 8). Only the former definition of abjection is relevant to this discussion: the process of rejecting the bodily abject. Significantly, this process is frequently followed by the projection of the abject elsewhere, onto a constructed other, for an ideal self is only able to be conceived and then experienced as a secure form because any sense of its own abject qualities — its own corporeality, fluidity, and vulnerability — is excluded and projected onto the body of 'the other' (see Butler 1990, 11, 133-4; Grosz 1994, 203; Derrida 1997, 244; Mercer 2000, 510; Shildrick 2002, 1).

Western patriarchal ideologies construct the generic male body as ideal and 'normal' in contrast to the generic female body, which is othered by an emphasis upon how menstruation and maternity make it theoretically subject to fluidity, vulnerability, leakiness, management difficulties, and a blurring of boundaries between self and other (see Butler 1990, 133-4; Grosz 1994, 205-6; Shildrick 1997, 17, 34-35; Braidotti 1997, 64; Sheldon 2002, 24). According to such ideologies, the supposed ultra-fluidity of female embodiment is emblematic of significant internal differences, evoking a generic female selfhood that is mysterious, vulnerable, possibly indeterminate, and threatening to the illusive contained, secure male self (Grosz 1994, xiv, 203; Shildrick 1997, 26, 34). The

subjection of male bodies to fluid changes and leakiness is either obscured by such constructions, or accounted for as a matter of avoidable excess, while female fluidity and leakiness is constructed as intrinsic (Shildrick 1997, 220). Thus, a fluidity continuum or variable becomes instead an essentialised binary, with males firmly placed on the privileged side of the non-fluid and non-leaky and aligned with concepts of internal stability and rationality.

The permeable human-animal bodies of shape-shifters have been approached in terms of these gender theories of abject fluidity and leakiness (Sobchack 2000a, xxiii), and so have the bodies of children: Elizabeth Grosz applies such theories to concepts of childhood in passing when she writes of how children's bodies appear to inhabit an "out-of-control status" which they are "led to believe ends with childhood" and their entry into "the time of a self-contained adulthood" (1994, 205). In applying theories intended for a discussion of female embodiment to a site of fantastic metamorphosis and child embodiment, the corporeal specificities of female fluidity and leakiness are replaced with metamorphic specificities (such as fluidity and leakiness between species boundaries, the constant breaching of boundaries of the skin and identity, and an openness to leaky animal bodily expressions), and asexual child specificities (such as a fluidity apparent in bone growth, the loss and growth of teeth, and the leakiness of urine, faeces, snot, vomit, blood, saliva, pus, and tears). Concepts of the female animal (Kuznets 1994, 143-156) and of the femininity of childhood (Nodelman 1992, 29-30) are perhaps implicitly invoked by the alignment, but overall such theories simply enable us to recognise that the metaphor of childhood as fantastic metamorphosis implies childhood is a state of potentially abject otherness.[22]

The supposedly exclusive fluidity and leakiness of childhood, signified by bodily instability, mutable interiority, the non-containment of bodily fluids, and the behavioural blurring of species boundaries, connotes potential pollution, contagion, and abject animality (Holland 1992; Murcott 1993; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 198-199; Aitken

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[22] Perhaps some of the gender bias of fluidity theories is implicit in Thompson's series because primary focalisation is through a female protagonist, but the secondary, male character, Kevin, is far more intensively aligned with the fluid and abject than Tess, which emphasises how issues of class are more significant than gender in the trilogy. Considerations of gender are largely elided in the series and gender makes no difference to Tess and Kevin's animal experiences or to the final decisions they make about what to be or become.

2001, 23). Kristeva writes that "[t]he abject confronts us, on the one hand, with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*" (1982, 12) and John Lechte explains that "the abject is what allows the drives to have complete and uninhibited reign" (1990, 159). The construction of children as animal and primitive thus places them within the boundaries of the abject, as does children's apparently unrestrained bodily behaviour, which persistently transgresses social boundaries. As Norbert Elias writes, children

> encroach again and again on the adult threshold of repugnance, and …
> infringe the taboos of society, cross the adult shame frontier, and
> penetrate emotional danger zones which … adults themselves can only
> control with difficulty. (2000, 141)

Children thus "offer living exemplars of the very margins" of social order and "pose a potential threat or challenge to social order and its reproduction" (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 198, 9). For these reasons, childhood is sometimes aligned with constructs of chaos and instability, and perceived negatively as a state of animalistic dirtiness and sinfulness (Gooderham 1996; Hendrick 1990/1997; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 10-13; Mills 2000; Aitken 2001, 5-6). Children thus face social abjection through sanctions or quarantines which limit where children are allowed to go and be (Ariès 1962, 412; Murcott 1993; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, 11, 198).

The potential abject otherness conveyed by Thompson's motif metaphor of fantastic metamorphosis as childhood otherness is evident in descriptions of Tess as existing uncomfortably in-between categories. She is described as "not of either world; the animal or the human" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 44), and she is significantly destabilised by this fluidity: "[s]he didn't know who she was or who she wanted to be" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 44). Tess's fluid betwixtness is especially imbued with abject connotations because it signifies openness to chaos and dissolution. The cognitive state required to Switch is that of an open mind, unafraid of volatility, leakiness between borders, or a potential loss of self:

> It required a state of mind that was somehow more, and somehow less
> than just thinking. First, she would need to know what she wanted to
> be and have a clear picture in her mind of whatever creature it was.
> Next, and more difficult, she would have to try and imagine how it felt

> to be that creature from the inside. Then she had to let go. Letting go
> was the most difficult part, because the moment of changing was a bit
> scary. For that moment, brief though it was, it felt as though her mind
> was dissolving, and everything around her became vague and fluid
> and insubstantial. (*Switchers* 1998, 34)

The knowledge of other forms and the calm "presence of mind" needed to Switch (*Wild Blood* 2000, 38) somewhat implies a rational 'adult-like' cognition, suggesting that children are in fact in control of their minds and their changing bodies. However, we learn that "thought, concentration and anxiety were all hindrances to the process of change" (*Switchers* 1998, 35). The ability to Switch is thus less about control and focus than an open and imaginative empathy with the other and a willingness to 'let go' of the self, releasing control and restraint and giving oneself over to dissolution and the loss of firm and stable categories between self and world.

The abject connotations of this openness to dissolution and fluidity are particularly clear in the representations of animal metamorphosis in Thompson's trilogy. Thompson does not explicitly represent metamorphosis as a grotesque process of crunching bones and leaking flesh; nor does she dwell upon the gross leakage of animal bodily fluids. She does, however, concentrate upon representing human metamorphoses into animals that are conventionally considered abject. Rats are her main focus in this respect. Rats are frequently associated in Western culture with filth, pollution, and contagion, as well as infirmity and death (Cirlot 1962, 259), probably because of their connections with human waste and disease, but also because they transgress the boundaries between human and animal worlds. They refuse to remain in their 'proper' place outside human boundaries, and instead inhabit abject, liminal spaces in which animal nature and human culture are uneasily blended — spaces such as sewers, rubbish tips, and industrial landscapes.[23]

In *Switchers*, Tess's first sight of Kevin's rat friends fills her with a typical "horror" of the abject (1998, 55). The rats are described as a mass of bodies, "swarming" over the "wasteground" in which they live, "a dumping ground" for the refuse of human culture (55). After Tess reluctantly metamorphoses into rat form, she journeys with Kevin and the

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[23] Marah Gubar has also discussed the links between rodents, sewers, and the abject in children's literature, in her "Species Trouble: The Abjection of Adolescence in E. B. White's *Stuart Little*" (2003).

rats through "underground passages" (58), "beneath the houses" (59), through a house's "basement" (59), and then into a system of pipes, drains, and "sewers" (61). The group emerge into "another piece of wasteground which lay between two huge warehouses" (64), and then keep to the shadowed edges of streets, "running in single file close up to the walls and sprinting across the open spaces in between" (63). They relax finally in an industrial "coal-yard," where they sleep beneath a human portakabin then steal through the "rat runs that honeycomb the foundations of the city" (64-66). These rats are depicted as blurring the boundaries between proper and improper foods (see Douglas 1966, 41-57; Kristeva 1982, 2, 75-6, 95-99): they feast on "rubbish" and "left-over food" (68), and the rat, Long Nose, eats Tess's tail "for his breakfast" (67).

Abject connotations of rats' links to 'waste' and 'wastegrounds' as well as liminal and underground spaces are further developed in *Midnight's Choice*, where rats are connected to death and decay as they dig through underground catacombs for a vampire master who hopes to become permanently and uncannily 'undead'. In this novel, rats are described as possessing indistinct, fluid bodies: "[t]he dim light on their moving backs made Tess think of water, rippling and flowing. The kitchen was flooded with rats" (1999, 21-23). When the rats follow their master's orders to attack phoenix-Kevin at the zoo, they are similarly delineated as liquid, this time in a way which threatens to overwhelm and engulf the ideal and transcendent: they "welled up like a spring from below" and "streamed up the foliage" in their efforts to tear the phoenix "to pieces" (135, 139). In attempting to save the phoenix, the zoo-keeper, Jeff Maloney, is described as "up to his knees in rats, wading through a sea of them" (141). When phoenix-Kevin escapes, the rats disappear, "leaving the dead and dying behind" (141). Rat corpses are the only significant dead bodies in evidence in the series, and "the carcass of a rat" (71) is of substantial importance to the plot of *Wild Blood*. In addition to these elements, the connection of rats to the abject is further emphasised because the "slightly grotesque" absence of the proper amount of toes on Kevin's foot is the result of rat metamorphosis. Kevin informs Tess: "I only have three toes on this foot. I got the other two stuck in a crack in a drain pipe once, and there was no way to get out except to just keep pulling" (*Switchers* 1998, 110).[24]

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[24] It is possible to discuss the abject paradigm in Thompson's series in terms of the grotesque. Doing so emphasises the redemptive paradigms of childhood otherness, as the grotesque is frequently linked to the carnivalesque, in which an excessive and uncontrolled body is celebrated (Bakhtin 1984, 18). Maria Lassén-

Despite all of these abject connotations, however, Thompson does not finally represent fluid and animal childhood otherness as abject. Her trilogy of fantastic metamorphosis is a constructive text for analysis for precisely this reason. It highlights how childhood difference may be represented as otherness yet redeemed from negative, abject connotations by a variety of recuperative models.

4. A Rejection of Abject Connotations: The Priority of Redemptive Paradigms of Otherness

The otherness of Thompson's child Switchers is salvaged from potentially pejorative connotations by the priority given to several ideological paradigms which present this otherness as normal, functional, and temporary. Thus, while other groups defined in terms of fluid and leaky bodies (such as elderly, sick, or disabled adults) may face permanent social abjection, redemptive paradigms of childhood otherness frequently render childhood otherness valuable and tolerable, which protects children from the "exclusionary ferocity" applied to many othered groups (Aitken 2001, 7-8, 67; Holloway and Valentine 2000b, 4; Rose 1984, 13; Murcott 1993, 128). These redemptive paradigms include: a recuperation of the animal domain with which childhood is aligned; a recognition of the potential usefulness of childhood otherness; and constructs of an inevitable and socially induced development towards a desirable teleological end-point.

i. The Redemption of Animals

Thompson's metamorphic alignment of children and animals does not automatically establish childhood as an abject state because animals themselves are redeemed from abjection and given a status of normality within the *Switchers* trilogy. As Clare Bradford has pointed out, metamorphic episodes enable human characters to "assume subjectivities previously perceived as Other" (2001a, 152). In Thompson's series, metamorphosis into animal forms traditionally conceived as abject allows that abject otherness to be redressed.

Seger has drawn attention to the ways in which fantastic metamorphosis in children's literature may represent a carnivalesque time out (2000, 2002, 2004, 2006), but this is not one of the primary redemptive paradigms here, and a theoretical framework based upon the abject allows for a more precise insight into Thompson's ideologies of childhood otherness.

An experience of animal subjectivity and of interaction with animals through fantastic metamorphosis illustrates that supposedly 'abject' animal species are not, finally, abject creatures.

For example, Tess's experience of goat embodiment challenges her perceptions of the abject qualities of goats. Goats have sometimes been constructed as abject creatures because they have been linked to the devil (Cirlot 1962, 137), and have been conventionally considered to behave inappropriately and to eat improperly. We are thus told that goats have "poor manners" (*Switchers* 1998, 92), and that:

> Tess had something of the same distaste for goats that she had for rats.
> They were the poor relations of the other farmyard animals, always
> bony, always hungry, always eating what they shouldn't.
>
> (*Switchers* 1998, 91)

Kevin encourages Tess to metamorphose into a goat, saying, "Why don't you try it, eh? We could go for a spin" (*Switchers* 1998, 92). His choice of terms implies that experiencing different animal bodies is merely like sampling different clothing or test-driving an automobile, but Tess's reasons for not wishing to become a goat are based upon her awareness that metamorphosis strongly affects her interior subjectivity. As the following passage suggests, Tess is reluctant to invite what she perceives as the abject into her selfhood:

> She had always avoided those animals which had characteristics that
> she perceived belonged to people of a different, inferior class. She
> had never experienced life as nature's scoundrels because of her fear
> of their human counterparts. Foxes, bats, crows and magpies, rats and
> stoats were all villainous creatures in her imagination.
>
> (*Switchers* 1998, 94-95)[25]

Tess's experience of the form and thus the 'nature' of a goat challenges her perception of goats as abject creatures. Once metamorphosed into goat form, she comes to

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[25] I do not have the space to discuss the ideologies about class evident in this trilogy, as they are not instrumental to the trilogy's primary ideology of childhood otherness. However, the class differences between Kevin and Tess are raised repeatedly and Tess's dislike of certain animals is clearly represented as a form of upper-class snobbery which she profitably overcomes.

recognise the value of a goat's "love of life and wildness and freedom," and significantly learns that "it was a myth that goats would eat anything. On the contrary, her senses of smell and taste were so refined that she … would leave anything that was the slightest bit tainted" (*Switchers* 1998, 96). Rather than embodying the abject, goats are thus proven as fastidious as 'civilised' human beings. Similarly, Tess's metamorphosis into rat form offers an experiential access to the corporeal and cognitive differences of rats, which establish them as variable and human-like, rather than undesirable and iniquitous binary others. Unlike the many animal species in the series who are depicted as instinctive and unreflexive, rats are represented as possessing a "visual language" (*Switchers* 1998, 51), family ties (*Switchers* 1998, 61, 68, 72), and strong and unambiguous "codes of behaviour" parallel to human customs and conventions (*Switchers* 1998, 51, 73). They also love stories (*Switchers* 1998, 195), a quality which is usually reserved for humanity.

The redemption of these particular animals, and, by association, of potential constructs of childhood otherness as abject, is also evident in the beneficial effects of Tess's experiences of both goat and rat forms. Her time spent as a member of each species alters her personality in ways which provide her with "useful resources" (*Switchers* 1998, 95), helping her to survive challenging experiences and to save the world. In her "days and nights of existence as a rat," Tess "had discovered a new sense of courage" (*Switchers* 1998, 95), and it is "act[ing] Goat" (*Switchers* 1998, 188) which allows her to avoid being struck by an American napalm bomb when she returns from defeating the Krool. Thus, alignment with non-human animals is not represented as abject but as a valuable experience, which leads us to a second key paradigm for the positive recuperation of childhood otherness — the concept of functionality.

ii. Functionality: Salvationary Potential and Developmental Self-Exploration

Thompson's fluid and leaky child other is salvaged from depreciatory connotations by ideologies which interpret childhood otherness as a state of functional possibility and purpose. This is firstly evident in the trilogy's Romantic ideology that qualities of childhood otherness might save the corrupt adult world from itself (Coveney 1957, 148, 284-285; Pattison 1978, 30, 45; Kessen 1983a, 44, 1983b, 266; Hendrick 1997, 37; Mills 2000, 17-18). Such an ideology aligns Thompson's work with other texts in which "[t]he

child is pure potential, cast in the role of innocent saviour of mankind in a tradition reaching back to Rousseau's *Emile*" (O'Sullivan 2004 19; see Coveney 1957 5-6), and perhaps further back to the legend of the Christ child and the mythic archetype of "the heroic child who liberates the world from monsters" (Cirlot 1962, 44).

In Thompson's trilogy, childhood otherness is crucial to the salvation of the world. The adult search for commercial gain and power (in the form of American oil-drilling in the Arctic) awakens the supernatural Krool, jeopardising the world. Ordinary adults are depicted as incapable of recognising, let alone combatting, this supernatural evil (this 'cruel') aroused by their actions. In contrast, children have the power to save the world from the apocalypse instigated by adults because they are linked to the supernatural, willing to believe in its existence, and able to face it on equal terms. Tess and Kevin's childhood otherness enables them to travel safely into the deadly Arctic environment and to defeat the Krool by taking the "leap of imagination" which transforms them into dragons (*Switchers* 1998, 154). Switchers' salvationary powers are a product of their biological and subjective potentiality, their animality, and their exclusive access to a powerful, magical imagination. Childhood otherness is thus recuperated from abject connotations because it is significantly functional.

This is further illustrated by the way in which childhood otherness serves an important developmental purpose in allowing for intensive self-exploration. Maria Lassén-Seger has highlighted the tradition by which animal metamorphosis is a means for children to gain experience, empathy, and a greater understanding of the world around them (2006, 156-7). In Thompson's series, however, animal metamorphosis specifically enables children to explore themselves in ways which are foundational for their future lives. Children's power to be multiple is conceived as an important tool with which to investigate the range of their potential subjectivities. Significantly, children have only a limited time in which to experience their potential selves and to choose which of these best expresses their essential identity and is thus most suitable for their post-childhood existence. Lizzie, Tess and Kevin's mentor, stresses the importance of fully exploiting childhood potentiality:

> We all thinks we has all the time in the world when we's young. And
> sometimes we doesn't push ourselves hard enough. We doesn't use
> our imagination, so we never really gets to the bottom of ourselves.

> Sometimes we doesn't know what we could be until it's too late.
>
> (*Switchers* 1998, 122)

It is considered 'too late' by adulthood because adults are represented as corporeally and subjectively fixed. Because they no longer rapidly change physically, they are considered no longer capable of actively exploring other ways of being-in-the-world.

The construction of adulthood as a loss of self-potential is manifest in Kevin's eventual nostalgia for his childhood creativity and in Tess's reluctance to lose her Switching powers (*Wild Blood* 2000, 35, 44). Kevin suggests that the choice of what to become at the age of fifteen is finally irrelevant because the choice between an adult human or adult animal form always entails fixity and the loss of potentiality:

> "Maybe it doesn't make that much difference, in the end. I mean, the best thing was being able to Switch. Nothing could be as good as that, really, could it?"
> Tess sighed. "It's like having everything, isn't it?" she said. "I can't stand the idea of losing it." (*Wild Blood* 2000, 61).

Caroline Walker Bynum notes that self-definition is always achieved partly by the exclusion of other possible selves (2001, 77). Near her fifteenth birthday, Tess visualises the different animal feet she has possessed in the past as metonyms of her different animal-selves, and thinks that "part of the difficulty in choosing what to be was having to give up all the other things" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 35). The thought of this elimination "threatened to drown her in tears and … a growing sense of despair" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 35).

The ideology that 'subjectivity congeals with the settling of the body' advocates that children should 'live to the fullest' before the possibilities of youth are lost to them. The pressure this places upon children is constructed as positive, in spite of its endorsement of potentially dangerous experimentation. As Kevin says,

> sometimes we don't know what we can do until we have to do it. And if we always stick with what's easy and what's safe, then we'll never be made to find out. (*Switchers* 1998, 133)

Tess notes how often adults "sound… off about how young people didn't make the most of themselves" (*Switchers* 1998, 122), but their concern is justified by Tess's repeated

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discoveries of new Switching possibilities during the limited time available to her in her final years as a Switcher, when she learns that she can attain imaginary or magical forms (such as those of a dragon, a phoenix, a vampire, or a *Star Wars* character), change others' shapes, and control the weather.

Childhood self-exploration is further represented as important because the boundaries of one's future subjectivity are determined by childhood experiences. Childhood is delineated as a time in which to accrue personal attributes and knowledge for adulthood. Thus, because she has experienced rat form, there is a "part of Tess's mind that was and would always be rat" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 52). Similarly, as adult humans who were once Switchers, Kevin and Lizzie retain their ability to communicate with rats in their visual language. Adults are limited by the extent to which they explored their potential and extended themselves as children, experimenting with various shapes, and thus amassing diverse personality traits. Such childhood exploration also has a symbolic effect in relation to adult's general flexibility. As Kevin tells Tess:

> I realised that it doesn't matter whether or not I can change my shape; not any more. What matters is that being a Switcher taught me … how to adapt. How to change to meet whatever situation arises, even though we might look the same from outside. (*Wild Blood* 2000, 164)

This passage suggests that because Tess and Kevin fully engage with their Switching powers and 'stretch' their potential as children, their adult subjectivities will be complex and adaptable and they will retain an unusual amount of internal fluidity and adaptability.

Childhood otherness thus holds important functional purposes which redeem that otherness from any potentially negative connotations. This paradigm of functionality is closely linked to a further redemptive paradigm, that of the inexorable movement of time. Thompson's emphasis that children have a limited time for exploring the potential range of their subjectivities metaphorically constructs time as a limited resource (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 7-9). Time is something "precious" that can be "wast[ed]" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 75) and which is "running out" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 66). This foregrounds a recuperative paradigm of childhood otherness as temporary, highlighting the fact that the momentum of time will inevitably end childhood otherness.

iii. An Inexorable Biological Impetus Towards Adult Normality

Because the movement of time inevitably brings children to their fifteenth birthday, when Switching is ordained to cease, there appears to be a biologically determined developmental impetus which inevitably shifts the mutable child body out of otherness and into a fixed adult form. The otherness of childhood fluidity and mutability is thus recuperated from any potentially abject and negative connotations by a teleological paradigm which emphasises its provisionality (Steedman 1992, 40; Prout and James 1997, 28).

Switchers' inexorable movement towards adult normality reveals how the notion of childhood exterior and interior mutability is premised upon ideas of 'growth' and 'completion'. In common discourse, adulthood is formally deemed to begin when processes of biological maturation are 'finished'. Thus, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *adult* as "matured, full grown," and *adultness* as "[t]he state of being adult; complete development" (1989). Comparatively, the definition of *child* includes both "[t]he unborn or newly born human being" and "[a] young person of either sex below the age of puberty," allowing for a definition of *adolescence* as "the period which extends from childhood to manhood or womanhood" and "[t]he process or condition of growing up; the growing age of human beings." These popular definitions illustrate how child and adolescent bodies are conceptually situated within a developmental paradigm which renders them latent and incomplete, always in progression towards the teleological end-point of adulthood (Archard 1993, 34, 36).

A focus upon child development into a 'finished', mature form obscures the continuing processes of change and transformation in adult bodies and ignores the focus in contemporary consumer culture upon the adult body as an unfinished project with inherent plasticity (Shilling 1994, 4-8). Instead, it suggests that, just as adult subjective possibilities are supposedly limited by the parameters of childhood self-exploration, adult bodily changes are restricted to the physical boundaries established by the end of puberty, which is subsumed within childhood. This is evident in Tess's observation of Kevin after he has lost the ability to Switch and entered human adulthood:

> Tess was so accustomed to seeing him that she hadn't noticed the
> changes in his body, but all of a sudden they had become obvious. He

> was like a bag of bones, big bones, all loosely connected and not very
> well coordinated. His feet were enormous and his hands were long,
> with knuckles everywhere. He seemed acutely embarrassed by this
> strange body but it would, Tess realised, soon begin to make more
> sense. The hollows would flesh out and the shambling slackness
> would turn to smooth strength. Kevin was growing out of being a boy
> and would soon be a man. (*Wild Blood* 2000, 67)

These final changes Tess sees in Kevin indicate that he has reached his limit of bodily growth. He is essentially 'complete' because his bodily boundaries are fixed. He has entered a plateau of gradual change, leaving behind any experience of the comparatively rapid and extreme changes of childhood. His bones will never again transform in an expression of creative potential; he will no longer 'grow up', but will rather 'grow out', into his preordained adult skeleton, 'fleshing out' his 'bag of bones' so that his adult flesh and muscle will complement his 'enormous' feet and 'long' hands.

In a similar respect, Tess's uncle-in-law, Maurice, describes how his fifteenth birthday was an entry into a predetermined state of limited physical change: "At that moment, at the moment when the sun rose, I became fifteen. A fifteen year old boy, destined to become a man and a father, and then grow old and die" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 141). Like Kevin, Maurice becomes a bounded, mortal being on entering adulthood, his body regulated by a predictable adult destiny. He retains some bodily creativity as a future father, but his trajectory is fixed and his bodily changes are perceived not as positive potential or development, but as a fated adult blossoming followed by a deterioration, a movement towards death (Backett-Milburn 2000, 86). It is thus unsurprising that Tess's fifteenth birthday is described as "loom[ing], more like a funeral than a celebration, an end instead of a beginning" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 44).

The fatalistic quality of the eventual cessation of childhood otherness is evident in the fact that all Switchers are destined to meet another Switcher who will inform them of the eventual loss of their powers: "We all meet someone who tells us," Kevin informs Tess, "and we all meet someone we have to tell. I don't know how it works or why, but it seems that it always does" (*Switchers* 1998, 52). Significantly, however, that destiny also means that all Switchers will be informed that they have an agential choice about what to

finally become. That children have an option about whether to become adult humans highlights the possibility that the child other has the capacity to resist becoming the adult self-same. Permanently becoming non-human offers a continuation of corporeal and cognitive otherness, as when Kevin's acquaintance becomes an adult eagle or hawk (*Switchers* 1998, 155; *Wild Blood* 2000, 59), or Declan becomes a *Tuatha de Danaan*. In merely providing options which undermine the biological inevitability of growing up to become a human adult, Thompson's series emphasises that a paradigm of inexorable *biological* movement into adulthood is not all-encompassing. A redemptive *cognitive* paradigm is thus required to address the threatening possibility that children may refuse to reject childhood otherness.

iv. The Powers of Socialisation: Malleable children

The final significant paradigm recuperating potentially negative connotations of childhood otherness is thus a socialisation model, which maintains children's placement upon a teleological developmental pathway towards adulthood. This paradigm and its effective redemption of the potential leakiness and abjection of childhood otherness is evident in Thompson's fictional law that children must discover their potential to Switch before the age of eight, in certain aspects of Tess's characterisation, and in the constituents of the trilogy's conclusion.

Firstly, Thompson's fantasy law that children must discover their power to Switch before the age of eight implies that socialisation can eliminate childhood otherness. Lizzie tells Tess:

> All kids is born with the ability [to Switch]. But very few learns that
> they has it. You has to learn before you's eight years old, because
> after that your mind is set and you takes on the same beliefs as
> everybody else. A lot of kids find out they can Switch, but when their
> parents and friends say it's impossible, they believes them instead of
> theirselves, and then they forgets about it, like they forgets everything
> that doesn't fit in with what everyone else thinks. It's only a few who
> has enough faith in theirselves to know that they can do it despite

what the rest of the world thinks. (*Switchers* 1998, 194-5)

Thompson thus outlines a belief that children can be steadily trained to adopt 'appropriate' (cultural) adult forms of cognitive control; this will have effects at the level of the body, eradicating leakiness, fluidity, and openness to behavioural otherness (Simpson 2000).

Thompson's fantasy law therefore conveys ideas about the internalisation of social bodily controls first proposed by Norbert Elias in his theories of the civilising process (2000 [1939]) and Michel Foucault in his theories of surveillance and discipline (1977 [1975], 1980). Elias writes, "[w]hat marks off a child from an adult is taken to be the successful practice and performance of internalized, even unconscious, control over the body and its functions" (2000, 160; 275, 365-6), and Foucault describes how subjects internalise the "inspecting gaze" of others and so exercise a 'system of surveillance' upon themselves, conforming and adjusting their bodily behaviour and appearance in order to meet acceptable social norms (1980, 155). Thompson's specification that social training can have irreversible effects upon children's metamorphic potential by the biological age of 'eight' implies that socialisation can permanently transform cognitive otherness into normal adult subjectivity and thus constrain children's biological fluidity even before it becomes fixed by the biological movement into adulthood. This proposition recuperates childhood otherness by stressing that children are malleable and open to rehabilitation into adult forms of correct behaviour.

Thompson illustrates how powerful and pervasive socialisation processes may be in her depiction of Tess. At the age of thirteen, Tess considers Switching an absolute necessity for her personal happiness. It is described as a great "freedom" (*Switchers* 1998, 2) and "the only thing that made the difference between happiness and misery in her life" (*Switchers* 1998, 10). However, Tess is by this time already successfully interpellated into certain 'adult' states of mind that effectively limit the fluidity and leakiness of her body and subjectivity. Her rejection of what is culturally classified as abject (evident in her early reluctance to become certain animals, as noted above) is a key sign of an adult cognitive state according to certain psychoanalytic theories which assert that a successful adult identity depends upon ridding the self of associations with abject figures (Coats 2004, 143). Tess's initial subjection to socialisation is further palpable in her efforts to keep her metamorphoses "tidily separate from her 'real' life" (*Switchers* 1998, 110). Her Switching

is "private and carefully contained" (*Switchers* 1998, 110), confined temporally (to the weekends) and spatially (to hidden places outdoors) (*Switchers* 1998, 8).

This is, of course, partly because of Tess's perceived need to keep her Switching secret, but her reluctance to Switch outside of these times and places is also intended to illustrate her unrecognised socialisation, in that the "values that she had absorbed in her succession of comfortable homes and high-class schools had prejudiced her more deeply than she supposed" (*Switchers* 1998, 94-95). Even after Tess has become more open to certain possibilities following her experiences with Kevin, a socialised, rational view of the world continues to constrain the extent of her childhood otherness, limiting her awareness, so that she erroneously tells her younger cousin, Orla, that "there's no such thing as fairies … They're just old stories. From a time when people … were less sophisticated" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 48). Orla, with her belief in fairies, is aligned with primitive (childhood) otherness, and Tess, nearing her fifteenth birthday, represents a 'civilised', 'adult' way of looking at the world, which limits its possibilities. By the trilogy's end, Tess has overcome her earlier socialised ways of thinking about the world and her life within it and so would seem to have moved away from a socialisation paradigm. Nonetheless, the series illustrates the importance of a redemptive socialisation paradigm by concluding with its own socialising imperative, endorsing children's decision to grow up.

Unlike the children who lose their Switching powers at the age of eight, Tess's loss of childhood otherness is not a passive submission to covert socialising forces. Nor is it merely based upon childhood obligations, like her Uncle Maurice's movement into adulthood. Tess's uncle-by-marriage chose to become an adult human because he felt a sense of responsibility to his parents. He tells his twin, Declan, that "one of us had to stay with our mother and father … If we had both vanished for ever it would have killed them" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 141). Responsibility to the emotional needs of her parents is also a "concern" for Tess, best explained in terms of her awareness of parents' emotional investment in their children (*Midnight's Choice* 1999, 11; *Wild Blood* 2000, 141; see Zelizer 1985). However, Tess's decision to grow up is finally based upon a desire to gain what John Stephens, in another context, has called the "greater potentiality of adulthood" (2003, 124).

In the *Switchers* trilogy, the movement into adulthood is mostly constructed as a

loss of potentiality, but Thompson's conclusion indicates that adulthood provides a different form of powerful potential. Her series suggests that it is only by choosing to become adult humans that children can become effective agents in the 'real' world. Kevin tells Tess when she is in *Danaan* form that:

> I could live a happy life as a rat. I know I could. And you could live forever as you are; young and beautiful, a magical being. But neither of us would have influence, you see? (*Wild Blood* 2000, 163)

Childhood potential is clearly limited here to the personal self and to the animal and mystical realms, meaning that children cannot effectively change the human adult world. This is finally represented as a weakness, because adult forms of power and influence have certain formidable effects which it is suggested can only be combatted with 'real' rather than supernatural forces.

Kevin helps Tess to understand that it is only by working inside the adult human world as animal "ambassadors" and environmental warriors that they can help to protect all forms of life from the "locust"-like ravages of adult humanity (*Wild Blood* 2000, 106-7, 164-165). He warns her that if she chooses to become permanently *Danaan* she will be forever separate and unable to affect the non-faery world: "if that's the choice you make, then you won't belong to this world any longer" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 164). Although Tess and Declan, in *Danaan* form, make significant changes to the real world, such as transforming a prized horse into a donkey (*Wild Blood* 2000, 155), this is constructed as a secret power, absent from signification or recognition in the human adult world, and with probably ephemeral results. The daylight transformation of Tess's faery-gifted jewellery into a necklace of "rusty old wire" and a ring which is really "a plastic washer from a tap" informs readers that the *Tuatha de Danaan* inhabit an artificial world of illusion, empty of substance and depth, which is forever incapable of significantly altering the more substantial world of adult humans (*Wild Blood* 2000, 166). Consequently, while only children can affect the supernatural world, so that only Switchers can defeat the Krool, it is only adult humans who can "save the wild places" and their animal and magical beings from human destruction (*Wild Blood* 2000, 165).

Given Tess's earlier feeling that "[s]he didn't want to be an adult in a society … where no one cared about anything except money" and humans were but "a plague on the

earth" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 106-7), Thompson's conclusion suggests that rejecting adulthood is a form of escapism which is disadvantageous when children could instead choose to grow up and work hard to improve the world. A similar message is conveyed by Kevin's approval of becoming an adult human. A neglected child who spent most of his childhood as a rat, Kevin is originally "cheated" out of a choice of what to become at fifteen, but his partial regrets at ending up human rather than rat are eventually discarded (*Wild Blood* 2000, 60). When Declan metamorphoses Kevin into a rat, Kevin decisively rejects this opportunity to escape the human adult world. He firmly asserts: "I want to be human" (*Wild Blood* 2000, 163), and his words bear a potent socialising force because of his earlier distrust and dislike of "rotten human" society (*Switchers* 1998, 73). Thompson's endorsement of the choice to grow up and achieve Western cultural forms of adult agency, maturity, and responsibility thus has a strong socialising impact, and this socialisation paradigm clearly recuperates childhood otherness by directing it towards a positive form of morally and ecologically responsible adulthood.

Conclusion

My analysis of Kate Thompson's *Switchers* trilogy has illustrated how examining fantastic metamorphosis as a metaphor in children's literature may offer insight into Western ideologies of childhood and adulthood. Thompson's metaphor that 'childhood is fantastic metamorphosis' highlights how the foundational biological and cognitive differences between children and adults may be distorted into otherness if these differences are embellished with essential and exclusive links to biological and subjective fluidity, nature, animality, imagination, and the magical. Biological immaturity and childhood bodily change are universal and natural human features, but paradigms which exclusively restrict fluidity and interior potentiality to childhood are specific cultural interpretations rather than 'truths' about children and childhood. Similarly, children may display certain cognitive differences from adults, but the suggestion that these differences exclusively align children with nature, animals, and the imaginative and magical transforms childhood difference into otherness. In both instances, the similarities between children and adults are concealed and the differences between them are overemphasised and essentialised into dual, hierarchical oppositions.

The childhood otherness which results from such distortions may be perceived as connotatively abject in a variety of ways, but potentially negative elements of childhood otherness are significantly redeemed by paradigms which recuperate abject animality, stress the purposefulness of childhood otherness, and emphasise a progressive, teleological movement towards normative adulthood. These constructs allow children a special biological and cultural place according to a vision of childhood otherness as temporary and normal. In the next chapter, I will analyse two metamorphosis narratives in which adolescent changes threaten a departure from such teleological paradigms and result in a threateningly permanent otherness. This developmental deviation raises questions about the necessity of conformity and nonconformity in the process of maturation.

CHAPTER TWO.

The Metamorphic Growth of Wings:

Deviant Development and Adolescent Hybridity

Narratives that introduce fantastic metamorphosis into characters' lives towards the end of childhood often use the motif to signify the bodily changes of puberty (Palumbo 1986, 15; Bradford 2001a, 151; Lassén-Seger 2006, 49-50). As with the tenor of 'childhood', a ground of 'corporeal change' is at the basis of this metaphorical link. Constructs of childhood otherness relating to corporeal fluidity and subjective mutability may thus continue in the metaphor of fantastic metamorphosis as puberty. However, fantastic metamorphosis can also elicit concepts of puberty as a vigorous secession from childhood. Pubertal bodily changes are often thought to be quantitatively and qualitatively different from those of childhood. Developmental theorist Rolf E. Muuss states that although "physiological change takes place at all age levels, the *rate* of change during this period is immeasurably greater than in the years that precede and follow it" (1975, 5). The rapid corporeal changes that mark childhood in the West may therefore be imagined to intensify during adolescence. They may also be perceived to differ in substance, for the pubertal development of mature genitalia and secondary sex characteristics is distinctive. A metaphorical link between the metamorphosis motif and puberty may thus convey the development of adult materiality, sexuality, and power, and the concept of radical identity change. I will deal with these adult-related elements in **Chapter Three**, but in this chapter I focus upon how the alignment of fantastic metamorphosis with puberty may also signify adolescent hybridity and/or deviant development.

Puberty may be considered a drastic transformation which creates an insurmountable division between child and adult forms, but the binary between childhood and adulthood is bridged by adolescence in Western societies. The physical changes of puberty may be conceived to instigate a temporary mesh of child and adult embodiment and interiority, and adolescence is correspondingly a space of hybridity in terms of subject positioning. While some cultures across time and space have provided access to adult

status at the beginning of pubertal change (Archard 1993, 24), most modern Western societies construct adolescence as a cultural life-stage which encompasses those who have begun to develop adult bodies and subjectivities but who are not yet given the social status of adults. This has largely isolated pubescents from both the child and adult realms, leaving them trapped in a transitional space within which they may vacillate between adult and child subject positions. Kai Mikkonen notes that "[m]etamorphosis functions in contemporary literature often as a trope for the joining of culturally, ethnically or even biologically different elements in one self" (1997, 270) and Clare Bradford has noted how the "uneasy conflation of human with animal" in certain manifestations of the metamorphosis motif may symbolise the "ambivalence (neither here nor there) of postcolonial experience" (2001a, 162). Fantastic metamorphosis may also metaphorically represent the amalgamation of child-adult attributes that signifies Western adolescence.

For example, the sub-motif of the fantastic growth of wings at puberty can be read as a metaphor for adolescent hybridity. The movement from a human body into a form which is part-human and part-animal metaphorically conveys the child-adult fusion of the adolescent state, and the replacement body of the metamorphosed winged human may thus be a vehicle for a tenor of physical and cultural hybridity. As a hybrid state of being, adolescence is conceived according to some ideologies as an abject condition.[26] Julia Kristeva writes that it is "not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (1982, 4). As the boundary between two well-established and easily defined social groups, adolescence may be considered to disturb important categories and invoke unease. As Karen Brooks explains,

> [t]he category 'youth' endlessly shifts and slides between the binary
> opposites of adult/child, innocence/knowledge, and
> power/powerlessness, disrupting the essentialism of these

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[26] Possible links between adolescence and abjection have mostly been researched and discussed in terms of processes and states of psychological abjection, which have been recognised as a "distinctive feature of contemporary adolescent culture" (Coats 2000, 2004, 139, 137-160; also see Forisha-Kovach 1983, 318-320; Wilson 2001). Work on abjection in young adult literature has thus often focused upon what Julia Kristeva calls "the abjection of self" (1982, 5), not the state of social abjection resulting from the possession of a body perceived by others as abject (1982, 102) (for examples, see Westwater 2000; Wilson 2001; Stephens 2003; cf. Gubar 2003).

> psychological and social sites and causing discomfort in adult circles.
>
> (Brooks 2003, 2; also see Lesko 1996, 455)

In being not fully one thing or the other, adolescence is a composite state which signifies a "refusal to conform to the laws governing the clean and proper, the solid and the self-identical"; it thus threatens adult "self-representations" (Grosz 1994, 195).

This may result in a perceived necessity for the intensive monitoring of adolescence, or even in the temporary abjection of adolescents from adult society as a form of quarantine. Stuart Aitken, for example, notes the frequent Western demonisation of adolescents and the "moral crisis" surrounding adolescent culture and adolescents' use of public space (2001, 154, 145-161). However, just as a particular form of otherness may be constructed as a normative state for childhood, this hybrid adolescent otherness is usually constructed as a temporary, normal stage on the pathway towards appropriate adulthood, and so is largely redeemed. Many forms of social deviance or 'pathology', such as minor drug use or severe mood swings, are therefore tolerated during adolescence because developmental paradigms construct them as typical and "temporary aberration[s]" which will be rejected with the movement into adulthood (Forisha-Kovash 1983, 320, 317; Kroger 1996, 56). Thus, Patricia Spacks calls youths "licensed transgressors" (1981, 296), and Stuart Aitken suggests that adolescence is a "'stage' designed to encourage, and, by so doing, survey and control, rebellious behavior," a description which aligns adolescence with the authorised chaos of the carnivalesque (Aitken 2001, 77; see Bakhtin 1968).

Because adolescent otherness is recuperated by its placement upon a teleological pathway towards normative adulthood, adolescents who develop in ways different to the anticipated norm may be denied the leniency applied to 'normal' adolescents and forced to face the possibility of permanent social abjection. A metamorphosed winged replacement body may act as a metaphorical vehicle for ideologies of adolescent hybridity, but the fantastic transformation which produces this body is ultimately represented in most growing-wings narratives as a rare transgression from a developmental norm, and the process of metamorphosis in this context is thus a powerful vehicle for a tenor of deviant development. Therefore, while Kathleen Beck has rightly argued that fantastic winged people may metaphorically convey the political situation of marginalised social and ethnic groups (which she describes as "other groups who simply are and end up persecuted")

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(2000, 281), the developmental deviance signified by a rare growth of wings clearly resonates with a tenor of corporeal and cultural deviation from normative pathways of development. It thus strongly parallels the adolescent development of physical disability or differences in normative sexual orientation. However, by conveying the significant consequences of developmental deviation, this motif metaphor perhaps best expresses an ideology that all adolescents need to fear their inability to control their own bodily changes and to worry about whether these changes will be beneficial or damaging to their social status.

Two growing-wings narratives which illustrate these ideologies are Bill Brittain's *Wings* (1991) and Laurel Winter's *Growing Wings* (2000). Both are supernatural fantasies for older children, set in contemporary America but including a fantastic element, the human growth of wings. As humans who grow animal wings, the characters in these texts are not directly associated with other winged beings in fantasy fiction, such as angels, demons, and vampires. Characters do not become part-human and part-angel, part-demon, or part-vampire, but part-human and part-animal. Intertextual connections to angelic, demonic, and vampiric supernatural beings may be evoked, but only in a metaphorical, connotative sense.

Brittain's *Wings* is written in the first-person, from the viewpoint of a small-town American boy who grows a pair of bat-like wings at the age of twelve. Pubertal change is an implicit impetus for Ian's transformation, which is otherwise inexplicable. His growth of wings aggravates his already difficult family relationships, but leads to a friendship with a six-fingered classmate, Anita Pickens. When Ian is faced with the threat of being made into a freakish spectacle by tabloid media coverage, he retreats to the safety of the Pickens' cabin in the mountains. There he discovers that the loss of bone density accompanying his transformation allows him to fly, but Ian's family wants him back and he finally decides to conform to normative developmental expectations by agreeing to the surgical amputation of his wings.

Winter's more recent novel, *Growing Wings*, is narrated in the third person, but focalised primarily through Linnet, an eleven-year-old whose mother, Sarah, explicitly relates the growth of wings to "something to do with puberty" (2000, 5). While Ian is the only winged person in his world, Linnet discovers that she is not the first human to sprout wings at puberty, but most winged individuals have had their wings removed in order to

keep this deviant development a secret. When Linnet's 'cut-wing' mother finds it too difficult to cope with Linnet's metamorphosis, Linnet joins a small, clandestine community of winged and cut-wing individuals in an isolated mountain retreat. There, she forms relationships with cut-wing Ellen (the founder of the community), Jan (her winged adult daughter), Jake (Jan's pre-pubertal son), Charlie (a young man in his twenties with damaged wings), and Andy (a winged adolescent girl). Linnet and Andy's attempts to fly are unsuccessful, as no winged person has ever been light enough to achieve flight. Both girls' chafe against the restrictions of hiding from the world, but, rather than choosing to rejoin society by amputating their wings, they decide to transform society by exposing their secret metamorphoses as a minority version of appropriate development.[27]

Both novels illustrate how the careful surveillance of childhood and adolescence in Western societies is an attempt to ensure that children and adolescents progress along standard developmental pathways towards desirable adult norms. Characters' experiences of growing wings show that the threat of permanent deviation from an otherness-towards-sameness paradigm results in potential social abjection. The process of metamorphosis thus acts as a vehicle for a tenor of developmental deviance. However, the human-animal replacement bodies resulting from this deviation are themselves vehicles for a tenor of adolescent hybridity. In each novel, these hybrid bodies carry different connotations of regression or progression, leading to the expression of dissimilar ideologies of childhood, adolescence, and maturation and to significantly divergent conclusions about the necessity of conformity or nonconformity to social norms.

1. Deviant Development: Themes of Surveillance and Spectacle

i. Normative Development and Institutional Surveillance

Normative pathways of development are mapped out by professional discourses of knowledge formed by modern technologies such as medicine, science, and pedagogy (see Elias 2000 [1939]; Foucault 1977 [1975]; Armstrong 1983; Jenks 1996; James 2000; Prout

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[27] The threat or event of wing loss is a key theme of most growing-wings narratives. For example, Edmund Hamilton's "He Who Hath Wings" (1953) details a character who sprouts wings shortly after birth and later has them amputated, and wing amputation provides a powerful opening scene in the recent film, *X-Men 3: The Last Stand* (2006). Also see Coville (1997).

2000b; Aitken 2001; Howson 2004). Such technologies are characterised by processes of surveillance which collate data about individual children and adolescents, "making it possible to classify, to form categories, to determine averages, [and] to fix norms" (Foucault 1977, 190). Biophysical averages are established (such as age-linked heights, weights, and cognitive capacities), and institutional powers then use supervision, control, and correction to maintain and reinforce these developmental norms (see Piaget 1977; Armstrong 1995, 396-397; James, Jenks and Prout 1998, 7, 18; Foucault 2000, 70; Aitken 2001, 52, 75; Howson 2004, 22, 142-144). In both Brittain's and Winter's narratives, the fantastic metamorphosis of pubescent characters is a vehicle for representing the negative social consequences of adolescent deviation from such normative development. This representation begins in the texts with a focus upon the monitoring of child and adolescent development through the institutions of hospital, school, and family (Howson 2004, 142).

Western society's extensive medical surveillance of developing bodies is highlighted in Brittain's *Wings*. When protagonist Ian's physical development apparently goes awry with the onset of severe pain in his back, medical surveillance is maximized: "It seems like for the past month you've been spending most of your time in ol' [Doctor] Donovan's office," Ian's friend comments (3). Ian's many medical examinations allow for the compilation of detailed information about his body. His file is then juxtaposed with the medical profession's accumulated information about possible developmental defects, allowing for the elimination of possible pathologies. Thus, Ian tells his friend: "I already know I haven't got polio or muscular dystrophy or about a thousand other things" (3). His comment that "[m]aybe this afternoon we'll get an answer" (3) reveals his faith that the rational system of medicine will be able to appropriately normalise his development by recognising and controlling his deviance. However, Ian's development is finally deduced to be so abnormal that it falls outside the substantial body of medical knowledge: "There have been no prior cases anything like this one … It's unheard of. Yet it's happening," his doctor says (12-13).

Dispensing with the institution of the hospital, Winter's *Growing Wings* instead foregrounds the panoptic environment of the school. Within her novel's opening passages, Winter draws attention to the school's careful questioning about illnesses and the requirement of a parental note to explain absence. Teachers' reports that protagonist, Linnet, is "upset" require her to have a personal meeting with the assistant principal, whose

"voice was kind, but … eyes were clinical" (2000, 13). Linnet is aware that the assistant principal monitors her self-presentation and records whatever she says and "things she didn't say but he suspected … in her file" (13) — the sort of individual case-file that is accumulated with thousands more to create paradigms of adolescent normality and deviance (Foucault 1977, 189-193). The school's disciplinary surveillance clearly aims to produce physically and psychologically healthy youths, set on a path of 'normal' development towards healthy and productive versions of adulthood (Armstrong 1995, 396). In Linnet's case, however, the institutional surveillance of the school fails to expose the extent of her deviation from developmental norms because her mother works against the conventional connection between family and state. In an attempt to hide her daughter's possible deviant development, Linnet's mother, Sarah, has long claimed that Linnet has a "heart murmur," a physical deviancy that is somewhat socially acceptable because it is internal and invisible (Winter 2000, 9; see Grosz 1996, 56). Sarah's claim releases Linnet from engagement in physical education, which enables her to avoid the bodily inspections of her peers in the locker room. However, the family's role in monitoring adolescent development remains clear.

Winter's novel opens with a description of the way in which Linnet's mother "touch[es] Linnet's shoulder blades lightly" each night when she tucks her in, "[n]ot like a caress — more like a nurse taking a pulse or checking for swelling" (1). Because the growth of wings is a hereditary abnormality in Winter's fictional world, Sarah anticipates Linnet's deviation from paradigms of normal adolescent development and monitors her carefully. Like other families in the novel, she conceives this deviant development as something which must be hidden from the state and from the public, and has no idea of how to cope with such concealment in the long-term except through normalisation. This failure to "see any alternatives" to hiding or normalising deviancy means that families in the novel are often the source of violent strategies to standardise adolescent development (29). Thus, Sarah's wings were brutally amputated by her mother, Margaret (4), and Margaret herself talks "bitterly" of how her parents removed her wings at "eleven … before they had barely begun to exist" (30). A discussion of the negative social effects of deviant development can establish why Winter's families perceive the concealment or normalisation of their winged adolescents to be their only options.

ii. Stigma and Spoiled Identities

Foucault argues that disciplinary power punishes and corrects abnormality by removing rank or status (1977, 181), and Erving Goffman's theories of stigma and spoiled identity fully explicate how this process works in relation to non-standard physical appearance (1963). According to Goffman, physical difference may become a stigma which discredits a subject, marking him/her as shameful and reducing his/her status from that of "a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (1963, 1-4). Stigma thus results in a "spoiled identity" which diminishes individuals' social, cultural, and political status and security, reducing their "life chances" (Goffman 1963, 1-3, 5) and leading them to be "allocated a marginal status and excluded from full social acceptance" (Howson 2004, 23). Goffman adds that the spoiled identity resulting from the embodiment of stigma is communicable:

> those related through the social structure to a stigmatized individual are frequently treated as if they and the stigmatized person are one … [and] the tendency for a stigma to spread from the stigmatized individual to his close connections provides a reason why such relations tend either to be avoided or to be terminated. (1963, 30)

Psychological theories of abjection explain the reasoning behind such spreading "waves" of stigmatisation (Goffman 1963, 30). As Margrit Shildrick notes, "unusual bodily form has a long history of provoking fear, repugnance and frequently condemnation" because it invokes a sense of anxiety (2002, 53). The physically abnormal and 'abject' implicitly symbolises a disruption to identity, system, and order, and must be quarantined, normalised, or eliminated in order to maintain social ideals (Wilson 2001, 28; Cranny-Francis et al. 2003, 217).

An exploration of the family as an institution of surveillance and normalisation in Brittain's novel illustrates the ways in which developmental deviation signifies a stigma which is feared to be infectious. Doctor Donovan explains to Ian's family that "there's no need to isolate the boy. His problem certainly isn't contagious" (1995, 30), but Ian's family are intensely aware of the way in which Ian's abnormality has spoiled his identity and threatens to spoil their own. They thus segregate him from the family body, telling him: "[a]s long as you have this … sickness, you'll keep to your own room" (19). Ian's

protestations that he is "not sick" are ignored because his family feel that not being "*normal*" signifies a deviance which is automatically pathological (19). The combined psychological and social reasons for their segregation of Ian are evident in their different reactions to his wings. Ian's mother tells him to "be careful not to touch" her with his wings, afraid of actual contact with these abject appendages (25), while his older sister declares: "[i]f any of my friends ever see those ugly things, I'll just die!" (24). As a banker with political ambitions, Ian's father immediately perceives that having a physically abject son will ruin his chances to enter the 'clean and proper body' of government. As Mary Douglas has outlined, the social or political body may be symbolically aligned with the human form and so subjected to forms of boundary abjection (1966, 115-122). Desperate to succeed in office, Ian's father thus laments that "[t]hey'll want somebody normal down at city hall. And there's nothing normal about having a kid with wings" (1995, 18).

This fear of stigma and spoiled identities is implicitly behind the behaviour of families who hide or forcibly normalise their winged members in Winter's *Growing Wings*. These families clearly assume that the wider world will not be able to abide the presence of a winged adolescent's corporeal deviation from normative development. The violent normalisation they enact upon their adolescent members is metonymic of the social punishment or abjection they fear winged adolescents (and their families) would face if their difference were to become public knowledge. Alexandra Howson writes that "all members of society are aware of what constitutes biophysical normality and how deviation from such norms is negatively valued" (2004, 25) because it "has the potential to socially discredit someone and mark him or her as less than human" (2004, 24). The fantastic growth of animal-like wings conveys this sense with metaphorical power, and Linnet is depicted as very aware that her difference from "normals" may lead to painful forms of social abjection (Goffman 1963, 3).

Goffman outlines how such social abjection can be avoided, however, by managing stigma so that its visibility is decreased or completely elided (1963, 48-51). The gaze becomes metonymical for knowledge, and the "information control" signified by concealment allows an individual to 'pass' as normal (Goffman 1963, 41-49, 74-97; Howson 2004, 24-25). Wing binding is therefore a common practice in Winter's fictional world, but wings cannot be hidden permanently without suffering damage, and there is always the possibility with such concealment that "corporeal information may 'leak out'

into an encounter and discredit the person" (Howson 2004, 25). Once Linnet's wings grow

so large that they cannot be safely hidden, she retreats to Ellen's isolated home in the

mountains, aware that the wider world is a place of constant surveillance, not merely by

those in official positions of power, but also by the many subjects occupying positions

lateral to her own, such as her school peers (Foucault 1977, 176). However, because she

chooses a prolonged and more intensive concealment over normalisation, Linnet continues

to inhabit a vulnerable and threatened subject position in which the gaze of others is to be

feared as a "kiss of death" (Winter 2000, 9).

iii. Scopophobia: The Fear of Becoming a Negative Spectacle

'Scopophobia' is literally 'a fear of being looked at or seen'. While it may be

defined medically as an "unwarranted" or "irrational" fear, in this context it can be

understood as a logical fear that the embodiment of difference will result in social

abjection.[28] Partially stemming from internalised shame and guilt about failure to meet

anticipated ideals or norms of appearance, scopophobia particularly manifests anxiety

about being punished or ostracised by society for visible bodily difference. Such anxiety

has been suggested by some research to be a general characteristic of adolescence.

Adolescence is an era of intensified expectations of public display, combined with frequent

peer and adult commentaries about bodily changes, and it is sometimes conceived as a

stage of heightened self-consciousness (Coleman and Hendry 1999, 56; Archibald et al.

2003, 35; Howson 2004, 22). Many theorists, however, restrict constructs of childhood or

adolescent scopophobia to deviant developmental issues such as low self-esteem or

physical difference (Wildermuth 1990, 259; James 2000, 27). The research of sociologist

Allison James, for example, illustrates "the potential for an emerging acute self-

consciousness" for those children "whose bodies differ from the norm" (2000, 27). This

self-consciousness is engendered by peer habits of surveillance and spectacle:

> Through noting and remarking upon differences between one body

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[28] For medical definitions of scopophobia as a "persistent, abnormal, and unwarranted fear of being seen or stared at, despite the understanding by the phobic individual and reassurance by others that there is no danger" see Change That's Right Now™ (http://www.changethatsrightnow.com/problem_detail.asp? SDID=632:1832) (accessed 9 March 2007) and Farlex, Inc (http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/ scopophobia) (accessed 9 March 2007).

and another and through having their own bodies singled out, children

learn to distinguish between … normal and different bodies.

(James 2000, 27-28; also see James 1993, 66)

An understanding of surveillance and spectacle as integrated methods of disciplinary power in contemporary society appears to counter Michel Foucault's account of modern power configurations. Foucault stresses the importance of surveillance in modern society and relegates the corrective power of spectacle to antiquity (1977, 129, 216). Kevin Vinson argues that he probably misread the importance of spectacle in the modern world because his early theorising on modern forms of power was published before the contemporary escalation of "personal media technology" (2006, 31, 33-34). Vinson draws attention to the works of theorists such as Guy Debord (1990, 1995) who have highlighted the continuing importance of spectacle in contemporary times (2006, 33-34). He rejects Jean Baudrillard's (1994) assertion that surveillance and spectacle are passé, and emphasises that contemporary Western societies have "a regulatory and monitorial system of surveillance and spectacle that induces certain conformative and power-laden modes of both thinking and activity" (Vinson 2006, 35-7, 42). The positive spectacle of the few who wholly conform to an ideal, and the negative spectacle of those who transgress an anticipated norm, together locate and maintain the parameters of normality, so that spectacle works with surveillance to encourage adherence to normative 'rules' of behaviour and appearance (Vinson 2006, 42).

In contemporary culture this is particularly evident in the ideal of the hairless female body. This exemplary body is continually represented as a positive spectacle in media and advertising, so that women are encouraged to conform to this body as normative (Bartky 1988; Cranny-Francis et al. 2003, 198; Howson 2004, 104-106). This 'encouragement' becomes compulsory when it is reinforced by the disciplinary surveillance of others' gazes, a surveillance which is frequently internalised and strengthened by a fear of punishment and correction in the form of negative spectacle (Howson 2005, 77-78). When surveillance uncovers a subject who fails to conform to the predominant ideal of normality, he/she is made into a negative spectacle as a warning to others. The media furor over Julia Roberts' display of underarm hair at the *Notting Hill* premier in 1999 is a perfect example of this (Middleton 2004).

In both Brittain's and Winter's growing-wings novels, the exercise of disciplinary power through a combined surveillance and spectacle, and the deviant's consequential fear of being seen, are evident within two primary sub-motifs: freakery and the "lurking" or "snooping reporter" (Winter 2000, 93; Brittain 1995, 1). Much freak discourse emphasises the constructedness of freakery through staging and "stylized, highly embellished narratives," but those with abnormal bodies may find themselves unwillingly slotted into categories of freakery (R. Thomson 1996b, 7). In Brittain's novel, it is Ian's mother who first mentions the word "freak" in relation to his transformation (14), but Ian already possesses implicit social knowledge about bodily nonconformity and has internalised a surveillance gaze so that he shares a desire to meet developmental norms and similarly fears that he is "turning into a freak, like the ones in the circus" (Brittain 1995, 16; see Foucault 1977, 128-9, 183; Goffman 1963, 32-33; Howson 2004, 24-5). Ian's experience of abnormal transformation thus quickly prompts him to objectify his own body.

Alexandra Howson notes that although most people experience their bodies as a major part of their sense of self, the body can become an object for both self and others through various processes and events that cause phenomenological disruption, such as injury or sickness (2004, 36, 57; also see Goffman 1963, 7). Looking into a mirror for the first time after his transformation is therefore horrifying for Ian, and he views himself from a detached, objectifying subject position, perceiving himself as a "monstrous thing" (Brittain 1995, 22). He faces similar objectification from his peers at school, who now see him as "another weirdo" and a "class freak" to rival the six-fingered Anita (41). After a morning of his classmates "sneaking peeks at [him]" and "tittering behind their hands," Ian is overwhelmed with scopophobia and reluctant "to leave the room and have a bunch of strangers seeing" him (43). Leaving school that afternoon, he is embarrassed at the idea that "all the folks in town" might see his wings, and hides under a cover in the back of Miz Pickens' truck to avoid the public gaze (55).

In Winter's novel, Linnet and Andy similarly avoid being seen because they fear that dominant Western body idioms and interpretive frameworks will lead others to interpret their deviant bodies as 'freakish' objects. They doubt whether others will "claim [them] as humans" (Winter 2000, 88) and envision making media headlines as "FREAKS THAT FLY," "MUTANTS IN MONTANA," and "WINGED WEIRDOS" (110). Andy's own mother tries to sell her to the circus and Andy consequently calls herself a "real freak"

(105), but Linnet tells Andy that she actually looks like a "black swan" and teases her to "[g]o join a zoo or something" (105). The freak theme's connection to circus and zoo motifs arouses empathy for humans and animals kept as the objects of spectacle. In the wake of her growth of wings, Linnet understands why her "mother hated zoos. She said they were awful for the animals — to be there just to be stared at" (106). Mary Midgley has written of how "[b]eing stared at produces horror widely" in both humans and animals, and she suggests that "[t]hose stared at often feel as much attacked as if they had been actually abused or hit" (1995, 10, 12). The alignment of the freak, circus, and zoo motifs in these growing-wings stories also draws attention to the blurred species boundaries manifested by winged humans and illustrates how easily they can be slotted into the category of other hybrid 'freaks' such as hermaphrodites, 'wild bodies', and 'pygmies', all "double creature[s]" who have in the past been constructed as "neither fully animal or human" and who have been consequentially examined, scrutinised, and displayed before 'normals' as objects which are alien, strange, and other (Fudge et al. 1999, 6).

Such implications are echoed in the second major sub-motif relating to scopophobia in both novels, the lurking or snooping reporter. The representation of an invasive media presence in both growing-wings narratives illustrates how surveillance threatens to punish in the form of negative spectacle when the abnormal is detected by the disciplinary gaze. Reporters' intrusive eyes and their all-seeing photographic lenses thus require the abnormally winged to conceal themselves in fear of being seen. The objectifying effect of photographic specularisation is evident in the metaphorical resonance between discourses of photography and hunting, inherent in both the 'shooting' of an object and the stalking behaviour of tabloid reporters. In Brittain's narrative this is apparent in the way in which reporters are repeatedly described in negative animalistic terms, as a "mob" (39, 56), a "swarm" (56), and a "herd" (57) who enact "vulture"-ish (56) attempts to see and know. Miz Pickens tells Ian that "they'd likely stomp you right into the ground, just to get something to write for their newspapers" (57). Their aggressiveness is highlighted: "television cameras were *pointed* … microphones were *thrust*" (56, my emphases). They invade the private space of the Carras residence, hustling Ian's father, "blocking" (56) his escape route, and leaving him "trapped" (56) and at the mercy of their intrusive gaze and questions. In Winter's narrative, snooping reporters are less aggressive but just as invasive. Winter's winged characters are forced to hide in their mountain house when tabloid

reporters come to the mountains in search of the source of rumours of "freaks with wings" (87-88), and when the media's spying brings them inside the walls of Ellen's retreat, the winged residents have to hide in Ellen's darkroom in order to (ironically!) avoid negative exposure.

The tabloid reporters in both Brittain's and Winter's stories are deemed to be in search of knowledge they can sensationalise to provide the public with the bonding experience of the shared perusal of otherness (R. Thomson 1996b, 4-5, 10). In Brittain's narrative, such reporters are described as "always on the lookout for stories with a bizarre slant" (1995, 34), and Winter highlights how such reporters habitually provide trashy misinformation about "Elvis sightings and UFOs" (2000, 87). Brittain's reporters also function, however, in a role of surveillance and control as a moral guard for normal society, as the first reporter to approach Ian's family is symbolically from the "Silver City *Sentinel*" (1995, 34). The photographic eye of the reporter thus represents the curious gaze of non-deviant, 'normal' people, and tabloid information-gathering signifies the clash between the American constitutional "right not to be disturbed" and the public's right to knowledge, which is an attempt to gain reassuring power over the abnormal (Brittain 1995, 80; Vinson 2006 40).

Narratives of the metamorphic growth of wings thus allow for an intensive exploration of the perceived social effects of deviation from normative paradigms. They highlight the threat of stigma and spoiled identities and outline consequential fears of being seen. However, while the process of fantastic metamorphosis in these novels acts as a vehicle for a tenor of deviant development, this motif metaphor has a second significance, in that the replacement body produced by the metamorphic growth of wings is also a fantastic vehicle for a tenor of adolescent hybridity. This dual significance means that endorsements of the acceptance or rejection of deviant development have symbolic implications for ideologies of childhood, adolescence, and maturation.

2. Hybrid Bodies: Metaphors of Regression or Progression

Both *Wings* and *Growing Wings* revolve around the question of whether deviant development should be normalised. Because the winged replacement body produced by deviant development is a vehicle for a tenor of adolescent hybridity as well as abnormal

embodiment, the issue of normalisation is linked to the perceived place of child and adolescent qualities within a developmental paradigm. Adolescent hybridity is temporary by definition because adolescence is conceived as a transitory stage that is always provisional. However, in Brittain's and Winter's texts the trajectory of adolescent hybridity is dependent upon whether the metamorphic growth of wings at puberty signifies regression or progression. In both narratives, wings represent childhood and adolescent qualities. In *Wings,* this signals a regression because it is considered necessary to reject childhood and adolescence in order to gain a normative adulthood. Comparatively, in *Growing Wings,* these early life-stages are fruitfully incorporated into a broadened version of adulthood, and the metamorphic hybridity of the winged replacement body is thus progressive. The question of normalisation therefore invokes significant ideologies about maturation and the necessity of conformity or nonconformity to bodily and cultural norms.

i. Regressive Hybridity and Progressive Conformity: Rejecting Childhood and Adolescence

In Brittain's *Wings*, normalisation is presented as the best solution to deviant development and its consequences of objectification and social abjection. With wings, Ian can never live a 'normal' life, enjoying the anonymity available to those who conform to surveillance expectations; his body will be conspicuous wherever he travels, distinct to the public eye: "[t]he awful wings would mark me as something not quite human, wherever I was" (1995, 17). If Ian is normalised into an acceptable individual the public gaze will lose its threatening quality and become approving or unseeing, glossing over Ian's form as one standard body among many. David Couzens Hoy notes that individuals are generally "complicit in the process of their self-formation and they learn to normalize themselves" (1999, 8). His statement builds upon Foucault's assertion that a disciplinary coercion, constraint, and subjection to habits, rules, and orders causes individuals to internalise a surveillance gaze and participate in their own subjection to norms (Foucault 1977, 128-29). In order to become an acceptable and productive member of adult society, Ian actively decides to conform to social constructions of normality. He agrees to the surgical amputation of his wings, submitting himself to what Foucault calls "the technico-medical model of cure and normalization" (1977, 248). This resolution carries a substantial ideological message about the necessity of conformity in American culture. The

'appropriateness' of a choice to conform is conveyed by the alignment of particular ideologies of childhood and adolescence with the elements of Ian's metamorphosis.

The metaphorical implications of Ian's metamorphosis illustrate that his deviation from normative developmental pathways threatens an undesirable state of permanent adolescent otherness. His hybrid, winged replacement body is a liminal and potentially abject adolescent body. The measure of the abject embodied in Ian's new form is evident in his "horrified and fascinated" response to his transformed body (Brittain 1995, 24; see Kristeva 1982, 2; Grosz 1990a, 89, 94) and in the wings that align his human form with the body of "a giant bat, or some flying reptile long extinct" (Brittain 1995, 23). Bats have long been culturally abhorred because of their "ambiguous nature," which blurs the boundaries between rodents and birds, and their wings have been considered an "infernal attribute" (Cirlot 1962, 22). Ian's bat-like wings are certainly described in abject terms, as too much of the physical interior is visible externally on these appendages, muddying important borders of inside/outside and subject/object: his wings are formed by palpable "*bony* rods" and "[t]his *skeleton* framework was covered with a *membrane* … so thin as to be almost *transparent*" (23, my emphases).

Corresponding to constructions of adolescence as a pendulous transition, with progressive movements towards adulthood accompanied by regressive movements towards childhood (see Blos 1967), Ian's metamorphosis into a hybrid adolescent state combines adult and child-like qualities. His wings are potential markers of adulthood because they pubertal sexual development and act as a source of agency — having discovered flight, Ian thinks of his wings as a foundation of adult-like power, providing and signifying "the glory of having control of [his] own life" (125). However, the ideologies of the text powerfully align Ian's growth of wings with cultural facets of childhood, allowing his metamorphosis to symbolise an eleventh hour movement towards childhood and thus the socially threatening possibility of an escape from growing up. This threat is mostly emphasised through the access Ian's wings provide to a corporeal-based transcendent play constructed as inappropriate for a functional adult future.

Allison James, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout argue that "[a]long the historical trajectory of Western societies the binarism of the work/play distinction became progressively mapped on to the adult/child dichotomy" and the "status identity" of children and adults became based upon conceptions of childhood as play and adulthood as work

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(1998, 90). Ian's father, Lester Carras, believes that Ian's corporeal difference renders him unwilling to take up adult work. He fears that because Ian has grown wings, he will choose to spend his "whole life zooming around like a bird" (123), escaping into a child-like, animalistic freedom from capitalist employment. Alexandra Howson notes that assumptions about normal bodies are underpinned by assumptions about the physical requirements for economic productivity (2004, 26). Bodies that are 'deviant' signify chaos and undermine the established capitalist system based upon docile, industrious bodies capable of taking up productive roles in the adult community. Lester thus also considers Ian's embodiment to render him *unable* to work as an adult subject, leaving him as vulnerable to exploitation and objectification as a prey animal before predators:

> You'll stand out wherever you go, like a canary at a gathering of cats. Oh, I can hear it now: 'There goes Ian Carras. Yeah, that's right, the one with the wings.' A job? Forget it. The only place you'd work would be in a freak show. (123)

Ian's bat-like appearance perhaps has vampiric connotations in this respect, implying that, because he is unable to work for a living, he will have to live in a parasitic, child-like dependency, reliant on others' productive aid (Aitken 2001, 7). Even Miz Pickens, who encourages Ian to value his deviant development, insists that his access to the transcendent freedom of flight should be a carefully monitored and scheduled form of play, suggesting that she, too, has concerns about guiding Ian into an appropriately productive adulthood. She insists that Ian always be monitored when flying, that he limit his flying to "[o]ne flight a day," and that he participate in household chores:

> There's work to be done around here, and I'll expect you to help with it. Having wings is a rare and wonderful thing, Ian, but you'd best learn right away that there's more to life than playing like you're a bird. (118)

Because he can fly, Ian is attributed with animal qualities and limited to a child's subject position as an object of adult supervision.

Although J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904) and *Peter Pan and Wendy* (1911) would seem to be obvious intertextual backgrounds to this concept of flight as play and eternal childhood, intertextual allusions to the myth of Icarus are instrumental to Brittain's

articulation of this ideology. By naming his protagonist 'Ian Carras', Brittain clearly intends to evoke the tale of Icarus, whose father, Daedalus, constructs two sets of feathered wings to enable their escape from imprisonment on the island of Crete. Daedalus uses his wings to reach a socially and economically productive future in the wider world, but Icarus fails to focus on escape and becomes absorbed in the joys of flight. Flying too close to the sun, his wax-glued wings fall apart and he tumbles to his death in the sea (March 1998, 123-124, 212). Icarus's fatal surrender to the transcendence of flight is often read as a lesson about the dangers of pride (Stephens and McCallum 1998, 69-76; Neaman 2005, 298-299). However, in the context of Brittain's narrative, Icarus's absorption in flight seems to be more readily interpretable as a carefree and child-like involvement in play, demonstrating a lack of adult wisdom and responsibility. With this narrative as intertext, Brittain implies that if Ian were to retain his wings, he would remain too tempted by transcendent forms of play to give proper attention to adult forms of work. This escape from normative adulthood would figure a symbolic death.

According to Brittain's ideologies of childhood as bodily play and adulthood as valuable work, firm divisions necessarily exist between childhood and adulthood and Ian can only grow up by rejecting his childhood qualities and abjecting his wings. His decision to normalise his deviant development and abnormal embodiment is thus imbued with a sense of 'rightness' because his wings are metaphorically regressive and it is only through conformity that he can progress, moving into adulthood by leaving behind childhood otherness and adolescent hybridity. Ian's decision is therefore endorsed by its enactment of typical logocentric and phallocentric ideologies of maturation as a loss or elimination of childhood. Attaining adulthood in the contemporary world represented by Brittain involves painful but necessary compromises and abjections, signifying entry into a world which is 'fallen', in the spiritual and literal sense, in that childhood and adolescent transcendence (flight) is impossible. Karen Coats writes of how

> the modernist subject operates under a sacrificial logic of abjection.
> The subject must abject, that is, define and exclude, those things
> which threaten it and must build strong defenses against their return.
> She must take up a position with respect to difference and learn what
> her culture values as ideal in terms of bodies and behaviors. (2004, 8)

Subjects must thus reject qualities which threaten their social status.

In terms of maturation, this sacrificial logic often specifically requires a complete severance from childhood origins, spaces, qualities, and traits. As Roderick McGillis has noted, "the child is that from which we come and from which we tear ourselves away" (1996a, 18). Following Freud, who articulated the idea that adult "society is achieved at some definite cost to the individual, namely a loss of freedom or happiness" (Turner 1992, 178), Lacan wrote of the symbolic castration all subjects must suffer to enter the Symbolic (1977a), that is, the loss of corporeal *jouissance* with the entry into language and social laws (see **Chapter Five**). Growing up for Ian literally requires a pound of flesh, which represents his sacrifice of childhood bodily experience in order to access adult society. Significantly, intersubjective relationships with family and friends, and the potential development of heterosexual romantic love, appear to function as consolation prizes for the loss of childhood potentiality and adolescent hybridity. In the aftermath of his operation, Ian thinks he might regret his normalisation in future years, but he muses: "I would never be alone with my thoughts and misgivings … and my grief. For on the hand that gently gripped mine were six fingers" (1995, 135).

A male choice for companionship and intersubjectivity rather than isolated independence may be a constructive revision of the gendered patterns of *Bildungsroman* and *Kunstlerroman,* which typically imply that male identity is based on individualism and separateness and female identity is based on connectivity and caring (Trites 1997, 63-64, 68). However, Brittain's resolution may still contain negatively gendered ideologies, because it appears that males are required to conform more fully to normative standards than females in order to stake their place in society. Like Ian, Anita Pickens has the option of removing an additional appendage in order to fit into society, yet she chooses to keep her extra finger. Lacanian analyst, Carmela Levy-Stokes, suggests that "[e]very woman must pass, like man, through the signifier. However, not all of woman is subjected to the signifier" (2001, 105). Ian is thus represented as more subject to the phallic law of castration than Anita, and she can continue to enjoy the *jouissance* of bodily difference during her adulthood, whereas Ian cannot.

There is, further, a classist inference to this comparison. As members of the middle-class, Ian's family are situated in a township and involved in bourgeois politics. Comparatively, the Pickens live in an isolated mountain cabin which has "never known a

coat of paint" and lacks amenities such as running water and an indoor toilet (1995, 61-2). The Pickens' propensity for positive forms of violence, particularly in support of their constitutional rights, and their association with the powerful blue-collar logging company links them to the proletariat. Anita is described as wearing "ill-fitting homemade dresses and scuffed sandals, even in the winter," and the social ostracism she faces as "the class freak" is implicitly linked to her class-based bodily appearance as well as to her six fingers (41). The Pickens' support for Ian's deviant embodiment and Anita's decision to retain her finger thus aligns them with ideologies by which the 'lower' classes are perceived as more intensely and 'naturally' embodied than the disembodied middle-class (Morgan 1993, 82; Cranny-Francis 1995, 7, 66-87; Cassuto 1995).

Nevertheless, by focalising through Ian, Brittain's novel supports the perceived necessity of abandoning childhood and adolescent otherness in favour of adult sameness and endorses the process of normalising the self to fit social expectations. While a deviant development is shown to offer considerable rewards, the possibility of living "a normal life" is valorised as the best option if there is a choice (Brittain 1995, 38). This bears negative ideological messages for those readers who are corporeally different from the constructed dominant 'norm' and reaffirms the supposed 'otherness' of childhood and adolescence, entailing a binaristic and hierarchical difference between childhood and adulthood.

ii. Progressive Hybridity and Progressive Nonconformity: Integrating Child and Adolescent Qualities with Adulthood

In contrast, in Winter's *Growing Wings* the hybrid, winged body produced by fantastic metamorphosis signifies progression because its metaphorical links to childhood and adolescence are represented as desirable and able to be acceptably and productively incorporated into adulthood. Winter's winged adolescent characters reject the possibility of normalisation and instead demand that society widen the parameters of normative development and adulthood to encompass them. By taking control of their own surveillance and spectacle, these adolescents aim to alter society constructively by transforming definitions of normality.

The adolescent hybridity signified by the winged human body is conceptualised in

Winter's narrative as a desirable embodiment which can be recognised as such through positive spectacle. While Ian's bat-winged body is constructed as abject in Brittain's *Wings*, Winter's characters are linked to an ennobled animal species, the swan (2000, 105), and their feathery wings are beautiful according to intertextual connotations of angelic splendour. Additionally, their hybrid bodies become metaphors for the desirability of youth, and Winter recognises the ways in which adult society may covet adolescent hybridity (Spacks 1981), something well-illustrated in the twentieth century's appropriation of youth for an adult consumer market (Frank 1997; Brooks 2003). Karen Brooks notes that society makes a positive spectacle of youth because it finds it interesting and desirable (2003, 1), and this idea is evident in Linnet's admiration of Andy. Linnet believes that

> [e]ven without wings, a tall, dark girl with red-gold hair and a prickly
> personality was interesting. Add the wings and Andy could get
> interviewed by anyone she wanted. Late-night talk shows. Prime-
> time news. Any magazine in the country. Or all of the above.
>
> (Winter 2000, 110)

Whereas, in Brittain's narrative, adolescent hybridity has to be rejected in order to achieve adulthood because its child-like qualities resist economic productivity, here adolescent hybridity is presented as a source of symbolic capital. Such capital might enable winged youths to develop constructive relationships with reputable varieties of the media, such as *Oprah* (107), and may also afford them careers as "models," "rock stars," or "MTV" presenters, all roles which require performance as a desirable spectacle (154). The novel's recurring image of "reporters constantly circling around like sharks" thus gains a paparazzi connotation, suggestive of the scopophilic tendencies of contemporary Western societies (154). Winter's persistent focus on characters' longing for flight further implies that the non-winged might envy rather than reject winged humans.

Unlike in Brittain's narrative, in which easily-achieved flight signifies regressive childhood play, in Winter's story the potential for flight symbolises a possible adult form of transcendence. Significantly, however, this transcendence may only be achieved by adults who retain certain child-like and adolescent qualities. Because the growth of wings is not accompanied by a loss of bone density (as in Brittain's *Wings*), the ideal winged body in *Growing Wings* belongs to the winged human who is "small for their age" (2000, 38). This

ideal reverses normal developmental expectations, as the movement towards adulthood is usually signified by increasing size and height, and such are often markers of superiority. Allison James writes of how developing height frequently registers the present social status of a child and "provides a literal yardstick for a child's status as a future adult" (2000, 29; also 1993, 113). Being small for one's age is correspondingly usually a symbol of social inferiority and regressive links to childhood (James 2000, 29). Because of the inversion in Winter's narrative, by which a small body is desired as superior, Winter's winged characters aim for an adulthood which retains a smallness linked to childhood and a continuing hybridity linked to adolescence.

This valorisation of smallness is not uncommon in contemporary Western cultures in relation to the female gender, however, as the commodification of youth (and particularly the idealisation of the (pre-)pubescent, slender female body in modelling) shows. As in real Western societies, in Winter's text this ideal is problematic because those with bodies unsuited to this developmental ideal must engage in "body work" to achieve it (Featherstone 1982, 82). This leads to the novel's dubious endorsement of behaviour which closely matches the eating disorder of anorexia. The tall and big-boned Andy monitors her diet rigorously in order to attain an ideal body weight unsuited to her frame. The text supports her attempts by giving an authoritative finality to Jan's dismissal of others' concerns about Andy's eating habits: "She's not anorexic or bulimic — just highly disciplined and overly optimistic. She overdoes it sometimes, but she's not stupid and she's not sick" (2000, 50-51).

Additionally, Winter avoids dealing with the problematic implications of her ideal winged body for male characters, whose attainment of this ideal would place them in opposition to prevalent social models of muscular masculinity (Mishkind et al. 1987). Rather than representing male characters with alternative masculinities which value the embodiment of smallness, Winter delineates only one male adult with wings, Charlie, whose potential for flight, and thus his need to acquire a slim, small form, has been taken out of his hands because his wings have been mutilated by binding. Winter's evasion here is compounded by her emphasis upon Charlie's desirability due to his "athletic form" (102), which he gains in part by working with "weights" (64), illustrating a typical conformity to hegemonic ideals of muscularity. Furthermore, her depiction of the pre-pubertal Jake's answer to the dilemma of the ideal winged body is quite opposite to Andy's attempts to

submit herself to the idealised form. In a typically phallic statement, Jake says, "I'm not going to be small for my age … I'll just have enormous wings instead" (38).

What Jake's comment and Andy's dieting illustrate, however, is Winter's emphasis that children and adolescents possess the potential to become what they desire and achieve their dreams. She intimates that they may do so by guiding their own development, modifying the trajectory of their bodies' unfinished growth using cultural interventions. In contrast to Brittain's narrative, in which cultural intervention serves only to normalise, Winter's narrative contrastingly conceives cultural intervention as something which can assist adolescents in their deviant development towards an abnormal but progressive type of adulthood. Conveying an ideology which constructs child and adolescent bodies as more mutable than those of adults, Winter suggests that this intervention needs to begin early in life. Those adolescent characters who have had their wings mutilated or amputated have absolutely lost the potential to fly, but so, it is believed, have unharmed winged adults such as Jan, who have finished growing yet were unable to guide their development into the valued version of deviant (small) adulthood. Ellen's photographic chronicle of Jan's development thus records unfulfilled potential and dashed hopes. Stroking a photograph of an adolescent Jan, Ellen remarks, "wistfully", "[w]e thought she'd be able to fly" (62). In contrast, developing adolescent bodies are perceived to still have potential in that their development might be guided into a form which can achieve flight.

Winter's winged adolescent characters thus look to the intervention of cultural knowledge and technology to assist them in their efforts to attain an ideal adult embodiment. Linnet and Andy's efforts to train their bodies in how to achieve flight require self-regulation and self-surveillance, which overtly indicates faith in positive rational intervention. Both Andy, through her "careful diet and strenuous exercise regime" (39), and Linnet, through her search for knowledge on the internet (10) and in books (54), attempt to find medical and scientific regimes of knowledge which will help them achieve their youthful potential. Linnet's insatiable curiosity about her deviant body guarantees that she will find the idea of WingNet, a secret international network of winged and cut-wing people, exciting. Ellen says the network "probably know everything" (189) and they may possibly have gathered enough specialist knowledge about winged people to assist in guiding youth development towards an ideal deviant embodiment. Certainly, Linnet hopes to learn from other "[p]eople who had experimented with different flying techniques"

(195), and her decision to expose herself to the wider world offers the possibility of access to further epistemological resources. Whereas Andy attempts to achieve flight through the control and regulation of her body, Linnet is more interested in supplementing her winged body, and her idea to use helium balloons to boost flight capacity suggests an acceptance of 'cyborg' or 'posthuman' technological intervention. Moreover, her helium idea is triggered by her reading of *Winnie the Pooh*, which reinforces the text's progressive metaphors of childhood and adolescence, suggesting that it is not just the post-pubertal retention of a child-like body which offers the chance for flight, but imaginative capacities linked to childhood (2000, 99).

The hybridity of Winter's winged replacement bodies is thus conceived as progressive, an advancement which is conveyed symbolically through the possibility that the potentiality of youth might bring about a utopian-like transformation of society. In *Wings*, Ian's choice for normalisation entails that society is fixed as it is and deviant adolescents must adjust themselves to fit into that reality, whereas Linnet and Andy's refusal of normalisation in *Growing Wings* implies that society is open to positive change and an expanding definition of normality. This inference is communicated by the text's transformation of both surveillance and spectacle into constructive tools rather than hazards. For instance, while Ellen's photographic record of the development of the winged residents of her home initially makes Linnet uncomfortable, it can finally be understood as an attempt to transform a form of deviant development into merely one more 'normal' pathway into an acceptable adulthood.

Initially, Linnet likens her experience of being filmed by Ellen to that of "having a mug shot taken" (63). The winged subject being recorded by Ellen's camera is apparently accorded a disempowered, objectified subject position, and cut-wing Ellen is placed in a role of power as a disembodied "subject who knows" (Foucault 1977, 26-27; cf. Cranny-Francis et al. 2003, 179-187). Correspondingly, "[i]t gave Linnet an odd feeling" to look at pictures of Jan's growing wings. "It seemed like spying, like violating a trust" (62). The "harshness to [Ellen's] voice" as she comments that WingNet "were always big on scientific tests" implies that this organisation may be guilty of a similar objectification of their winged subjects (189). However, as Andy states, all winged humans will be perceived as "freaks until having wings is just one more normal way to be, like having red hair or brown eyes" (169). The work of both Ellen and WingNet thus signifies a

compilation of information about winged adolescents which may eventually render ordinary this deviant developmental pattern.

Additionally, photographs of Andy spread-eagled on a rock and of Linnet communing with wild deer display winged adolescents in the form of positive spectacles. These photos allow Linnet to see herself through objective eyes and to realise that she is "not very scary," that is, not a freak but an accepted and acceptable part of the natural world (67). Ellen also encourages Linnet to become a photographer herself, which enables Linnet to develop a sense of agency and personal control over spectacle. An awareness of the affirmative possibilities of self-controlled spectacle is at the root of Linnet and Andy's concluding decision to display their physical difference to the world. Winged people, such as Ellen's adult daughter, Jan, have long been "tempted to … try living with wings in the real world" (40), but no-one has been willing to become the first public spectacle of winged embodiment. Andy realises that becoming equal is "never going to happen unless somebody takes the risk" of exposing themselves to potentially negative social reactions (169). She and Linnet intend to manage their initial exposure to the world in a way which will convey a positive rather than negative spectacle of winged embodiment. In doing so, they hope to attain a "political visibility" which will free present and future generations of winged adolescents from scopophobia and normalisation (Howson 2004, 27; see Goffman 1963, 114). Images of youths as beings of metamorphic potential are thus combined with positive metaphors of flight as progress and transcendence, which allows 'child' and 'adolescent' aspects of the self to be retained as ameliorating qualities for the adult world.

Explicit intertextual references to Barrie's *Peter Pan and Wendy* (1911) endorse this ideology, although Winter's use of *Peter Pan* is unconventional.[29] While *Peter Pan* is usually regarded as conveying a nostalgic concept of an eternal childhood, Winter incorporates *Peter Pan* throughout her novel in a way which aligns its images of childhood flight with a productive struggle to achieve an unconventional form of adulthood. The use of quotes from *Peter Pan and Wendy* to begin certain chapters is nowhere more significant than in the final chapter, which commences with this epigraph:

> Of course in the end Wendy let them fly away together. Our last

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[29] J. M. Barrie's play, *Peter Pan* (1904), was followed by a novelisation entitled *Peter Pan and Wendy* (1911). Winter incorporates quotes from the novel but she refers to the novel as *Peter Pan*. This is not an uncommon action as republications of *Peter Pan and Wendy* are often simply titled *Peter Pan*.

> glimpse of her shows her at the window, watching them receding into
>
> the sky until they were as small as stars.
>
> (Winter 2000, 187, quoting Barrie [1911] 1993, 267)

These words mark a conclusion in which Linnet and Andy are preparing to 'fly away together' into the public adult world, not into an escapist childhood. While, in *Peter Pan*, characters such as Wendy can have carefree childhood years but must eventually grow up and put childhood flight behind them, Winter's winged adolescents reject both the segregation assigned to childhood and the abjection of childhood qualities required of conventional maturation. Instead of conforming to social and biological norms, her adolescent characters positively integrate childhood and adolescent qualities with adulthood and attempt to attain a progressive, alternative form of maturity in which flight might be possible.

Conclusion

An analysis of the metamorphic growth of wings at puberty therefore offers substantial insights into certain Western ideologies of adolescent development and hybridity. The growth of wings may be a metaphorical vehicle for a tenor of deviant development, and analysing this motif metaphor therefore allows for an exploration of ideas about the surveillance of youth development and the negative personal and social consequences of permanent deviation from trajectories towards normative adulthood. The animal-human winged replacement body that is produced by this metamorphosis may in turn be a vehicle for a tenor of deviant embodiment *and* adolescent hybridity, so that the question of whether to normalise this winged body becomes a metaphor for reservations about the place of supposed child and adolescent qualities in maturation and adulthood.

Metaphorically, Bill Brittain's *Wings* (1991) conveys ideologies of conformity which reinforce binaristic constructions of childhood and adulthood and stress the superiority of a bounded, adult self. In contrast, Laurel Winter's *Growing Wings* (2000) clearly rejects normalisation and attempts to redefine the parameters of normality in a way which allows for the incorporation of 'child' and 'adolescent' qualities into an acceptable form of adulthood. Whereas Brittain's narrative thus asserts ideologies of surveillance and spectacle as oppressive but necessary forms of disciplinary power, Winter's narrative

suggests that spectacle and surveillance can subdue difference but can also be used constructively to transform Western culture in positive ways.

CHAPTER THREE.

Tenors of Maturation:

Developing Powers and Changing Identities

As I suggested at the beginning of **Chapter Two**, a narrative alignment of fantastic metamorphosis with adolescence may metaphorically signify processes of maturation. There are many different tenors which may be conveyed, as maturation is a broad concept, attracting many different ideologies. In this chapter, I have selected two basic tenors of maturation conveyed by the metamorphosis motif — the development of adult materiality and power, and the achievement of an adult identity.

I explore the first of these by examining a specific motif metaphor in which the metamorphic acquisition of a powerful, predatory body at puberty represents 'the development of adult physical power' or 'adolescent growth into a powerful adult form'. This motif metaphor expresses ideologies about the perceived dangers inherent to an adolescent acquisition of powerful adult capabilities and illustrates fears about the adolescent potential to become monstrous. The perception that youths may acquire power before they are capable of wielding such strength responsibly is thus represented simplistically as an imbalance between adolescents' adult bodies and immature interiorities, so that various forms of adult power are conveyed metaphorically in the concept of physical strength, and adolescent deviance becomes an issue of uneven physical and moral development. I employ models of agency and intersubjectivity to gain insight into the ideologies of maturation consequential to this motif metaphor in three supernatural fantasies set in contemporary America: Bruce Coville's *Russell Troy, Monster Boy* (2003), Susan J. Kroupa's "Tricky Coyote" (1999), and Sherwood Smith's "Monster Mash" (1988).

I investigate the second tenor of maturation, the achievement of an adult identity, by examining the possibility that becoming adult involves a transformation of identity entailing a discontinuity between child and adult selves. In certain contexts, fantastic metamorphosis between human and animal forms may be a vehicle for a tenor of 'adolescent identity change' or 'becoming an adult self' and may metaphorically convey

adolescent identity loss, diffusion, exploration, recuperation, and reconstruction. I analyse this motif metaphor through an interpretive framework of philosophical criteria of identity, comparing American Tamora Pierce's otherworld tetralogy, the *Immortals* Quartet (1992-1996), with Melvin Burgess's British supernatural fantasy novel, *Lady: My Life as a Bitch* (2001). I examine the form and significance of essentialist and provisionalist ideologies of adolescent identity in each of these texts, thus expanding our knowledge of significant Western beliefs about maturation.

1. Attaining Adult Power: The Possibility of Becoming Monstrous

Ideologies about the adolescent potential to become monstrous are perceptible everywhere in the Western world, largely due to media hype about the possible corruption and menace of 'today's teenagers' (Boyden 1997, 194-5; Gaines 1998, 244-246). Although Patricia Spacks suggests that the potentially negative forms of power assigned to adolescents belong to them only as a mass group (1981, 45), in recent decades society has become increasingly alert to the possible power of individual adolescent 'monsters' (Aitken 2001, 146-148). One particular expression of a belief in potential adolescent monstrosity is the fear that the process of maturation might allow for the development of adult physical power before the achievement of adult forms of morality. Unlike the developmental deviance explored in **Chapter Two**, this ideology relates not to the threat of permanent deviation from teleological paradigms, but to a disparity in the timing of two important maturational achievements. These achievements, the attainment of adult power and the development of adult morality, can be examined through the concept of intersubjective agency in a small range of metamorphosis narratives.

Maria Lassén-Seger notes that the metamorphosis motif is frequently used to temporarily ascribe increased agency and power to child characters (2006, 172, 255). However, when metamorphosis coincides with adolescence it may metaphorically signify the permanent achievement of adult power. In some narratives, fantastic metamorphosis may thus figuratively represent a tenor of 'the adolescent development of a powerful adult body'. This motif metaphor may be analysed in a number of adolescent metamorphosis narratives which initially locate adolescent protagonists as victims of bullying, then introduce fantastic metamorphosis as a source of power supplying those victims with the

physical capacity to stand up to their bullies. The experience of corporeal power results in a growth of agency when protagonists become aware of their capacity to influence their life experiences.

As Robyn McCallum outlines, while people are constructed as subjects by social and linguistic forces which consign them to "a series of provisional subject positions" (1999, 96), "a person is not simply determined or dominated by ideological pressures of overarching discourses or ideologies — they are also an agent" (1999, 4). Paul Smith defines agency as "a form of subjectivity where … the possibility (indeed, the actuality) of resistance to ideological pressure is allowed for" (1988, xxxv), and McCallum elaborates upon this definition when she describes agency as an awareness of the self "as capable of conscious or directed meaning or action outside social discourses and practices" (1999, 96). In the metamorphosis narratives of bullying I examine, protagonists may feel so subjected by society and other people's aggressive forms of agency that they are unaware of their own capacity for agency. They may believe themselves fated to tolerate bullying because they are physically smaller or weaker than the bullies who torment them. However, size and strength do not always determine the outcome of physical confrontations, and the protagonists occupy a victim position not merely because they are less powerfully embodied but because they feel a sense of passivity or helplessness which results in an unconscious acquiescence to subjection at the hands of others. The experience of corporeal power prompts a shift in perspective by making protagonists aware of the agential capacities they already possess.

However, the development of adult-like corporeal power provides victimised protagonists with such formidable capacities that they risk becoming monstrous. They undergo a sharp movement from a passive victim position to the role of violent offender when they experience the urge to misuse their superior bodily power in order to gain revenge. Their metamorphosis into predatory forms foregrounds the capacity for violence implicit in the concept of physical power, and the cannibalistic implications of these forms emphasise that the misuse of physical power may signify monstrosity. However, the metamorphic characters of these bullying narratives do not wish to become monstrous bullies and they thus recognise the need to accept adult forms of moral restraint upon their agential possibilities. Such restraints may be conceived in terms of intersubjectivity, a form of subjectivity which is "dialogically constructed through inter-relationships with

others, through language, and/or in a relation to social and cultural forces and ideologies" (McCallum 1999, 8).

The way in which intersubjectivity works to constrain transgressive forms of agency in these metamorphosis texts can be understood by reference to Michel Foucault's early conceptualisations of power and discipline (1977, 1980). As I outlined in **Chapters One** and **Two**, Foucault argues that Western subjects have internalised a disciplinary gaze and come to enact a once exterior-based control internally upon their own subjectivities and bodies. Moral responsibility is thus posited as essentially a learned condition, evolving from the internalisation of social expectations, the acceptance of moral agency, and the recognition of the negative social consequences of transgression. Rather than being passively constructed by social forces, subjects are thus complicit in their subjection to standards regarding unwarranted violence towards others, and they actively choose to moderate their agential possibilities in order to respect the subjectivities of others.

i. Biting Back: Potential Adolescent Monstrosity

In three metamorphosis texts, Susan J. Kroupa's "Tricky Coyote" (1999), Sherwood Smith's "Monster Mash" (1988), and Bruce Coville's *Russell Troy, Monster Boy* (2003), initial victims of bullying gain the ability to protect themselves physically when they fantastically transform into powerful predatory creatures, but their desire to physically defend themselves or others edges into a dangerous desire for revenge which threatens to turn them into moral monsters. This is symbolised in each of the narratives by the motif of the bite, an animalistic and cannibalistic urge for literal monstrosity which is represented as the dangerous culmination of finding pleasure in violence and others' fear.

Susan J. Kroupa's metamorphosis narrative delineates the growth of intersubjective agency in a young Hopi boy named Jimmy. In addition to focalising through a Hopi protagonist, Kroupa employs other Hopi characters, such as Jimmy's grandmother and mother, and incorporates the mythological figure of Coyote, who is the subject of a large body of indigenous American narratives. The issue of appropriation inherent to a non-indigenous author's representation of indigenous figures has been covered at length in postcolonial theory and has become a recognised issue in children's literature criticism (Ziff and Rao 1997; McGillis 1999; Bradford 2001b). To examine this issue here would be

tangential to my main argument, but it is important to note that Kroupa's representation of Hopi culture and beliefs cannot be assumed to be accurate or authorised. I thus approach Kroupa's story as a Western narrative which merely explores concepts of maturation and metamorphosis from an imagined indigenous perspective. This is necessary because Kroupa's adaptation of Hopi representations of Coyote as a fool and of witches or sorcerers as evil clearly indicates an alteration of conventional Hopi beliefs in favour of a different way of thinking (see Malotki and Lomatuway'ma 1984, 293, 329).

In "Tricky Coyote", coyotes have always "haunted the edges" of young Jimmy's life, but Jimmy resists the possibility that the coyote is his "animal guide" because he has internalised a negative image of Coyote as a foolish trickster (44). Jimmy's feelings about Coyote may be accurately constructed in terms of his Hopi heritage; Karl W. Luckert notes in his preface to a collection of Hopi Coyote Tales that while the Coyote figure is constructed as an ambiguous, "formidable trickster" figure within nomadic, hunting cultures such as the Navajo, in Hopi culture, which is based upon cultivation, the coyote is "more straightforwardly" reduced "to the level of a laughable fool" (1984, iv). Jimmy becomes aware of other potential ways of understanding Coyote, however, when he unexpectedly transforms into a coyote himself and uses his impressive coyote teeth to bite back at the bullies who have been making his life miserable.

The bullying Jimmy suffers from two of his peers begins when he undergoes a significant life-change, shifting from the Hopi village where he was raised by his grandparents to live in an urban area with his mother. Moved against his will to this new habitat, where he attends a new school and is subjected to bullying, Jimmy initially perceives himself to be a subject lacking agency. A variety of factors contributes to his sense of subjection, including his subject position as a child and his new community's negative interpretation of his racial identity. We learn that his new school "had hardly any Indian kids. Some of the boys in the class laughed out loud when the teacher announced that Jimmy had come from the Hopi reservation" (46). Race is an implicit factor in the bullying Jimmy endures, as it seems probable that Miguel, the main bully, persecutes Jimmy in an attempt to abject his own possible links to an indigenous background and/or to prevent his own social exclusion on the basis of Hispanic racial difference. We learn that "Jimmy thought [Miguel] looked more Indian than Hispanic" (47), and given that the only other children who are described (apart from Jimmy's Navajo friend, Delbert) are the

blond bully, Nick, and a thin, freckled girl, the majority of the children at the school are implicitly Anglo-American.

Despite these factors, Jimmy reduces the complex causes of his sense of subjection to the inescapable differences in capacities of physical power between himself and the two boys who torment him. Miguel is described as "stocky" and a "good head taller" than Jimmy (46). Although Miguel's friend, Nick, is merely portrayed as a "skinny kid," Jimmy endures both boys' "punching him if he didn't run fast enough to escape them" because he feels he is not "strong enough to beat them up" or defend himself from their attacks (47). An outburst of anger at the injustice of his suffering, however, results in Jimmy's unanticipated transformation into a coyote. In coyote form, Jimmy could successfully outrun the bullies and escape their harassment, but he ignores the coyote instinct to flee from the presence of humans and utilises his new possibility of success in combat, aware that because "coyotes have sharp teeth," a return attack might be successful (48). Jimmy thus assaults the two boys out of a desire for revenge, using his agency in a monstrous way: "He attacked Nick first, sinking his jaws into a piece of arm, smelling the blood as his teeth ripped through flesh. It made him sick and elated at the same time" (48). This particular fusion of emotions in relation to the motif of the bite highlights the links between monstrosity and abjection. Becoming a monster means becoming an abject being whose existence disturbingly transforms other human beings from agential subjects into fleshy objects that can be consumed; this threatened cannibalism epitomises moral transgression. While Jimmy only grazes Miguel in this attack, he leaves Nick with a flesh wound which requires "thirty-four stitches" (51).

The monstrous motif of the bite is also present in Sherwood Smith's short story, "Monster Mash", where it conveys a duplicate ideology of the potential adolescent misuse of physical power. Smith's tale features a female protagonist, Cat, whose family possesses a werewolf gene which is activated in certain descendants when they reach puberty. The shape-changes take time over puberty to settle into full body transformations, giving adolescents a moratorium in which to learn to control their powerful new bodies. Cat thus learns: "it was unlikely I'd do a complete change into a wolf more than once or twice before I learned to control it a little" (135). Because Cat has never transformed fully into a wolf, she risks attending an important Halloween event (as if in costume) on the night of one of her changes. Unfortunately, a "full-scale Change" (142) strikes, and when fleeing

the crowded school gymnasium, Cat stumbles across the school bully, Jeff Griswold, torturing one of his "latest victim[s]" (132). Cat and her friends had all "been nailed at one time or another" by Jeff and his cohorts (132), and when she witnesses this bullying incident she is struck by an intense anger that prompts her to aggressively intervene.

As in Kroupa's tale, it is implicit that the bully is physically superior to the children he torments, as Cat notes that she only escaped Jeff's bullying when he went to junior high school, indicating that he is older than her (132). He is also described as "holding some smaller kid down" (142) in the bullying incident that Cat interrupts. In a metaphorical sense, Cat's anger and her resulting intervention represents her sudden awareness of her access to a greater capacity for agency now that she is older and stronger physically and emotionally. However, because her werewolf form provides her with a physical power so much stronger and more dangerous than Jeff's, her potential for positive agency edges into the monstrosity of abusive power.

Cat allows the disorienting pain of her shape-change and the rage incited by Jeff's unjust behaviour to affect her behaviour: "without even thinking I charged over and grabbed Jeff by the shirtfront and belt buckle … I lifted him up over my head … I slammed him back down on the bench. His head smacked against the wall with a hollow "Thok!"" (143). Jeff's terror, evident in the "fear [that] stretched his mouth into an ugly shape" and the "little noise [he makes], like a newborn kitten," makes Cat "laugh" as she "gloat[s] down into [his] cowering face" (143). Furthermore, we read that Cat "stared down at the pulse beating in his white neck" and "felt drool form around [her] teeth as [she] thought hazily, *How good to sink my teeth into that soft neck …*" (143). She becomes "mesmerized" by the sight of her "yellow claws pressing into Jeff's neck," where "[f]our thin, bright dots of blood had appeared" (143). As in "Tricky Coyote", the cannibalistic implications of a fantastic predatory form highlight the brutality of unchecked power which transgresses the human rights of other subjects. Cat's rage on behalf of all victims of bullying is clear — she pulls Jeff off his latest victim, calling him "Bully scuzz!" and saying "How do *you* like-" (143). However, her words are incoherent ("all that came out was a loud growl"), and when this inability to communicate is combined with Cat's instinct to bite, her aggressive behaviour is not perceived as defence or punishment but as monstrous revenge (143). Thus, as Cat hovers over Jeff in her hybrid werewolf form, experiencing this transgressive desire, she symbolically hovers on the brink of moral

abjection.

In correspondence with these first two narratives, the main character in Bruce Coville's metamorphosis novel also develops the agency to bite back at the bully who torments him. Coville's novel was first published as *The Monster's Ring* in 1982 and republished with some substantial changes in the early twenty-first century as *The Monster's Ring* (2002) in America and *Russell Troy, Monster Boy* (2003) in Great Britain. The major changes to the narrative lie with the introduction of two talking rats, Jerome and Roxanne, and the alteration of the protagonist's surname from Crannaker to Troy. Both changes illustrate an effort to situate the text more clearly within Coville's *Magic Shop* series, but there are also some minor changes of word choice and expression throughout. The basic story is the same, however: the novel's protagonist, a young boy named Russell, is fleeing from a bully, Eddie, when he stumbles across a magic shop. There, for a token price, he is given a mysterious item which turns out to be a magic ring promising to turn the wearer into a monster. Russell loves the idea because he is "very fond of monsters" (11) and it is a "pleasant daydream" to be able to become a monster who could "show that Eddie a thing or two" and have him "whining, begging, pleading for mercy" (2). The ring provides three stages of transformation, and Russell tests all three of these before he eventually returns the ring to the magic shop. Because he sampled the dangerous third stage of transformation, however, he is left with "after-effects" (129) which transform him into his monster-body whenever the moon is full.

Again, in this narrative the bully is depicted as physically superior to the victimised protagonist. Eddie is described as "six inches taller than Russell and made mostly of mouth and muscle" (2). Gaining access to a powerful body through fantastic metamorphosis therefore provides Russell with the sense of agency intrinsic to a possession of adult-like power and strength. After his first temporary transformation at home, Russell is left with some lingering stimulation which makes him more aware of his capacity for agency in his ordinary form. When Eddie bullies him in the school cafeteria, Russell thus defends himself for the first time, and this makes him feel better about himself: "Usually he just took Eddie's abuse without saying or doing anything, and ended up feeling rotten as a result" (28). Now, because he has fought back, Russell feels "pretty good" (28). However, Russell's initial, first-level transformation fails to provide him with an enduring sense of powerful agency, and when Eddie attacks him the next morning,

Russell is beaten and left with "a burning sense of humiliation" (44) and "an aching urge for revenge" (46).

When Russell transforms for his school Halloween celebration, testing the second stage of his ring, he thus enjoys being a formidable monster. He realises "[h]e wanted to scare the living daylights out of people!" (53) and to "*Get Eddie!*" (62). The ring gives Russell an "increase in size" and "new strength," as well as a fierce visage that allows him to feel powerful (67). There is an obvious development of agency subsequent to this second transformation experience: "Inside he felt stronger and braver and more ready to tell people what he thought than he ever had before" (72). An outburst of anger residual from this second transformation motivates Russell to stand up to Eddie within his own "puny" form for a second time, this time more forcefully (100): "For the first time he could remember, he made a fist with the intention of using it on someone. He had a feeling he was going to get pounded again. But this time he was going to pound back" (75). Due to a new awareness of agency and an energising anger, Russell gains the upper hand in this encounter, but his own "whirlwind" of violence frightens him more than being a victim of the violence of another, especially when it ends symbolically with a movement into monstrosity: "Holding his enemy down, Russell opened his mouth to take a bite out of Eddie's shoulder" (76).

Each of these narratives thus uses the motif of metamorphosis to metaphorically represent the potential for adolescent monstrosity when the development of new adult power stimulates an awareness of agency. In the first two texts I discussed, this danger is resolved by an ideological focus on the necessity of internalising a disciplinary gaze and accepting moral responsibility for one's actions.

ii. Internalizing a Disciplinary Gaze and Accepting Moral Agency

In Susan J. Kroupa's story, the negative aftermath of Jimmy's attack on the bullies who had been tormenting him allows him to mature in several ways. Firstly, because his internalised disciplinary gaze failed when he chose to use his new physical power for revenge, Jimmy is subjected to social abjection and the external disciplinary gaze of his school peers. The bully, Miguel, now "stared at his feet as if he were afraid" at the thought of Jimmy (51). He calls Jimmy "*Brujo!*", a Spanish word which Delbert, Jimmy's Navajo

friend, translates as "*witch!*" (51). Jimmy's schoolmates shun him with a chant about witches, and when Delbert learns that Jimmy did indeed shape-change into a coyote and attack the bullies he rejects Jimmy with "a look of horror on his face" (51) and is "afraid to even come near him" (53). We learn that "Nick and Miguel no longer bothered [Jimmy] on the walk home from the bus stop, but the way they watched him, as if he were a monster, made Jimmy almost wish they'd go back to chasing him" (52). Due to this gaze-related ostracism, Jimmy re-internalises intersubjective moral controls. However, the process of internalisation was already being reinforced before he faced his peers by Jimmy's fears about what his grandmother would think if she knew of his monstrous behaviour: "Jimmy remembered the taste of flesh in his mouth and felt sick. He hoped his grandmother never found out" (51). Additionally, Jimmy's internalised moral controls are activated when he becomes aware that his actions may have wide-ranging negative effects upon blameless others. He realises that it "would be his fault" if "some innocent coyote who'd never attacked a human, who'd never sunk his teeth into flesh just because he was angry," is shot by the local adults who start hunting for a rabid coyote (50, 53).

Jimmy's attack on the bullies was the result of an agential choice, but after the assault he reverts to his passive point of view, believing that because he has the power to become a coyote his moral nature is out of his control and he must of necessity be a 'witch', which he understands to mean someone who "us[es] power to hurt others" (44-45) and "always uses their magic for evil" (52). However, the coyote figure who is Jimmy's animal guide visits him in the aftermath of his transformation and makes Jimmy recognise his capacity for agency by telling him, "*No one can make you a witch. Only you can do that*" (54). An ability to transform is thus separated from a witch schema that emphasises a desire to hurt others, and at this juncture "Jimmy remembered it wasn't the coyote part of him that had wanted to attack the boys," for his coyote instincts had urged him to flee, not bite (54).

Coyote's counsel thus helps Jimmy to realise that he cannot be forced into a negative immoral subject position but rather creates his own moral position in the world through the actions he chooses to pursue. Jimmy learns through the trigger of anger that he possesses the capacity for other subject positions than passive suffering, but he also learns that there are certain agential possibilities he does not want to practise. He thus chooses to be morally responsible, recognising that the employment of power to attack rather than

defend is the act of a bully, a 'monster' who would hurt and endanger others. Significantly, Coyote also provides Jimmy with a lesson in adopting a positive agential orientation toward a subjugating world, and this helps Jimmy to accept that his sense of subjection is not merely related to physical power. Jimmy thinks:

> maybe having Coyote as an animal guide wasn't so bad. Coyote, once with an endless desert to roam and hunt, now had to find food in garbage cans. The king of tricksters had pulled off the greatest trick of all: his whole world had changed and he'd survived. (55)

This realisation functions as a metaphorical lesson for Jimmy regarding his own ability to positively survive changes to his world. Thus, Jimmy comes to understand that agency represents a capacity to make conscious choices about one's behaviour and one's approach to the world. Employing agency does not necessarily result in a correction of the imbalance of power or of subject positions which limit agential possibilities, but it provides a way of adopting a survivor's orientation towards the world in which one is a subject.

In Sherwood Smith's narrative, positive agency is also represented as something which must be controlled by the intersubjective restraints represented by the disciplinary gaze. Cat's new adult power, represented by her werewolf body, is initially uncontrolled, and emotions overpower rational thought, so that she reacts 'without thinking' to intervene violently in the bullying incident she witnesses. However, when her aggression towards the bully, Jeff Griswold, goes too far and she desires to bite into his neck, her internalised intersubjective monitoring causes her to freeze. Despite her gloating over Jeff's terror, she registers her laughter as an "even creepier sound" than his fearful whimper, and her realisation that she is fascinated by the sight of his blood and wants to sink her teeth into his flesh "scare[s]" her and "still[s]" her "rage" (143). Cat thinks: "*I'm turning into a real monster. But I'm not a monster!*" (143-4). She thus becomes aware that she has agential control over her body, and it is implicit that she will not follow through on her abhorrent desire to do "a monster mash on Griswold's face" (150). However, before Cat can release Jeff she is subjected to the external disciplinary moral gaze of her friends, who appear on the scene confused and horrified: "Some of them had the same sort of look on their faces that we'd always had when we saw Jeff. Except they weren't looking at Jeff, they were all looking at me" (144).

Unlike Cat, Jeff is totally impervious to the external disciplinary gaze, and thus completely lacks an internalisation of agential self-control. In fact, the constant presence of two side-kicks at his performances of bullying suggests that he has internalised an external gaze appreciative of violence, and this must to some degree stimulate his immoral activities. Cat has internalised intersubjective moral constraints, but her transformation from a one-time victim into a potential bully suggests that subject positioning is ambiguous and the potential for monstrous agency exists in anyone, should such constraints lapse. The process of a victim becoming a supposedly literal monster, a werewolf, shows that everyone has the potential to become "monsters like Griswold" (136). Monstrosity is not determined by essential biological qualities but a failure to adequately internalise the adult moral responsibility, self-discipline, and intersubjectivity necessary to temper adult-like physical power. This is emphasised by Cat's concluding realisation that monsters are not defined by "fur and fangs" but by transgressive agential choices (150).

iii. Monstrosity or Mere Masculinity? Empathetic Boys and Harmless Monstering Around

Bruce Coville's version of this motif metaphor takes a different ideological form from the other two texts I have analysed. Rather than emphasising the necessity of internalising a disciplinary moral gaze in order to develop intersubjective controls upon agency, Coville instead represents the development of intersubjective agency through empathetic masculine bonding. This has the effect of recoding the adolescent potential for monstrosity as a mere outbreak of masculine energy, so that the horror of violent bullying is diminished and the use of adult power for defence, attack, and disruption is reconceived as a masculine rite of passage.

When Russell feels the urge to bite Eddie there is some indication of an internalisation of moral constraints upon his agential possibilities:

> [A] warning bell went off in his head.
>
> 'What am I doing?' he cried in horror.
>
> Terrified now, not of Eddie but of himself, he leaped to his feet and
>
> raced off. (77)

In this scene, Coville clearly represents the potential for monstrosity consequential to a new development of physical power and awareness of agency. However, his story

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indicates that intersubjective controls on agency are not the result of fears of being perceived as monstrous but rather of the development of accountability and empathy. Russell's experience with the ring is intended to teach him "responsibility for [his] actions" (115), for he fails to remember the warning about his magic ring and is told to solve his own problems by Mr. Elives, the magic shop owner (117). In addition to this new acceptance of personal accountability, Russell is able to overcome the moral perils of his agential possibilities when he develops empathy for his bully that prevails over a desire for revenge.

Seeing "[h]is enemy … in the grip of a large, mean-looking teenager" at a public Halloween event, "Russell could tell that he was feeling the same kind of fear that he, Russell, had so often felt when trapped in Eddie's grasp" (83). When two more teenagers join the first, Russell hears a "nervous edge in Eddie's voice" that "he had heard … in his own" (84). He is "infuriated by seeing even his enemy get bullied" (85) and "despite all the bullying Eddie had done to him in the past, three against one stuck in Russell's throat" (92). This passage in effect revisions Russell's encounters with Eddie into more acceptable, one-on-one, 'fair fights'. Furthermore, by developing an empathy for his nemesis, Russell gains control over his own agency and is able to rationally use his new physical power to be a hero, rescuing Eddie from his position as a victim of others' bullying.

However, Russell also chooses to uses this rescue as an opportunity to "give *Eddie* a good scare. Not hurt him," but warn him away from bullying Russell ever again (94). By using his superior physical power merely to threaten and frighten both Eddie and the older teenage boys, Russell teaches the bullies a lesson without physically harming them, which highlights how agency, when controlled by intersubjective empathy and accountability, can be used to positive effect, transforming bullies into frightened pseudo-victims who will think twice before picking on anyone again. However, by using his physical power in this way, Russell also resignifies potential adolescent monstrosity as mere shenanigans. He is able to feel that "[f]rightening Eddie like that was the most satisfying thing he had ever done" because Eddie's fear is ultimately unfounded (96). Russell's threatened violence is empty of serious menace and he converts Eddie with snarled and hissed words and a flash of his fangs (95). He merely takes one of the "frightened" teenage bullies for a ride in the air and releases him safely in some mud,

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hurting only his pride, as the comically "satisfying *sploosh*" of the drop indicates (94).

Even the bullying Russell endures from Eddie is emptied of real distress by idiomatic

descriptions such as, "[h]e smashed Russell a good one, knocking the breath completely

out of him," words which fail to convey genuine pain and wounded embodiment. The

seriousness of these bullying episodes is also consistently lightened by comedy, such as

when the narrator describes Russell as crying out, "Leave me alone!", but because Russell's

face was "mashed" into the grass at the time, "all that came out was 'Leemealun!'" (43).

To reinforce the impression that the adolescent misuse of adult-like physical power

is not seriously horrifying, most of the behaviour Russell is driven to by his monster

metamorphoses is constructed as mischievous pranks rather than dangerous urges. When

Russell first transforms, he goes out into the night and causes merry mayhem, growling at

late shoppers, swinging on street lamps, chasing cars, and being chased by police officers

(21-22). In the morning he thinks of this outburst as merely "embarrassing" (22), not

morally wrong, and when the school is "buzzing with rumours about the 'maniac'" he finds

it hard to "keep a straight face," obviously finding the situation very amusing (25).

Russell's second transformation at the school causes a "wild rumpus" when he is pursued

by students and teachers in what is described as a "merry chase" (64), triggering obvious

intertextual connections to the boyhood bravado evident in Maurice Sendak's *Where the*

Wild Things Are (1963). Furthermore, despite Russell's initial control over the monster

ring, he is represented as the passive recipient of uncontrollable bodily changes and urges.

Russell wonders, "*What was this ring doing to him*?" (77), and we read that "he was

frightened by what was happening *to him*" (81, my emphasis). Russell's potential for

agential monstrosity is thus reconfigured by the incorporation of conventional ideologies

suggesting that male aggressive instincts are biologically determined and unavoidable.

Because the residual moon-based transformations Russell experiences are totally out of his

control, the narrative finally implies that a modicum of 'horsing around' (or 'monstering

around' in Russell's case) is natural and harmless conduct for hormonally-driven adolescent

boys.

Additionally, such boyhood violence is constructed as tolerable because it is an

advantageous stimulus for the growth of autonomous subjectivity. Ideologies of

hegemonic masculinity not only excuse violent behaviour but approve it as essential for the

achievement of an admirable version of male adulthood, and in this respect, Russell's

experience of being bullied and of developing the agency to overcome that bullying is constructed as a positive rite of passage, which somewhat implies that experiencing violence has beneficial side-effects for the development of agential subjectivity.[30] This is evident in how Russell's triumph over Eddie, followed by a masculine bonding between them, constructively moves him into what is represented as an autonomous adolescent masculinity, away from a passive subject position within a childhood negatively controlled by female-based power. Russell's mother is depicted throughout Coville's novel as repugnantly and destructively maternal. She "fusse[s] over him a lot" and denies him a capacity for agency (13), "smothering" him with her overprotectiveness, so that Russell is left to wonder: "How could he grow up if he never got the chance?" (74). His new experiences of anger and agency give him the power to stand up to his mother and demand: "Why won't you ever let me make something better myself?" (74).

It is Russell's mother who suggests that Russell should "[m]ake friends" with Eddie (45). This initially makes her seem particularly clueless and out of touch with the reality of her son's life, but Russell thinks, "it would take as much guts to shake hands with Eddie as it would to punch him" (45). After Russell scares Eddie with his monster form, he realises he needs Eddie's assistance with a problem and the two boys bond. Russell thus forms an apparently intersubjective relationship with Eddie, and the boys are able to shake hands, thank each other for favours, and agree that they are now "squared" (107). Following this experience, Russell is trapped in monster form until morning and consequently spends the night away from home, sleeping over at the magic shop with Mr. Elives. In the early morning, Russell is faced with the predicament of finding his way home, absent of clothes, and he chooses to run home, through town, naked:

> Once the first fright had passed, he actually began to enjoy it. The
> chill in the air — and the sheer craziness of racing across town in his
> birthday suit — made him wildly alert. He felt open to the world,
> delighted by every sight and sound his greedy senses could absorb.
>
> (82)

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[30] The term 'hegemonic masculinity' has developed out of the work of Australian theorist, R. W. Connell (1995, 2000). As Rolf Romøren and John Stephens explain, "'hegemonic masculinity' is used to refer to the version of masculinity which is considered normative within a particular society's expressions of masculinity. In most cases this does coincide with masculinities based in domination and/or violence" (2002, 233).

There is a naughtiness and sexual awakening evident in this acceptance of his body —and in the fact that he shocks two middle-aged women as he makes his streak through the neighbourhood (83). When Russell arrives home, his mother appears prepared to accept his change of status, and although she "hug[ged] him close," she "caught herself" from falling back into her old habit of overbearing mothering (125). This concluding adventure suggests that Russell has come to terms with his body and its uncontrollable changes and found his place as an independent male, a triumph metaphorically reinforced by the punning title of this penultimate chapter of the novel, "Home Run" (119).

iv. Intersubjective Moral Agency Achieved

Thus, in some narratives in which metamorphosis is a vehicle for a tenor of maturation, the motif of fantastic metamorphosis may metaphorically delineate an ideology that a primary adolescent task is to develop a form of morally controlled agency. In bullying narratives by Susan J. Kroupa, Sherwood Smith, and Bruce Coville, in which victims of violence are metamorphosed into predatory forms, the acquisition of physical power stimulates an awareness of agency. However, the predatory nature of the victims' metamorphosed forms emphasises their own potential for monstrosity should their new physical power be unrestrained by moral regulations. This metaphorically suggests that adult corporeal power may develop out of tandem with intersubjective adult moral constraints. These narratives may therefore emphasise the necessity of developing internal constraints upon adult agency in order to maintain respect for the rights of others. This ideology may be conveyed by representing protagonists' as internalising a disciplinary gaze and adopting moral agency rather than passively acquiescing to violent urges; however, it may be represented more ambiguously if violent monstrosity itself becomes recoded as harmless monstering around.

Metamorphosis as a vehicle for a tenor of 'attaining adult power' is but one of many potential motif metaphors conveyed when fantastic metamorphosis acts broadly as a vehicle for maturation. To further develop an appreciation of the possible tenors of maturation expressed by the metamorphosis motif, I continue this chapter with an exploration of a common motif metaphor in which fantastic metamorphosis is a vehicle for a tenor of adolescent identity change.

2. Becoming an Adult Self: The Continuity or Discontinuity of Identity

Northrop Frye suggests that all literature is about the "the loss and regaining of identity" (1964, 55), but John Stephens and Robyn McCallum point out that this is a particularly attractive and recurrent theme in children's literature (1998, 63). This is because childhood is often constructed as a space in which identity is formed and adolescence as the site of a major reconstruction of that identity. Due to the extreme and rapid physical changes of puberty, and corresponding alterations in subject positioning, adolescence is often constructed as a time of intensely fragmented and confused subjectivity (Erikson 1968; Kroger 1996; Coleman and Hendry 1999). Although empirical research has led to reservations about the veracity of constructions of adolescence as tempestuous (Kroger 1996, 6), adolescence is still widely believed to be a period of radical change which transforms the child into an adult self, potentially producing a discontinuity of identity (Coveney 1957, 48; Wildermuth 1990, 259; Kroger 1996; McCallum 1999, 3). This may be partly because the typical adult/child binary of contemporary Western cultures means that the identity configurations appropriate to occupants of children's subject positions are inappropriate for adulthood and must be transformed during adolescence to create suitable adult versions of subjectivity.

There is much debate over the terms 'identity', 'subjectivity', and 'self' (Leary and Tangney 2003a). Mark R. Leary and June Price Tangney consider the term 'self' to be a "conceptual morass" of meanings as diverse as "the total person," "the person's personality," "the seat of a person's self-awareness," "the source of agency and volition," and a person's self-knowledge (2003b, 6-8). 'Identity' is similarly comprehensive in signification. Drew Westen and Amy Kegley Heim describe 'identity' as "probably the broadest self-related concept" (2003, 646). It may refer to: a structure or configuration of selfhood; a process of gaining a sense of self; a conscious, subjective experience of individual uniqueness; an unconscious entity from which perception and action emerges; a sense of inner agency; a sense of personal sameness and continuity of experience; a sense of commitment to certain values and ideals; a solidarity with or categorisation within a particular group or type; and/or the means by which an individual can be identified by others (Erikson 1968, 19-20, 208-209; Kroger 1996, 32; Westen and Heim 2003, 646).

However, 'identity' may be specifically imbued with humanist connotations of an essential, single, and coherent self. In this respect, identity may chiefly refer to "the

condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality," as well as to "[t]he quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness" (OED 1989). Bill Albertini and his colleagues thus claim that "the classic definition of identity" is "sameness over time" (2000, 623). 'Identity' as I use it is equivalent with the concept of 'self' and encompasses this sense of uniqueness and similarity. However, it also allows for a consideration of the many different components of selfhood. Because of its wide-ranging denotation and its implication of consistency, in an analysis of the continuity or discontinuity of selfhood the term 'identity' is far more apt than 'subjectivity', which specifically emphasises the multiple and transitional social, linguistic, and cultural contexts of identity formation (Mansfield 2000, 2-12).

The motif of fantastic metamorphosis is a powerful figurative device for exploring identity continuity and discontinuity because it foregrounds the processes and characteristics by which identity is constructed, called into question, and/or maintained. Metamorphosis "forces a confrontation with … a cluster of concerns associated with the nature of personhood and personal identity" (Skulsky 1981, 6) and "engages a wide range of questions concerning identity in the face of changes in temporal, cultural or mental perspective, or with regard to age, ethnicity, sexuality and gender" (Mikkonen 1997, 26). Identity is usually considered to be affected by pubertal changes and the cultural transition between child and adult subject positions. Analysis of fantastic metamorphosis as a metaphor for maturation may thus offer an effective way in which to assess certain ideologies of adolescent identity change.

i. Ideologies of Identity Change

Questions about what constitutes identity and how identity is achieved and maintained throughout the lifespan are ancient philosophical concerns (Bynum 2001, 78). Out of many centuries of enquiry and debate, two primary ideologies of identity have developed in the West: ideologies of essential identity and provisional identity. Essentialist concepts emphasise that the self is "a unique and essential entity which exists prior to and in opposition to society," while provisionalist accounts conceive "the idea of the selfhood of an individual as constructed within a series of provisional subject positions

via specific social and discursive practices" (McCallum 1999, 68). Essentialism is a humanist ideology long prevalent in the West, whereas provisionalism is a comparatively recent ideology which has begun to gain ground following serious modernist and postmodernist criticisms and revisions of humanism. As Lois Kuznets notes, the very concept of a self is now seen as a suspect construction of bourgeois humanism (1994, 208).

James Thompson observes that metamorphosis is a key strategy many twentieth-century novelists have used to explore contemporary conceptions of selfhood and identity (2000, ii). Although Rosemary Jackson argues that the motif inevitably violates a "definition of the self as a coherent, indivisible and continuous whole" (1981, 82-83), metamorphosis can metaphorically convey a far broader range of ideas about identity. Thus, Caroline Walker Bynum and Marina Warner independently distinguish between two primary concepts of metamorphic change which correspond to the two basic ideologies of identity I have highlighted. Firstly, Bynum's outline of a moderate form of metamorphosis which she calls "evolution-change" is compatible with a concept of essential identity (2001, 20). Warner attributes such a concept of change to Aristotle, who observed that the future of an organism will be appropriate to its seed, and she defines it as a teleological view of development (2002, 79). Evolution-change is linear and quantitative, and may be perceived as a mere addition to or subtraction from an essential core of selfhood, so that identity or "entity-ness perdures" (Bynum 2001, 20). In constructions of human identity, Western culture has tended to privilege this concept of change, in which any alterations are perceived as the unfolding of an internal self-design; contemporary theories of DNA blueprints have added a scientific certitude to this belief (Bynum 2001, 24, 28). According to the concept of evolution-change, or a teleological view of development, the child becomes an adult through a predictable pubertal metamorphosis and remains fundamentally the same person.

At the opposite end of a "spectrum" of the signified 'change' is "replacement-change," a type of change in which categories may be breached and identities destroyed as one thing radically transforms into another thing completely different (Bynum 2001, 20, 28). Warner locates the genesis of this concept of radical change with the study of insects, particularly butterflies, which foregrounds how the outcome of change may be completely dissimilar from its origins (2002, 79). The notion of replacement-change corresponds with ideologies of provisional identity, in which people's identities are open to extreme change

due to bodily alterations, life experiences, and movements through sometimes radically different subject positions throughout their life-span. It is generally accepted that individuals may change outwardly and inwardly beyond almost any connection to their former selves due to some intense tragic, transcendent, or generally transformative experience or crisis in their lives (Williams 1973, 2-3; Sider 2001, 196). Adolescence, with its radical physical, cognitive, cultural, and social changes, is clearly a prime moment for such replacement change. According to the concept of replacement-change, children become adults through a radical metamorphosis which drastically alters their identities, rendering them completely different people from their childhood selves.

The substance of these two primary Western ideologies of change and identity can be analysed through an exploration of fantastic metamorphosis narratives which introduce metamorphosis at adolescence and explicitly explore the possibility of the continuity or discontinuity of identity. To enable a comparison of ideologies of evolution and replacement change, and essential and provisional identity, I investigate two very different narrative works — Tamora Pierce's *Immortals* Quartet (1992-1996), an otherworld tetralogy aimed at readers in the lower age bracket of the young adult market, and Melvin Burgess's supernatural fantasy, *Lady: My Life as a Bitch* (2001), intended for older teenage readers. Pierce's otherworld tetralogy features a female protagonist, Daine, who possesses a 'wild magic' which enables her to communicate with non-human animals. The four novels of the tetralogy, *Wild Magic* (1992), *Wolf-Speaker* (1993), *The Emperor Mage* (1994), and *Realms of the Gods* (1996), trace her adventures in the kingdom of Tortall, the Carthaki Empire, and the Divine Realms. Daine is apprenticed to the great mage, Numair, who works for the king of Tortall, and her wild magic with animals makes her a powerful participant in the kingdom's struggles with pirates, raiders, and dangerous immortal beings. During adolescence, she learns to shape-change, not explicitly because puberty has triggered any change, but rather because she is trained to use her innate powers. A multi-bodied shape-shifter, Daine can modify her human body with partial transformations and perform full-body metamorphoses.

Melvin Burgess's supernatural metamorphosis narrative is of an entirely different nature. It delineates the experiences of Sandra Francy, a British girl in her late teens whose increasingly 'wild' behaviour results in a chance meeting with a tramp, Terry, who possesses the uncontrollable ability to turn other human beings into dogs. Sandra is

transformed into a bitch, and the narrative outlines her attempts to come to terms with her new life as a stray dog, her conflicting feelings and desires in relation to doghood and humanity, and her relationships with her family, Terry, and two metamorphosed human-dogs, Simon/Fella and Mitch. While Pierce's Daine possesses an internal power to temporarily become any animal she desires, Burgess's Sandra is subjected to someone else's power and thus disempowered, forced into a permanent replacement body. These agential differences point to the different ideologies of identity change operating in the texts. As a self-controlled power might indicate, Pierce's *Immortals* narratives encourage a belief in essential identity, while allowing for some possibility of extensive change over time. Comparatively, the lack of free choice experienced by Sandra in the course of Burgess's *Lady* is but one way in which the novel conveys a sense that her identity is fragmented, open to total change, and entirely provisional — yet, as I will outline, Burgess's representation also maintains contradictory traces of essential identity.

An analysis of the ideologies of adolescent identity change in these narratives may be usefully structured around a variety of philosophical criteria which indicate the continuity or discontinuity of identity. Key philosophical criteria for the impermanency or stability of identity include spatio-temporal continuity; character, behaviour, and subject-positioning; memory; and recognition from others (Wiggins 1971; Munitz 1971; Williams 1973; Skulsky 1981; Tomberlin 2001). Within these categories, certain features act as markers or "identity pegs," which combine to communicate the persistence or disintegration of a unique, differentiable individual over time (Goffman 1963, 56). By applying these criteria to characters who undergo fantastic metamorphoses, we can explore the metaphorical expression of adolescent identity change and determine how these texts convey ideologies of maturation as a process of evolution or replacement-change, thereby endorsing beliefs in the essentialism or provisionality of human identity.

ii. Spatio-Temporal Mass and an Embedded Core

Analysis of fantastic metamorphosis as a metaphor for adolescent identity change may begin with a consideration of the criterion of spatio-temporal continuity. The idea that a person has the same identity throughout their lifespan because they inhabit a continuous spatio-temporal embodiment is probably the most basic and practical

understanding of identity (Williams 1973, 9; Bynum 2001, 163, 223). Initially, this appears to relate to the factor of continuous physical appearance. A distinctive bodily appearance displaying only minor changes over time guarantees a unique identity, and the consistent "external image" of a person (including body shape, facial structure, and fingerprints) is one of the key markers of identity continuity (Goffman 1963, 56). However, the potential for radical changes to alter an individual's body over time begs the question of whether significant corporeal alterations might destabilise a continuous identity (Skulsky 1981, 1; Muuss 1975, 64-5).

Drastic transformations between species may metaphorically represent significant non-fantastic bodily changes, so that the metamorphosis motif may explore anxieties about the body as a marker of identity over time. In metamorphosis narratives, a changing body causes a disconnection from the familiar identity peg of continuous bodily appearance, so that the return to human form often results in statements such as "*His body!* He had it back. He was himself again!" (Coville 2003, 119). However, the identity persistence criterion of spatio-temporal continuity is not merely based upon bodily appearance but bodily mass. In metamorphosis narratives, some continuous, perceiving consciousness usually endures within a transformed spatio-temporal bodily mass. The factor of spatio-temporal continuity thus emphasises the persistence of identity despite bodily changes, suggesting that some permanent aspect of selfhood remains firmly embedded within any particular spatio-temporal mass, regardless of how much a body in space may alter over time.

This enduring presence may be described as a core essence. Embodiment may be imagined as the experience of a network of nerves and sensors leading into some kind of thinking and perceiving core, which Erik Erikson describes as an "observing center of awareness" (1968, 135) and Leary and Tangney record as "[m]ost people['s] … sense that there is an experiencing 'thing' inside their heads that registers their experiences, thinks their thoughts, and feels their feelings" (2003b, 7). Leary and Tangney state that "many people report that this mental presence is at the core of who they really or most essentially are" (7). In detailing the humanist pursuit of self-knowledge, Sidonie Smith thus writes that

> the self may proceed vertically, delving downward into itself to find
> the irreducible core, stripping away mask after mask of false selves in

search of that hard core at the center, that pure, unique, or true self.
Launched on a romantic journey, the self steams into the interior of
itself, through lake after lake, layer after layer of circumstance to an
unencumbered center of quiet water, pure being or essence. (1993, 18)

The Cartesian mind/body dichotomy or body-as-other ideology dissociates this inner core from the body in which it resides. Such dissociation is obvious in body-borrowing narratives, in which an inner core is detachable, so that essential selves may travel between bodies. In such narratives, spatio-temporal continuity is no guarantee of continuous identity because core selves can move indiscernibly between different spatio-temporally positioned bodies. Metempsychosis thus divorces identity from embodiment and stresses that the significant elements of identity are superfluous to a connection with a specific spatio-temporal mass. Metamorphosis narratives, however, are more likely to express the ambiguity with which the West approaches the issue of embodiment and identity. By emphasising the spatio-temporal continuity of identity regardless of radical bodily changes, these narratives stress an ideology that identity is firmly linked to a specific bodily container, no matter how much that container changes, because the perceiving self is embedded in an enduring link to a particular material form, and this link may only be broken by death (and perhaps not even then).

In Pierce's *Immortals* tetralogy, Daine's experience within the Divine Realms illustrates that identity is retained by the dead in the form of their lived bodies. While death detaches the core of a person from their material body in the human realm, continuous identity is manifested in the afterlife through an identical replacement of the body left behind. Thus, Daine can be held in the corporeal, living arms of her mother in the realms of the gods, even though her mother's "stone cold" corpse has long since been buried (*Realms of the Gods* 1996, 61). Bodies thus clearly form and express a large portion of people's continuous identities. However, Daine's ability to transform her body into non-human shapes yet maintain a stable identity gives the impression that an essential self, a unique human identity and "essence" (*Wild Magic* 1993, 208), is a core somehow attached within but not defined by one's spatio-temporal form. In this respect, Pierce's series emphasises the necessity of having some essential part of oneself separated from one's body so that identity persists despite physical changes.

This is illustrated in the need for Daine to divide her essential self from the magic

which allows her to merge herself with others psychically and radically transform physically. When her inborn wild magic is untrained, Daine risks losing herself through a psychic, empathetic blending with other animal species. This loss of identity is imagined by Daine's childhood horse friend, Cloud, as a change to her "spirit," which would "take on the scent" of whatever animals Daine joined with mentally and magically (*Wild Magic* 1993, 171). Such joining threatens a loss of self which is envisioned as a leakiness between Daine's spiritual essence and her magic:

> Obediently she looked [inside herself] for her wellspring of copper
> fire [wild magic]. She dropped in and they fell through it, until she
> saw a white core to the fire. It bled into the copper as the wild magic
> bled tendrils into it. (*Wild Magic* 1993, 209-10)

This potentially dangerous interface between Daine's essence and her magic is easily reconciled by the installation of clear self/magic divisions which have a divisional self/body effect. Learning of Daine's problem, her mentor, Numair, establishes a magical "glass wall" between her innermost sphere of selfhood and her surrounding sphere of magic. This remedy leaves Daine feeling "sure of herself," with a "clear" mind and an essence "untainted by her magic, just as the magic was entirely apart now from her inner self" (*Wild Magic* 1993, 210). While Daine's magic still affects her body, it never again threatens her selfhood, and she can both commune with animals and transform into animal forms without risking the discontinuity of her essential identity.

Because this wall is established in the early days of Daine's magical development, she is protected from the possibility of replacement-change before she ever begins to metamorphose fully into other animal species. It is only after her 'essence' is firmly separated from her magic that her ability to empathise and communicate with other animals becomes an active body-sharing which has residual metamorphic effects upon her human form. While her selfhood is situated in another being's body through metempsychosis, Daine's own body begins to change partially into that body's species. For example, when she is body-sharing with the marmot, Quickmunch, in *Wolf-Speaker*, Daine's human face gains a marmot's whiskers, nose, and teeth (1994a, 177). This side-effect prevents the implication of totally separate self/body divisions typical to metempsychosis narratives and suggests that Daine never actually leaves her body, but

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merely sends a fragment of herself outwards. Furthermore, when Daine does eventually undergo full body shape-changes, the secure and protected positioning of her essence within her spatio-temporally continuous form allows her transformations to function as expressions of her stable, inner uniqueness. Daine's metamorphoses over the course of the series are thus represented as forms of evolution-change which maintain her essential identity. Daine can be perceived to be "expanding the horizons of self and boundaries of experience through accretion, but always carrying forward through new growth that globe of an irreducible, unified core" (Smith 1993, 18).

A continuous identity according to the criterion of spatio-temporality is also initially evident in Burgess's *Lady: My Life as a Bitch*. Sandra's identity is inextricably bound to her spatio-temporal mass, as is evident in the passage representing her metamorphosis. Although she is unexpectedly physically transformed, Sandra is somehow so deeply embedded in yet separate from her body that she fails to perceive her new body as different or to believe her felt bodily changes until she adequately *sees* her new form. Metamorphosed into a dog by the tramp, Terry, Sandra thus dashes through the city towards her home, unaware of her bodily change, although she is now running on all fours and experiencing greatly expanded senses of smell and taste (9-10). She is initially unaware that she is trying to use her mouth instead of human hands to turn her bedroom's door handle (12), suggesting that her being is so firmly entrenched within her spatio-temporal form that she requires no conscious thought or effort to send messages for movement between brain and appropriate body parts — yet at the same time, her being is so detached from her embodiment that she remains essentially ignorant of the fact that her body has changed and is moving, feeling, and sensing in ways fundamentally different to the inhabitation of a human form. It is not until she looks into her bedroom mirror that she accepts that she is fantastically transformed, knowing that she is bounded within a body that inhabits the space before the mirror and that the dog's eyes looking into the mirror are eyes she moves and controls: "I didn't think that reflection was anyone else's but mine, not for one second" (12).

Sandra's reliance on vision to confirm her physical change is a clear sign of a Cartesian separation of the interior self from the exterior body and its world. As Alexandra Howson writes,

> [i]n the Cartesian view of the world, vision is privileged as the

primary sense that connects the self to the physical and material

environment in which it is located. The eye becomes the privileged

medium of communication about self … and of knowledge production

through empirical observation. (2005, 15)

However, Sandra's identity is finally far less distinct from her embodiment than it might at first appear from Burgess's initial Cartesian emphasis on vision, for her visual recognition of herself confirms that her perceiving self is firmly attached to her particular spatio-temporal mass, despite radical bodily changes. In both Burgess and Pierce's narratives, such spatio-temporal continuity metaphorically conveys the persistence of identity regardless of the physical transformation from a child to an adult form. However, in Burgess's novel, despite this spatio-temporal continuity, bodily changes allow for the possibility of a replacement-change of identity because identity is disordered by a discontinuity in bodily *experience*.

This appears to correspond to the fact that, for Burgess, an embedded, perceiving core is implicitly conceived as a mind rather than an essence, soul, or spirit, as in Pierce. However, Cartesian dualism locating identity solely in the 'mind' in opposition to physiology is finally nonsense because a mind is a brain, and consciousness, thought, and emotion are thus entrenched in a biological organ (cf. Skulsky 1981, 18, 39; Leary and Tangney 2003b, 7). In Burgess's novel, regardless of their new dog forms, Sandra and other human beings metamorphosed into dogs appear to retain cognitive capacities which entail a human brain, thus removing human mind from human body in an impossible way, creating abject "[d]ogs that could think" (2001, 29). Because it allows for this retention of human brain capacities in humans metamorphosed into dogs, Burgess's narrative conveys the possibility that dogs have comparable cognitive and affective capacities to humans, a possibility which Sandra herself finds "horrible! … It made [her] feel sick" (29). However, the narrative does not emphasise that metamorphosed humans can think, but that their bodily experiences of being a dog affect their human perception.

As phenomenological theories stress, "[p]erception is always located in and through the space of the lived body and the material body is an integral dimension of the perceiving subject" (Howson 2005, 78). Thus, while Sandra initially retains her perceiving self subsequent to her transformation into a dog (because of spatio-temporal continuity), over time her changed embodiment affects her inner perceptions. This is represented as less to

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do with the potentially lesser capacities of a dog's brain than with the sensual experience of a dog's body, which supposedly overloads the perceiving, inner self with sensory data, restricting attention to the ever-present moment. Burgess posits that a dog body is more open to its exterior environment than a human body, providing an intensity of experience that demands a commitment to the immediacy of existence and the consequential rejection of rational thought and an awareness of the passage of time. "You have no idea what your senses are if you've never been an animal," Sandra thus narrates, as if human beings are not also an animal species sensually embedded in a physical environment and shaped by significant bodily experience (18). Burgess's emphasis on the effects of bodily experience metaphorically suggests that the adolescent achievement of adult corporeality is overwhelming and may alter identity completely.

This implication of bodily effects upon identity corresponds to a provisionalist ideology of human identity, suggesting that

> [t]he true self or core of metaphysical selfhood can never be discovered, unmasked, revealed because there is nothing at the core. … The self is split and fragmented, no longer unitary. At any given moment the self is different from itself at any other given moment.
>
> (Smith 1993, 56)

As a dog, Sandra's identity becomes wholly provisional; despite her spatio-temporal continuity, her inner self lives in the moment and appears unable to hold a permanent point of view, as her thoughts and values are constantly affected by exterior circumstances and experiences. This conveys a sense of discontinuous identity. Burgess's narrative thus illustrates that identity may be provisional in spite of any spatio-temporal continuity, because a changed embodiment alters an experience of being-in-the-world, not only providing different sensations and experiences, but requiring altered interactions with any surrounding environment. Bodily change may therefore affect behavioural consistency, leading us to a second criterion for measuring ideologies of adolescent identity change.

iii. Behavioural Consistency: Character and Subject Positioning

As Harold Skulsky points out, considerations about the persistence of a person's identity often focus upon behaviour (1981, 192-3; also see Wiggins 1971, 45-46).

However, behaviour is closely linked to concepts of character and subject positioning, the former encompassing the possibility that people are born with a certain essential 'nature' or temperament which will manifest itself in continuous behavioural tendencies throughout their lifespan, the latter highlighting how character and behaviour may be severely affected by the ways in which people are constructed within specific social, linguistic, and cultural contexts (Bynum 2001, 223). Biological and psychological investigations suggest that the transformation from a child into an adult body stimulates changes in cognitive and affective processes, resulting in character and behavioural alterations, yet the social expectation that extensive behavioural changes will accompany an adolescent's change of form may be in part responsible for such alterations (Kroger 1996, 6; Coleman and Hendry 1999, 52). A cultural displacement out of habitual subject positionings due to bodily changes may thus jolt characters into an identity transformation or crisis (McCallum 1999, 68-9). Whatever their cause, alterations in behaviour, character, and subject positioning may be interpreted as mere modifications in the unfolding of an essential identity or they may be considered drastic enough to signify a replacement-change of identity. Using behavioural criteria, we can examine ideologies of adolescent identity change in metamorphosis narratives from a different perspective and can question again how the motif metaphor of metamorphosis as maturation may signify a continuity or discontinuity of identity at adolescence.

In Pierce's *Immortals* tetralogy, third person narration allows for the representation of essential facets in Daine's character. A brief scan of the opening pages of three of the novels, for example, discloses repeated descriptors, such as "soft mouth" (*Realms of the Gods* 1996, 6, 3; *Wild Magic* 1993, 2), "stubborn chin" (*Realms of the Gods* 1996, 6; *Wild Magic* 1993, 2), and "blue-grey eyes the colour of the clouds overhead" (*Wolf-Speaker* 1994a, 3; *Wild Magic* 1993, 2; *Realms of the Gods* 1996, 7). Similarly, we read recurring descriptions of Daine's favoured "practical" clothing and a hairstyle which 'tames' her curly hair (*Wild Magic* 1993, 2; *Wolf-Speaker* 1994a, 3). These markers work metonymically (and in the example of her eye colour, metaphorically) to divulge certain stable aspects of Daine's personality, such as her empathetic nature, her sometimes stormy temper, and her penchant for an active lifestyle. While Daine's human body thus conveys essential character traits, these qualities are not dependent upon her human form but merely expressed through it, and such character traits are unaffected by her metamorphic bodily

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changes. On the other hand, her life experiences and shifts in subject positioning, as signified by her multiple fantastic bodily changes, influence her character and her values, altering some of her behaviour.

One example of this is her change of habit in regards to meat-eating. The second novel of the tetralogy narrates that "[h]uman friends often exclaimed to see her hunt. They seemed to think, because she shared a bond with animals, that she ought to go meatless" (*Wolf-Speaker* 1994a, 50). Daine dismisses such ideas as "crazy," believing that humans are naturally hunters and meat-eaters, and stating that she simply "close[s] … off" her wild magic when hunting (*Wolf-Speaker* 1994a, 51). In the third novel of the tetralogy, however, set a mere year later, Daine no longer eats wild game (*Emperor Mage* 1994b, 104), a change consequent to her own metamorphic experience of animal subject positioning as prey: "ever since I could take on a creature's mind or shape, I can't eat game of any kind. I know how it feels to be hunted" (*Emperor Mage* 1994b, 106). Additionally, Daine's attitude towards the abject immortals known as Stormwings changes over time, as she moves from prejudice towards these beings in the early books of the tetralogy to an acceptance of their potential for individuality. Any changes to Daine's values and behaviour are minor, allowing her to be depicted as a character who possesses the important capacity to develop but is safe from replacement-change. Thus, although she experiences significant changes in subject positioning between her child and adult identities across the course of the series — moving from a subject position in which she is dependent upon her mother's and grandfather's guidance and approval, to an apprenticeship with the mage, Numair, and finally to a position of independence, power, and equality with other adults — these changes convey a progressive movement from child to adult roles, and such movement is teleological, a natural evolution-change that allows for the expansion and unfolding of identity.

In metaphorical terms, Daine's character and behaviour are maintained with consistency because her subject positioning is never dramatically changed by her metamorphoses into animal forms. Given that she is the daughter of the hunting god, Weiryn, Daine's metamorphoses are underpinned by traditions in which metamorphosis, organised by the gods, has certainty, reason, and importance (see Olsen 1987, 53). Daine's world is in the midst of a war between the humans of Tortall and monstrous or dangerous immortals who have travelled into the human world from the realms of the gods and are

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allied with Tortall's human enemies. As a friend of the powerful humans in charge of Tortall's defence, Daine's shape-shifting, body-sharing, and communicative powers are frequently engaged in the war effort. Her fantastic metamorphoses thus generally take place in order to serve a human purpose, and her behaviour remains consistent in whatever form she takes, as she primarily uses her animal forms to pursue human business, such as spying on or fighting the enemy. Furthermore, because Pierce's animals are anthropomorphic in many respects, Daine's experiences of body-sharing and full or partial bodily metamorphosis do not effectively threaten her identity. This is most obvious in the way in which Pierce represents Daine's ability to mind-speak with animals in terms of a simple analogy with human speech. For example, when Daine first meets a marmot in *Wolf-Speaker*, the creature is described as:

> Shocked, frightened and irate … calling the man below names that
> Daine hadn't thought a marmot would know.
> You must have learned that from squirrels, she commented. None of
> the marmots *I* ever knew said such things. (1994a, 157)

In comparison with Daine's identity continuity according to behavioural criterion, Sandra's fantastic metamorphosis in Burgess's novel is a final, extreme marker of the severe character and behavioural discontinuity she has experienced during adolescence. At the opening of the novel, Sandra maintains her human form but has already developed a behavioural disjunction that has made her virtually unrecognisable to family and friends. Once a 'swot' with sensible friends and a loving boyfriend, Sandra suddenly rejected all that she formerly valued, deciding that "there had to be more to life than what [she] was getting" (74) and that she would "get off on anything [she] could find to get off on" (77). She determined that she just wanted to have a "good time" (58, 73, 75, 80, 193), that is, to live always in an enjoyable moment. No longer interested in schoolwork, or the human metanarratives which attempt to shape and give meaning to life, Sandra simply "stopped seeing" her best friend, Annie, and her boyfriend, Simon, and began to tirelessly party, drift between different social groups, sleep around, and drink excessively (77).[31] Those

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[31] Sandra's human boyfriend, Simon, is not the same Simon (in the form of the dog, Fella) who becomes her boyfriend after her metamorphosis. The shared name can be no accident, however, and is one way in which Burgess attempts to maintain some sense of traditional value and essentialism in the narrative, recuperating

who knew and cared for her prior childhood self reacted to this discontinuity of identity negatively, particularly her mother, who responded, Sandra feels, "like I was some sort of mad bitch, as if I'd gone crazy" (77).

Sandra's metamorphosis into a dog is thus symbolic of the drastic replacement-change of identity which has already taken place following puberty. Leonard Barkan argues that "metamorphosis is the destination for those who live by the passions" (1986, 66); certainly, Sandra's desire for immediate, vivid bodily experience as a human is represented as a regressively animalistic desire which leads directly to her transformation into a dog. Burgess's narrative often suggests that it was because Sandra was behaving like a bitch in heat that she became one in fact: "God, when I look back, I was so far gone! No wonder I ended up as a dog" (2001, 85). Sandra thus symbolically becomes what she is performing in a modern version of the convention by which fantastic metamorphosis is a revelation of the true, inner self (Warner 2002, 85, 206). Given the equally common convention by which metamorphosis is a punishment for the "breaking of deeply felt taboos and the … overstepping of natural boundaries," there are also potentially dubious, misogynistic connotations of moral punishment to Sandra's metamorphosis (Forbes Irving 1990, 16, 13; also see Barkan 1984, 66; Warner 1994a, 56).

The essentialism linking Sandra's transformation to her adolescent behaviour is further evident in the way in which she initially locates her identity in her humanity, meaning her human body and her old childhood self when she wishes, "I want to be myself again" (2001, 47), but later draws on her new dog form as a marker of her adolescent and adult self, thinking, "[e]ach day I was more and more a dog, more and more myself" (146). When she thinks about the family pressures she faces to behave in certain ways and have a certain identity, Sandra vows that, "[g]irl or dog, I was going to carry on being myself right up until my last breath" (190). When she revisits her family after several months away from them in her dog form she realises that their expectations about her need to maintain 'proper' and consistent behaviour have not changed, and that despite her experiences as a dog she has not essentially changed either: "I was stuck here at home weeping and wailing because my bloody family couldn't accept me as I was. So what's new? What had changed? Nothing — not even myself, when it came down to it" (192). Her decision to

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the abjection symbolised by Sandra's metamorphosis into a dog. Another is in the fact that Sandra, when in heat, only has sex with Fella and Mitch, dogs who were once human, never with authentic dogs.

change her behaviour as an adolescent, moving away from the usual expectations for life on "the human track," thus resulted in a replacement-change of identity which is symbolised by her dog form (85).

Sandra's permanent identity change from human to dog thus becomes a metaphorical illustration of the perceived finality of adolescent identity change. Maria Lassén-Seger suggests that Burgess ends his narrative on "a note of uncertainty as to whether or not the protagonist… will choose to assume animal form forever" (2006, 194), but there is no choice for Sandra, for there is, in fact, no "chance [for her] to become human again" (cf. Lassén-Seger 2006, 224). She has no powers to execute a fantastic metamorphosis that would return her to her human form, and while there are rumours among the metamorphosed dogs that one dog "got turned back" into human form, the tramp, Terry, appears incapable of bringing about this reverse metamorphosis for Sandra (Burgess 2001, 87). Sandra's inability to metamorphose back into human form appears to be a metaphor for her inability to recover her former, childhood identity. After the fantastic metamorphosis which signifies her adolescent identity change, Sandra comes head-first against the wall that divides certain subject positions into the possession of different bodily forms. Any attempts to perform her pre-metamorphosed subject positions while in her replacement dog body are depicted as grotesque and frightening to others.

For example, near the end of the narrative, Sandra decides she wants her old life and her old identity back and to achieve this she chooses "*to refuse to behave like a dog*. If I was going to be human, I had to behave like a human being. I had to *be* Sandra Francy" (156). Making her way back to her human home, she awkwardly dresses her dog body in her favourite human outfit, applies make-up, and attempts to walk on two legs and verbalise human speech through her dog mouth and throat. This performance of dog-human hybridity evokes the abject and results in Sandra-Lady's abjection from the family fold. Sandra's family struggle to believe that this dog is their daughter, and Sandra's attempt to resume her human subject position as Sandra Francy ultimately fails, symbolically illustrating the ideology that after adolescent change and the movement into adult embodiment, it is impossible to return to the child self and a child's subject position. Sandra's radical replacement-change from her child self into an adolescent 'wild thing' and then into a literal bitch in heat thus evokes an ideology in which adolescent replacement-change is irrevocable. In the wake of her drastically different experiences, Sandra only

feels she is still essentially the same person she once was when she nostalgically remembers her pre-adolescent self, with its beliefs and attachments.

iv. Memory: Links Between Past, Present, and Future Selves

A variety of theorists stress the need for adolescents to maintain a sense of personal history and suggest that a successful adult identity is achieved only when adolescents can "feel a progressive continuity" (Erikson 1968, 87) between their past and future identities (Blos 1962, 134-135; Kroger 1996, 50). The concept of replacement-change, of an inability to achieve this integration, often rests upon the loss of memory about and awareness of a prior identity, because regardless of drastic physical and behavioural changes, memories may link selves across time (Wiggins 1971, 45, 54; Williams 1973, 1-5, 13). When memories are displaced or entirely lost a replacement-change of identity may be considered to occur.

Gareth Matthews explores the discontinuity or "sense of alienation" many adults supposedly feel from their child selves because of what he terms "childhood amnesia," that is, adults' inability to recall significant portions of their lives, particularly their childhood years (1994, 81-88). However, while "episodic memories" may be lost, important memories form an autobiographical 'story line' that helps to construct and maintain a sense of continuous selfhood (87). Furthermore, if a philosophical 'linking criterion' is used, it becomes clear that unique selves cohere because people remember their past selves in successive links over the years, thus maintaining a sense of identity continuity over time (86). Even if certain memories are forgotten, knowledge of what was once remembered and of what once must have happened allows people to reconstruct their experiences and maintain a sense of continuity (Kihlstrom et al. 2003, 72). In metamorphosis narratives, memory is a significant determinant of identity continuity or discontinuity. The loss of self through a loss of autobiographical memory is often represented in terms of the danger of forgetting one's humanity if trapped for any length of time in animal form.

In Pierce's tetralogy, while Daine has no need to fear losing her memory of her originary human identity after Numair's spell has firmly isolated her 'essence' from her magic, her continuous identity is nevertheless overtly related to memory retention. Daine preserves her human bodily continuity through memory in a way which integrates her

metamorphosed animal selves with her prior and future human selves. Upon learning to shape-shift, she has difficulties regaining her human body until she learns to mentally imagine herself, a process which involves not picturing her human body, but remembering pivotal life events:

> She closed her eyes and tried to remember who Daine the human was. It was easier to remember her wolf-self, or her bat-self. So who was she?
>
> An image appeared before her eyes, a pool of copper fire with a central core of white light. Between core and pool lay a wall of clear power, like glass … The white core was her inner self, the sparkling wall was the barrier Numair once put between Daine and her magic, to stop her from forgetting her humanity.
>
> *Start there*, she thought. She found memories of Ma, of Grandda, of the house where she grew up. Next were the Snowsdale humans who tried to kill her for running with wolves. She saw Onua, who gave her work in Galla and a home in Tortall. Here were others who filled important places in her life, a mixed bag of nobles, commoners, warriors and animals. So *that's* who I am, she thought…
>
> (*Wolf-Speaker* 1994a, 213-4)

Daine's core, inner self, separated from her magic and its effects upon her body, is filled with the memories that make Daine human and maintain her identity as continuous. These memories remind Daine of her unique biography and her distinctive subject positioning in relation to other individuals. Her continuous selfhood is thus clearly constructed by the continuity of her memories, so that "remember[ing] Daine the human" allows her to return to human form: "Under her memories now she felt talons become feet, and wings become arms" (*Wolf-Speaker* 1994a, 228).

In contrast to Daine's memory retention and her consequentially firmly continuous identity, memory loss is a significant factor in the discontinuity of Sandra's identity in Burgess's narrative of metamorphic change. Sandra's metamorphosis into a replacement body which supposedly has access to a vivid sensuality inspires a continuous living in the moment that slowly leads to the forgetting of prior experiences and the inability to imagine

the future. Some time after becoming a dog, Sandra forgets her prior life, those she loves and hates, and her human identity:

> As the days and nights tumbled past, my life as a person began to
> seem like a dream to me … The people I knew became distant
> memories … I felt the past, even my recent doggy past, falling away
> from me. … By the end of another week, I had no idea that I had
> ever been a human girl called Sandra Francy. (138)

The erasure or discontinuity of Sandra's prior identity for considerable stretches of the narrative is emphasised by the renaming of Sandra and her dog-boyfriend so that they epitomise animal anonymity. The once human Sandra is renamed 'Lady', and Simon is called 'Fella', each character thus becoming mere generic representatives of their animal gender, their distinctive human identities eradicated. As Erving Goffman argues, the personal name is the most potent identity peg (1963, 58); Sandra's replacement name thus indicates that a replacement-change of identity has occurred. When Sandra-as-Lady sees a picture of her human self and remembers who she once was, she narrates that "I had recovered my memory. I was still a human being inside" (2001, 153). The recovery of memory thus reasserts a sense of continuous selfhood, regardless of prior memory losses and identity disjunctions. Identity is only totally provisional when memory is lost.

However, in Sandra's case, a loss of memory may not signify a replacement change of identity because such unreflexiveness appears to characterise Sandra, indicating an essential identity trait. Sandra notes that her human self was never prone to activating memory or attempting to integrate present with past and future. For example, she narrates: "I never think about anything, me. I just do it. I never look back or have regrets. Sometimes I think that I never even have any hopes for the future" (174). Additionally, Burgess's choice of first person narration for Sandra's tale further conveys a sense of essential identity despite memory loss because a continuous self, some unbroken being inhabiting or speaking an 'I', clearly persists to remember and carry the story throughout. Caroline Walker Bynum argues generally that such a continuous self may be a mere narrative technique, as without some identity persistence a metamorphosis narrative becomes a series of vignettes rather than a complete story (2001, 177-8). However, Burgess's selection of first person narration is deliberate, and while it often works to

intensify the apparent fragmentation and provisionality of Sandra's identity, it also encourages doubts as to whether Sandra's fantastic change really symbolises a replacement identity.

<u>*v. Recognition from Others*</u>

All of the identity criteria I have so far discussed (spatio-temporal continuity, behavioural-continuity, and memory-continuity) may be applied as self-assessment, but all are also effectively employed by others to determine the consistency of an individual's identity. One final way in which to consider the continuity or discontinuity of identity is thus through the criterion of recognition from others. As Erik Erikson has argued, a sense of continuous identity partially comes from "the perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity" and from "being assured of recognition from loved ones" (1968, 50, 165). The desire for the confirmation of one's continuity through recognition by loved ones and the fear of not being recognised or confirmed as continuous when one changes have long been metaphorically invoked in metamorphosis narratives. The most famous example of this theme is the ancient story of the great hunter, Actaeon, whose faithful hounds no longer knew him when he was transformed into a stag and thus tore him apart (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.138-257).

In the context of recognition from others, the mother is a powerful determinant of identity continuity, largely due to essentialist notions that mothers have an innate connection with their children. I thus approach the criterion of recognition from others in terms of the mother-daughter relationship in each of the texts under consideration. First, however, a fragment of Tove Jansson's *Moomintroll* series serves as a comparative basis for this discussion of the importance of mothers in determining the continuity or discontinuity of identity. Nancy Lyman Huse has noted in her study of the *Moomintroll* series that the mother figure, Moominmamma, is perfect in her "unconditional, intuitive love" (1987, 138). In *Finn Family Moomintroll* (1961 [1948]), Moominmamma thus knows her child even when he has been physically transformed by a magic goblin's hat. When nobody will believe that Moomintroll is Moomintroll because he does not *look* like Moomintroll (and they were not witness to the spatio-temporal continuity of his selfhood through fantastic metamorphosis), Moomintroll turns to his mother for a definitive

recognition of his continuous identity:

> "But who are you, my little beast?" [she asks initially].
>
> "Oh, please stop this awful game," wailed Moomintroll. "It isn't funny anymore. I am Moomintroll and you are my Mother. And that's that! … Look carefully at me, mother. You must know your own Moomintroll."
>
> Moominmamma looked carefully. She looked into his frightened eyes for a very long time, and then she said quietly: "Yes, you are my Moomintroll."
>
> And at the same moment he began to change. His ears, eyes, and tail began to shrink, and his nose and tummy grew, until at last he was his old self again.
>
> "It's all right now, my dear," said Moominmamma. "You see, I shall always know you whatever happens." (Jansson 1961, 35-36)

Not only does Moomintroll's mother know him, but the power of her loving recognition is enough to free her son from the spell he is under and enable him to regain his familiar form, executing what Maria Lassén-Seger has elsewhere identified as a "traditional resolution where love and recognition undo the spell of metamorphosis" (2006, 227). Moominmamma's promise to always know Moomintroll 'whatever happens', is metaphorically a promise that no matter how he might change in growing up, he will always maintain a continuous identity: the gaze of his significant (m)other will always reintegrate his identity after the occurrence of substantial physical changes.

An analysis of the workings of mother-child recognition in Pierce's tetralogy illustrates an overarching ideology that all humans undergo provisional identity changes throughout their lives but retain essentially the same identity. Daine's mother never has to identify Daine when she is in the form of an animal, but the significant humans in Daine's life never have great difficulty recognising her, whether she is body-borrowing or transformed. This is partly due to setting — Daine is situated in a fantasy otherworld in which magic plays a dominant part in human societies, and her friends are well aware of her metamorphic abilities. Thus, when an animal behaves in an odd manner, Numair is quick to ask, "Daine, is that you?" (*Wolf-Speaker* 1994a, 173). The concept of recognition

in Daine's relationship with her mother is still of great importance to the ideology of identity continuity in the text, however. Unusually, the significance is not centred upon Daine's mother, Sarra's, recognition of a transformed Daine, but on Daine's awareness of changes in her mother.

Daine realises that her mother, now living in the Divine Realms, has an altered identity but is still essentially the same person. Learning that her mother is now a minor god, Daine demands of a mutual friend, the cat goddess:

> "Is she my ma, then? … Is she who she was, Sarra Beneksri?"
>
> "Are you who *you* were?" asked the cat.
>
> About to say that of course she was, Daine stopped herself. Daine of
> Snowsdale could no more heal animals — or turn into one — than the
> sun could rise in the west. (*Realms of the Gods* 1996, 49)

However, Daine's wild magic, although undeveloped, was always part of her Snowsdale (childhood) identity, and her child self possessed the latent potential to shape-shift. Provisional identity changes are thus assimilated into an essentialist ideology in a way that denies replacement-change and asserts the priority of evolution-change and unfolding development.

The text emphasises that, like Daine, Sarra has merely developed to become more than she was, not become a radically different person. As a human healer in a relationship with the god, Weiryn, Sarra was made into a goddess at her death so that she could live with Weiryn in the Divine Realms, rather than in the Black God's Realm, where mortal dead usually reside. However, as the platypus god, Broad Foot, explains, her transformation "wouldn't have worked if [she] … hadn't liked such things already. Since she does, she became the Green Lady" (*Realms of the Gods* 1996, 48). Sarra was thus only able to become a goddess when she died because her human self and her human life contained the potential for this future transformation. Because Daine's mother puts a potentially dangerous creature into her apron pocket and seals the pocket at the top with magic, forgetting that there is a hole in the bottom, she is clearly still the somewhat impractical self Daine knew as a child, the mother who was known to forget a hat on a cloudy day (*Realms of the Gods* 1996, 48-50). Thus, the motif of mother-child recognition in the series emphasises that identity change is developmental rather than radical, and

identity continuity is maintained regardless of the identity changes inherent to growing up — or dying!

In comparison, in Burgess's narrative, the failure of others to recognise or accept Sandra's adolescent identity change foregrounds an ideology of replacement-change and the possibility of a discontinuous identity. Maria Lassén-Seger argues that Sandra's "metamorphosis is framed from the very beginning as a test of parental love that is destined to fail miserably" (2006, 227). When Sandra is transformed into a dog, she immediately returns to her family home, where she faces severe rejection from her mother and brother, who perceive her as a "mad dog" and drive her from the house (Burgess 2001, 11). The particular inability of Sandra's mother to recognise her daughter in dog form is represented as a deep betrayal of the mother-child relationship. It signifies a lack of unconditional love and understanding which may even be a potential cause of the replacement-change that has already occurred:

> All right, I was a dog, but she was my *mother*. She should've known who I was even if I'd turned into a clod of earth. … I disgusted her so much she wanted me dead. My own mother! No wonder I felt so betrayed. No wonder I'd turned into a stupid, pointless dog. (20)

An initial failure to recognise the metamorph is not uncommon, however, and at the denouement of the novel Sandra is finally recognised by her mother. She enthuses at this juncture: "How many people could pick their daughter out of a horrible hairy face full of fangs and a tongue like a face flannel? Could your mum do that for you? 'Cause my mum did it for me!" (169). While the pressure of consensus reality later appears to convince Sandra's mother that the dog in human clothing is not Sandra, her final plea for the fleeing dog to stay, and Sandra's brother's iteration to "Let her go!" suggests that Sandra's family did indeed recognise her, but found her so changed from her prior self that they disowned her (190), abjecting their transgressive teenager in order to maintain a rational family identity.

Burgess's narrative constantly emphasises that Sandra's transformation into a stray dog is a metamorphosis into something "disgusting," "something revolting and mad that ought to be destroyed" (111). Her metamorphosis is thus clearly a metaphorical re-enactment of her earlier adolescent identity change, which revolted her family and friends.

Largely, their distaste is a reaction to Sandra's transgressive teenage sexuality, which is perceived as morally abject. Just as Sandra's mother reacted to Sandra's new adolescent behaviour "like [she] was some sort of mad bitch" (implicitly, 'in heat') (77), her friend, Annie, acted as if Sandra "was the Great Slut of Withington" (79). The Francy family's repudiation of Sandra-as-Lady clearly relates back to Sandra's earlier drastic personality change at adolescence because the deciding factor in their rejection of Sandra-the-dog rests upon the way in which she chews up her childhood teddy bear, an action which her family take to symbolise a severe discontinuity from her prior self, asserting a change so total that her prior and present identities cannot be integrated. However, Sandra's first person narration maintains a sense of continuity between her child, adolescent, and dog selves through the suggestion that her behaviour in dog form conveys a latent essential identity her family never understood and she never emphasised until her adolescent rebellion. Sandra claims: "I'd never even liked Mr Brown [the teddy]!" (195). Thus, the lack of recognition Sandra receives from her family as a dog parallels their failure to recognise her continuous identity when she changed her behaviour as an adolescent to better express her essential identity.

Charles Taylor emphasises that our identity is defined always in dialogue with "the things our significant others want to see in us" (1994, 32-33). Recognising and despising the power of others to define the self, Sandra demands: "What right did they have to decide who I bloody was?" (Burgess 2001, 190). Sandra's hatred for the way in which others have the power to construct her identity is evident in her early adolescent behavioural change, when she realises that "the people [she] feel[s] most alive with are people … you can know and then forget about all in a week" (59), that is, people who do not know her and thus do not require her to conform to their expectations that she will have a certain type of continuous identity. Sandra's comment that "the person she [my mother] wants me to be isn't the way I am" (174) implies that Sandra has always had an essential identity that went unrecognised simply because her childhood self was obedient to social expectations, and she has now merely set her essential self free, rejecting all attempts to mould herself into the sort of person others want her to be. Being a dog is thus not so much a "symbolic refusal to grow up" (Lassén-Seger 2006, 229) as an expression of Sandra's true selfhood, so that she is not avoiding adulthood but simply living a hedonistic adulthood free of undesired social restraints and responsibilities. Marina Warner labels replacement-change

the 'Ugly Duckling' motif (2002, 79). However, just as the Ugly Duckling's change is not total because the swan was never a duckling after all, but always a cygnet, biologically programmed to unfold in such a way, Burgess's narrative finally seems to imply that Sandra's drastic adolescent identity change is not really a replacement-change.

<u>*vi. Blended Ideologies of Identity*</u>

Analysis of metamorphosis as a metaphor for identity continuity or discontinuity in Tamora Pierce's *Immortals* Quartet and Melvin Burgess's *Lady: My Life as a Bitch* allows us to perceive constructions of adolescent identity change as evolution- or replacement-change, entailing different ideologies of essential or provisional identity. Safely embedded within her spatio-temporally continuous body, despite its changes, Tamora Pierce's protagonist, Daine, is not subject to replacement-change. She merely 'develops' over time, enhancing rather than losing her unique subjectivity, and maintaining a continuity of identity through and past adolescence. Her character remains essentially the same and she is able to maintain consistent behaviour and advance in subject-positioning, retaining her memories and receiving recognition of her continuity from others. Metaphorically, Daine's story conveys the concept that an adolescent develops an adult self that is essentially continuous from the self they were as a child. The possibility of provisional identity is accepted only within the boundaries of a secure, unfolding, essential selfhood. Pierce thus blends essentialist and provisionalist ideologies of identity in a way which represents change as a positive and progressive development and expansion of self rather than self-disintegration.

Her humanist narrative may supply a more flexible and constructive ideology of adolescent identity change than Burgess's narrative, in which replacement-change appears to be possible but is bounded within adolescence, suggesting that much-desired changes of identity are impossible after the completion of pubertal changes. Sandra greatly desires to return to her prior childhood identity at moments throughout the novel, but this is finally impossible, and her new identity remains fragmentary and provisional, positioned in the moment and unable to be reintegrated with her childhood self. However, while Burgess's novel may seem to convey an ideology of provisional identity, it also hints at essentialist traditions in its suggestion that Sandra changed into a dog because her essence is and

always was animalistic and she always desired an escape from rational control, reflexivity, and the passage of time. Burgess's text is thus imbued with a postmodern ideological ambiguity which no doubt contributes to its controversial status.

Conclusion

Maturation is a major metaphorical tenor for the metamorphosis motif. In my discussion of two different tenors of maturation in this chapter, I have illustrated how analyses of this broad motif metaphor can provide insight into ideologies about particular aspects of maturation. In the first analysis, a specific metamorphosis sub-motif in which adolescent characters gain powerful predatory forms illustrates ideas about adult power relating to concepts of adult and adolescent embodiment and morality. This fantastic sub-motif offers a metaphorical expression of the attainment of adult power, which generates ideologies about the adolescent potential to become monstrous. Whereas, in **Chapter Two**, fears about the adolescent potential to become permanently other were related to concepts of corporeal developmental deviation and undesirable hybridity, in this motif metaphor such fears were based upon the possibility of different elements of adult maturity developing out of tandem and leading to violence and moral transgression. Analysis of this motif metaphor offered insight into some of the profound moral and social issues involved in maturation, particularly the perceived necessity for physical power and agential subjectivity to be balanced by intersubjective moral controls.

In the second analysis, fantastic metamorphosis as a vehicle for representing the attainment of adult identity conveys significant ideas about the links between identity and maturation, embodiment, behaviour, memory, and recognition from others. Fantastic metamorphic bodily changes can metaphorically convey ideas about the maturation process as a significant shift between child and adult identities. Such fantastic changes can highlight important features and conditions of identity and offer a metaphorical expression of the possibility of identity continuity or discontinuity in relation to adolescent maturation. In their particular presentations of identity continuity or discontinuity, fantasy narratives may convey different blends of essentialist and provisionalist ideologies of identity which communicate different ideas about maturation and subjectivity in the contemporary world.

My analyses of both tenors of maturation — developing powers and changing identities — extend our understanding of metamorphosis as a motif and offer insight into the rationales of different ideologies of maturation in Western texts and cultures. Having analysed a variety of important ideologies of childhood, adolescence, and maturation in my first three chapters on the fantastic metamorphosis motif, I now turn my attention to how fantastic metamorphosis may be used by authors to explore and express other diverse ideologies relating to youth experience, beginning with concepts of racial and ethnic difference and otherness.

CHAPTER FOUR.

Changing Representations of Werewolves:

Ideologies of Racial and Ethnic Otherness

The narratives discussed in **Chapter Three** illustrate that anxiety about becoming someone other (and particularly becoming someone monstrous) is frequently represented by fantastic metamorphosis into a canine form. Canine figures are highly significant to Western ideas about humanity, animality, and beastliness. Dogs are important in this respect (Leach 1964; Asker 2001; Haraway 2003), but wolves are particularly eminent — as Peter Hollindale states, wolves are "a unique presence in the human mind … a navigation instrument for humanity's perplexed route-finding in the modern world" (1999, 113) and "humankind's relations with the wolf are more complex and more intimate than with any other wild creature" (1999, 99). This complexity carries over into representations of werewolves, although an initial assessment of the two interrelated motifs may suggest otherwise, for both wolves and werewolves have long been simplistically constructed as unambiguous monsters that embody pure predatory instincts, carnivorous appetites, violent drives, and a will to destroy human beings.[32] A recent trend, however, has been the redemption of both wolf and werewolf figures, a move which illustrates some of the major ideological changes that have taken place within the West over the last few decades (Lopez 1978; Zipes 1983; Lawrence 1996; Hollindale 1999; Bourgault 2003, 2006). This new trend has frequently been linked to changing ecological ideologies (Zipes 1983; Hollindale 1999; Bourgault 2003, 2006), but it can also be interpreted as a signifier of other important ideological shifts, especially in relation to concepts of racial and ethnic difference (Arnold

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[32] There are many narrow demarcations for the term 'werewolf'. For my purposes (and most popular uses) 'werewolf' is a broad term conveying any transformation which occurs between wolf and human being. The wolf segment of the dyad may be a natural wolf, super-wolf, or hybrid wolf-human. 'Lycanthrope' is the most common alternative term for werewolf. Lycanthropy can mean both "the magical ability to assume the form and characteristics of a wolf" (in folklore and fictional narrative) and a "delusion that one has become or assumed the characteristics of a wolf or other animal" (in medical literature and fictional narrative) (American Heritage Dictionary 2000). The latter can be differentiated as psychological rather than supernatural lycanthropy.

1986; Greenleaf 1992, 56; Hall 2003, vii).

Racial and ethnic differences may be othered by what Kwame Anthony Appiah calls a "racialist" belief in racial or ethnic essences, a view "that all the members of each race share … certain fundamental, biologically heritable, moral and intellectual characteristics with each other that they [do] not share with members of any other race" (1995, 276). Appiah points out that racialism does not entail a hierarchical system or "a simple identification of one race with evil and another with good" (1995, 280), but this is certainly how it has commonly operated. For considerations of the nature of such racialist othering, fantastic literature is a valuable resource. Constructions of race and ethnicity habitually appear in fantasy and science fiction metaphorically, as represented through the vehicle of fantastic figures. As Jeffrey A. Weinstock argues, "SF [Science Fiction] aliens frequently function as thinly veiled metaphors for real-world racial, ethnic, religious, somatic, and political groups" (1996, 330). He notes that purely fictional beings are "never totally divorced from real-world politics" and "readily become metaphors for terrestrial groups and situations, thereby constructing and reinforcing specific ideological positions" (1996, 330).

The expression of disguised 'xenophobic' or racist sentiments within science fiction is well-recognised; Weinstock argues that 'extraterrestrialism' frequently "draws from repertoires of real-world stereotypes and so functions as an unproblematic extension of Orientalism" (Weinstock 1996, 330). However, fantastic figures may also be employed by authors to interrogate xenophobic or racist ideologies and present redemptive ideologies of racial and ethnic difference. Fictional depictions of aliens can therefore illustrate "the extent to which a given culture values … [or] fears human difference and diversity" (Weinstock 1996, 330). Werewolves obviously contain the same metaphorical potential as science fiction aliens when represented in certain ways in certain contexts. However, because the figure of the werewolf manifests conceptions of human animality, it may offer a more fundamental insight than other fantastic figures into some basic ideologies about physical and cultural difference. Specifically, the werewolf motif reveals two key ideological processes at work in the construction of racial or ethnic difference as otherness. It shows how any group may be imbued with projected constructions of generalised otherness that ignore factual specificity and diversity. It also illustrates how the projection

of these othering frameworks is a form of abjection, originating with an obsession about what is desirable and undesirable in the projecting group.

In the first instance, the figure of the werewolf may be read as embodying many of the qualities of otherness generically applied to different groups of people. Much recent race and ethnicity theory focuses upon the necessity of recognising the specificity of cultural differences and the ways in which different groups have faced different experiences of prejudice and racism. Avtar Brah, for example, writes that:

> [p]rocesses of racialisation are … historically specific, and different groups have been racialised differently under varying circumstances, and on the basis of different signifiers of 'difference'. Each racism has a particular history. It arose from a particular set of economic, political and cultural circumstances, has been reproduced through specific mechanisms, and has found different expression in different societies. (2000, 436)

A fantastic figure, however, even if it is deliberately aligned with an existing group of people, allows for a symbolic stress upon some of the common ideologies of racial othering.

Any group that faces hostility and racism from another group is faced with similar othering processes. Although these take specific forms for any one group, there is a recognisable collection of 'undesirable' qualities which have been traditionally applied to many othered groups, transforming their variable differences into a general inferior otherness, and these qualities are encapsulated in the figure of the werewolf. Where it functions as a vehicle for a tenor of racial or ethnic otherness, the werewolf motif therefore foregrounds the dehumanisation and demonisation inherent to othering processes. It illustrates how othered groups are often constructed as inferior by their alignment with corporeality, nature, animality, primitivism, savagery, instinctiveness, stupidity, regression, immorality, irrationality, chaos, abjection, evil, and contagion (Sollors 1995, 299-300; Mosse 2000, 197). Significantly, this motif metaphor also highlights how projections of otherness frequently peak with representations of the other as cannibal (Bradford 2001b, 38; Daniel 2003, 8).

The figure of the werewolf is thus an archetype for human otherness which can

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theoretically be applied to any individual and any group, for everyone is at risk of becoming othered and marginalised from some social category. Typically, however, when lycanthropy functions as a metaphor for racial or ethnic otherness, the norm is Western European or Anglo-American. There is some alignment of the werewolf with Native American groups, largely because the wolf is also an animal native to North America, but also because Native American attitudes towards the wolf are thought to be dissimilar from European conventions (see Lopez 1978). However, the werewolf more generally tends to function as a metaphor for European 'white ethnic' and religious groups who are or were minority groups within another Western European culture. Narratives are often set within the Middle Ages and openly refer to the history of prejudice and religious intolerance evident in the medieval werewolf trials. Significantly, non-redemptive werewolf narratives are far less likely to align the werewolf with a real racial or ethnic group; in such tales, the werewolf manifests the perceived dangerous otherness of non-specific strangers or of evil within humans in general. Stories that redeem the werewolf figure, however, frequently align the werewolf with a specific othered minority race or group. In such cases, the redemption of the werewolf is clearly an attempt to redeem othered figures in general by pinpointing how processes of otherness have unnecessarily projected negative qualities onto them.

Combined abjection and projection is thus the second key ideological process illustrated by the werewolf figure in relation to the construction of racial or ethnic difference as otherness. As I argued in **Chapter One**, those in power in Western society have typically rejected their human animality and attempted to maintain an ideal, disembodied image by projecting links to that animality elsewhere, onto consequentially othered groups. Constructions of racial and ethnic difference as negative otherness are thus narcissistic, merely externalised projections of egotistical concerns. Because traditional werewolf stories locate otherness in the wolf yet represent the wolf as partly human, such stories uncover the trace of familiarity in projected otherness, disclosing how difference is othered and feared because it is held to represent unwanted qualities that are felt to exist within. In particular, it shows how othering may be based upon a fear of human animality. Changing representations of the werewolf (and implicitly of the racial or ethnic other) are often explicitly linked in werewolf texts to shifting concepts about human

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animality as signified through the motif of 'the beast within' (Zipes 1983; Lawrence 1996; Hollindale 1999).

This brings us back to the broad ideological ramifications of Cartesian dualism within Western thought. When the human animal body is denied and corporeality is abjected, animals are feared for their trace of familiarity and laden with negative qualities that attempt to eliminate any sense of their commonality with humanity. Animals are thus probably the most basic othered group in the Western ethos. As Alan Bleakley notes, the biological, literal animal and the psychological, conceptual animal are quite different things (2000, xii). Mary Midgley outlines how the complex natures of various animals have been obscured by a "mythical stereotype" of the 'beast' (1995, 39). Animals have been made to embody all of the potentially uncivilised features that humans dislike and wish to disregard in themselves and their own 'nature' or culture, and animality has thus habitually signified violent, instinctive, chaotic, and evil forces (Otten 1986, 4; Scholtmeijer 1992, 190; Midgley 1995, 24-36, 39-49). The figure of the wolf has thus borne "projected guilt for the human predatory past and a present replete not only with consumption of animal flesh but with all manner of exploitation of and barbarity toward our own species and others" (Lawrence 1996, 9; also see Greenleaf 1992, 50). However, because what is abjected is never fully expelled, the assertion of human superiority over animals has always been accompanied by a sense of the repressed 'beast' within the human, representative of a fear of degeneration into undesirable, 'uncivilised' behaviour (Midgley 1995, 36-39). The werewolf, held to signify an "innate cruelty and blood lust in mankind," is the most obvious fantastic representative of this concept of "man's bestiality" (Lord 1973, ix; also see Lopez 1978; Salisbury, 1994 163-6).

How the werewolf also comes to represent racial and ethnic otherness through abjection and projection may be understood by reference to Ursula Le Guin's discussion of the Jungian Shadow (1974). The inner beast signified by the werewolf may be considered a manifestation of the Shadow, which is considered to be "the other side of our psyche, the dark brother of the conscious mind," often represented symbolically through animal forms (Le Guin 1985a [1974], 63-64). Le Guin writes that "[i]t is all we don't want to, can't, admit into our conscious self, all the qualities and tendencies within us which have been repressed, denied, or not used" (64). She notes how, "[u]nadmitted to consciousness, the

shadow is projected outward, onto others. There's nothing wrong with me — it's *them*. I'm not a monster, other people are monsters. All foreigners are evil" (64). Le Guin insists that "[i]f the individual wants to live in the real world," a world without the false perceptions caused by such projections, "he must withdraw his projections; he must admit that the hateful, the evil, exists within himself," and stop trying to construct himself as ideal by projecting what he fears outwards (64).

There has been a major ideological shift within the last fifty years in the conceptualisation of the inner 'beast' that suggests Le Guin's hopes for the withdrawal of projections has begun to be realised. Concepts of beastliness and evil have been disconnected from their essentialist attachment to animality in a deconstructive movement which breaks down the negative binary opposition between human and animal. The acceptance of the reality that "[w]e are not just rather like animals; we *are* animals" (Midgley 1995, xxxiv) has obvious effects in relation to ecological ideologies, so that the "re-visioning of humankind, its nature and its relations with the animal world" (Hollindale 1999, 99) alters ideologies about other animal species. As Le Guin's analysis would suggest, however, the deconstruction of human animality as beastly and evil also has an effect on representations of racial and ethnic difference, as the need for projection diminishes, allowing for an active engagement with the true differences of other groups of people. The precise characteristics of shifting ideologies of a beast within and of racial and ethnic otherness can be explored by tracing changes in representations of werewolves.

From a pan-global and -historical point of view, there has always been a range of werewolf schemata in folklore, legends, and other forms of oral and written literature (Douglas 1992, 172). Redemptive changes in the representations of werewolves have been evident in adult fantasy fiction since at least the 1940s (Langford 1997c, 1006) and in children's literature for the last twenty to thirty years. The stress in redemptive narratives upon werewolf families and/or packs rather than isolated individuals and on lycanthropy as a genetically inherited or inborn feature (caused by biological family traits, an inherited family curse, evolutionary change, a congenital abnormality in the process of gestation, or supernatural events or surroundings at the moment of birth) emphasises that new werewolf figures are intended to convey recuperative ideologies of embodied racial or ethnic difference (Summers 1966, 3; Lopez 1978, 236; Woodward 1979, 49, 113, 227). I will

illustrate these recuperative ideologies and their limitations by analysing a variety of contemporary American and British children's and young adult fantasy texts, including Maggie Pearson's *Owl Light* (1996) and *Dark of the Moon* (1998), Annette Curtis Klause's *Blood and Chocolate* (1997), and Patrick Jennings' *The Wolving Time* (2003). In order to provide a basis from which to discuss these redemptive ideologies, I will initially outline two traditional werewolf schemata that represent the wolf segment of the werewolf dyad as essentially abhorrent. In doing so, I will particularly focus upon the representation of the werewolf in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007).

1. The Abhorrent Beast Within: Negative Attitudes

A propensity for reading the fantastic figure of the werewolf metaphorically is evident in the many works which analyse the motif in relation to human violence and align werewolves with human criminals — mass murderers, serial rapists, and insane cannibals (Baring-Gould 1865; Eisler 1948; Woodward 1979; Otten 1986; Duclos 1998). Such analyses attempt to make sense of the existence of the motif by conceiving lycanthropy as a symbolic expression of the human capacity for brutality and destructiveness (Douglas 1992, 18; Baring-Gould 1973 [1865], 6-7). The conventional attribution of monstrosity to the figure of the wolf illustrates the common human rejection of animality as a repression of the 'beastly', inferior, chaotic, and threatening. An idea of the 'wolf' within humanity as a being who is evil and undesirable is conveyed in two potential formats, each of which metaphorically conveys negative constructions of racial and ethnic difference. The first of these, a schema of monstrous werewolves, manifests a simplistic image of embodied human difference as insidious, unmitigated otherness. The second, a sympathetic werewolf schema, advocates a cautious tolerance towards those who have inherited a loathsome but unintentional bodily otherness.

i. Monstrous Werewolves

The wolf has long been constructed as a symbol of essential evil in the Western imaginary. Montague Summers, one of the earliest English-speaking commentators on werewolves, writes that:

> all down the vistas of dateless centuries the wolf has ever been the
> inevitable, remorseless enemy of man … The distinctive features of
> the wolf are unbridled cruelty, bestial ferocity, and ravening hunger.
> … the wolf is ever the emblem of treachery, savagery, and
> bloodthirstiness … the eternal symbol of ferocity and inordinate evil
> appetite, hard by which rides cruel devouring lust.
>
> (1966 [1933], 65-66)

The traditional "monstrous werewolf" schema exercises this conventional concept of the wolf. In this schema, the wolf is a metaphor for atrocity and the werewolf is a metaphor for the conscious human expression of cruelty and wickedness, deliberately disguised beneath an apparently normal and benign human surface. The monstrous werewolf is an agential being who finds a malicious joy in destructive behaviour.

Monstrous werewolves are malevolent in both their forms, but their conjoined monstrosity is particularly linked to the evil 'essence' of the wolf. If they are not wolf or werewolf originally, then their capacity to become wolf is frequently represented as a choice they have made to express and further facilitate their wicked desires and acts. The transformation of a human into a slavering wolf in the monstrous werewolf schema is thus not perceived as an outbreak of an other from within but as the manifestation of an essential truth about the consistent evil otherness of the apparently human character. This iniquity is frequently represented in the form of a hunger to eat human beings. Sabine Baring-Gould, another early commentator on werewolves, writes that one definition of lycanthropy is "[t]he change of man or woman into the form of a wolf … through magical means, so as to enable him or her to gratify the taste for human flesh" (Baring-Gould 1973 [1865], 8). In the 'monstrous werewolf' schema, werewolves always hunger for human flesh, a cannibalism which (as I noted above) is considered the epitome of human otherness.

The figure of the monstrous werewolf may be read in certain contexts as a metaphor for essential racial or ethnic otherness. As an illustration of the tenet that strangers are to be justifiably feared and despised, the monstrous werewolf exposes how any particular person or group of people may be considered by members of another group to look human but embody evil. As Fredric Jameson writes, according to such ideologies,

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behind the other's "apparently human features a malignant and preternatural intelligence is thought to lurk" (2004, 190). Because the iniquity of monstrous werewolves is essentially linked to their wolf forms, they are "evil because [they are] Other, alien, different, strange, unclean, and unfamiliar" (2004, 190). Yet evil and monstrosity is also frequently an agential choice for these werewolves, so the motif highlights how such others are considered to have willingly given themselves over to wickedness and evil because of their essential biological animality and moral inferiority. Clemence Housman's allegorical tale, "The Were-Wolf" (1896), provides a classic example of the monstrous werewolf as a metaphor for the stranger who appears 'normal' but really embodies an evil that threatens the local community. Housman's werewolf appears alone, however. In more recent literature, monstrous werewolves are often depicted in packs, frequently in the process of attacking isolated towns (usually in America) or attempting to secretly take over the world — both obvious metaphors for the insidious racial or ethnic other (see Jamie Hall's annotated werewolf bibliography for a range of examples (2003)).

Monstrous werewolves are not common in children's and young adult fantasy fiction. This is partly because they are more suitable for the horror genre, functioning as "a cliché of terror" which has little to offer the more ambiguous and complex realm of fantasy fiction (Hollindale 1999, 102). It is also because the popular genres of children's and young adult fantasy literature have taken shape during the decades in which there has been an ideological shift away from the representation of racial and ethnic difference as simplistic, evil otherness. Nevertheless, relevant examples can be found in C. S. Lewis's *Prince Caspian* (1951), in which werewolves are crude monsters allied with other supernatural villains against the powers of good, and in Theresa Radcliffe's *Dark Enchantment: Valley of Wolves* (1996), in which a powerful Frenchman uses a magical salve to transform himself into a werewolf for nefarious purposes. Because the monstrous werewolf is unpopular in contemporary fantasy, however, fantasy narratives which do contain monstrous werewolves also often include a second werewolf schema, the sympathetic werewolf, in which the wolf remains essentially abhorrent but the human is treated with 'tolerance' for his/her embodied difference. In this context, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) is pertinent for discussion, as I will shortly illustrate.

ii. Sympathetic Werewolves

'Sympathetic werewolves' are said to have emerged around 1200AD in
entertainment literature, romance, and theological discussion (Bynum 2001, 94-5). Marie
de France's medieval narrative, *Bisclavret* (1198), is usually considered to be the first and
most illustrative example of a sympathetic werewolf schema, but the experience of
Sigmund and Sinfjotli in the Norse *Volsunga* saga is obviously along the same lines, as is
the well-known medieval account of the Ulster werewolves, recorded by Gerald of Ireland
around 1187 (Douglas 1992, 115; Otten 1986, 54-61; Bynum 2001, 15-18, 91-95, 105-
110).[33] Sympathetic werewolves are human beings who are cursed to become wolves
against their will due to an antagonistic spell, a contagious werewolf bite, or the accidental
use of magical water, herb, salve, potion, wolf fur, or wolf girdle. The unified otherness of
the monstrous werewolf, who is evil in both human and wolf forms, is here split into a
self/other dualism.

Sympathetic werewolves are thus binarised, their human form represented as
humane and their wolf form as an undesired outbreak of detestable animality. Because the
human is not malevolent and has not sought this metamorphosis, sympathetic werewolf
narratives generally extend the sympathy of the narrator and implied reader to the human
segment of the werewolf dyad (Douglas 1992, 248). The wolf form may be granted some
grace from evil if the human is able to retain the rationality to somewhat control the wolf's
brutal urges and resist attacking humans (see, for example, Stewart 1984 [1980], 100, 118).
However, sympathetic werewolves are frequently represented as unable to command or
even remember their wolf experience (for example, Vande Velde 1998). Even lacking
monstrous urges, the wolf remains in this schema an inferior and shameful form to be
eliminated or, at best, tolerated, as in Susan Shwartz's "The Wolf's Flock" (1988) (Skulsky
1981, 109; Douglas 1992, 115; Woodward 1979, 169).[34]

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[33] As Douglas B. Killings explains (1997), the *Volsunga* saga was first written down in Icelandic (Old Norse)
in the thirteenth century A.D, by an anonymous author. However, most of the material is based upon Old
Norse and Icelandic mythologies which are centuries older. The *Volsunga* Saga was first translated from the
Icelandic into English by Eirikr Magnusson and William Morris in 1888. It has enjoyed a recent return to
fame in Melvin Burgess's apocalyptic, futuristic reversion, published as *Bloodtide* (1999) and *Bloodsong*
(2005).
[34] Another, quite different, type of sympathetic werewolf narrative involves the nightmarish transformation in
which the evil wolf essence takes over the human self as well, so that sympathetic characters gradually
become totally monstrous once they are cursed or bitten. For an example, see the children's horror story,
Your Momma's a Werewolf!, by M. D. Spenser (1996).

While the monstrous werewolf schema metaphorically illustrates how an external other may be considered wholly abhorrent, the sympathetic werewolf schema demonstrates how the fear of this other's monstrosity comes from a sense of otherness within the self. In this schema, the abhorrent beast within represents the 'bursting free' of humanity's repressed animal drives, urges usually delineated in such narratives as regressive, horrid, and "uniformly evil" (Douglas 1992, 21). The sympathetic werewolf can thus be considered representative of the "sort of transformation to which we are prone when we lose an essential human perspective, the ability to look within as well as without" (Telotte 1986, 173). J. P. Telotte suggests that:

> [a]n improper mode of vision, such as the sort that enables us to abdicate our human responsibility or see in our fellow human beings that otherness we almost instinctively fear, in the end engenders that very monstrousness from which we initially and naturally recoil.
>
> (1986, 173)

In this way, the sympathetic werewolf is an example of a conceptual *doppelgänger*, exposing how the construction of an ideal Western self is dependent upon the simultaneous construction of a binary other — an other which yet contains a trace of the self (Douglas 1992, 253).

It is possible to further read the sympathetic werewolf as a vehicle for ideologies of racial and ethnic otherness. While sympathetic werewolves are rarely represented in packs (unlike monstrous werewolves), the representation of sympathetic werewolves as dangerous individuals within a normal community has some metaphorical resonance with this tenor. As individuals who carry biological otherness in the form of a hereditary curse or a curse relating to the time and manner in which they were born, sympathetic werewolves may be vehicles for the concept of an undesirable miscegenation and signifiers of a deceptively 'normal' other who bears a trace of 'contaminated' blood and so threatens to weaken the 'healthy' racial purity of the community and destroy it from within. This is especially clear when such narratives focus, as they often do, upon issues of 'romance' and thus of 'interbreeding' (see Shwartz 1988; Blair 1993; Viguié 2004).

Similarly, the contemporary concept of the contagious bite which may create a sympathetic werewolf symbolises the threat of degeneration into a 'less civilised' and

'lower' form of life and thus bears metaphorical parallels with colonial and Social Darwinist fears of regression through racial miscegenation or cultural incorporation (see Bourgault 2006). According to the Great Chain of Being, certain racial or ethnic groups were considered closer to a human animal past and were thus perceived as threatening, "regressive agents" who could infect and destroy white civilisation (Shildrick 2002, 30; Asker 2001, 144-160; Bradford 2001b, 114).[35] In addition, the way in which the dangerous sympathetic werewolf is treated is revealing: there is usually a manifesto that the werewolf cannot be blamed for their lycanthropy, that it is 'not their fault', for they are merely the victims of a curse or accident of birth. The sympathetic werewolf can thus be interpreted as a vehicle for a 'tolerant' but racist attitude towards what remains perceived as undesirable biological difference. Karen Coats argues that tolerance can exist only from a place of perceived superiority (2004, 155), and Appiah notes that any extension of equality or tolerance which comes with a proviso that it is given 'in spite of' difference means that this difference continues to be perceived as "count[ing] naturally or to some degree against one's dignity" (1994, 161). The metaphor of the sympathetic werewolf makes it clear that individuals should try to eliminate the 'curse' of being different if they can.

Sympathetic werewolves have always been more common in children's and young adult fantasy literature than monstrous werewolves, and they remain common in recent narratives, most prominently in the form of Remus Lupin in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (appearing initially in the third book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999)). This may mean that these kinds of racial and ethnic ideologies persist or simply that the sympathetic werewolf figure is considered too useful as a metaphor for generalised concepts of evil otherness, human violence, and insanity to be completely discarded. The fame of Rowling's *Harry Potter* series means that the sympathetic werewolf will remain very well-known, however, and that the wolf will continue to be seen as a slavering beast (although, in the film version of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), the

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[35] The motif of the contagious werewolf bite was new to the twentieth century. Adam Douglas attributes the introduction of this motif to the 1935 film, *The Werewolf of London*, and its current prevalence to its appearance in the popular 1941 film, *The Wolf Man*, which became "the definitive cinematic treatment of the werewolf legend" (Douglas 1992, 241, 248). Others trace its arrival in these movies and subsequent texts to a borrowing from vampire legends, particular Eastern European legends in which vampire bites were contagious and vampires were capable of metamorphosis into wolf form (Woodward 1979, 155, 194; Hall 2003, 12).

representation of the wolf segment of the werewolf dyad as a wolf-like creature rather than a realistic wolf indicates some attempt at differentiation between otherness and difference).

Whether biological difference remains othered in the series is ambiguous. Although Lupin was not born a werewolf but became victim to the 'curse' when he was bitten as a child, his wolf-like birth name adds a hint of inborn essentialism to his abhorrent lycanthropy, and this essentialism is intensified by the fact that the monstrous werewolf who infected him, Fenrir Greyback, bears the name of the evil wolf of Norse legend (*Order* 2003, 314). This monstrous werewolf is an active agent of regressive chaos who deliberately bites others (particularly children) and encourages them to join his terrorist pack:

> He regards it as his mission in life to bite and to contaminate as many
> people as possible; he wants to create enough werewolves to
> overcome the wizards. … Greyback specialises in children … bite
> them young, he says, and raise them away from their parents, raise
> them to hate normal wizards. (*Half-Blood* 2005, 313-314).

The term "contamination", evocative of discourses of disease and degeneration, is used repeatedly in relation to lycanthropy in the sixth book of the series; in a book which refers to a 'Half-Blood Prince', this becomes implicitly an issue of race (*Half-Blood* 2005, 572, 580).

However, because the only werewolves featured and mentioned in Rowling's series are male (especially males bitten as children), and because Lupin is the epitome of the English gentleman fallen upon hard times (particularly in the film version), and thus of the usual central 'norm', it is tempting to read lycanthropy in the series as a metaphor not for racial or ethnic difference, but for the frequently othered 'difference' of homosexuality — often wrongly considered to be the end-result of attacks by monsters who prey on children. Elizabeth Lawrence has already noted the way in which the contagious bite of werewolves has been understood to metaphorically represent the spread of AIDS (1996, 2). This implication is obvious in Rowling's series in the depiction of werewolves as diseased beings who require treatment at the wizarding hospital, St. Mungo's (*Order* 2003, 431-2; *Half-Blood* 2005, 442). Lupin is habitually described as looking "ill and exhausted" (*Azkaban* 1999, 59). Such implications are intensified by the way in which Lupin's

lycanthropic 'disease' interferes with a potential heterosexual relationship in the final two books of the series (2005, 2007).

Whatever the metaphorical tenor of lycanthropy is in Rowling's series (and it appears to be both race and homosexuality), it is significant that the motif is used to explore othering, social abjection, and political marginalization. Lycanthropy is used as a primary signifier for discourses of discrimination. Harry's friend, Hermione, champion of marginalised groups in the wizarding world, says: "all this hysteria about giants. They can't *all* be horrible … it's the same sort of prejudice that people have towards werewolves … it's just bigotry, isn't it?" (*Goblet* 2000, 377). Later, when discussing house elf rights, she reiterates: "it's the same kind of nonsense as werewolf segregation, isn't it?" (*Order* 2003, 155). Werewolves in Rowling's wizarding world are "shunned", "unable to find paid work" (*Azkaban* 1999, 261) because of social prejudices and official "anti-werewolf legislation" (*Order* 2003, 271). However, because lycanthropy in the series maintains links to a monstrous otherness which can only be repressed with the aid of the magical Wolfsbane Potion which makes werewolves "safe," rendering "harmless" the "fully fledged monster" within (*Azkaban* 1999, 258), Rowling's exploration of such prejudice remains problematic for social and political purposes; the sympathetic werewolf can only be tolerated and is understandably socially excluded because the beast within remains objectively abhorrent, threatening, and dangerous.

In describing the different ways in which werewolves have been portrayed over time, Caroline Walker Bynum delineates particular differences between the ancient, medieval, and modern werewolf, pairing the ancient and modern werewolf together as exemplifying the monstrous schema, in opposition to a medieval preference for a sympathetic werewolf schema (2001, 94-95). Such chronological differentiation is far too rigorous, partly because monstrous and sympathetic werewolves appear to have always existed side by side in the popular imagination (as the sympathetic werewolves of the *Volsunga* saga and the monstrous werewolf figures of medieval trials attest), but also because this distinction fails to fully encompass redemptive werewolf schema which have become popular in the modern era and may have had forerunners in earlier times. The wolf has not always been perceived as an abhorrent beast; there have been images and symbols of noble, wise, and benevolent wolves throughout Western history (see Lopez

1978; Davidson 1986 [1978]). Regardless of past representations, positive werewolf schemata have become particularly common in contemporary fantasy literature. This is significant because such schemata clearly convey important redemptive ideologies of racial and ethnic difference.

2. The Accepted Beast Within: Redeemed Otherness

The shift in representations of the werewolf in children's and young adult fantasy literature of the last twenty to thirty years pivots around a change in the signification of the beast within. The routine link between animality and inferiority has been broken, and the signification of 'beast' has been neutralised, separated from connotations of evil and cruelty. This is manifested in a new presentation of the inner wolf as a neutral or benevolent animal or super-being rather than an essentially abhorrent beast or monster. Thus, in comparison with monstrous werewolves, who are wholly other, and sympathetic werewolves, who embody self and other in a typical mind-body dualism, redeemed werewolf figures may have their human and wolf selves in tune with each other without being in conflict with the 'normal' world. The presentation of not only the human but the wolf segment of the werewolf dyad as sympathetic completely blurs the simplistic binary between human = good, self; wolf = evil, other. Ridding the animal within of essentialist connections to evil otherness reduces its danger, so that people become less inclined to protect themselves by projecting their feared inner otherness onto those who are perceived as externally different.

The redemption of the werewolf figure thus has obvious implications for metaphorical representations and constructions of racial or ethnic difference as otherness. In redemptive werewolf narratives, textual alignments encourage readers to equate werewolves metaphorically with groups who have been traditionally marginalised, misrepresented, and persecuted because of negative Western ideologies. Lycanthropy is no longer representative of inherited moral or behavioural characteristics which are to be despised, or of an embodied, disease-like curse to be sympathetically tolerated. Rather, it is represented as a biologically or culturally inherited moral and ecological superiority, a superficial difference in the way of being human, or a significant and perhaps

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incommensurable racial or cultural difference.

i. Idealised Werewolves

One of the major ways in which wolf and werewolf figures have been redeemed in recent fantasy literature is through idealisation. This movement can be read as a typical deconstructive reversal or inversion of binaries and the values attached to them in order to interrogate traditional beliefs and constructions. Thus, wolves are stressed to be benevolent and nurturing and humans are represented as destructive and cruel. Such idealisations of the wolf usually focus on a belief in the wolf's significant ecological role. Wolves are represented as morally superior to humans through an emphasis upon positive aspects of wolf culture and behaviour and comparatively negative elements of human 'nature' and culture. In both Gillian Cross's *Wolf* (1990) and Maggie Pearson's *Owl Light* (1996), this reversal involves an epistemological search that uncovers and lists newly-discovered facts about wolves. Wolves are understood to be social creatures that care for each other and their young, work cooperatively, and are unwilling to kill each other, making use of cultural procedures of submission to avoid any unnecessary losses of life.

Facts become blurred with idealisations, however, when texts claim that wolves only ever hunt the "weak and injured," never kill in excess, and never kill each other (Lopez 1978, 4). Idealisations tend to centre on assertions that healthy wolves have never harmed or attacked human beings without provocation, while humans have always hunted wolves (Pearson 2001 [1996], 45; Lawrence 1996, 6). This means that early oral and recorded histories of wolf attacks in the European past are largely dismissed as the over-exaggerated accounts of superstitious and simple-minded folk. When an awareness of the greater numbers of wolves and the dangers of hard winters in early European history is allowed for, this idealist schema is often limited to claims that while humans have hunted some wolf species to extinction, there has never been a believable record of a (healthy) wolf attacking a human in North America (Cross 1992 [1990], 124; Lopez 1978, 4). Barry Lopez draws attention to how such revisionist beliefs about wolves may (unintentionally) disregard indigenous peoples' knowledge and experience, not to mention their status as human beings (1978, 4).

The idealism that imbues this deconstructive reversal of ideas about the relative

ferocity and cruelty of wolves and humans is evident when the evils of human culture are blamed for any 'unnatural' behaviour among wolves. Thus, the young hereditary werewolf in *The Wolving Time* (2003), a novel by Patrick Jennings, tells his human friend that:

> my parents say wolves don't prey on people. … They don't say no wolf has ever attacked a human being … They say that usually when a wolf attacks a person it's because the wolf is sick, or desperate. There are many wolves that don't have enough to eat because either their prey has been decimated by humans or members of their pack have been killed by wolf hunters, which makes it more difficult to bring down big game. It's never easy making a living in the wild and these extra hardships sometimes cause a wolf to do things it normally wouldn't do. (2003, 52)

In a typical reversal, "[t]he evil traditionally attributed to werewolves is transposed instead to the ugly propensities of ordinary people" (Hollindale 1999, 111), and humans are revealed to be the real 'beasts', violent beings who hunt, torture, and murder others, causing wolves to become 'desperate' and 'do things [they] normally wouldn't do'. In a similar deconstruction, Gillian Cross deliberately unravels the use of the werewolf figure as a metaphor for the human criminal, allowing her protagonist, Cassie, who has been perceiving her terrorist father as a Big Bad Wolf, to accuse him finally of behaviour far inferior to a real wolf: "Wolves don't forget about their children … You wouldn't have done that if you were a *wolf*!" (1992 [1990], 136-7).

An idealised recuperation of wolf and werewolf figures has implications for the amelioration of negative ideologies of race and ethnicity. It suggests that traditionally othered groups are really the innocent and possibly morally superior victims of another group's projections of their own evil. Again, Patrick Jennings's werewolf novel offers a primary example, for it depicts the horrors engendered by a late sixteenth century European hostility towards strangers and foreigners. In this text, newcomers to Saint-Eustache, a village in the French Pyrenees, become easy targets for the villagers' scapegoat projections, resulting in unjust imprisonments, tortures, and executions (2003, 37-38). The pubescent Laszlo and his werewolf parents, Rita and Kalman, have lived near the village for many years, but have always been ostracised by the locals, in large part (we are led to

presume) simply because they belong to a different ethnic group, being Magyar from Erdély, a region "[t]he French call … Transylvanie" (23) — a land commonly invoked in fantasy and horror fiction as a landscape containing vampires and werewolves (Ashley 1997, 960).

Rita draws explicit links between werewolves and othered ethnic or racial groups in a way which reverses the conventional application of demonising signifiers:

> It isn't right … What goes on in that village in the name of God goes against everything natural in the world, and it is certainly not the only village that abides such injustice. Your father and I, our parents, and theirs, and countless generations before them have lived in many such villages in many lands all over the world, and each time we hope for fairness and respect for life, but each time we find just the opposite.
>
> (2003, 167)

The evil representatives of the church and the hostile villagers are explicitly compared with the gentle, compassionate, and generous strangers, foreigners, and werewolves depicted throughout the novel. Like the inoffensive humans who become victims of the villagers' projections, the local wolf pack are also revealed to be innocent beings merely going about their daily lives but made to suffer because of others' paranoia. The analogy is intensified by the discrete way in which the wolves treat their own wolf stranger, the sad lone wolf, Bertok, who is regarded with caution but not hatred and is eventually successfully assimilated into the wolf pack.

According to an idealised werewolf schema, external beasts such as Jennings' wolf pack are not in fact evil creatures, and human immorality cannot thus be blamed upon a 'beast' within (Midgley 1995; Scholtmeijer 1992, 193-4). The beast within is revised, and evil is not only separated from animals but suggested to be a consequence of the rejection of animality — it is concluded that the behaviour of the human villagers and officials is caused by their fear of their own place in the natural world. Considering themselves separate from and superior to the physical world, the villagers need to hold evil others responsible for the natural phenomena (such as "hailstorms and droughts … injury, disease … [and] plague" (Jennings 2003, 36)) which they consider should no longer affect them. Rita says:

> You must remember that the men who pursue us … no longer rely on
> their senses. They have lost them. They don't know what is all
> around them. They've lost touch with their nature. They believe they
> are superior to it, that God has made them so, but I see God more in
> the leaves of a tree, or in the eyes of a wolf, than I do in such
> murderous men. I do not believe that it is God that motivates their
> actions. It is fear. (167-168).

Maggie Pearson's idealised werewolf figure is also represented as maligned because of abjected human links to nature:

> A werewolf is nothing to be afraid of. Gran said so …
>
> 'Once upon a time, … there was an animal called Man. He
> lived in a cave and he ate mostly roots and berries. But sometimes he
> hunted the other animals, and sometime the other animals hunted him.
>
> 'And, true to his animal nature, he was alive to every sound
> and scent and shadow in the world about him.
>
> 'But Man grew to be a whole lot cleverer than any animal that
> had gone before … he began to be ashamed of his poor relations, the
> animals.
>
> 'Most of all, he was ashamed of that small part of himself
> which still heard the call of the wild, lonely places and whose dream
> would always be to hunt the badger by owl-light and run with the deer
> and to live in tune with the changing of the seasons.
>
> 'Man was ashamed — and a little afraid. And so he made up
> stories to frighten himself about a creature that could not resist the
> call. A creature that was half-man, half-wolf.
>
> 'He called this creature the werewolf.' (2001 [1996], 1-2)

In order to redeem the werewolf figure, Pearson makes a common contemporary claim for the authenticity of positive models of wolves. Such claims usually dismiss contemporary werewolf motifs (especially those developed in horror films) and search in ancient myth and folklore for the 'proof' of wolves' supposedly true, ideal nature (Douglas

1992, 260-61). This proof is often manifested through conjectures (which are represented as facts) about prehistoric humankind's affirmative feelings about wolves and the natural world (also see Lopez 1978; Zipes 1983; Douglas 1992, 260-61; Lawrence 1996, 6). Pearson conveys a view that wolves are essentially wonderful creatures that were once perceived as such by featuring an idealised retelling of Marie de France's *Bisclavret*, in which the werewolf is presented as content with his dual form. He further embodies a role as the guardian of nature and other animals (2001 [1996], 177, 238). Like this idealised bisclavret, Pearson's werewolf, Lemmy, is portrayed as totally in tune with the natural world, acting as nature's custodian in his wolf form, while his connection with nature is signified by his employment as a gardener in human form. The title of Pearson's werewolf narrative, *Owl Light*, comes from John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (1623), in which the mad villain, Ferdinand, is a psychological lycanthrope who claims "I'll go hunt the badger, by owl-light" (Hollindale 1999, 111). In Pearson's novel, which is focused around a human plot to capture badgers for illegal badger-baiting, 'wolfish' cruelty is disconnected from the werewolf and projected back upon humans. The werewolf is not only redeemed but idealised as the protector of other animals and is depicted in one romanticised scene affectionately nuzzling (rather than eating) a badger cub (2001 [1996], 76).

Pearson's narrative illustrates how the idealised werewolf is metaphorically reminiscent of the romanticised 'noble savage'. In her text, the noble savage can be considered in terms of a 'white ethnic' rather than non-European indigenous group. 'White ethnicity' in this respect could be framed in terms of class, but the idealised werewolf's links to the noble savage motif are more fully encompassed by recognising the English peasantry's ethnic otherness in Pearson's novel. In some ways, the depiction of the idealised werewolf as noble savage is an attempt to pay tribute to what is seen as ideologically superior indigenous perceptions of the environment. For example, Pearson references a belief in Native American respect for the wolf, going so far as to claim that "Native Americans say that when the wolf eats, no one goes hungry," for "when the wolves have eaten their fill, they howl, inviting the smaller animals to feast on what's left over" (2001 [1996], 44).

However, a 'noble savage' representation of the werewolf has potentially problematic implications because in Pearson's *Owl Light,* and its sequel, *Dark of the Moon*

(1998), her werewolf, Lemmy, is portrayed as inferior in his human form. He is "Lemmy the simpleton, literally 'not all there'" due to his possession of a dual body — "[i]t was only in the darkness that … he could become truly himself. Bisclavret. Lord of the forest, alive to every sound and scent and shadow in the world around him" (2001 [1996], 234). Lemmy is representative of the indigenous 'folk' of England, as is evident in his alignment with the Stittles, an ostracised, rural working-class family whose members have lived in the local village for millennia (2001 [1996], 12-13). A racial analogy is apparent in the emphasis that werewolves "probably have to be born that way, not made" (2001 [1996], 4). We are told that it used to be the "cunning man" who could shape-shift, but now figures such as old Mr. Stittle, and the novel's protagonist, Hal, are the cunning men (2001 [1996], 239), and the werewolf is portrayed as unintelligent and practically extinct, belonging to a time which has passed. This is particularly palpable because Lemmy is strongly connected to the past; he apparently came out of history and eventually goes back to live in it (1998, 180), which suggests that he represents the ideal of a noble savage race or culture which is endangered, 'dying out' in the present due to social change, or permanently located in the past where it can remain separate and untrammelled (a metaphor borne out by the fact that Lemmy is notably smarter in his human form when living in the past) (Gutmann 1994c, x). This impression is somewhat mitigated by the hint that Hal's baby brother may become a werewolf because he was born on Christmas Day (an old Northern European superstition — see Baring Gould 1865; Cohen 1996). Because Hal is a cunning man, however, it seems unlikely that his brother will be, and both boys are, at any rate, new arrivals to the village and so replacements of the older village 'folk' such as Mr. Stittle and Lemmy.

The idealised werewolf schema can be interpreted as potentially multiculturalist because it appears to value difference and expounds "the virtues of 'deviant' or 'alien' cultural values" (Menand 1995, 346). However, while idealised depictions of the virtues of different groups are obviously redemptive, they continue to essentialise difference, limiting all members of a category of people to a certain stereotypical way of being. Furthermore, when such virtues are idealised in connection with romanticised representations such as the noble savage, they can be condescending and present certain groups as victims; the idealised wolf may thus be 'de-clawed', and not acknowledged as powerful and dangerous. The idealised werewolf schema may therefore metaphorically represent merely another

stereotype of the racial or ethnic other, illustrating a continuing inability to comprehend people from different racial and ethnic groups as 'normal' (variable) human beings. This latter point of view, however, has appeared in other contemporary werewolf narratives which present redemptive ideologies of lycanthropy as non-essential difference.

ii. Non-Essentialist Werewolves

'Non-essentialist' or 'non-essentialised' werewolves may be portrayed with elements of idealism or monstrosity, but their key characteristic is that there is no essentialist link between their wolf form and either of these constructions. Such werewolves are usually biologically determined to become a wolf, but their biological form is represented as having no essentialist moral or behavioural characteristics, such as automatic manifestations of superiority or inferiority, intelligence or stupidity, morality or immorality, good or evil. Thus, non-essentialist werewolves are conceived as individually unique, agential creatures, each capable of choosing evil, good, or neutral behaviour. Implicitly, this bears the ideological message that both monstrosity and goodness are abstract concepts borne out in individual acts.

Narratives tend to convey this non-essentialism by interrogating all of the elements of prior werewolf schemata, turning every default value into a variable and leaving only one constant attribute: that wolf and human forms are not inherently evil or good. A non-essentialist werewolf schema thus moves away from the total othering of the monstrous werewolf, from the binaristic selfhood/otherness of the sympathetic werewolf, and from the romanticised otherness of the idealised werewolf, to represent lycanthropy as a metaphorical expression of physical difference which must be read as superficial, relating only to appearance rather than substance. The wolf and the human stranger are thus redeemed from a position of otherness, and the 'beast within' no longer refers to a wolf or animal self but to the ability of all human beings to execute evil.

There are two paradoxical liberal humanist ideologies at the heart of this non-essentialist werewolf schema: an ideology that everyone is collectively the same (a sense of shared identity as humans or living beings, or an emphasis on a non-essentialist basis for all), and an ideology that everyone is individually different (a sense of unique personalities and life-paths). The first of these emphasises similarities over differences, and cultural and

physical differences are perceived as superficial in comparison with a common 'humanity'. Charles Taylor has called this the "politics of universalism" and explored how its aims within national politics are to acknowledge the equal dignity of all citizens and to provide for the "equalization of rights and entitlements" (1994, 37). This politics may be extended (in animal rights and ecological ideologies) beyond a sense of shared human rights to stress the right of all living beings and ecosystems to equal respect and consideration (Rockefeller 1994; Lopez 1978, 249). In its potential emphases on both a non-essentialist basis for moral actions and/or universal human capacities for making agential, rational moral choices, the politics of universalism may work in conjunction with a second ideology, that everyone is different. The "politics of difference," as Taylor labels it, can take two forms, depending on whether it focuses upon the "unique identity of … individual or group" (1994, 38). I will consider individual identity here and discuss group identity in relation to my final werewolf schema, multicultural and incommensurable werewolves.

In its appearance in non-essentialist werewolf narratives, the ideology that everyone is different emphasises the importance of individuality, presenting a "picture of 'atomistic' individuals who are creating their identities and pursuing their ends independently of each other" (Gutmann 1994b, 7). Because such individuals make their own agential choices, individual character and behaviour is proposed to be far more important in representations of value and worth than what are perceived as superficial physical or cultural differences. As Howard Winant points out, this ideology is evident in Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, in which he hopes that people will one day not be "judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character" (Winant 2000, 183-4). Such a hope dismisses white racialist connections of physical difference with essential negative (black) or positive (white) moral and behavioural characteristics. The individual capacity for moral agency is emphasised. It is considered necessary to treat any person as a distinctive, non-essentialised personality and to avoid making conjectures about their character based upon their physical or cultural attributes.

Children's and young adult fantasy narratives have been using the figure of the werewolf to present and explore this redemptive ideology since at least the nineteen-eighties. In some stories, a non-essentialist ideology is used to redeem the wolf from a position of otherness and to explore the extent to which human projections have falsely

othered the wolf in order to disregard humankind's own undesirable impulses. For example, Debra Doyle and J. D. Macdonald's short story, "Bad Blood" (1988), exposes how the signifier 'wolf' offers humanity an image of monstrosity which has nothing to do with the wolf form itself. The first werewolf character the story introduces, Jay, is an apparently monstrous werewolf, evil in both forms. He tells of how, after accidentally receiving werewolf blood through transfusion, he began to experience "[s]trange dreams, about changing into something fierce and powerful, getting free of everything and running through the night" (8). Jay says, "[a]fterward, in the mornings, I'd find dirt under my fingernails, and sometimes blood. … It was great — I could do things I'd only dared to think about before, and nothing could touch me" (8).

According to Jay's description, the wolf form entails monstrosity, but when a second, clearly non-essentialist werewolf appears in the narrative, rational and benevolent in both forms, the schema of automatic evil to which Jay adheres is called into question. Mr. Castillo, one of the teachers supervising the school trip on which Jay decides to torment and kill his classmates in wolf form, is also a werewolf, and he uses his wolf form to protect the schoolchildren and defeat Jay. His actions allow for the representation of evil as a choice, not an essential component of certain body shapes or forms. Jay is not a monstrous werewolf, for his atrocities are not represented as a quality of evil otherness essentially connected to the wolf form; he has merely chosen to employ his wolf form in this way, falsely using his lycanthropy as a licence for monstrosity in a way which has metaphorical resonances with the occasional justification of violent crimes by men on the basis of 'natural biological urges' (usually pinpointed to testosterone levels) (Cranny-Francis 1995, 25-6). Mr. Castillo tells the first person protagonist of the narrative, Val, that werewolves are not essentially monstrous but they may perform evil acts "[f]or the same reasons people do … Whatever those are. If chance hadn't made him a werewolf, … [Jay would] have probably done something else instead" (1988, 32). The story concludes with the stress that "most lycanthropes are everyday ordinary people. Jay was one of the unpleasant exceptions" (34).

The phrase "everyday ordinary people" is obviously intended here to stress the commonality of living creatures going about their daily lives in their various ways, although it holds obvious reference to the American way of life as the 'normal' human

routine. Its main intent, however, is to shift evil away from a stereotypical attachment to one 'race' (werewolves) and onto the acts of individuals. It emphasises the existence of moral similarities between cultures (that 'everyday ordinary people' agree that attacking others is wrong). Because Mr. Castillo and his wife are Hispanic, human moral similarities are obviously intended to outweigh cultural differences. The metaphorical link between Mr. Castillo and lycanthropy somewhat aligns the werewolf with 'ethnicity' (recalling that Anglo-Europeans are rarely read as an ethnic group). Other non-essentialist werewolf narratives, however, more explicitly align the misconstrued werewolf with othered social groups.

Harry Turtledove's "Not all Wolves" (1988) is a representative example of the non-essentialised werewolf as an explicit metaphor for redeemed racial or ethnic difference. In this short story, set in medieval Cologne, a young German boy, Dieter, begins to turn into a wolf at the full moon, a change precipitated by an unanticipated inborn gene activated by the bodily changes of puberty (72). On his fourth metamorphosis, Dieter is seen in the process of transforming and is hunted in his wolf form by the townsfolk. At the Jewish quarter, he finds shelter with an old man who hides him because they share a marginalised social positioning as recipients of negative othering processes. The author's decision to focalise the story through a werewolf character exposes the extent to which the townsfolk's othering of Dieter's physical difference is ungrounded and unnecessary. We learn that contrary to the popular belief that (were)wolves are bloodthirsty, Dieter "had no urge to tear the throat out of every man and beast he saw; past stealing a flitch of bacon once, he had gone hungry on nights the change struck him" (73). Dieter longs to tell the townsfolk: "*It's not my fault … I do no harm*" (71). There is something of the sympathetic werewolf in the suggestion that 'fault' is involved in bearing difference, but on the whole this is reworked to emphasise the extent to which notions of 'blame' should not be an issue at all.

While monstrous and sympathetic werewolf narratives have sometimes made their werewolves the protagonists of their stories, in redemptive werewolf narratives such focalisation allows for a defamiliarisation of automatic links between difference and evil. Dieter is already a somewhat marginalised member of the community in Cologne, for he is "an orphan, making his living as best he could, doing odd jobs for weavers and tanners, enamelers and smiths" (72). However, as a white male who experiences the false

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projection of negative otherness, this focalisation obviously encourages implicitly white, male readers to align themselves with the victimised other and adopt the consciousness that otherness is not a given truth but a construction about external difference. In particular, by aligning the othering of an innocent white boy with the othering of medieval Jews, readers are clearly intended to interrogate traditional ideas about Judaism as otherness.

The use of the werewolf as a vehicle for conveying the unjust othering of the Jewish people is reasonably apt — beyond the analogy by which Jews have been made to seem inferior and inhuman by an alignment with animals, both werewolves and Jews have been linked to occult forces and medieval demonology (Mosse 2000, 197-198). Furthermore, like the (were)wolf, who is frequently accused of hungering for human (and particularly children's) flesh, the Jewish people have also historically faced accusations that they slaughter Christian children and drink their blood (Mosse 2000, 195-198). Dieter is aligned with the Jewish, one of the most othered groups in history (Grosz 1993 [1990d], 61), when he is sheltered by the elderly Jewish man, Avram. When Dieter returns to human form, the two males have this conversation:

> "Why did you save me?" Dieter blurted. "I mean — everyone else who saw me wanted to kill me on sight. What made you so different from the rest of them?"
>
> Avram sat silent so long on his stool that Dieter wondered if he had somehow offended him. At last the old Jew said slowly, "One thing you should remember always — you are not the only one ever hunted down Cologne's streets." …
>
> … Avram was going on, as much to himself as to Dieter, "No, lad, and not all wolves run on four legs, either. You ask me, the ones with two are worse. Keep clear of them, and you'll do all right." He opened the door.
>
> Yesterday, Dieter thought as he stepped into the cool damp air of early morning, he would have had no idea what the old Jew was talking about. Now he knew. (82-83)

Avram's comments reflect the humanist "liberal belief in a universal subjectivity (we are all just people)" (hooks 1992, 167) — that is, the view that shared interior qualities of

being human (such as the capacity for compassion) are more important than exterior corporeal or cultural differences. The nature of Dieter's metamorphosis emphasises this ideology — Dieter's change is physical only, not mental or emotional: "[i]nside the fleshy envelope of a wolf … he kept the wits he had as a boy" (71). Thus, like the persecuted local Jewish people (metonymically represented by Avram), Dieter is hunted purely because his external difference awakens fear in the dominant local group; in this case, a fear of humanity's animal origins. The message is that monstrosity is unrelated to appearance and is centred in human agency; it can be represented only metaphorically as wolf-like, because real wolves (as Dieter experiences) are not really monsters either.

An attempt to represent wolves and werewolves as non-essentialised, through an emphasis that every being is an atomised individual with their own nature and choices, is also evident in Patrick Jennings' *The Wolving Time* (2003)*, even though, as I have argued, Jennings' wolves and werewolves are mostly idealised. A non-essentialist ideology, however, is implicit in the careful characterisation of the werewolf family members as individuals with their own idiosyncratic personalities. For example, while the protagonist Laszlo's father, Kalman, is described as a person who "worried too much" (18), his mother, Rita, is described as "always either laughing or waiting to laugh. Even under the direst of situations, she was at worst impatient, frustrated that laughter was so far out of reach" (19). Similarly, the wolves that live in the nearby forest each have their own traits, some "project[ing] brashness," while others show "cunning," or "confidence" (105). This insistence on individualism comes with a biological equivalent: "No two wolves, like no two people, ever look alike" (66). A politics of individual difference, drawing on a sense of individual, essential selfhoods, replaces essentialist ideologies based upon racial or ethnic stereotyping.

Thus, while Laszlo explains the possibility of wolf attacks on humans as partly due to each wolf having an individual personality, so that "some wolves are just aggressive, the way some people are" (52), this ideology also allows for the recuperation of individuals who participate in aggressive group acts. When Kalman generalises that all the villagers of Saint-Eustache do "terrible things," Rita protests that they are not "all bloodthirsty monsters" (28). While she agrees "[i]t's true that … they participate in shameful, sometimes unspeakable, things," she attributes this to "fear or ignorance" and emphasises

that "[t]he villagers are people, remember. They are none of them the same" (28).

 In its range of ideologies about difference, *The Wolving Time* clearly moves between the components of idealised and non-essentialist werewolf schemata. A tendency towards such slippage is evident in the text's further correspondence with the final werewolf schema I discuss, multicultural and incommensurable werewolves. This flexible narrative thus allows for an expression of the second form of the "politics of difference" which I touched upon above — the unique identity of a particular group (Taylor 1994, 38). This politics is manifest in the text in the fact that the ability to become a werewolf is an inborn characteristic, making werewolves equivalent to a specific racial or ethnic group. When the orphaned human girl, Muno, wonders if her adoption into Laszlo's family means that she can become a werewolf, Rita says:

> [s]adly, it's not something one can choose to be. … There's nothing
> wrong with being human … just like there's nothing wrong with being
> a wolf, or a werewolf, or even a rat. We are what we are born to be.
>
>   (2003, 193)

 On the other hand, these hereditary werewolves cannot gain the ability to transform until they swim through a body of magical water, "a wolving pool" (92), and they must make a conscious decision to do so (93). The choice about whether to unlock latent werewolf powers by entering a wolving pool can only be understood as a metaphor for the possibility of 'passing'. Like the members of certain ethnic or racial groups who have the capacity to assimilate to a majority culture and forgo their own ethnic or racial heritage, werewolves can choose to not fully develop their ethnic or racial identity by not attaining the ability to transform. This explicitly means that they would not have to face prejudice and live in fear of being discovered (93-4), but it is also a failure to cultivate what may be perceived as their "authentic" selves (see Taylor 1994, 30; Appiah 2000, 612). This is evident in the paradox that it is precisely at the moment of facing his choice about whether to become a werewolf at the wolving pool that Laszlo most thinks of himself as being "*bred*" (2003, 93) and by the fact that when he looks into the pool, he sees "a reflection of a wolf," a clear symbol that lycanthropy is ordained by his interior essence (94). Because non-werewolf strangers face prejudice and persecution in the narrative anyway, it is implicit that choosing not to enter the pool would be a wasted sacrifice. Technically,

werewolves in supernatural fantasies always have to 'pass', hiding their difference from most others in order to live in the human world, but Jennings' particular construction illustrates that werewolf figures may be metaphorically imbued with specific multiculturalist ideologies.

iii. Multicultural and Incommensurable Werewolves

An ideology of non-essentialism does not necessarily mean that the unique cultural differences between groups are completely disregarded or that it is believed to be desirable for the cultures of various ethnic groups to blend into one common culture. However, a non-essentialist perspective may overlook the significance of some differences or may fail to see the possibility of the assimilation or loss of such differences as problematic. The fact that Charles Taylor also refers to the "politics of universalism" as "difference-blindness" suggests that there needs to be a stronger recognition that biological and cultural differences between racial and ethnic groups exist and that, however superficial they may be, their existence has certain significant effects (1994, 40). As bell hooks states, for example, the idea that we are all the same fails to eliminate racism, for in the context of American society, at least, whites may "have a deep emotional investment in the myth of 'sameness,' even as their actions reflect the primacy of whiteness as a sign informing who they are and how they think" (1992, 167). hooks's comment highlights the fact that racial and ethnic differences continue to *matter* in social life and structure, affecting the formation of identities, social positions, and relationships. If they are not acknowledged as a reality, we risk ignoring or making light of people's experiences of racialism and racism (Appiah 1995, 277; Williams 2000).

Furthermore, an ideology that groups' differences are less important than their similarities is felt by some to lead to the negative suppression, incorporation, or assimilation of difference. Non-essentialism may thus seem to threaten people's enjoyable experience of their ethnic and racial heritage and/or make that heritage seem less important than some other dominant cultural 'norm' (Menand 1995, 336-337). Some suggest that "parallel cultures" can interact without this occurring — Louis Menand notes that:

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> [i]n a pluralist model, groups maintain their traditional folkways
> immune from the interference of other groups; but there is also a
> shared public space, where people engage with one another in the
> terms of a common culture. (1995, 346)

Radical versions of multiculturalism critique this approach, however, suggesting that the concept of a common culture merely "enshrines the norms of the dominant group, and thus functions as an enforcer of existing inequalities" (Menand 1995, 346). Such critiques may present an alternative identity politics which draws on 'cultural relativism' ("the view that there is no basis for judging the values of other people's cultures") and which "assumes the ultimate incommensurability of group values and interests" (Menand 1995, 346). These radical ideological standpoints may then be used to advocate a form of cultural pluralism which proposes a "permanent cultural and physical separation" of ethnic or racial groups (Patchen 1999, 294; also see Menand 1995 346).

As with non-essentialist werewolf schemata, multicultural and incommensurable werewolves are not inevitably monstrous or ideal. The multicultural or incommensurable werewolf schema duplicates non-essentialist assertions of monstrosity as a rational choice and similarly rejects the application of negative otherness to those with physical or cultural differences from any conceived 'norm'. However, this schema may incorporate essentialism in the form of insurmountable biological or cultural differences between ethnic and racial groups. A belief in insuperable racial or ethnic differences may be communicated by a return to some essentialist werewolf schemata components and strengthened by notions of gendered sexual relations, so that race and gender intersect to represent "the incommensurability thesis" (Menand 1995, 346). Annette Curtis Klause's young adult supernatural fantasy, *Blood and Chocolate* (1997), can be understood from this critical perspective. As with numerous other werewolf narratives, *Blood and Chocolate* is usually classified as a horror text, but as I argued in the **Introduction**, the werewolf motif is genrically variable. Because Klause's novel focalises through a likable werewolf protagonist and does not represent monstrous werewolves, it is better suited for definition as fantasy.

A racial or ethnic metaphor is explicit in *Blood and Chocolate* through Klause's representation of her werewolf pack as a different species from humans. They are "*Homo*

lupus" (190) to humans' *Homo sapiens*, super-human, intelligent creatures who trace their origins into prehistory and possible extraterrestrial sources:

> The stories said that by ritual, sacrifice, and sacrament, they opened their souls to the Forest God, the great hunter who took the shape of the wolf. To reward them for their devotion, his mate, the Moon, gave them the gift to be more than human. Then they could throw aside the pelts of hunted animals and grow their own, abandon their knives of flint and use their teeth. Their children's children's children still carried the beast within, and all were subject to the Moon. (16)

> Those who preferred science to myth said they descended from something older — some early mammal that had absorbed protean matter brought to Earth by a meteorite. (35)

"Wolf" is thus "only a convenient term" to describe the non-humanoid component of Klause's dual-bodied beings. Their second form is a "creature much larger and stronger than any natural wolf," with lengthier toes and legs, larger ears, and eyes that hold "fire" (35).

Along with the glowing eyes, Klause's werewolves retain many of the default values of the traditional monstrous werewolf schema: they cannot resist changing at the full moon (although they can change at other times by will), they are vulnerable to silver (although anything that severs their spine will also kill them), and they sometimes hunger to hunt humans and eat human flesh. Despite Klause's unusual retention of this latter aspect of the abhorrent beast within, her werewolves remain redeemed and this craving does not automatically align them with monstrous or sympathetic werewolf schemata.[36] Her werewolf pack is not represented as a force of chaos, destruction, or evil, or as a group of innocent people suffering under a terrible genetic curse. Rather, they are delineated as

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[36] This has been done successfully before Klause. David Langford refers to two werewolves in adult narratives who are "sorely tempted" to prey on humans when in wolf shape but restrain themselves out of a sense of moral decency — Polacek in Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt's "The Castle of Iron" (1941) and Angua of the City Watch, who appears in a number of works in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series (1983-2006) (Langford 1997c, 1006).

an incommensurable racial or ethnic group with their own biological characteristics and customs that cannot be measured by others outside the group. Klause's werewolves are biologically different and inherit an "instinct" to sense humans as prey (60). As long as they do not indulge this instinct, we cannot judge them for this divergence, a clear case of incommensurability.

To add to the metaphorical representation of Klause's werewolf species as a racial or ethnic group, her pack is explicitly aligned with 'white ethnic' minority groups in the United States of America, as the pack is composed of French werewolves who emigrated to America in the seventeenth century and German werewolves who joined the French-American pack in the nineteenth century (12). The pack also lives on 'Sion Road' in the city, suggesting a further metaphorical alignment with the conventional 'otherness' of Judaism. The pack's ethnic distinctiveness is emphasised by the fact that the female werewolf protagonist, Vivian, has a perfect French accent (1997, 25), which illustrates that the werewolves have clearly not become 'plain Americans' within "a few generations" (Jacobson 2000, 242). During the twentieth century, the conjoined French-German pack has lived in partial isolation in the West Virginia hills. However, the murder of a human girl by Axel, a werewolf in his early twenties, causes the local human townsfolk to set fire to the country inn that is the pack's home and livelihood, a disaster that kills many of the pack members, including the pack's leader, Vivian's father. The pack's shift to a city in Maryland in the wake of the fire brings this minority group of werewolves into the urban melting pot and allows for the possibility of a cross-cultural romance between werewolf girl and human boy.

After their arrival in the city, Vivian chooses to date a human boy, Aiden, for a variety of reasons largely relating to her increasing sense of alienation from her racial or ethnic heritage (cf. Coats 2004, 158). She is disturbed by the murders of human girls by Axel and 'the Five' (a gang of young werewolves, led by Rafe, who thought to clear Axel's name by committing a second murder while he was in prison). Following the murders and the destruction of their home, the pack has disintegrated and Vivian has become progressively estranged from her people (and thus her own dual body). Her alienation is intensified by her widowed mother's sexual (mis)behaviour, her own previous sexual interest in both Axel and Rafe, and her observation of and participation in the pack's

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violent ancient leadership rites. At a time when her pack are showing their most inhuman qualities and Vivian is questioning aspects of her werewolf inheritance and culture, humanity appears to offer a morally superior way of being-in-the-world. Vivian thus thinks that a cross-cultural relationship might be more fulfilling than a partnership with one of her own kind, and she fantasises that Aiden could be her "true mate" because he fits a 'New Age' model of masculinity different from the predominantly hegemonic masculinity of the werewolf men she knows (171). If Aiden gained the ability to become a werewolf, she believes "he wouldn't lord it over her, or soil his new ability with blood and power," but would treat her and others with respect, enjoying the beauty of wolf form without indulging in its potentially violent urges (171).

Because Vivian and her pack have been 'passing' as normal humans in the city, Aiden is unaware of Vivian's 'racial' difference. Her decision to disclose herself to him is made out of a desperate desire for a human to condone or redeem her wolf self and to accept her as she wants to be, non-essentialised by her racial heritage and thus different from what her pack appears to be becoming. Aiden appears to be open-minded and interested in the supernatural, but when he discovers her difference he illustrates a conventional mindset. Realising that Vivian is a werewolf, he assumes that she is a monstrous or sympathetic werewolf. This is evident in his initial quivering horror when he sees her transform, followed by his belief that shooting her with a silver bullet will "release" her from her "torment" (254).[37] Aiden can thus only understand Vivian's extreme difference as negative otherness.

His horrified reaction to Vivian's lycanthropy is especially intense because she surprises him when he anticipates sexual intercourse. Sex promises a moment of amalgamation to defy the usual distinct separation of individuals and it is often aligned with the process of eating. Marina Warner writes of sexual union as "a form of reciprocal devouring" (1998, 165) and Maggie Kilgour notes how the "language of love is filled with metaphors of eating" (1998, 245). Vivian gifts Aiden with the revelation of her animal self during a moment of sexual vulnerability, as he lies naked in bed, waiting for her with open

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[37] The motif that a "werewolf can be killed by a silver bullet fired by someone who loves him" (Klause 1997, 275) originates with the third Universal film in which Lon Chaney's Wolf Man appears, *The House of Frankenstein* (1944) (Douglas 1992, 255).

arms. His violent abjection is a reaction to the threat of total incorporation into the other, which further works as a metaphor for a fear of cultural assimilation. As Karen Coats has intimated, Aiden's rejection of Vivian is also an abjection of his own animality (2004, 158). He reacts negatively to Vivian's metamorphic revelation that sex is an animal urge. In this respect, a similar experience is shared by Vivian's werewolf suitor, Gabriel, whose deceased human girlfriend once panicked with typical abjection when he began to Change into a wolf during sexual intercourse; she called him a "filthy beast" in the face of this reminder of her own animality (273).

As in the redemptive idealised and non-essentialist werewolf narratives I have discussed, Vivian explicitly challenges Aiden's negative interpretation of her lycanthropy by linking harmful otherness to an interior quality and reversing the accusation of monstrosity:

> I thought you were different from the rest, open-minded, but you're
> just like those parents you despise. At the first sign of the unusual you
> run. You tell lies about me and make people hate me. You take away
> my friends. You're the monster, not me. I only wanted to love you.
>
> (201)

Although her love for Aiden does not disappear with this misunderstanding, Vivian comes to believe that there is no possibility she could ever have a successful relationship with a human (even after Aiden learns she is not a killer and could thus conceivably come to terms with her difference). In this way, Klause's narrative corresponds to the traditional American (Hollywood film) ideology that interracial relationships "will not work" in the long term and will end tragically (hooks 1994, 53).

Vivian's conclusion that an 'interracial' relationship is undesirable is highlighted by her thoughts and feelings when she becomes permanently "stuck between" human and wolf forms (1997, 262). Her unwanted hybrid form can be read as a metaphor for the ambiguous fusion of a variety of conventionally binarised categories, such as human/animal and child/adult. In terms of my analysis here, however, it clearly represents Vivian's cultural confusion. Her attempts to bridge the gap between *Homo lupus* and *Homo sapiens* intensify her alienation from her cultural heritage and lead her to a state of hybridity in which she feels she cannot be a part of either werewolf or human cultures.

Typically, however, the marginalised group is depicted as more open and understanding about cultural hybridity than the majority norm, and although Vivian finds her in-between state horrifying and views herself as a "freak" (266), her werewolf suitor, Gabriel, tells her she is "beautiful" (274), and her werewolf age-mates "refuse… to let her be alone" (267), adopting her hybrid form for themselves in an attempt to comfort her.

In a metaphor that suggests self-alienation is agential, Vivian's hybridity is represented as her own "choice," subsequent to her pursuit of human culture, and is overcome by her rejection of humanity and re-immersion in her lycanthropic heritage (275). The superiority of racial or ethnic separatism is conveyed when Gabriel's kiss frees Vivian from her detested hybrid form, restoring her metamorphic powers and teaching her that self-fulfilment is only possible with her own kind. "Aiden was always still kissing [Vivian] when she wanted him to bite" (272), and when Gabriel kisses her she realises that

> [t]his was the kiss she had craved. The kiss that Aiden couldn't give
> her. … How could she have mistaken Aiden's kisses for this? They
> had been delicious and smooth like the brief comfort of chocolate, but
> they had never been enough. (276)

This ideology of racial or ethnic incompatibility is naturalised by an essentialised, patriarchal representation of gendered desire. Vivian, depicted as physically superior to Aiden, a 'sensitive New Age guy', finally finds him sexually dissatisfying, whereas Gabriel, a conventional, hegemonic hero, is her physical superior and 'thus' her physical match, capable of satisfying her deeper sexual needs.

Klause thus finally essentialises racial and ethnic differences, primarily by asserting that different races cannot mix advantageously (sexually or culturally). At the same time, however, she de-essentialises the moral status of werewolves, so that their incommensurability does not mean they are to be seen as evil. As with other redemptive werewolf narratives, this comes with a correspondingly appropriate conceptualisation of the beast within. Gabriel says of humans:

> I do believe they have a beast within. In some it's buried so deep
> they'll never feel it; in others it stirs, and if a person can't give it a safe
> voice it warps and rots and breaks out in evil ways. They may not be

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> able to change, but they still can be the beast of their own nightmares.
>
> It's our blessing that we can exorcise those demons. Sometimes it's
>
> our curse. (274-5)

Thus the 'beast within' has two potential signifieds in Klause's text: 'abhorrent monstrosity' and 'accepted animality'. When human animality is not accepted and expressed, it leads to monstrosity. In werewolves, this process is more oblique; werewolves are blessed with an ability to express a healthy animality, but that animality may come with darker urges that, if given reign, transform animality into beastliness. Like the non-essentialist werewolf schema, Klause's incommensurable werewolf schema thus represents monstrosity as an internal quality unrelated to external form. However, there is always a danger that werewolves may slip into monstrosity. This danger can only be averted by maintaining a patriarchal social order, respect for human beings, and distance from human groups.

Firstly, werewolves who belong to an ordered and strongly patriarchal werewolf society are able to enjoy healthy animality without slipping into monstrosity. The narrative makes it clear that patriarchy is required to maintain order among werewolves. Non-hegemonic types of werewolf males exist — Vivian's mother's new lover, Tomas, for example, is "a lover, not a fighter" (1997, 268). However, there are hints that the quiet and diplomatic leadership style of Vivian's father, Ivan, partially allowed for the development of perversity in the pack, leading to the destruction of their home (118). In the aftermath of this destruction, "the whole pack seemed to be crazy … With more than half of them dead, no-one knew his or her place anymore" (13). It is only in this atmosphere that a female werewolf, Astrid, attempts to gain power, something which is represented as perverse and wrong, as symbolised by her monstrous willingness to kill human beings.[38]

Additionally, racist attitudes towards humans are part of what allows for the development of werewolf monstrosity. Before the pack is returned to order, Rafe and other werewolves perceive humans as inferior, "incomplete creature[s]" with "only one form"

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[38] The extensive patriarchal and sexist implications of Klause's werewolf society are not something I have the space to draw out here, but it is important to be aware of two things. Firstly, as Avtar Brah has noted, an "essentialist assertion of difference … can be especially problematic for women if the cultural values that the groups in question excavate, recast, and reconstruct are those that underscore women's subordination" (Brah 2000, 444), and this is certainly the case in Klause's werewolf society. Secondly, Klause relies upon an analogy with the patriarchy of wolves, which Lopez, among others, has shown to be a false assumption (1978).

(34) and derogatorily refer to them as "meat" (36-37). The redemptive racial and ethnic revisioning of the novel is partially conveyed through a shift in this representation, as werewolf characters come to see the human race as deserving of respect, despite their differences. However, humans are perceived as different enough that the two races should maintain distance in order to avert the werewolf development of monstrosity. Prolonged contact with humans forces werewolves to repress the healthy expression of their animality in order to 'pass' as humans and this can lead to outbreaks of werewolf monstrosity. Thus, unlike the usual redemptive message that different peoples can understand each other and get along if they relinquish the need for othering and attempt to meet each other as equals, Klause's werewolf schema redeems werewolves only to argue that in spite of this redemption, incommensurable biological and cultural differences mean that the races are better off keeping apart. Klause thus concludes that extreme difference exists — it need not be othered, but nor can it be made equivalent to the dominant norm. Humans and werewolves are different species (read 'races') and cannot safely blend, leading to a need for cultural pluralism.

Conclusion

Of course, werewolf stories are not really very good vehicles for the promotion of multiculturalism. They remain heavily Eurocentric and although they may expose and problematise the link of any 'othered' group to animality, they maintain that link. However, by manifesting a generic representation of otherness, werewolf narratives do expose the reductionism at the heart of othering and illustrate how projections of otherness may be based upon the abjection of human animality. Furthermore, the noticeable changes in some werewolf representations over the past few decades foreground important modifications in ideologies of difference and otherness. In particular, they show us that the binaries of animal and human, mind and body, and self and other have been integrated, and changing ideas of the animal within have been accompanied by changing representations of external others.

Contemporary werewolf narratives may also convey a greater acknowledgment of Westerners' capacity for monstrosity and evil than earlier texts, and they may illustrate how

this acknowledgment lessens the tendency to point the finger elsewhere, projecting outwards and condemning non-Western cultures for the West's own sins. The recuperation of specific othered groups through the werewolf figure further illustrates attempts to accept guilt and shame for the brutalities and injustices of the Western past, although non-essentialist ideologies might be interpreted as an unwillingness to be blamed for anyone else's (such as one's ancestors' or culture's) misdeeds. Similarly, idealisations of the werewolf may be read as an attempt to dissociate the author and implied reader from the Western history of institutionalised prejudice and cruelty, aligning the modern generation instead with the righteous other.

Furthermore, the existence of multicultural and incommensurable werewolves might be an attempt to allow for a state of equal diversity, but where such a schema is accompanied by essentialist ideologies (as in Klause's narrative), it may merely continue the stereotypical alignment of the other with the strange and the dangerous and reinforce contentious ideologies of gender difference. With the retreat of negative ideologies of human animality and otherness, however, ontological unease in the face of metamorphosis may be replaced by curiosity, fascination, and the desire to become metamorphic. My next chapter will explore this potential desire for otherness and illustrate how fantasy narratives may offer the metamorphic body as a metaphor for transcendence.

CHAPTER FIVE.

The Desire for Transcendence —

Jouissance *in Selkie Narratives*

'Transcendence' is one of the major tenors to be extrapolated from any analysis of the metamorphosis motif as metaphor in the fantasy genre. While many philosophies of transcendence are based upon the exclusion of the physical, the representation of transcendence through fantastic metamorphosis often encompasses the opposite — the achievement of transcendence by embracing materiality. As I have illustrated throughout this dissertation, fantastic metamorphosis may often represent the materiality of humanity as abject. However, as Julia Kristeva has argued, "[t]he abject is edged with the sublime" (1982, 11); it is thus equally possible for this motif to signify the sublime experience of transcendent embodiment (see Bourgault 2003, 2006). When fantastic metamorphosis is a vehicle for a tenor of transcendence, it frequently becomes an object of desire for fictional characters. This motif metaphor may thus convey important ideas about the nature, cause, and consequences of human desire, as well as the possibility of achieving transcendence.

In order to investigate this possible motif metaphor I employ contemporary theories of desire and *jouissance* in my readings of a variety of selkie narratives. The metamorphosis selkie sub-motif invites such an application because most selkie narratives foreground themes of desire and suggest that fantastic metamorphosis provides access to a *jouissance* which unites experiences of transcendent embodiment and transcendent language. *Jouissance* is a French psychoanalytic term for an experience of transcendent pleasure. It means more than mere 'enjoyment' and suggests a condition of ecstasy and fulfilment, perhaps so extreme as to blur the differences between pain and pleasure. My use of the term denotes a form of transcendent pleasure experienced in a condition of presence, which I explore in terms of both embodiment and language. Contemporary theories of desire and *jouissance* are often based upon linguistic concepts, and applying these theories to selkie narratives enables us to gain an incisive understanding of the ideologies of desire and transcendence in these texts. Using such theories, we can examine

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how and why the selkie figure is a vehicle for a tenor of transcendence and how this motif metaphor conveys significant ideologies of desire.

That ideologies of desire are frequently embedded in selkie narratives for and about *adolescents* suggests that a desire for the experience of transcendence may be considered particularly pertinent to the adolescent condition. Patricia Spacks writes that

> [a]dolescents provide appropriate fictional material because they exist
> always (so we believe) in a condition of desire. They want intensely:
> want love, excitement, gain, supremacy, challenge — whatever.
>
> (1981, 293)

She suggests that "[a]dolescents always *want*, and they always want much they can never get. In all historical periods, representations of this time of life rest on this assumption" (212). However, a construction of adolescence as a time of desire may be less significant to the selkie stories I analyse than a concept of adolescence as a stage of psychic reconstruction.

In his psychoanalytic accounts of adolescence as a key era of character formation, Peter Blos defines adolescence as a time of "second individuation" and "psychic restructuring," in which the important psychic adjustments and accommodations made in the second and third year of infancy are reworked (1941, 1962, 1967). Blos emphasises that "[a]dolescence is … a period during which infantile emotional responses become reactivated and essentially reoriented" (1941, 422). He argues that "the task of psychic restructuring by regression represents the most formidable psychic work of adolescence" (1967, 171). Blos suggests that "regressive" desires for incorporation and dependence are a normal element of this restructuring and that adolescents can only "mature" into independent, agential, and intersubjective adults by facing and reworking infantile traumas (1967). Julia Kristeva's suggestions that puberty instigates a "second birth" (1980, 195) and that adolescence is "an open psychic structure" (1990, 8) independently echo Blos's theory. In her earlier work, Kristeva suggests the possibility of a "pubescent reactivation of the Oedipal experience" which "lets the subject reconnect with his own oral, anal, and phallic stages" (1980, 195-196). In her later work, she articulates the idea that "the adolescent structure opens itself to the repressed and initiates a psychic reorganization of the individual," but she hesitates to state that all adolescents go through such a process and

proposes that adolescence is less an "age category" than a "mythic" construct imbued with Imaginary significance (1990, 8). The construction of adolescence as a time of psychic reordering relates well to the selkie motif, which can be understood in certain narratives to be fantastically representing characters' relations to the psychic registers of the Lacanian Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary.

In the adolescent selkie narratives I analyse, the different forms desire takes and the variable reasons for a desire for transcendence are important to the overarching ideologies of the texts. However, because the fantasy genre allows for the impossible fulfilment of characters' desires, the resolution of desire is particularly significant in these texts, and different resolutions finally express dissimilar ideologies about the nature of human desire, transcendence, and maturation. In this chapter, I examine the ideologies expressed by three possible resolutions of desire in particular selkie narratives, principally focusing upon Australian Lilith Norman's supernatural novel, *A Dream of Seas* (1978), British writer Jane Stemp's supernatural fantasy, *Secret Songs* (1997), Charlotte Koplinka's historical *The Silkies: A Novel of the Shetlands* (1978), American Franny Billingsley's otherworld fantasy, *The Folk Keeper* (1999), and Janni Lee Simner's supernatural short story set in contemporary America, "Water's Edge" (2001). To establish the theoretical framework necessary for this analysis, I first outline pertinent theories of desire and language and delineate the parameters of selkie *jouissance*.

1. Lack and Absence, Presence and Jouissance*: Theories of Language and Desire*

As I have indicated, an analysis of selkie narratives invites an application of contemporary theories of language, desire, and *jouissance*, and my approach in this chapter thus employs a range of ideas generated by French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, and French poststructuralist, Jacques Derrida. It may be considered unusual to combine the ideas of these two theorists; Spivak, among others, writes of the "controlled and limited polemic" between Lacan and Derrida (1997, lxiii). However, as Anthony Easthope argues (2002), Lacan and Derrida share many concerns, despite their supposed differences. Both were interested in the primacy of language in Western culture, the chain of linguistic signification, and the concept of transcendental or master signifiers and signifieds. Their

major disagreements appear to have pivoted upon: Derrida's belief that there is no transcendental signified, in contradiction to Lacan's emphasis on "the unconscious as the seat of verification and 'truth'" and the Real as a site of presence (Spivak 1997, lxiii-lxiv); Lacan's privileging of the signifier over the signified, giving the signifier pre-eminence (Spivak 1997, lxiv, lxx-lxxi; Gallop 1985, 120); and Lacan's particular attribution of primacy to the signifier of the Phallus (Lacan 1977a, 287; Spivak 1997, lxv). Without blurring the differences between Lacan and Derrida's ideas, my analysis of selkie narratives in this chapter will demonstrate some of the ways in which Lacanian and Derridean concepts can be used together to understand the fictive representation of a desire for transcendence. I focus upon Derrida's delineation of the metaphysics of presence and ideologies of language in his *Of Grammatology* (1997 [1976]) and apply a certain reading of Lacanian concepts through a configuration of presence and absence.

As noted in the **Introduction**, my interest is in how major theoretical concepts (rather than major theorists) can help us to understand the ideologies embedded in particular metamorphosis motif metaphors. In this respect, I use a Lacanian-based approach for my analyses in this chapter, rather than purely Lacan himself, although my primary readings of Lacan must be understood to permeate my understanding of Lacanian concepts. However, because Lacan never simply outlines his ideas or his terminology, my application of his ideas necessarily draws upon the works of others who have clarified his arguments in useful ways. My understanding of Lacan is also sometimes necessarily second-hand because I cannot speak or read French (as Ellie Ragland has pointed out, there are potential difficulties in using Lacan in translation (1995, 1-15)) and because I do not have access to all of Lacan's works (some of which are unpublished and/or untranslated in full — including those which surely must be considered key to any complete understanding of Lacan's concepts of the registers and desire, his *Seminar VI: Desire and Its Interpretation* and *Seminar XXII: RSI (Real, Symbolic and Imaginary)*). Furthermore, Lacan is not a very quotable theorist, as his ideas are often only conveyed implicitly through their application over lengthy analyses; they accordingly merely infuse many Lacanian-based accounts. My Lacanian model of psychoanalytic concepts applied through a lens of presence and absence begins with Lacan, however, and is further substantiated by a variety of Lacanian commentators. These writers do not form a particular 'school' of Lacanian analysis, but they interpret Lacan's ideas in similar ways to myself, generating

relevant paradigms for understanding the representation of desire and transcendence in selkie narratives.

There is always the possibility when a literary analyst adopts a psychoanalytic approach that complex elements the psychoanalyst understands from years of training and practice will be simplified or used unconventionally. However, when psychoanalysis is employed as a medium for understanding cultural ideologies about human nature present in particular works of literature, and not for understanding truths about the human condition as evident in individual analysands, psychoanalysis becomes a more flexible conceptual tool than as used in therapy. For example, the use of Lacanian ideas about presence and absence in an analysis of selkie narratives does not necessitate an employment of Lacan's problematic conceptualisations of gender and sex differences. As I will shortly illustrate in my discussion, there are patriarchal qualities to Lacan's conceptualisation of the Symbolic and there is a matriarchal bias to psychoanalytic concepts of the pre-Oedipal Real, but there is no non-essentialist reason why language, culture, and laws must be assumed to be male or masculine and, comparatively, joyous embodiment female or feminine. Except where they are relevant for an understanding of the metaphors and ideologies in particular selkie texts, an engagement with the gendered implications of Lacan's theories is thus superfluous to the current discussion.

i. Lacan's Three Registers

Lacan's radical revisioning of Freudian concepts through modern linguistics proposes that the subject is structured by language and that language creates a sense of lack or absence which generates desire. His theories of language and desire pivot around his model of the three registers. These 'registers', 'dimensions', or 'orders', translated into English as 'the Imaginary', 'the Symbolic', and 'the Real', are heterogeneous but inextricably linked in a way which Lacan likened to the complex interweaving of the Borromean knot (Sheridan 1977a, x, 1977b, 280). The first register Lacan theorises, the Imaginary, is defined as "the field of phantasies and images" which stem from the optically-oriented mirror stage (Benevenuto and Kennedy 1986, 81). The Imaginary is the realm of the ego and its objects of desire and is thus the focal point of Lacan's ideas on the *autre* (other or 'little other'). His second register, the Symbolic, is the realm of language

and signification. Referred to as the *Autre* (Other with initial capitalisation, or 'big Other'), the Symbolic Order represents social and cultural symbolic systems. Lacan's final register is the Real, which was initially a minor concept within Lacanian theory; like Lacan's other terms, it altered and developed in meaning and significance over the course of his career (Sheridan 1977a, x, 1977b, 280). Karen Coats describes the Real as "one of the most difficult concepts to grasp in Lacan, much debated and little understood" (2004, 22). It is generally agreed to refer to what is beyond language and thus beyond a human capacity to describe. As Alan Sheridan defines it, the Real is "that which is lacking in the symbolic order, the ineliminable residue of all articulation, the foreclosed element, which may be approached, but never grasped" from the position of the Symbolic (1977a, x, 1977b, 280). Many Lacanian interpreters conceptualise the Real as the animal, sensory world, the realm of "the organism and its biological needs" (Sheridan 1977a, x, 1977b, 280), and thus the realm of unmediated and unordered material experience (see Belsey 1994; Bleakley 2000, xiii; Glowinski et al. 2001; Kirshner 2003; Coats 2004).

There are accounts of both a developmentally sequential movement between Lacan's three registers and an overlaying of all three at once in the structure of the human psyche. According to the developmental model (always retroactively posited), one begins life in a state of presence within the Real and becomes separated from this experience of presence by the entry into human systems of signification. This movement from a condition of presence into absence has frequently been explored in terms of Lacan's mirror stage model and the entry into the Imaginary. Lacan posited in his mirror stage theory that in their earliest phase of life humans do not conceptually distinguish themselves from the world around them but maintain an embodied, sensory existence and undifferentiation of the self from the world that is lost during the 'mirror stage' (1977a, 4). This undifferentiation of the self from the world includes an undifferentiation from others who inhabit it, particularly the mother, who may seem to be a part of the child's self.

Between the ages of six to eighteen months, a change occurs that Lacan explains in terms of a mirror metaphor. Upon seeing themselves in a 'mirror', be it literal or metaphorical (such as perceiving anew the body of another), children slowly apprehend that their bodies are bounded and separate from the surrounding world. This realisation engenders a sense of alienation within the self and a separation of the self from the world, as children recognise a gap between the fragmented, sensory bodies they inhabit in fluid

contact with the world and their Imaginary 'specular ego' or '*imago*', which seems complete in itself but apparently lacks connection to the sensate world (Wilden 1968, 169). This decentering of the self means that

> the Imaginary register of ideal images has come into being and has
> determined the only way in which we can know anything — through
> alienation (knowing oneself through an external image), duality (the
> result of a deep ambivalence caused by the alienation between the
> subject and its ideal image), and identification (the attempt to dissolve
> the subject into the ideal image and say, "This is me").
>
> <div align="right">(Coats 2004, 19)</div>

Thus, the birth of a unified self-image in the Imaginary brings subjects to a self-awareness which makes the specular self (whole, unified, exterior, over-there) absent from the embodied self (split, interior, here, lacking what is over-there). As Derrida clarifies for us, "[t]he reflection, the image, the double, splits what it doubles. … What can look at itself is not one" (1997, 36).

Lacan's later work locates the alienating split in the subject with the developmental process of language acquisition, through which one is admitted into the Symbolic order. Tamise Van Pelt addresses the 'myth' that the mirror stage is central to Lacanian theory, stating that Lacan "rejected" the mirror stage as a sufficient explanation for the decentering of the subject and relocated the experience of alienation from the parameters of the gaze and image into broader constructs of language and signification (2000b, xviii). However, Lacan's early work on the mirror stage clearly holds the seeds of his later work on the Symbolic, and "developmental mirror stage theory" thus has a "complex reincarnation in the structural theory of the registers" (2000b, xv). Karen Coats points to this when she says that at the mirror stage,

> [t]he baby has entered the world of signifying transactions, and image
> has displaced being; the subsequent and inevitable entry into language
> represents a further displacement or alienation, a further aphanisis, or
> fading, of the Real in favor of the Symbolic, by way of the Imaginary.
>
> <div align="right">(2004, 19)</div>

In other words, the splitting of the subject as a result of the mirror stage is a consequence

of signification — the *imago* or specular ego functions as a signifier of the self, just as the word 'I' will eventually operate, both symbols displacing a sense of a fully present, embodied self.

In linguistic terms, this displacement occurs because "the signifier does not refer to the thing itself" (the referent), but only to a signified, which is merely the idea or thought-concept of the referent (Coats 2004, 62). The actual referent can never be reached through language, because "whenever we use words to talk about objects or experiences, there is always a gap, a mediation of the referent through language that necessarily makes the referent other than what it is" (Coats 2004, 80). Thus, Lacan states that "the being of language is the non-being of objects" (1977a, 263) because "the symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing" (1977a, 104; also see Belsey 1994, 55). That is, "the signifier/signified combination replaces any experience one might have had of the thing in itself" and institutes a gap between the experience of being and the possession of meaning which suggests that language displaces presence (Coats 2004, 62). The experience of being fully present in the undifferentiated, unsignifiable Real is thus lost when language sorts and makes experience meaningful in a process which erases access to such experience (Lacan 1977a, 65; also see Coats 2004, 80; Glowinski 2001, 10). As Catherine Belsey suggests, "[n]o longer an organism in the real, the speaking human being encompasses a void, a lack under the Law" (1994, 56). Similarly, Silvia Rodriguez describes how "[t]he subject is condemned to a meaning given by the Other [language, the Symbolic], but Lacan insists that it is at the cost of a loss of his/her being" (2001, 196). Huguette Glowinski further explains that "[b]y choosing meaning, the being of the subject disappears … This exchange and loss is a process called 'aphanisis'" (2001, 9).

ii. The Metonymy of Language and Desire

Because signifiers are unable to meld with things, any signifier refers to a signified which is only another signifier. Thus, "signifiers slide endlessly and substitute one for another in an endless chain" which produces an infinite deferral of signification (Coats 2004, 22). Derrida describes how this metonymical movement suggests that all signifiers are finally pointing to a "fundamental signified" which is the "terminal-point of all references" (1997, 266), a "transcendental signified" which "place[s] a reassuring end to

the reference from sign to sign" (49). A fundamental or transcendental signified is thus "an entity capable (per impossible) of halting the potential infinite regress of interpretations of signs by other signs" (Rorty 1995, 175); it is the "final reference ... the final signified to which all signifiers refer" (Spivak 1997, xvi), a primary and absolutely irreducible signified "thinkable and possible outside of all signifiers" (Derrida 1997, 73).

Various cultural metanarratives or grand narratives have provided different transcendental signifiers to represent this transcendental signified. For example, in Lacanian theory the Phallus is usually considered to occupy the place of a transcendental signifier, while in Christianity this signifier is Christ or God. Karen Coats argues that transcendental signifiers ('master signifiers' in Lacanian terms) aim to

> cover over our status as split subjects … The master signifier founds a chain of signifiers and sets it in motion, each signifier establishing its meaning on the basis of its reference to the master signifier. But the master signifier itself is not part of the chain; it does not move.
>
> (2004, 123)

Unlike other signifiers, master signifiers thus work metaphorically rather than metonymically for transcendental signifieds which indicate transcendence from a condition of lack or absence. In other words, while ordinary signifiers merely displace meaning or presence onto other signifiers, master signifiers symbolise direct access to a transcendental signified.

The concepts of master signifiers and transcendental signifieds in language can be understood to be (symbolically) paralleled in theories of desire by the concepts of the *objet a* and the *jouissance* that comes with access to a state of transcendent presence. Just as a linguistic "chain of signification" (Lacan 1982, 48) may be infused by implicit reference to a master signifier and a transcendental signified, desire (caused by the alienation of language) is believed to function along a metonymic chain which is permeated by an implicit search for the *objet a* and *jouissance*. Lacan's *objet a* is (and is meant to be) a concept which is slippery, unsignifiable, and unable to be pinned down (Sheridan 1977a, xi, 1977b, 282). However, we know that the term is linked to Freud's theorisation of the 'object', and that the '*petit a*' is meant to differentiate the object in terms of the little otherness (*autre*) of the Imaginary while yet relating it to the '*Autre*' (grand or capitalised

Other), the locus of language and law (Sheridan 1977a, xi, 1977b, 282). Most commentators agree that the *objet a* can be defined as 'the (object-)cause of desire', and stress that it is not the object of desire: "It is not what is desired but it sets desire in motion, and because desire is metonymical it may move, it may be displaced from object to object" (Marks 2001, 122).

Lacan suggests that the original lost object is the mother's breast, but clarifies that the *objet a* actually represents a lost sense of presence, which he relates to the Real and animal experience. Lacan says:

> It is the libido, *qua* pure life instinct, that is to say, immortal life, or irrepressible life, life that has need of no organ, simplified, indestructible life. It is precisely what is subtracted from the living being by virtue of the fact that it is subject to the cycle of sexed reproduction. And it is of this that all the forms of the *objet a* that can be enumerated are the representatives, the equivalents. The *objets a* are merely its representatives, its figures. The breast … certainly represents that part of himself that the individual loses at birth, and which may serve to symbolise the most profound lost object. I could make the same kind of reference for all the other objects. (1977b, 198)

Thus, the *objet a* functions much like a master or transcendental signifier for that imagined lost fulfilment, transcendence, and satisfaction of being experienced before the alienating movement out of the (animal) Real into the (human) meaning systems of the Imaginary and Symbolic. It represents a transcendental signified of presence, and thus signifies a lost access to *jouissance*. It cannot be the object of desire because as an abstract concept it cannot be materialised as an actual object to be pursued in the world of the Symbolic. Instead, objects within the Symbolic system, such as the breast, are retrospectively imbued with an Imaginary wholeness which allows them to function as substitutes for the *objet a*, "the most profound lost object" (Lacan 1977b, 198). Coats writes that "the subject obsessively seeks to recover" the *jouissance* of the Real "through the introjection of certain objects that act as representatives of this wholeness" (2004, 81). As Levy-Stokes describes,

> [t]he lack in the signifying order, a lack in the Other, which designates

a lack of *jouissance*, creates a place where lost objects come, standing in for the missing *jouissance* and creating a link between the signifying order and *jouissance*. … Here *jouissance* is embodied in the lost object. (2001, 104)

This particular Lacanian model thus posits that desire arises from the lack originating with entry into signification and is directed towards a transcendental signifier (*objet a*) which would both explain and remedy this desire (Lacan 1977a, 104). Like language, such desire is irrevocably metonymical, moving from one object of desire to another in a never-ending chain which defers the *jouissance* experienced by access to the presence of the Real (1977a, 175). However, I propose that some objects of desire in narratives within the fantasy genre manifest the *objet a* metaphorically rather than metonymically, in which case, attaining that fantastic object provides fictional characters with access to the ultimate *jouissance*. While most objects of desire are imbued with Imaginary substance but limited to a horizontal, contiguous significance within the realm of the Symbolic (indicating a continuous lack and displacement of meaning and desire), fantastic *objet a* allow for a movement between domains, a direct, vertical correlation between the Symbolic-Imaginary and the Real. As Levy-Stokes argues, "[i]t is the object a that holds the central, irreducible place between the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary" (2001, 106). It thus appears that a fantastic *objet a* allows for a metaphorical crossing of the Lacanian 'bar' between signifier and signified, enabling access to non-lack — to sufficiency, wholeness, and abundance — that is, to the presence of the Real, and thus to an experience of *jouissance* (see Gallop 1985, 122-123, 128; Stanton 1986, 174, 178). This hypothesis can be explored by analysing how desire and *jouissance* are constructed in relation to the fantastic motif of the selkie.

2. The Desire to Be Transcendent — The Jouissance of Being Selkie

'Selkie' is a Scottish dialect word for 'seal', but in folklore and fantasy selkies are shape-shifters who can take both seal and human forms.[39] They possess a dual nature and in most narratives their ability to transform between shapes requires the medium of a

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[39] Other variations of the term include 'silkie' and 'selchie'. To maintain consistency, I use the term selkie as default and only use other variations when quoting excerpts that use such spelling.

sealskin — they are represented as able to move between human and seal bodies by shedding their sealskin and emerging in human form or placing their sealskin around their human body and transforming into a seal. In very rare cases, selkies are represented as hybrid rather than metamorphic beings (see the Japanese anime, *Ellcia* 1996) or as possessing a dual-body which transforms between a human and a hybrid part-human, part-seal form (see Oppenheim 1975).

i. Selkie Pre-Texts

There is a variety of traditional selkie folklore and a range of long-standing folk narratives (see D. Thomson 1954; Briggs 1970, 1970-1971; Williamson 1985, 1992; Griffin 1985). However, the best-known selkie narratives today are the Scottish folktale, "The Seal Wife," and the Scottish ballad, "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry". These two narratives are the primary pretexts for contemporary selkie retellings, and they further comprise the basic components of a contemporary selkie schema. In "The Seal Wife," a fisherman falls in love with a female selkie upon seeing her dancing with others of her kind in their human forms. He steals her sealskin, preventing her from returning to the sea and forcing her to become his wife. Many years later, one of their children discovers the hidden sealskin and the selkie woman returns to the sea, leaving her human family behind. This tale is known in a variety of traditional versions, by titles such as "The Selkie Wife," "The Seal Woman," and sometimes "The Mermaid Wife". Barbara Leavy (1994) places the Seal Wife tale within the 'swan maiden' tale type, which encompasses swan maidens, mer-girls, goose-girls, and many other supernatural women whose magical skins or clothes are stolen by men (also see Briggs 1991b, 260). Regardless of this broader connection, however, it is the seal wife version which is most prevalent in contemporary children's literature, as is evident in the availability of picture book reversions of the tale by Susan Cooper (1986), Mordecai Gerstein (1986), Jackie Morris (2004), and Chardi Christian (2005).

The other well-known selkie pretext, "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry" (sometimes known as "The *Grey* Silkie of Sule Skerry"), focuses upon a human woman who bears a baby to a selkie man. After she nurses the baby, the selkie takes him away and she marries a human man, who one day shoots two seals while out hunting, killing the selkie man and

child. Dorsey Griffin claims that this ballad (sometimes listed as Child Ballad 113, from the Child catalogue of British ballads) is common to all the islands and lands of the North Sea, and the basic plot certainly remains the same in a number of regional versions. The plot to which I refer should not be confused with a ballad of the same name, however, also listed as Child Ballad 113, which recounts a drastically different selkie tale, in which the selkie is a charming monster who kills his lovers. A folktale of the same name printed in Katharine M. Briggs' *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales* (1991b [1970-1971], 261) presents yet another very different narrative.[40] The ballad I have outlined is the more familiar of the three different tales with this shared title, as is evident in the fame of its refrain:

> I am a man upon the land,
>
> And I am a silkie in the sea,
>
> And when I'm far and far from land
>
> My home it is in Sule Skerry.

Although the plot of "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry" has not been simply retold in contemporary children's literature, its influence is obvious in narratives which centre upon the nursing of a selkie child by humans (Doherty 1996) or the shooting of a selkie (Doherty 1996; Stemp 1997). Its impact is also evident in tales which combine the famous lines of the song with a focus on male selkie characters (Stemp 1997; *Selkie* 2000).

ii. Schema for a Selkie Motif

Using the "Selkie Wife" and "Silkie of Sule Skerry" pretexts, we can determine that a basic schema for the selkie motif has the following default components: a selkie is a supernatural seal who is dual-bodied, capable of fantastic metamorphosis between human and seal forms; a sealskin is required as a medium for this transformation; a selkie is compelled to do whatever the keeper of their skin desires; and a selkie desires (to be within) the sea. When details from the many variations of these pre-texts and other early selkie narratives are taken into account, the following variable components of a selkie schema emerge: selkies possess power over the weather and can influence fishing success

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[40] These three different selkie narratives can be read in the **Appendix**.

for humans; they may be desirable and beautiful, or quite ugly; their blood may raise a storm; they may be called to shore by the shedding of (seven) tears; and selkie-human descendants may be born with webbed fingers and toes. Contemporary selkie narratives adopt, embellish, and/or adapt this variety of schema components in diverse ways, rendering all the components variable. It is thus important to discuss selkie narratives in contemporary fantasy literature as engaging with a selkie motif rather than reinterpreting a tale type (cf. Lassén-Seger 2006, 7).

Despite this diversity, most contemporary selkie narratives foreground concepts of desire, generally by representing the selkie's intense longing for the sea but also by exploring issues of love, lust, and possession. The forms of desire delineated may thus include: a selkie's desire for the sea and her/his sealskin; a human's sexual and/or romantic desire for a selkie; a female selkie's children's desire for their mother's love and/or presence; a human's desire to possess a selkie's knowledge, wealth, or charm, or to obtain selkie assistance; and the desire of a human or human-selkie descendant to become selkie. This latter form is the specific type of desire I will analyse in a small selection of selkie narratives.

iii. The Parameters of Selkie Jouissance

In the tales I analyse, human or human-selkie descendents desire to become selkies because the selkie figure represents direct access to the joyous experience of transcendence. It does so for a variety of reasons relating to different constructs of *jouissance* (see Evans 1998). In most selkie narratives, fantastic metamorphosis into seal form represents access to *jouissance* in the form of *jouissance du corps*, "the *jouissance* of the body … located at the intersection of the Real and the Imaginary" (Levy-Stokes 2001, 106; also see Fink 1995, 196). To experience the Real suggests a return to a pre-Symbolic state of presence — as Lacan writes, "[t]here is no absence in the real" (1988, 313) and "[b]y definition, the real is full" (see Fink 1995, 182). However, *jouissance du corps* maintains links to the Imaginary, implying the retention of the self or ego. A *jouissance* of the body thus offers a transcendence of the split and alienated subject position of the Symbolic by allowing the subject to experience their subjectivity in full sensory *jouissance* in the transcendent materiality of the Real, "the pure reality behind representation"

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(Kirshner 2003, 86).

A desire for *jouissance du corps* is reflective of a longing to connect with natural experience directly, rather than through the filters of consciousness and language. Because humans are believed to be separated from the biological experience of the Real by their entry into the Imaginary and Symbolic realms, they may be perceived as being "only dully aware of everyday life," operating on a "low-grade consciousness" and "get[ting] out of an experience far less than is available" (Hume 1984, 84). In contrast, non-human animals are imagined to be 'fully alive' to their senses and their phenomenological embeddedness in the world in ways humans are not. In fantasy narratives, the desire for *jouissance du corps* is thus often represented as a desire for non-human animal experience. The non-human animal body is frequently depicted in metamorphosis narratives as supremely sensual and powerful in comparison with the human body, and a return to human form from animal embodiment is represented as a diminishment and loss of super-senses.

The selkie motif obviously represents access to *jouissance du corps* because it allows movement between a human form and an animal or supernatural seal body, but this access to *jouissance du corps* is heightened by the way in which a selkie's removable sealskin is capable of metaphorically (rather than metonymically) representing the lost *objet a*. Karen Coats describes the *objet a* as "an object not wholly distinct from oneself that covers over one's constitutive lack" (2004, 61) and as something which is "perceived as a 'missing piece' of one's own body" or self (2004, 82). As she has indicated through her excellent discussion of Shel Silverstein's *The Missing Piece* (1976), in imaginative literature the *objet a*, the object-cause of desire, can be conceived and represented as an actual, achievable object of desire with form and substance, a literal missing part of the subject which can be retrieved. In selkie narratives, the selkie skin or pelt so often longed for is literally a missing piece of the self, allowing it to function as a metaphorical *objet a*. There is thus is no need for any metonymical movement of desire for the selkie and no chain of substitute-signifiers for an unachievable, lost *jouissance*; selkies can articulate and label the loss that separates them from the *jouissance* of the Real and they know exactly what object they must regain to 're-seal' the split self and once more access the transcendent *jouissance* of unmediated, animal experience in the sea.

The fact that selkie *jouissance du corps* occurs in the sea rather than on land is significant, as the sea is a perfect vehicle for a tenor of *jouissance*. The fluidity of the sea

appears to allow for a greater interconnective experience of being-in-the-world than land-bound embodiment, in which earth and air are separate and the body is thus not constantly reminded of its embeddedness in the world. Additionally, the sea frequently represents the presence of the Real because it is imagined as a 'she', a maternal body of amniotic fluid, a metaphorical womb, and the origin of life (Cirlot 1962, 56). If *jouissance* occurs in the Real, before the child enters the Imaginary and Symbolic, then it is supposedly an experience relating to a sense of infantile unification with the mother. This link between oceanic fluidity, the *jouissance* of the Real, and the originary bond with the maternal body appears in the feminist psychoanalytic works of Julia Kristeva (1980, 1984), Luce Irigaray (1985b), and Hélène Cixous (1986, 1989, 1994).[41]

Julia Kristeva's theorisation of the pre-Oedipal (pre-Imaginary and pre-Symbolic) 'semiotic *chora*' is particularly significant. Kristeva's semiotic represents an order of experience in-between the Real and the Imaginary, which aligns it with *jouissance du corps* (Oliver 1998, 84, 98), and her *chora* (literally 'space') denotes a receptacle, sometimes imagined in the form of a womb (Leitch 2001, 2166). The semiotic *chora*, which "precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to a vocal or kinetic rhythm" (Kristeva 1984, 26), is described as an "oceanic" world and is connected to the maternal body, to the feminine in general, and to what is mysterious, unintelligible, and unsignifiable (Kristeva 1984, 25-30; Leitch 2001, 2166). A post-Symbolic connection with the semiotic allegedly "bring[s] the body back into the very structure of language" (Oliver 1998, 84), allowing access to what Kristeva describes as "intonations, scansions, and jubilant rhythms … the voiced breath that fastens us to an undifferentiated mother … a *maternal language*" (1980, 195; also see Cixous 1986, 93, 1989 4; Stanton 1986, 166-7).

This leads us to the other major reason why the selkie figure functions as a signifier of *jouissance*: selkie being-in-the-world frequently offers access to a transcendent form of speech. Carmela Levy-Stokes writes that "the *jouissance* of meaning, *jouis-sens*, is located at the intersection of the Imaginary and the Symbolic," which indicates the

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[41] For a good discussion of the work of Kristeva, Irigaray, and Cixous in relation to these concepts, see Domna C. Stanton's "Difference on Trial: A Critique of the Maternal Metaphor in Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva" (1986). In a children's literature context, see Roni Natov's "Mothers and Daughters: Jamaica Kincaid's Pre-Oedipal Narrative" (1990), and Christine Wilkie-Stubbs's discussions of Gillian Cross's *Pictures in the Dark* (1998) (2000, 82-86; 2002, 93-99).

Imaginary projection of wholeness onto the inherently lacking structure of language (2001, 106). In the selkie narratives I analyse, however, a construct of *jouis-sens* also draws deeply upon the sense that transcendent meaning can be accessed in the being of the Real. As I have outlined, Symbolic representations of meaning supposedly erase the language-speaker's access to the being of the Real, and because the being of the Real is unsignifiable, it appears to offer transcendent meaning beyond what we can understand from our position in the Symbolic. However, *jouissance* is frequently imagined to be possible with the Other, that is, within language (see Levy-Stokes 2001, 103). This is not the same as '*jouissance* after the letter', which refers to the attempt to relocate desire and meaning within the Symbolic. '*Jouissance* after the letter' occurs when the subject attempts to "manage her sense of lack through an active pursuit of a subject position in the Symbolic order where she can assume and pursue her own desire" (Coats 2004, 80, 95). In contrast, *jouis-sens* signifies the pleasure of access to a transcendent language which does not efface being in the representation of meaning, which is not arbitrary or metonymical, and which works by metaphorically providing access to presence. As Dylan Evans explains, the concept of "*jouis-sens* ('enjoyment in meaning' or, perhaps, 'enjoy-meant')" means that "[j]ouissance is no longer simply a force *beyond* language; it is now also a force *within* language" (1998, 13).

Selkies are frequently depicted as embodied with a form of musical speech which offers such *jouis-sens*. This depiction could be understood by engaging more fully with the works of Kristeva and Cixous. However, in order to avoid the essentialist gendered implications of their discussions and to maintain my theoretical focus in this chapter upon Lacanian and Derridean ideas, I interpret selkie *jouis-sens* through the theories of speech outlined and debunked by Jacques Derrida in his *Of Grammatology* (1997 [1976]). In this text, Derrida reviews the logocentric belief in a "full and originarily spoken language" which once provided humans with the "immediate, natural, and direct signification of … meaning (of the signified, of the concept, of the ideal object...)" (1997, 29-30). He illustrates how a desire for "the living self-presence of the soul within the true logos" (34) has been manifested in concepts of "self-presence in the breath" (26) or "the self-present voice" (30) and argues that the voice has consistently been constructed in Western philosophy as if it bears a transparent relationship to the signified, whether that signified is sense or thing (8, 11, 26).

Following Derrida, we can perceive that the metaphysical belief in the possibility of *jouis-sens* is particularly manifested in the concept of the divine 'neume', which Jean-Jacques Rousseau defined as a wordless religious song of jubilation. The neume is "pure vocalization, form of an inarticulate song without speech, whose name means breath, which is inspired in us by God and may address only Him" (Derrida 1997, 249). It is:

> a speech before words, alive enough to speak, pure, interior and
> homogeneous enough to relate to no object, to gather into itself no
> mortal difference, no negativity; it is a charm and therefore a song …
> The neume, the spell of self-presence, inarticulate experience of time,
> tantamount to saying: *utopia*. (250-1)

This idea of "a pure breath (*pneuma*)," of an inarticulate speaking and singing language, combines concepts of nature and divinity (249). Derrida writes that "[s]uch a breath cannot have a human origin and a human destination. It is no longer on the way to humanity like the language of the child, but is rather on the way to superhumanity" (249). Such a transcendent language can thus only be embodied in fantasy creatures such as selkies, and it is significant that selkies are generally not merely animal but supernatural, with access to the divine and thus to transcendent meaning. Leonard Barkan writes that "[m]etamorphosis is the moment when the divine enters the familiar," and the metamorphic connection to animality frequently implies transcendence because it implies "the mystery of the divine embedded in the real, the natural, the quotidian" (1986, 18). This idea is often explicit in selkie folklore which describes selkies as descendants of fallen angels or human or supernatural royalty. Many selkie narratives also hint at the transcendent mysteries of a faery or supernatural existence which offers access to the enigmatic depths of the sea and thus to a powerful signifier of "unfathomable alterity" or transcendent otherness (Stanton 1986, 160).

The selkie motif therefore functions as a signifier of *jouissance* for a variety of reasons. An exploration of a desire for selkie *jouissance* in certain selkie narratives allows us to investigate significant cultural ideas about the nature of human desire, the nature of adolescence and maturity, and the possible effects of achieving or failing to achieve *jouissance*.

3. Achieving Jouissance: The Representation of a Drive Towards Death

The first depiction of desire I will discuss, the representation of a drive towards death, is the rarest in children's literature, but it is best discussed first because its very possibility resonates within the other narratives I discuss, influencing the way in which desire is both framed and resolved. In Lilith Norman's unusual selkie novel, *A Dream of Seas* (1978), the representation of an achievement of deadly *jouissance* is a powerful nihilistic resolution of desire, but an examination of the text suggests that this resolution aims to convince young readers that unchecked desire and *jouissance* is unhealthy and dangerous. The novel is a supernatural fantasy depiction of a young human male known only to the reader as "the boy" and "Seasie". After the boy's father drowns in an inland Australian river, he and his mother move to the city of Sydney to live by the beach at Bondi. There the boy develops a chain of desire fixated upon the achievement of *jouissance* in the sea, and he eventually loses all interest in life in the Symbolic world. At the narrative's climax, the acquisition of a long-desired wetsuit enables the boy to metamorphically merge bodies with a male seal, and in this replacement body he disappears into an animal world of the Real. It is possible to argue that the novel is not really a selkie novel because this magical transformation is apparently unique and selkies do not appear to exist in the text as a supernatural, faery race. Any narrative involving supernatural metamorphosis between human and seal forms can be considered to engage with the selkie motif, however, particularly when the metamorphic character is depicted as experiencing an intense longing for the sea.

i. Deadly, Pathological Desire

The quality of Seasie's desire for the sea in Norman's narrative emphasises the potential deadliness of *jouissance*. As I have suggested, adolescence can be conceived as "an open psychic structure" (Kristeva 1990) or an era of "second individuation" (Blos 1967), a time in which individuals supposedly modify their relationship to the Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic psychic registers. In Norman's novel, Seasie's process of second individuation is impaired by the trauma of his father's death, which triggers a desire for an escape into the Real realm of being and a rejection of the Symbolic realm of meaning, with the differentiation language provides between concepts such as dead and alive. Lacan's

patriarchal conception of the Name-of-the-Father as a *nom de plume* for the Symbolic is useful for understanding Norman's representation of Seasie's failed second individuation. As Bruce Fink has outlined, the "unmediated relation between mother and child, a *real* connection between them," is believed to be an early source of *jouissance* "canceled out by the operation of the paternal function," the signifier or 'Name-of-the-Father', which intervenes in this dual relationship and redirects desire into the Symbolic (1995, 60). The Name-of-the-Father is not meant to refer to a literal father or an Imaginary father (the paternal *imago*) but only to the Symbolic father in the form of social law (Sheridan 1977a, xi; Fink 1995, 55-6). However, in Norman's narrative the death of Seasie's literal father generates a fantasy for an Imaginary father in the Real that turns Seasie progressively away from the Symbolic father. Thus, although he "assimilate[s] language," he "cannot 'come to be' in language" (Fink 1995, 55) and is unable to establish a life for himself in the Symbolic world.

Seasie imagines that his father has returned to the body of a primal mother in the form of the sea:

> Where was his father's home now? *Stockman swept away while trying*
> *to swim a flooded creek.* He tried to see it, as he had tried every night,
> but there was nothing. His father was gone. Swept away. Swept
> down all the branching creeks, and over all the flood plains, and down
> all the rivers, to the sea. (12)

Seasie visualises his father living on in an ambiguous post-death state, swept downriver into the sea where he has found a new home in the depths of the ocean. He fantasises "[t]hat his father wasn't dead, not the way grown-ups meant. He was part of the blue sea-world" (54), always floating "closer" and "[w]aiting" for Seasie to join him in the ocean's state of undifferentiated oneness (61). Blurring his infantile loss of *jouissance* with the mother with the loss of his father in adolescence, Seasie thus desires to reunite with the body of the father through the body of the (oceanic) mother in a form of reverse conception. His desire for *jouissance* is therefore regressive, a seeking to return to original oneness with both mother and father, and this extreme desire works as a death drive, foreclosing any normal capacity for life in the Symbolic and instigating psychosis (also see Lassén-Seger 2006, 201).

ii. The Effacement and Splitting of Subjectivity

The alienating, deadly effects of Seasie's unchecked desire for the Real are startlingly evident in his lack of a proper name. Derrida writes that the proper name is "the unique appellation reserved for the presence of a unique being" (1997, 109) and Bruce Fink discusses it as a trace, an individual's "place-marker or place-holder in the symbolic order" (1995, 52). It is significant that in *A Dream of Seas* such a signifier is initially absent, for the third person narration describes the protagonist throughout by the generic 'boy'. When the boy is, finally, named, he is merely labelled with the signifier of his desire. The nickname 'Seasie' (short for 'seasick') is given to the boy on his first day of school in Bondi. Norman narrates how the boy considers:

> he was sick *for* the sea, not from it. He was sick for that magical
> world that was his father's world, and the seals' world. And he took
> the word [seasick] and planted it deep inside himself. (21)

This process of 'planting' the name of his desire deep within himself illustrates in a metaphorical manner the way in which the subject can supposedly come to exist in language only under a name or pronoun which "supplants what it constitutes" (Belsey 1994, 56): "I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object" (Lacan 1977a, 86). However, for Norman's protagonist, this new name, 'Seasie', does not erase his connection to the being of the Real, but to the Symbolic, for his human individuality is effaced under the obsession of his desire.

Norman's narrative illustrates how this desire, based upon metaphorical movements towards the Real (rather than investments in *jouissance* after the letter), increasingly alienates Seasie from the world around him, until he eventually fails to invest any human emotion in the Symbolic. Lacking subjectivity, he is incapable of maintaining any intersubjective human relationships, and he eventually moves through the Symbolic like an empty automaton, existing in a dream-like state, emptied of everything but desire:

> When school went back in the new year he stayed amongst the new
> kids, and he barely noticed. … He brought home books and sat for
> long hours at the desk his mother and Frank had bought him for
> Christmas. And his brain was filled with the crash and foam of surf,
> so that he went to school each day with his books empty … still his

mind remained empty of all but the sea. (63)

It is significant that Seasie only fully relinquishes any attempt to engage in the Symbolic after his mother invites her lover, Frank, to share their home, initiating the formation of a new family (which culminates with her pregnancy and marriage to Frank at the end of the narrative). Immediately after Seasie learns of Frank's usurpation of his father's place, a double page seascape appears (58-59), the only double pages of illustrations in the text. This shift from words to images indicates Seasie's permanent split from the Symbolic as he increases his psychological distance from his real mother and is impelled towards the Imaginary-imbued Real body of the metaphorical mother, the sea.

Seasie's desire first takes on the later extreme, pathological form of his dream of seas on the day he arrives in Bondi with his mother. Seeing surfers in their wetsuits, Seasie mistakes them for seals: "Hey Mum! Look at the seals!" (7). When he learns that "[t]hose aren't seals … They're just surfers. Board-riders in wet suits" (7), Seasie experiences a jarring gap between idea/l and actual thing. Philippe Julien writes that "it is through misunderstanding that the unconscious lets us glimpse a little of the real" (1994, 2), and it is with this particular misrecognition (or *meconnaissance*, in Lacanian terms) that Seasie's unhealthy desire is born, a desire to elide the gap between representation and 'reality' by turning actual surfers into seals. The boy says to himself:

> They were seals when I was in the flat. In the flat I was far enough
> away; now I'm too close — or not close enough. For maybe they are
> seals to themselves too. Sometimes if you look through a bit of
> curved glass you find that there is a distance where everything tips
> upside down. I found that distance when I looked out the window. If
> I get closer, maybe I'll find it again. (9)

The desire to 'get closer', to meld thing and idea by uniting himself with the sea, becomes Seasie's ultimate object of desire. When, at the end of his first day in Bondi, Seasie dreams himself as a seal pup being born, his desire is fantastically heightened by a literal manifestation of the internal self-alienation subsequent to life in the human world. Because the novel is narrated in third person omniscient narration, the occasional focalisation through this male seal affirms it as another actual being somehow intimately linked with Seasie's being, rather than a figment of Seasie's longing or imagination. Seasie

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is not consciously aware of the seal, but its existence substantiates his sense of lack, as his seal 'mirror self' or "shadow" (67) becomes a possible metaphorical signifier of Seasie's lost *objet a*. The split subject of the Symbolic is literalised, and at the denouement of Norman's narrative this split is sealed when Seasie melds with the seal, becoming selkie and allowing a fantastic return to the pre-Symbolic Real.

Seasie's melding with the seal is made possible by the acquisition of a wetsuit, which symbolises a traditional medium for selkie transformation, working quite explicitly as a sealskin. This is obvious from the beginning of the narrative, when, realising the Bondi surfers are not seals, Seasie yet notes how "the curve of their bodies was like the curve of a seal rearing up out of the sea to gaze around with sad and bulbous eyes. Their wet suits shone black, like skin…" (9). By desiring a wetsuit (and a surfboard), Seasie appears to abide by a normal metonymic chain of desire, in that he replaces the lost objects of his past with objects of desire that function as *jouissance*-substitutes in the Symbolic. However, although Seasie places value on consumer objects of desire within the Symbolic system, the surfboard and wetsuit he desires are not metonymical, Symbolic objects of desire. Rather, they allow a metaphorical movement across domains by representing access to the Real. At the close of the narrative, the use of a surfboard and the warmth of a wetsuit enable Seasie to swim farther out from shore than ever before, to deeper seas, resulting in his metamorphic union with the male seal. Putting his wetsuit on and entering the ocean thus enables Seasie to transform into a seal.

iii. Achieving a Jouissance of the Other

Seasie's transformation into a seal is explicitly an achievement of *jouissance*, as he accesses transcendent being in the Real: "Suddenly, *exultantly*, the boy was *free* … He turned his back on the land and swam away in the *joy and freedom* of the sea" (1978, 68, my emphases). As Roderick McGillis has written, "[d]esire's end is death" (2003, iv). The total fulfilment of Seasie's desire to get closer to the sea clearly signifies his demise. Lewis A. Kirshner argues that a desire to join an interpersonal other in "a total union beyond any possible symbolic, intersubjective relationship" is a pathological desire to join in "the supposed '*jouissance* of the Other,' meaning the ultimate enjoyment which belongs in fantasy to the mother" (2003, 92). Seasie's achievement of a deadly *jouissance* of the

Other is evident in his engulfment within his seal shadow and in his loss of human subjectivity in the maternal body of the sea.

In the first instance, Seasie's unusual transformation into a seal is less a melding of "two beings into one" (Kirk 1987, 237) than an incorporation of one into the other, as the seal being is valorised and the human is eclipsed. Before this metamorphosis occurs, the male seal is depicted as isolated from his animal community, suffering the same difficulty in fitting into his society as Seasie and drawn to the land in search of his *objet a* (missing part) just as Seasie is drawn to the sea. It thus appears that Seasie fills a gap in the seal's life, and by making the seal whole, ceases to exist himself. Additionally, Norman emphasises Seasie's eventual loss of human subjectivity by stressing that the seal is not a subject but a being without borders, undifferentiated from the sea-world he inhabits. As an ocean creature, the seal (and thus, later, the transformed Seasie), "was his world, in a way no animal, dragged by gravity, buffeted by hurricane and snow, rain and drought, heat and cold, could ever be. He was in his world, held by it. They were one" (44).

This loss of self is borne out by the way in which Seasie's final *jouissance* disregards the usual selkie link to transcendent language and accesses meaning in a form of transcendent being which erases rather than enhances subjectivity. The transformed Seasie has no memory of his human life — the merged seal-Seasie has forgotten any human past and, lacking any access to signification, is unable to comprehend human cultural objects such as apartment blocks:

> He reared his neck and shoulders out of the water and gazed towards
> the shore. It was not a place he knew any more and he puzzled at the
> strange rocks that lined the edge — rocks that were oddly regular,
> pink or white, or fading green. Rocks that had holes in them that
> glinted back the light from the sea. (68)

Seasie's loss of human subjectivity is further emphasised by the way in which the mortal, animal seal life Norman delineates in segments throughout the novel is categorically empty of human-like affect and intersubjective potential. Relationships between lovers, mothers, their children, and others are temporary and unmemorable; fathers are merely antagonists and rivals. By becoming a seal, Seasie has thus entered a state of being represented as mechanically instinctive, and he enjoys a *jouissance* of undifferentiated experience which

is pre-human rather than super-human. Unlike in most selkie narratives, Seasie's metamorphosis is into a replacement body which forever fixes the binary between Real and Symbolic realms, severing any potential for return or a dual existence. Because his transformation is not a return to his own origins, as in most selkie narratives, his transformation signifies a transgression, rather than a restoration, of natural laws and boundaries, and a rejection of what should have been his proper place in the adult Symbolic.

The deadly resolution of Seasie's desire in *A Dream of Seas* might be read as an authorial rejection of the traditional humanist valorisation of maturation, agency, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity. The narration of the novel is non-intrusive, and the omniscient narrator does not appear to condemn or approve Seasie's desire and its fulfilment. However, the clearly pathological implications of Seasie's desire in the text indicate that an excessive desire for transcendence results in an unhealthy and detrimental alienation from the Symbolic and suggest that the fulfilment of this desire is a regressive escape from the harsh realities of differentiation in the adult world. It is possible that readers will absorb a sense that the human condition is more painful than an animal way of life that lacks the possible losses inherent to subjective and intersubjective capacities. However, because the potential for achieving a non-human animal form is finally fantastic, and because Seasie's metamorphosis signifies his death in the Symbolic world, the overarching ideologies of desire and transcendence in this text are ultimately cautionary.

4. The Inability to Achieve Jouissance: Rerouting Desire into the Symbolic

It is perhaps because *jouissance* is perceived as potentially deadly that a common resolution of a desire for transcendence is an inability to achieve *jouissance*. I will explore this resolution and its ideological implications primarily through Jane Stemp's adolescent selkie novel, *Secret Songs* (1997), which emphasises the necessity of accepting unfulfilled desire and rerouting it into the Symbolic in order to achieve appropriate forms of maturity. Stemp's novel is a supernatural fantasy set in the contemporary world. Its selkie plot pivots around a young selkie male, Euan, whose sealskin is hidden by his possessive human lover, Ruth. Stemp's narrative centres, however, upon a female, human protagonist, the fifteen-year-old Ceri, who accompanies her family on a trip to Scotland from their home in

England (1997, 3). Ceri lives with her mother, Jen, step-father, Michael, and younger half-brother, Sam; she has never met her American father, Paul, and barely knows her older half-sister, Ruth, the daughter of Paul and his first wife. Upon arriving in Scotland, Ceri becomes embroiled in the desires of Ruth, Paul, and Euan, an entanglement resulting from her own desire for access to a transcendent experience of being.

Ceri's strong longing for transcendence is the result of her problematic developmental entry into the Symbolic order. Her contraction of meningitis in early childhood resulted in a significant hearing impairment, which makes it difficult for her to communicate easily in spoken language. Ceri's mother refused to allow her to learn sign language, and Ceri believes that her inability to freely exchange symbolic signs with others, whether spoken or gestured, renders her liminal to the entire Symbolic world. She appears to feel that her inability to properly hear the speech of others or her own voice separates her from the possession of a fabled "phonic substance" which offers "a full speech that [is] fully *present* … to itself, to its signified, to the other" (Derrida 1997, 7, 8). While the concept that the voice offers closer access to Real meaning is but a metaphysical ideology, Ceri's desire is consequently not invested in the Symbolic as a desire for '*jouissance* after the letter'. It is instead invested towards the Real, and she seeks transcendent and transparent meaning through Imaginary-imbued objects which substitute for her lost *objet a*, her hearing. The objects she fixates upon are all mere substitutions for her inarticulable desire to attain her *objet a* and thus to access the experience of transparent meaning and communication with others in the Real.

i. Four Unattainable Objects of Desire

There are four major objects of desire for Ceri in the course of the narrative: her Imaginary undersea world; selkies; the selkie, Euan; and her father, Paul. An Imaginary undersea world operates as the primary object of her desire at the beginning of the narrative. This world is a fantasy object Ceri has created out of a sense that the sea offers access to *jouissance*, an impression consequential to her somatic experience, which causes her to link the sea to her lost *objet a* and thus to the Real, for the tinnitus consequential to her childhood illness causes Ceri to constantly hear "an echo of the sound of the sea in her ears" (59). As she travels to Scotland, Ceri thus hears the noise of the moving car and the

wind through its open sun-roof as "an eternally-falling wave" which resounds with "musical notes" (3). While other people's ears require a supplement such as a seashell to hear the sea, "her own ears did it for Ceri, without the need for sea-shells" (155), suggesting a corporeal link to Real experience. Ceri wants to "keep in touch with her real ears" rather than struggle to make sense of meaning in the Symbolic, and she thus resists the use of her hearing aids — "small, hard thing[s]" (1) which filter her bodily experience, blocking her sense of access to the Real of the sea-sound, and function as a Derridean supplement (see Derrida 1997, 145), serving only to emphasise her loss of an originary, embodied hearing.

The sea, as a transcendental signifier of the Real, is not an object which Ceri can fully access in her current human form. Thus, she fantasises about an Imaginary undersea world, inhabited by beings who have transcended the human condition of lack and misunderstanding, separation and alienation. This object of her desire is inspired by a blend of instrumental music and the recorded 'Secret songs of the whales', neither of which contain lyrics or human voices and thus "have to be understood" (9):

> The sound began again, swirling like water. She loaded some green
> paint onto her brush and pulled it across the paper. Here was where
> she felt at home, in the undersea country she had been painting for
> years. Where the twittering sounds of human speech were little and
> unimportant, because meaning flowed through the water in the tides
> and currents. Ceri felt that she would never need words there, because
> none of the sounds needed to be understood: which was why she
> painted it, because she could never find the right words anyway. And
> it was there that the whales sang. (9)

Ceri thus attempts to use music and art, sound and image, as non-verbal sources of transcendent meaning, but her fantasy merely keeps her from investing her desire constructively within the Symbolic.

Ceri's discovery of folklore about selkies upon her arrival in Scotland allows her to posit that her fantasy object has always been an exterior truth, not her own creation. Merging this new signifier ('selkie') with her fantasy object of an undersea world, Ceri decides that selkies "were … the people who heard the whales singing" (41). Her

awakened desire to become or be one with the selkies is, however, immediately displaced by a more articulable desire to attain the love of the selkie, Euan. Ceri is partially drawn to Euan because he shares her liminal positioning, both of them being "[b]etwixt and between" social categories in a variety of ways (114). However, Euan becomes the object of Ceri's desire largely because he is selkie, and she thus substitutes him for the sea, just as the sea substitutes for combined transcendent being and meaning, and such transcendence for presence, back through the chain of her desire to her sense of lost originary *jouissance*. This slide of signifiers positions Euan as an object of desire in substitution for Ceri's final object of longing, the *jouissance* of hearing and speaking a fully present, transparent language. Thus, Ceri's immediate attraction to Euan is centred upon the clarity with which he communicates. Not only is his voice "extraordinarily clear: it seemed to ring inside her head" (23), but he asks the right "sort of question[s]" and listens to her as if he understands what she really means to say (26). His speech is represented as lacking the slippage of meaning inherent to ordinary language and instead displays access to the transcendent meaning beyond language which Ceri desires:

> 'I don't know enough *words*,' Ceri said [to Euan], almost shouting.
> 'How am I supposed to tell people things? You said exactly what I
> was trying to think, and I can't even paint it well enough either.' (38)

Euan's communication is meaningful and transparent, his voice a ringing of 'truth', because he embodies a state fantasised by believers in an originary speech:

> that state suspended between the state of nature and the state of
> society: an epoch of natural languages, of the neume … Between
> prelanguage and the linguistic catastrophe instituting the division of
> discourse … [where] a full language [can exist] … a language without
> discourse, a speech without sentence, without syntax, without parts,
> without grammar, a language of pure effusion... (Derrida 1997, 279)

Euan's possession of the selkie *jouis-sens* of a transcendent language is particularly evident because he is capable of musical speech without words, which demonstrates his access to the divine *neume* — at sea with Ceri, he sings to the seals, a song that contains "no words, only music" (Stemp 1997, 32). As a selkie, Euan has access to a seal form and thus to an animal site of being as meaning in the Real. Non-human animals can be perceived to be

creatures in touch with a primal language (or a form of being as meaning) because there is no "double bind" in their manner of communication — that is, they cannot present verbal messages that contradict non-verbal ones, by saying one thing and meaning another (Myers 1998, 71, 111). Ceri, used to "reading the face and lips as well as hearing the words" (192), is particularly hostile to this double bind. She imagines that the people of her undersea land "never say anything they don't mean, and they never say anything unless they have to. Except when they're singing, and then it doesn't matter" (25). Her desire to become selkie is thus a desire for "[s]elf-presence, [and] transparent proximity in the face-to-face of countenances and the immediate range of the voice" (Derrida 1997, 138).

Ceri can only access selkie *jouissance*, however, through the medium of the selkie Euan, and her desire to be selkie blurs with her desire for Euan's love, edging her towards a desire for deadly *jouissance*. As in Norman's narrative, there is a sense that selkie *jouissance* threatens a dispersal of self. Watching Euan swimming in the water with the seals, Ceri notes a loss of distinction between self and other: "It was difficult to tell, among the wet glinting curves of skin and body, what was seal and what was Euan" (33). Having experienced social liminality since the loss of her hearing, Ceri's desire to achieve transcendence is a desire to "belong" (153), in the sense that she wants to be fully present among others, but such full understanding threatens to eliminate dialogue, merging self and other. Her desire for a regressive '*jouissance* of the Other' is evident in her desire to use Euan's sealskin. Ceri is not a selkie, nor a selkie-human descendant, and thus has no sealskin of her own. However, when gaining temporary possession of Euan's sealskin, she sleeps with it gathered around her and, in an ambiguous scene, dreams that she swims with it in the sea. Euan later tells her that this was no dream, that she is capable of using his sealskin to become a "silkie in the sea" (152). Because the sealskin is a missing part from which Euan absorbs sensation, Ceri's use of it is an immersion in Euan's being (with sexual overtones not uncommon to representations of deadly *jouissance*). Euan tells Ceri of his sealskin: "Burn it, bury it, drown it — *I'll know*. It's part of me" (154).

Ceri's desire to achieve *jouissance* through a regressive merging of self with other in the pre-Symbolic realm of the Real is also evident in her final object of desire — her father, Paul. Paul substitutes as an object of desire for Ceri's lost *objet a* because imagining what her life would have been like if her mother had remained married to her father, Ceri realises that she may never have become ill and subsequently deaf and may

now possess a different subjectivity as a fully-hearing American (92). Her desire to meet and know her father is thus a search for her unalienated origins, but, as Peter Blos suggests, in adolescence regressive acts provide an opportunity for maturation (1967). "[W]hy am I doing this?" Ceri wonders on the cusp of her first meeting with her father, but upon looking into his face her need becomes clearer: "It was like looking in a strange mirror, or seeing her own reflection in the water of a deep well" (85-86). Meeting her father for the first time face-to-face since she was three thus provides Ceri with a mirror-stage effect, a second opportunity to individuate and to construct her identity.

ii. Investing Unfulfilled Desire in the Symbolic

By using the selkie motif to manifest the individual's psychic relationship to the registers of the Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic, *Secret Songs* explores Ceri's adolescent psychic reconstruction. For this reason, the status of Ceri's desire at the conclusion of the novel is of the utmost significance for the novel's overarching ideologies of adolescence, desire, and maturation. It is thus highly important that Stemp's narrative ends with Ceri relinquishing her regressive pursuit of *jouissance* in the Real and reinvesting her desire in the Symbolic. This change of direction is partially consequential to Ceri's experiences of the negative possibilities of unchecked desire. While her meetings with her father are initially gratifying, Ceri learns that Paul's desire is self-centred and possessive, leading him to objectify others and deny them a variety of subject positions. She comes to question: "did he only want me to be his daughter? Like his suit, and his car. His, and nothing else" (192). Ceri's experiences with Ruth are equally instructive in this way. Although Ruth defies their father's form of love, declaring that the only thing she wants from Paul is "[f]reedom" (191), her own love for Euan is equally selfish and controlling. Like the human males of selkie wife narratives, she steals and hides Euan's sealskin because she wishes to remove his agency, keeping him with her by default rather than allowing him the option to "go where [he] like[s]" (195).

When Paul attempts to shoot Euan in order to maintain possession of Ruth, and Ruth attempts to burn Euan's sealskin in order to maintain his presence in her life, Ceri intervenes to stop both events. When Euan then rejects Ceri in favour of Ruth, she experiences a *rite de passage* which teaches her that *jouissance* is ultimately unachievable.

She relinquishes her regressive desire to escape the complexities of human existence by becoming selkie, accepts (unfulfilled) desire as a fact of adult life, and reroutes that desire into constructive forms in the Symbolic. This is symbolised by her new resolution to learn sign language at last. While her desire for Euan remains, her inability to fulfil that desire is softened by the possibility that her friendship with Euan's younger relative, Fergal, might blossom into a satisfying intersubjective relationship. Although Fergal lacks the element of seductive otherness that Euan embodies (the mystery of things that humans cannot quite attain), he is a viable romantic hero and stands as a foil to Euan throughout the novel, not merely because he is his human relative, but because he has access to a different sort of potentially transcendent language — he is going to university to study literature. Ceri's relationship with Fergal frequently involves wordplay, and at their final meeting in Scotland they engage in a teasing game of "alliteration" and exchange addresses, suggesting Ceri's new commitment to the Symbolic world of language and intersubjectivity (197-198).

That Euan also rejects the experience of being selkie (in order to placate Ruth) further emphasises the novel's ideology of the ultimate impossibility of achieving *jouissance*. As a selkie on land, Euan is represented as embodying an intense desire for the sea and for his *objet a*, his sealskin. The "vehemence" in his voice as he agrees that "[s]wimming's easier" than rowing (34), and his pleasure at singing to, swimming with, and watching the seals (43, 107), attests to his desire for transcendent experience. Euan increasingly loses access to selkie *jouissance*, however, first through the loss of his skin and then through his loss of transcendent language. Although his voice initially 'rings' in Ceri's head with communicative clarity, he is eventually driven to kiss Ceri in a reversion to bodily speech because he has lost his ability to access transcendent meaning. His action is a failure, however, a sign of confusion, because Ceri's desire for him, and to be selkie like him, draws him in a sense of kinship (154). He later explains the kiss by saying, "We're too alike not to feel — something" (179). Euan cannot explain why he loves Ruth and cannot desire Ceri, however. In his attempts to do so, "[f]or the first time since she had known him, he was fumbling for words" and "[h]e stopped short, as if English had suddenly become a foreign language and he had forgotten how to speak it" (179). Clearly, Euan has departed the *jouis-sens* and other-linked *jouissance* of the Real and entered the Symbolic, in which intersubjective relationships are complex and difficult and the attempt

to communicate and understand one's own mind and desires is often impossible (see Coats 2004 80).

At the beginning of Stemp's novel, Ceri thus exists in the Imaginary, desiring the world of the Real so she can escape the slippage of meanings in the Symbolic. Karen Coats warns that "[t]he Imaginary is a wonderful place to visit, but the child subject mustn't continue to live there," they must discover some way of dealing with desire and lack beneficially, so that they can become a productive part of the Symbolic world (2004, 23). The convention that teenagers are filled with fantasy, hope, and aspiration thus meets the principle that adults accept life as often uncomfortable and disappointing. Patricia Spacks writes that "[t]he world denies fulfilment for most youthful dreams; to attain maturity implies relinquishing earlier fantasies" (1981, 293). A longing to access the transcendent experience of the Real (represented through a longing for a metamorphic state of being) may be perceived as a rejection of the need to acknowledge and accept human incompleteness. According to Stemp's text, growing up and achieving adult forms of intersubjectivity necessarily involves leaving such regressive desires behind.

A brief reference to Charlotte Koplinka's *The Silkies: A Novel of the Shetlands* (1978) provides additional clarification of this ideology of desire and maturation, although Koplinka's text focuses upon child and adult, rather than adolescent, characters. Like Stemp, Koplinka describes the ultimate inability to achieve *jouissance* or to maintain selkie *jouissance* in tandem with a human existence, resulting in similar conclusions about desire and the human condition. The selkie wife in this narrative, Lora, has willingly given her human lover her sealskin to possess because a dual life is impossible due to the irresistible pull of the sea. When Lora returns to the sea as a selkie to bring her beloved husband home safely during a storm, her desire for the sea overwhelms her and she disappears. The narrative focuses upon Lora's daughter, Karin, who, like Stemp's Ceri, suffers a childhood illness which causes a loss of hearing and a desire for the *jouis-sens* of the sea: "I wanted to see what was beneath the sea. I wanted to know what the seals who swam by the skerries knew" (1978, 146).

When Lora disappears, Karin goes in search of her mother and desires to rejoin with her in originary *jouissance* by becoming selkie and remaining with her in the sea. However, Lora and Karin together make a conscious choice to return to the Symbolic, social world and remain there out of a sense of responsibility for intersubjective human

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relationships. Lora says:

> I do not think we can leave the love, Karin. I can see your father's
> eyes and your grandmother's hands and your brother's smile. We may
> belong here, where there is nobody to care about except ourselves.
> But you have heard the seals crying on the skerries — crying for the
> people of the island. They feel for both; we belong to both places.
> The sea will go on without us and be content. But can our family be
> happy without us? (146-147)

Karin similarly thinks:

> We *were* children of the sea, bold and brave and free. But we had to
> become deaf to her call and turn away from her touch, because our
> lives upon the land were more important. There were people in our
> home who needed us and loved us. (147)

Lora and Karin thus actively choose to reject a *jouissance du corps* and *jouis-sens* which would signify their death in the Symbolic, and they instead intend to reinvest their desire for the sea into productive, intersubjective routes in the Symbolic realm. This is evident in Lora's explanation of how others seek *jouissance* after the letter:

> "But the sea is calling us," [Karin] whispered.
> "Perhaps we must find another way to answer her," [Lora] said.
> "Your father answers her by going out in his boat to fish. Bryan is
> learning to reply in the same way. Your grandmother hears the sea
> and knits warm sweaters for those who will go to her in boats."
>
> (146-147)

This rejection of *jouissance* in the Real in favour of a Symbolic life presents an ideology that human subjects are often split between the desire to be free, animal, immediate, and fully present and to be intersubjective, loving, and part of the human world of social meaning. According to this ideology, it is not possible to achieve a permanent interface between the two worlds so that both desires might be achieved. The belief presented to readers is that each human being must make a choice to live fully in the Symbolic world because the achievement of *jouissance* signifies a Symbolic death. This is

a very different ideology from that which I explore in the following segment, in which the achievement of a mitigated or safeguarded *jouissance* suggests that a belief in unachievable *jouissance* merely reinforces unnecessary binaries, obscuring the liberal potential to lead an effective and fulfilling dual life.

5. Allowing For a Real-Symbolic Interface: Jouissance Mitigated by Desire and Safeguarded by the Addition of Intersubjective Agency

Given that selkies are meant to be dual-bodied beings, with access to both human and seal forms (and thus to the realms of both the Symbolic and the Real), it is significant how often selkie narratives impose serious constraints upon that duality, particularly by emphasising the necessity of a medium for transformation and/or by limiting transformation into human form to certain synchronic markers, such as the full moon or a certain day each year (see, for example, Griffin 1985; Horn 1997). In addition to these limitations, a dual life is often represented as impossible either because the desire for selkie *jouissance* is too compelling to allow for a permanent interface (as with Lora in Koplinka's *Silkies*), or because others cannot tolerate such fluidity (as with Ruth and Euan in Stemp's *Secret Songs*). A consistent conclusion to selkie narratives is thus the demand that a final either/or choice be made between the land and the sea, human and seal forms, and Symbolic social existence and Real animal experience. It is only in recent selkie narratives that writers have begun to represent the possibility of permanent duality. This innovation appears to reflect changing beliefs about human animality (see **Chapter Four**), the nature of human desire, and the feasibility of achieving and maintaining *jouissance* in human societies. The experience of *jouissance* in the Real may now be represented as achievable without a consequential rejection of the Symbolic; this eliminates an impassable binary between the realms and allows for the establishment of a permanent Real-Symbolic interface.

Such an interface is possible only if the form of selkie *jouissance* achieved is mitigated by some retention of desire and safeguarded from deadly connotations by the maintenance of agency and (inter)subjectivity. In the latter case, many selkie representations describe the retention of agential subjective and intersubjective capacities which prevent selkies who stay permanently in the sea from slipping into the

undifferentiation of deadly *jouissance*. Subjectivity is signified by the maintenance of the ego in *jouissance du corps* and by access to the *jouis-sens* of a transcendent language which suggests the retention of a transcendent subjectivity. Intersubjectivity is then represented as a common element of selkie existence. Versions of the selkie wife folktale frequently stress that land-trapped selkies have family and friends who mourn them and call for them to return to the sea. Selkie *jouissance* is also frequently safeguarded from deadly connotations by the retention of an element of desire linked to human alienation. In part, this desire is maintained due to the tension of possessing a dual body — it is signified by the way in which selkie *jouissance* at sea is mitigated by a desire to come ashore and dance on land. Additionally, as we see in selkie wife narratives, the selkie who returns to the sea, achieving *jouissance*, frequently has some degree of desire invested in the Symbolic world of human interactions by the time she retrieves her sealskin. A sense of lack, guilt, or regret regarding the land-husband and children she leaves behind mitigates the selkie wife's *jouissance*, precluding access to the totality of absolute transcendence. This is explicit in a version of "The Seal Wife" collected by Katherine Briggs — on returning to the sea, the selkie wife "burst forth into an ecstasy of joy, which was only moderated when she beheld her children, whom she was now about to leave" (1991b, 321).

Selkie *jouissance* is also often represented as mitigated by desire in folklore which holds that selkie animality is the result of a curse. Kenneth Lillington's selkie narrative is exemplary in this respect. His reversion of the "Selkie Wife" folktale presents a human protagonist, Cathy (who helps the selkie wife, Fiona, regain her sealskin), musing upon how Fiona's *jouissance* in her return to the sea is mitigated by a more ancient lack:

> Even now, of course, Fiona would not be perfectly happy. She must still retain a core of yearning for that kingdom under the water where they had all lived before the spell [that made them selkies]. But there could be no recovering that, any more than man could recover the Garden of Eden. (1985, 141)

Regaining her selkie skin allows Fiona to return to the *jouissance* of selkie form, as well as an intersubjective relationship with her selkie sisters, but such access to transcendence is a form of mitigated and safeguarded *jouissance*. This *jouissance* allows for a dual existence, for Fiona comes to land once a year to meet with Cathy.

As Lillington's conclusion suggests, the achievement of a Real-Symbolic interface need not refer to a fifty/fifty dual life involving equivalent time in the subject positions which represent each order (human in the Symbolic and seal/selkie in the Real). The mere suggestion that a permanent interface is possible allows for the idea that *jouissance* can be achieved by those who inhabit the Symbolic if they open their minds to such a possibility, rather than passively accepting inherited beliefs about the necessary and inevitable separation of the two realms. A new emphasis on permanent duality and a continuous intermingling of the Real and the Symbolic has become increasingly popular in contemporary selkie narratives, such as Sandra Ann Horn's *The Silkie* (1997), and Chardi Christian's recent selkie wife reversion, which ends with the lines: "And so on the land and in the sea they found a new way to be together" (2005). I will examine this ideology of permissible duality in Franny Billingsley's otherworld novel, *The Folk Keeper* (1999), and Janni Lee Simner's "Water's Edge" (2001), a short story set in contemporary America. Billingsley's narrative constructs an unusual superhuman interface, while Simner's tale presents a more typical dual human-animal interface.

i. Two Objet a, Two Means of Achieving Jouissance

Franny Billingsley's adolescent selkie narrative is set in a fantasy otherworld in which there are many mysterious 'Otherfolk', but the most dangerous are those which are "*mostly mouth*" (15), known simply as 'the Folk', creatures of the underground who have the power to spoil human food and physically harm living beings. They must be placated by Folk Keepers (with offerings of food) in the liminal spaces of Cellars. Billingsley's protagonist, Corinna, lives in an orphanage on the Mainland, where she has disguised herself as a boy so that she can hold the position of Folk Keeper for the town of Rhysbridge in which the orphanage is located. She has secret powers but is unaware of their origin until she is taken to live at Marblehaugh Park, a Manor by the sea. There, Corinna develops a close relationship with Finian, the stepson and heir of the late Lord of the Manor, Lord Merton.

She eventually discovers that she is the daughter of Lord Merton and his first wife, a Sealmaiden, Rona, whose sealskin he stole, forcing her to marry him. At this juncture, Sir Edward, a villainous cousin who wishes to inherit, attempts to kill Corinna by throwing

her into the Caverns beneath the Manor. Corinna survives the fall but is trapped underground for a long period of time, which leads her to discard her male persona. When she allows her hair to grow long she fully develops her superhuman form. (When in human form, female selkies in Billingsley's otherworld have several special powers not common elsewhere in selkie folklore — they share seals' excellent vision and hearing, always knows the time, and have rapidly growing hair. When their hair is uncut, it functions like seal's whiskers, allowing them to feel their way through the world around them. It also provides them with the power of the Last Word, a rare linguistic ability for spontaneous rhyme and rhythm which confounds the aggression of the Folk).[42] By reading over the journal she keeps, Corinna realises that she was born with a sealskin which is now on display in the Manor. However, her skin is badly burned in a scuffle with Sir Edward after she makes her way back to the surface, and when she later attempts to wear the skin to transform into a seal, she realises that it is so badly damaged that her transformation would be unidirectional, into a permanent replacement body, for the burned patches of the sealskin are incapable of "revers[ing] the fusion of seal to human flesh" (159). Corinna rejects her skin and its one-way metamorphosis and returns to land, where she adopts a satisfying, open-ended lifestyle, marrying Finian and living on land, but enjoying relationships with other selkies by swimming in the sea in her superhuman form.

Although the descendant of a selkie and a human, Corinna has the ability to become a full selkie herself because she was born with a sealskin and thus the capacity for a dual human/seal body. The loss of her sealskin shortly after her birth allows it to function as her literal *objet a,* a lost piece of herself that is the object-cause of her sense of lack and desire. If she possessed her sealskin, Corinna could become whole. By melding with her skin, she could access the *jouissance du corps* of a fully self-present being-in-the-world. She could experience a supernatural animal embodiment beyond language, in which she would yet maintain a sense of self and the potential for intersubjectivity with other Sealfolk. However, the superhuman form available to Sealmaidens in Billingsley's world provides them with an equivalent *jouissance du corps* of full self-presence embodied within a sense of connectivity to the world. Significantly, this super-human form also

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[42] Because Billingsley does not explicitly refer to the existence of male selkies (although the use of the term 'Sealfolk' as well as 'Sealmaidens' intimates their existence) it is not clear if Billingsley's male selkies share the special powers embedded in the Sealmaiden's long hair.

allows access to the *jouis-sens* of transcendent language through the power of the Last Word. There is thus a second object-cause for Corinna's sense of lack at the opening of the narrative — a loss of access to the full powers of her superhuman form.

What keeps Corinna from accessing this superhuman *jouissance* is her desire for power, which is merely a substitute replacement for her desire for the *jouissance* of full self-presence. Initially unaware that her *objet a* (sealskin) exists as a literal object in the world, or that she can also achieve *jouissance* through her superhuman form, Corinna relates her sense of lack and desire to causes in the Symbolic, such as power relations, and she thus compensates for her sense of lack by seeking what is represented as a negative form of '*jouissance* after the letter'. Instigating a chain of desire around the signifier 'power', Corinna desires a cluster of metonymical objects such as revenge (12, 16, 18, 96), discovering others' secrets (27-8), and keeping herself hard at heart (8, 75-6, 105). Her desire for power is also manifested through her craving to be special and different and to maintain a sense of superiority over, and separation from, others (61). Corinna has no desire to be "just like ordinary people," and she revels in her "secret powers" — her abilities to know the exact time and to resist the cold, and her nightly two-inch growth of hair (19). She is so determined to be unique that she is ashamed at the shared mundanity of human hunger: "I refuse to be like ordinary people, living their ordinary, powerless lives, who need to eat and eat and eat" (21). Corinna's desire for power, however, particularly fixates upon the desire to be special by being a Folk Keeper, which she believes will provide her with the influence and authority she lacks as an orphan and a female in an inheritance-structured, patriarchal world. Her role as a male Folk Keeper replaces "the endless carrying of water buckets and scrubbing of floors and humiliations of Corinna" (4). It allows her to feel like the "queen of the world" (1), as her position accords her a degree of respect from the one hundred and twenty-eight households of the Rhysbridge community (3, 64). Ironically, however, it is this particular object of desire — the selection of power — which maintains Corinna's sense of alienation and lack of access to *jouissance*. This is because it results in the cutting of her hair.

In attempting to gain patriarchal power by disguising herself as a boy, Corinna amplifies her entry into the (male) Symbolic. She thinks of her disguise as a mere reorganisation of parts:

"The water seemed suddenly marvelous, now it can be smoke, now

> ice, now liquid. Nothing lost, only rearranged." I'd thought of how —
> all unknowing — I'd imitated it, turning Corinna into Corin, nothing
> lost, just a little surface rearrangement. (61)

However, this apparently metonymic 'surface rearrangement', which seems to merely rearrange contiguous or syntagmatic elements in the Symbolic world, is far from superficial. It instigates an immense loss because cutting her silver hair and keeping it short to obscure her femininity prevents Corinna from accessing her superhuman *jouissance du corps* and *jouis-sens*. Her decision to masquerade as a male thus impedes the paradigmatic connection her superhuman form offers between the realms of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real. By cutting her hair, Corinna cuts off the fantastic, metaphorical link between the realms which would allow her to access transcendent experience.

Corinna as Corin is thus clumsy, out of step with the world due to the loss of her *jouissance du corps*. She narrates: "I can trip over anything and nothing … I move through life like a person with one eye" (13). She adds that "[i]t didn't used to be so," but she is unaware that this lack is due to the cutting of her hair (13). Similarly, not knowing why, Corinna relates early in the narrative that:

> Ever since I turned into Corin, I can no longer put together words that
> scan and rhyme. Only those rhyming words, springing of themselves
> into the Folk Keeper's mind, can extinguish the destructive power of
> the Folk. In The Last Word they sense a power greater than their own.
> But every rhyme that comes to me now has a hole in its middle, right
> where the heartbeat should be. (9)

That hole is representative of Corinna's missing *jouis-sens*, an absence where the transcendent experience of full presence should be.

As her revelation of a sense of self-lack reveals, Corinna's chain of desire based around 'power' is merely an attempt to substitute for her ultimate desire to access the *jouissance* a reunification with either of her fantastic *objet a* (her superhuman form or her sealskin) would provide:

> My secret powers make up for that missing piece of me. I don't know
> what it is, but I ache for it each day. It's as though I have eyes, but

> there are colors I cannot see. As though I have ears, but there's a
>
> range of notes I cannot hear. But at least my powers set me apart from
>
> the rest. Once they are gone, will there be anything left? (19)

With her hair short, Corinna maintains only a limited range of superhuman powers (that is, her abilities to know the time, to resist the cold, and to grow hair more quickly than other people). Corinna believes that these negligible 'secret powers' compensate for her sense of lack, but in the process of their substitution her dimmed and partial Sealmaiden powers merely act as a Derridean supplement, emphasising her sense of absence and deficiency.

When Corinna's hair grows long and she fully accesses her superhuman form, she is filled with the joy of *jouissance du corps*: "The world is an explosion of beauty. My senses have opened like flowers; everything is an exquisite pleasure" (123). She explains, rhetorically, "I taste…," "I feel…," "I see…" (123-124). When threatened by the Folk she also experiences *jouis-sens*:

> another sort of light burst upon me, an interior illumination. A picture
>
> of a silver-haired lady came to me, and words to describe her, too,
>
> which wrapped themselves around the image, wove themselves into a
>
> net of rhythm and rhyme. … That boiling energy … paralyze[d] the
>
> Folk … (126-7)

The combination of *jouissance du corps* and *jouis-sens* in Corinna's superhuman form is evident in the heavily embodied description of her experience of the Last Word. While the transcendent speech of the Last Word is delineated in traditional metaphysical terms as spontaneous and song-like (see Derrida 1997), it is also described in terms of writing or artistic creation with the body. Corinna narrates: "[w]ith my hair long and loose, I can carve words from air and float them on a sea of rhyme" (127); "I string together fluid ropes of verse" (128); and "my hair dissolves images into rhythm and stirs it all together with rhyme" (128).

Despite the satisfaction of her superhuman form, Corinna's experiences of *jouissance* are mitigated by a desire for the more transcendent form of *jouissance* she believes she will achieve through unification with her sealskin. Her discovery that her sealskin exists brings her first *objet a*, object-cause of her desire, to the surface of her consciousness. As a literal part of her which is missing, it becomes an achievable object of

desire with a metaphorical access to the ultimate *jouissance*:

> The important thing is this: I am missing a piece. A piece as real as
> an arm or an eye. I always knew something was missing, that I was a
> shadow at noon, melting away beneath my own two feet. Once I feel
> my Sealskin round me, once I press it to my skin, I shall be whole.
>
> (113-4)

Corinna believes that she can only access and achieve her true subjectivity and experience of self-presence as a selkie in the sea, and she thus tells Finian: "if I stayed [on land], I'd miss myself" (154). Finian begs her to allow for a Real-Symbolic interface, to return to the sea but to keep the "door ajar": "Go to the sea, just come back, too" (139). In the typical paradoxical either/or climax to many dual-bodied selkie narratives, however, Corinna insists that upon becoming a Sealmaiden she will not return to land because she cannot risk the loss of her primary, concrete *objet a*: "I couldn't risk ending up like my mother, my Sealskin stolen or destroyed" (140).

ii. The Significance of Linguistic Subjectivity

Corinna obviously comes around to Finian's way of thinking, however, for when she realises that the damage done to her sealskin by Sir Edward means that it is "no longer a two-way door between land and water," she immediately tears it off (160). This rejection of her sealskin and its promise of access to transcendence is a consequence of her desire to retain her newly won agential subjectivity. In this respect, Corinna's reunification with her *objet a* is prevented by the abject connotations commonly attached to the semiotic realm after Symbolic selfhood has been attained (see Kristeva 1982, 1984). Corinna's damaged sealskin could certainly be described as an abject *objet a*. Even before she realises her transformation is unidirectional, Corinna is uneasy about her metamorphosis. As she bonds with her sealskin and begins to become a seal, she feels "horror" along with "fascination" at her physical transformation, clearly signalling the entry of the abject into the text (159). The language Corinna uses to describe her experience of metamorphosis is negative and indicates her sense that unification with her sealskin is less an integration of two selves than an absorption of one self into another, her human self engulfed by her seal body.

The metamorphosis is initially expressed positively as "[w]hat had been double was becoming single" (158), but Corinna eventually describes her sealskin as virus-like or parasitic, something ambiguously both external and internal, infesting the self: "My Sealskin was *taking me over*. Silvered fur stretched, *swallowing* skin, *binding* thigh to thigh" (159, my emphases). She uses images of inimical invasion and capture: "The Sealskin *crept up* my side, *wrapped round* my middle" (159, my emphases). Corinna's separation of her subjectivity from her sealskin is evident in the personal nouns and pronouns which locate her sense of selfhood in her (super)human form:

> The change had begun at *my feet*. There was the sweep of *Corinna's*
> *bluish skin* from shoulder to thigh. But webbed flippers fused what
> could no longer be called ankles and smooth fur bound *my legs* above
> the knee. (158, my emphases)

When Corinna decides to reject her transformation into a seal, she narrates: "I wanted myself back. I tore at the Sealskin, ripping it from me, which ripped away Corinna, too" (160). The following line, "[r]aw flesh, oozing blood, my own faraway scream," clarifies that in this moment 'Corinna' is not the seal identity she is tearing off but her (super)human self with its tender flesh fastened to the damaged sealskin.

Corinna's experience of rejecting her one-way metamorphosis can be best understood in terms of the significance of her linguistic subjectivity. Her sense of unease about the assimilative nature of her sealskin metamorphosis is heightened when she becomes "more seal than human" and her "words vanish" (159):

> I could no longer shape an image of inky wetness, spitting up pearls.
> I could no longer name Finian, couldn't even pretend I didn't love him.
>> An aching desolation overcame me. Gone was my new power
> of sculpting images with rhythm, welding rhythm to rhyme. Gone,
> too, was my newest power: saying those three words Finian had
> coaxed from me.
>> My hands moved of themselves, pulled at the Sealskin. I
> couldn't go on before I knew I could retrieve my words. (159)

With transformation into animal form through unification with her *objet a* (the master signifier of her desire), Corinna gains transcendent meaning and being: she "couldn't even

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pretend" she did not love Finian. However, she loses her power to express that love and her power to "tell [her own] story" (159) — that is, she loses her human subjectivity. As Karen Coats notes:

> To be completely coincident with the master signifier would mean to leave the chain of signification altogether, and since it is only in that chain that we are subjects at all, we would be precisely nowhere … we would achieve something like Being itself and go out like Tweedledee's candle. (2004, 123)

If the human subject is indeed constituted precisely by the entry into language, as Lacan has suggested, then transformation into a non-human animal form incapable of language may have deadly overtones for human subjectivity (Coats 2004, 2).

Corinna is particularly reluctant to lose language because her experience of writing, of telling her own story, has been crucial to the establishment of her subjectivity and because her desire for a potent subjectivity is crucial to her desire for *jouissance*. In describing a "well-known schema" about writing, Derrida describes how the act of writing may be perceived as a "sacrifice aiming at the symbolic reappropriation of presence" (1997, 143). He outlines how

> the operation that substitutes writing for speech also replaces presence by value: to the *I am* or to the *I am present* thus sacrificed, a *what* I am or a *what I am worth* is *preferred*. 'If I were present, one would never know what I was worth.' (1997, 142)

Corinna begins her journal (ostensibly, the novel we read in the first person) in order to show she is worth something by being a Folk Keeper. However, her "Folk Record" (2) becomes a medium for the transformation of her subjectivity; writing in it provides her with the means to reconstruct herself. The personal narration of her life allows her to regain access to her sealskin, her superhuman body, and the power of spontaneous, transcendent speech because reviewing what she has written allows Corinna to know and transform herself. She finally states that her journal "is no longer a Folk Record: I relinquish my duties! Call it instead Corinna's Journal" (112).

When Corinna believes herself only able to experience complete *jouissance* through unification with her sealskin, she writes that "I have reached the end of my human

words and have nothing more to say" (155). However, after she rejects the regressive loss of language inherent to her metamorphic experience, she expresses her joy in her linguistic subjectivity by supposedly starting a new journal (providing the final chapter of Billingsley's novel):

> This is the first page of my new book, my new life. I love the heady
> feeling of putting words on paper, ink now, my own wet, black letters.
> A world of ink, and air to dry it, too. I shall never finish my story.
>
> (156)

Writing requires the Symbolic human world of land, separate from the Real, undifferentiating quality of oceanic water, which washes away symbolic script.

A desire for language, for "[her] own words," thus draws Corinna back from the Real, sea world, to the Symbolic, human world, where she can lead her own version of a satisfying dual life (161). She narrates:

> My mother went mad when her Sealskin was destroyed. She turned
> her back forever on the sea. She may never have known her powers,
> that the sea was open to her still. But I won't go mad; I'll make the sea
> my second home. (161)

In the aftermath of her rejected metamorphosis, Corinna adopts a unique Real-Symbolic interface in which she experiences *jouissance* on both land and sea in her superhuman form. Although her sealskin is gone forever, her superhuman form, when underwater, offers her an experience of being-in-the-world even more joyous than her superhuman embodiment on land. Immersing her superhuman body in the sea makes Corinna feel "reborn," her "heart beating to the slow, rhythmic pulse of underwater life" and "the singing of the sea" (87). She feels a "wild joy … in releasing the burden of [her] own weight, exchanging thin air for this dense world" (88) in which her hair provides her with a *jouissance du corps* that makes her feel "as though [she] were hearing music" (89), and thus experiencing *jouis-sens*. Corinna's Real-Symbolic interface offers her access to a *jouissance* which is mitigated by the inevitable tension between the two realms (of the land and the sea) and the two registers (of the Symbolic and the Real). This safeguard from deadly *jouissance* is strengthened by her retention of subjective and intersubjective capacities on both land (in her relationship with Finian), and at sea (in her relationship with

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the Sealfolk she swims with in her superhuman form). Billingsley's narrative thus conveys a significant, new ideology that certain types of productive *jouissance* in the Real are achievable without the consequential loss of subjectivity and the constructive pleasures of the Symbolic.

iii. A More Typical Dual-Bodied Animal-Human Interface

Although Corinna does not take up the *jouissance* of an animal form but instead maintains a superhuman interface between the Real and the Symbolic, her achievement is analogous to the dual-bodied seal/human interface more common to recent selkie narratives, such as Janni Simner's supernatural fantasy, "Water's Edge" (2001). The ideal of an enduring interface between two realms is epitomised in the title of Simner's short story, which denotes the liminal space of the beach, where water and land permanently meet. Simner's child protagonist, Laura, "hear[s] waves no one else could hear" and is filled with an "aching" for the sea (47). Her longing alienates her from others, so that she is essentially absent from social engagements at which she is physically present. When Laura finds a sealskin in the attic of her grandparents' house by the beach, she discovers that she is able to transform into a seal, and she escapes into the ocean, which "[m]ore than anything, she wanted to swim in" (56). Her metamorphosis brings her *jouissance*: "[l]aughter bubble[s] within Laura" as she enters the sea, a place which is "better, more right, than home had ever been" (56). However, the sound of "someone call[ing] her name" (55) mitigates Laura's *jouissance*, and in endeavouring to escape from that call, she dives deeply into the waves and runs out of air, resulting in her return to shore (57). In Lilith Norman's selkie narrative, the protagonist's lack of a proper name in the Symbolic signifies his effacement; in Simner's story, the enunciation of the protagonist's name draws her back from her potential disappearance into the Real and calls her into being as meaning in the Symbolic.

It is Laura's grandmother who calls her back and who fishes her out of the surf, even though Laura "didn't want to leave [the sealskin] —or the water — ever again" (62) and "almost didn't care if she drowned" (58). Laura's desire for a potentially deadly *jouissance* is overturned when her grandmother (another selkie wife) explains that the sealskin Laura found in the attic once belonged to her and that she shares Laura's ability to

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always "hear the sea" (60). Because Simner's selkies have the life-span of natural seals, rather than faery immortality, this elderly selkie wife doubts her ability to "survive the change" should she use her sealskin; she also lacks any intersubjective relationships at sea: "any family I had before is long gone. You and your mother, your uncles and cousins, you're my family now" (61). Rejecting a deadly *jouissance* for herself, she offers the skin to Laura and condones her desire for such *jouissance*. However, Laura's desire for a *jouissance* which might signify her death in the Symbolic world is mitigated by a new desire for her grandmother's presence and safeguarded by the potential intersubjective relationship between them: "Laura didn't want to leave her [grandmother] either" (62).

Laura's grandmother tells her that selkies "can live on both land and sea" (59). Rather than following so many selkie pretexts by choosing one realm over the other despite this duality, Laura decides that she will "be a seal and a human both" (62). While her grandmother was once "a seal who sometimes lived on land," Laura chooses to "be a human who sometimes lived in the sea" (62). She finds intersubjectivity with her grandmother through their shared desire for the sea and through a teacher/student relationship. Becoming a seal imparts no seal-instincts to Laura, such as the necessity of breathing deeply before submerging, and she asks her grandmother to advise her about how to be a seal. However, Laura's inability to "figure it all out on her own" does not merely refer to her lack of knowledge about seal embodiment (63); it also signifies her need for assistance in learning to lead a dual life, investing desire in both the Symbolic (*jouissance* after the letter in the form of intersubjectivity) and the Real (the *jouissance du corps* of animal seal form).

In Billingsley and Simner's narratives, the concluding presentation of a permanent intersection between the Real and Symbolic registers illustrates revisionist ideas about desire, transcendence, and *jouissance*, particularly new beliefs in the human potential to access the transcendent presence of the Real safely, without losing desirable ties to the Symbolic and Imaginary. In both texts, protagonists are represented as developing positively and achieving a progressive and constructive form of maturity when they reject an oppositional mindset and decide to live a dual life, allowing their desire for *jouissance* to be mitigated by duality and safeguarded by Symbolic relationships. Thus, maturation is not achieved in these texts by accepting alienation, lack, and desire as inescapable facets of the human condition, but by adopting a liberal willingness to think outside binaries and

discard either/or conceptions of human experience.

This change in representation can be understood in terms of a number of cultural changes in the authors' cultures. As Dylan Evans argues, "[i]n Lacanian terms, different cultural groups have different ways of collectively organising their jouissance" (1998, 21). He highlights that "jouissance is not merely a private affair but is structured in accordance with a social logic, and moreover that this logic changes over time, presumably by virtue of some economic or other determinant" (1998, 20). The new ideology of achievable, mitigated and safeguarded *jouissance* depicted in certain selkie narratives can thus be understood firstly in terms of the contemporary redemption of human animality which I outlined in detail in **Chapter Four**. If we bring those conjectures about human animality to our analysis of this final resolution of selkie desire, we perceive that a permanent Real-Symbolic interface is now possible in selkie narratives because significant ideological shifts have led to the social sanctioning of a dual experience of bodily pleasure and social relations. The traditional insistence upon an adult Symbolic and Imaginary separation from the Real is thus seen as unnecessary, allowing for a continued connection to corporeal, pre-Symbolic pleasures in contemporary adult life.

This new possibility of permanent access to the Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic in selkie texts may also be related to changing concepts of subjectivity and improved gender ideologies. Hélène Cixous allegedly argues that Lacan's either/or logic of complete separation from the m/other has come to be seen as unnecessary in contemporary cultures, meaning that humans can now enjoy the continuing impact of the body in adult life (see Sellers 1996 6-7). This suggests that subjectivity is no longer necessarily premised upon the abjection of the maternal female body, primary divisions between self and constructed others, or the foundation of centralised rather than fragmentary selves. Such ideological changes must be considered an implicit background to the new resolution of desire in selkie narratives, which allows for permanent post-Symbolic links between the Real and the Symbolic.

Conclusion

As I have illustrated in my analyses of a variety of selkie narratives, fantastic metamorphosis may function as a figurative vehicle for a tenor of transcendence and it may

thus become an object of fictional characters' desires. By using Lacanian and Derridean theories which align the operation of desire with the metonymic chain of signification and the search for transcendental signifiers and signifieds, I have shown how the *objet a* may be represented in fantasy fiction in a literal form with a metaphorical effect rather than in the usual metonymical substitute-objects. By fantastically illustrating the reworking of human relationships to the psychic registers of the Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary, the adolescent selkie narratives I analysed explore ideas about the nature of human desire, the possibility of achieving *jouissance*, and the relations of desire and fulfilment to maturation.

Depending upon the particular representations of language, embodiment, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity in these texts, desire is represented as a pathological, regressive escapism with deadly consequences; as something which must be rerouted into the Symbolic in order to achieve maturity; or, alternatively, as something which can be fulfilled without the loss of mature subjectivity. In fact, in certain narratives, mature subjectivity is only achieved when desire is largely satisfied with the construction of a permanent, feasible interface between the Real and the Symbolic. The selkie narratives I examined in this chapter thus present readers with different ways of understanding and thinking about desire and transcendence. Because these explorations occur on a fantastic, metaphorical plane, they can be considered to affect their readers mostly at the subconscious level. However, by analysing these narratives and laying bare their ideological bones we can gain great insight into the implicit ideologies they present to contemporary audiences.

CONCLUSION

Fantasy texts are not far removed from reality. Unreal textual elements, such as plot and setting, may make fantasies appear escapist, but the impact of fantasy should not be underestimated. Fantasy expresses ideas about real life in symbolic forms, and by articulating the intangible in novel and inspirational ways, fantasies influence readers' thoughts and beliefs about the world in which they live. Fantasy texts have both explicit and implicit ideologies, the latter all the more potent because they are communicated symbolically. Implicit ideologies are frequently evident in fantastic motifs, which act as metaphorical vehicles for abstract conceptual tenors. As Elizabeth Lawrence has pointed out in relation to the motif of the werewolf, fantastic motifs are rich vehicles of expression, "carrying a complex web of embedded codes" (1996, 9). These codes may be activated intuitively and absorbed unconsciously by readers in ways which make the ideologies they convey appear to be natural, obvious truths. Analyses of fantastic figures as metaphors thus allow us to access ideologies in symbolic shapes which highlight their foundations and qualities. By bringing different cultural theories and theoretical frameworks to readings of fantasy motif metaphors, we can gain considerable insight into some of the beliefs in operation in Western cultures.

The motif of fantastic metamorphosis is one of the most basic fantastic figures, perhaps because the individual tenors this figure may metaphorically convey are remarkably multiple. However, we can isolate and examine certain metamorphosis motif metaphors and explore the ideologies they express. For this study, I chose a number of motif metaphors that convey contentious ideologies about youth and their environment. For each of the motif metaphors I chose to explore, there are numerous more in metamorphosis narratives that remain implicit, waiting to be teased out by readers and critics. However, the analyses I carried out allow us to draw some general conclusions about fantastic metamorphosis in children's and young adult fantasy literature.

We can determine that fantastic metamorphosis is a particularly compelling motif in this literature because it symbolically expresses concepts of change and otherness that underpin certain constructions of childhood and adolescence. While such constructions express adult concepts of youth, the motif is consistently believed to be attractive to child

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and adolescent readers because they are presumed to relate the motif to their own bodily and internal processes, qualities, fears, and desires. With its metaphorical expression of change, otherness, and human animality, the metamorphosis motif can communicate complex ideologies about: child, adolescent, and adult bodies; processes of physical, emotional, mental, social, and cultural change; alienation, marginalisation, abjection, difference, and otherness; the relation of human embodiment to subjectivity, agency, animality, identity, the abject, and *jouissance*; the nature of human experiences, human desires, and human anxieties; the personal and social consequences of embodying physical and cultural difference; normality and deviance; power; developmental regression and progression; immaturity and maturity; social behaviour and roles; physical and mental connections to space and place; and binaries and multiplicities in human personal and social experience.

The particular manifestations of metamorphosis examined in this dissertation indicated this range of ideological implications. However, the analyses of certain metamorphosis motif metaphors principally generated detailed insights into a number of specific ideologies. The analysis of fantastic metamorphosis as a vehicle for a tenor of childhood otherness demonstrated that constructions of childhood as a state of otherness may be deceptively grafted onto rational recognitions of childhood as different from adulthood in physiological and cognitive terms. While this grafting may lead to the potential abjection of childhood as a grotesque and chaotic state, childhood otherness may be powerfully redeemed from abject connotations by a range of recuperative paradigms, including those which emphasise the functionality of supposed childhood links to the fluid, animal, imaginative, and supernatural and those which emphasise the temporariness of childhood otherness by placing it within teleological developmental paradigms.

The examination of fantastic metamorphosis as a vehicle for a tenor of adolescent hybridity illustrated that adolescence may be seen as a normative hybrid state, but the threat of permanent hybridity may lead to a panoptic surveillance of adolescent development aiming to maintain the impetus towards normative adulthood. One construction of today's youth is thus that they fear their own developmental deviation because the embodiment of permanent difference from a conceived norm threatens stigma and social exclusion. Examination of this motif metaphor further illustrated that when developmental deviation indicates permanent adolescent hybridity, suggesting prolonged

links between childhood and adulthood, it may signal undesirable regression or potentially positive progression. Such implications may not simply relate to the amount of perceived 'child' and 'adult' qualities within adolescence, but to whether these qualities are perceived as necessarily binary or potentially integrative.

As demonstrated, metamorphosis may also strongly convey a broad tenor of maturation, which can take a variety of more specific tenors with different ideological connotations. One potential tenor of maturation is the acquisition of adult power, and examination of this motif metaphor illustrated that certain cultural anxieties about adolescent monstrosity may relate to a fear that the adolescent development of physical, adult-like power may not be moderated by a simultaneous development of agential self-control. Such fears may be alleviated by a belief in the pre-eminence of internalised, intersubjective moral regulations and in the acceptability of violent forms of adolescent masculinity. Another tenor of maturation expressed by the metamorphosis motif is adolescent identity change, and an examination of several metamorphosis narratives in terms of philosophical criteria of identity offered insight into the belief that maturation causes a severe identity change. The application of criteria of bodily and core continuity, behavioural consistency, memory retention, and recognition from others revealed that adolescent identity change might be seen as evolution- or replacement-change according to particular ideologies of essential or provisional identity. These ideologies were shown to be intermingled in both positive and ambiguous, controversial ways.

Further examinations of metamorphosis revealed that when figures of metamorphosis represent racial and ethnic difference or otherness, the motif exposes how constructs of racial and ethnic otherness may be entwined with processes of abjection and projection and concepts of human animality as abject or acceptable. Exploration revealed that the range of werewolf schemata in children's and young adult fantasy fiction is indicative of varying ideological approaches to group difference, ranging from the perception of such difference as a monstrous otherness to be abhorred or tolerated, through to the idealisation of cultural difference, the insistence that cultural and physical differences do not carry essentialist qualities, and the contention that difference is incommensurable and requires dissociation between groups.

Finally, analysis focused upon how the metamorphosis motif may act as a vehicle for a tenor of transcendence. The selkie motif, in particular, was understood to signify

transcendence and *jouissance*. It was also read as fantastically representing intangible struggles of the human psyche and this was understood in relation to particular concepts of language and linguistic subjectivity. Examinations of different manifestations of the selkie motif illustrated that the achievement of desire might be represented as deadly and regressive, so that maturity hinges upon an acceptance of an inability to achieve desire. However, it was demonstrated that in certain innovative selkie narratives it is considered possible to fulfil a desire for transcendence yet retain adult humanity; this possibility appears to relate to a new liberality about human animality, human lifestyles, and constructs of human subjectivity.

I used a variety of cultural theories to elucidate these motif metaphors and their corresponding ideologies. In doing so, I illustrated how different theoretical frameworks may assist our understanding of the implicit ideologies of fantasy texts and I established further knowledge of the theoretical frameworks themselves by giving them a practical application. Confirming T. E. Apter's suggestion that fantasy texts are very receptive to psychoanalytic interpretations (1982, 4), I found that psychoanalytic theories were particularly useful for understanding fantastic symbolism, but I discerned that these theories are best used in conjunction with other theoretical approaches which situate them within a broader cultural analytic frame and so limit their assumptions. Kristevan concepts of the abject, Lacanian register theory, and more general psychoanalytic concepts of projection and development are thus tempered (in both senses of the word) by accompanying poststructuralist, social constructionist, and sociological theories, as well as wide-ranging literary theories, philosophical theories, gender and feminist theories, race and ethnicity theories, developmental theories, and theories of fantasy and animality. I incorporated these different cultural theories into my overarching methodological framework of metaphor theory wherever they assisted in illuminating the motif metaphors and ideologies examined in the dissertation.

From a practical point of view, the various analyses of the dissertation showed that motif metaphors and their variable ideological implications are always relative to individual narratives. While particular metamorphosis sub-motifs can carry specific motif metaphors, these remain dependent upon context. For example, like all of the metamorphosis figures analysed, the werewolf figure has many potential tenors and can thus execute a range of motif metaphors. When a range of texts do share a specific motif

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metaphor, however, this common metaphor can convey common ideologies, as with the motif metaphor in which the metamorphic acquisition of a powerful predatory body represents a tenor of the development of adult power and conveys an ideology of potential adolescent monstrosity. Nevertheless, it is obvious from my analyses that a collective motif metaphor may also carry a range of ideologies. As I outlined, the werewolf sub-motif may commonly represent racial or ethnic difference; however, that shared motif metaphor can have quite different ideological implications depending upon whether that difference is represented as positive or negative, desirable or undesirable.

Because I have been necessarily selective about which motif metaphors I examine in this dissertation, the scope for further analyses of the metamorphosis motif as metaphor is broad. Gender ideologies have not been a specific focus of this thesis, and a focused study of gender representations in metamorphosis narratives would be a rich ground for further analyses of the motif. It would take a dissertation in itself to cover the issue adequately, examining the range of masculinities and femininities depicted and the ideological implications of the significant links between gender and particular types of animal embodiment, change, otherness, development, maturation, roles, and relationships. There is great potential for examinations of the metamorphosis motif as a vehicle for adolescent sexuality and sexual maturity, as well as queer and transsexual bodies. Additionally, metamorphosis often appears as a vehicle for the dislocation and displacement caused by shifting family configurations and multi-national, -ethnic, and -racial childhoods, and there remains further opportunity for an exploration of these tenors. Ecological ideologies in relation to constructs of childhood and young adulthood are also a promising avenue for future research.

Moreover, certain significant metamorphosis sub-motifs or motif metaphors have not been considered in this dissertation and could yield interesting insights (for example, avian, feline, vulpine, and cervine sub-motifs, and the common motif metaphors of metamorphosis as a secret identity or as an escape from a crippled human form). A comparison of metamorphosis narratives in the different genres of fantasy, horror, and science fiction would further illuminate the field, as would analyses of contemporary retellings and reversions of metamorphosis tale types (such as the mass of frog-prince/princess retellings and reversions available — although, like selkie narratives, contemporary frog-metamorphosis narratives may now be engaging with a frog motif or

schema rather than a specific tale type). The dearth of critical work available on fantastic metamorphosis in children's and young adult literature is surprising considering the immense importance and pervasiveness of this motif in children's and young adult fantasy literature and, presumably, in influence upon the imaginations and ideologies of young people (and adults) in Western cultures.

In this dissertation, I have aimed to enhance academic understandings of the metamorphosis figure in children's and young adult literature and to increase comprehension of particular Western ideologies about youth and their environment. I have demonstrated an appreciation for a range of Western cultural theories by illustrating how these theories allow us to gain insight into fantasy texts' implicit ideologies. More generally, I have endeavoured to contribute new insights to the field of children's and young adult literature criticism by offering a way of analysing fantasy texts in terms of motif metaphors. This method for analysing how fantasy is constructed and how it frames and conveys ideologies deepens our understanding of children's and young adult fantasy literature by highlighting its location within the contemporary ideological milieu. By specifically illustrating how the motif of fantastic metamorphosis is a significant imaginative figure that conveys important ideologies about the world in which we live, I have signalled the extensive possibilities for future analyses of other fantasy motif metaphors.

I do not claim that analyses of fantasy motif metaphors are the only readings possible for fantasy texts or that the ideologies evident in motif metaphors are present everywhere in Western cultures. I have illustrated how certain ideologies are embedded in specific fantasy motif metaphors in particular fantasy texts; readers must decide for themselves whether they see these ideologies elsewhere, in other forms within their cultures. What I do suggest is that analyses of motif metaphors offer an astute way of reading fantasy and investigating significant cultural ideologies. Moreover, I contend that it is extremely important to read fantasy in such a way in order to be aware of the ideologies a fantasy text may be conveying within its apparently fanciful pages, particularly if these ideologies are powerful, pervasive, or disguised as 'the obvious'.

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APPENDIX:

"The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry":

Three Versions

1. "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry": The Common Version

An earthly nourris sits and sings

And as she sings, Ba lilly wean

Little ken I, my bairns father

Far less the land that he steps in.

Then in steps he to her bed fit

And a gromly guest I'm sure was he

Sang Here am I, thy bairns father

Although I be not comely

I am a man upon the land

And I am a silkie in the sea

And when I'm far and far from land

My home it is in Sule Skerry

Ah, tis not well, the maiden cried

Ah, tis not well, alas cried she

That the Great Silkie from Sule Skerry

Should have come and brought a bairn to me

Then he has taken a purse of gold

And he has laid it on her knee

Saying, git to me, my little young son

And take me up thy nouriss-fee.

It shall come to pass on a summer's day
When the sun shines hot on every stone
That I shall take my little young son
And teach him for to swim the foam

And thou shalt marry a proud gunner
And a proud gunner I'm sure he'll be
And the very first shot that ever he'll shoot
he'll kill both my young son and me.

Alas, Alas, the maiden cried
This weary fate's been laid for me
And then she said and then she said
I'll bury me in Sule Skerry

Source:

Child Ballad 113: The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry, "Version 2"

Listed at "Lesley Nelson (aka the Contemplator)'s Child Ballad Website." *Francis J. Child*
Ballads: Biography, Lyrics, Tunes and Historical Information. Created March 7
1999. Accessed 21 May 2007. http://www.contemplator.com/child/silkie2.html.
(Nelson sources Volume II: 54-113 of Francis J. Child's five volume work, *The*
English and Scottish Popular Ballads (1882-1898), reprinted by Dover
Publications, New York, 1965).

*This is the version used (but modernised) by Jane Stemp in *Secret Songs* (1997),
pp. 12, 38, 59, 93, 113-14.

*For similar, but regional, variants of this common narrative, go to:
www.orkneyjar.com/folklore/selkiefolk/sulesk.htm, Accessed May 12, 2007.

As the two regional variants available at this website illustrate, the common refrain may be altered slightly:

> I am a man upo' the land,
> I am a selchie in the sea,
> And when I'm far frae every strand
> My dwellin' is in Sule Skerrie.'

2. *"The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry": Child Ballad 113, "Version 1"*

> The silkie be a creature strange
> He rises from the sea to change
> Into a man, a weird one he,
> When home it is in Skule Skerrie.

> When he be man, he takes a wife,
> When he be beast, he takes her life.
> Ladies, beware of him who be -
> A silkie come from Skule Skerrie.

> His love they willingly accept,
> But after they have loved and slept,
> Who is the monster that they see?
> 'Tis "Silkie" come from Skule Skerrie.

> A maiden from the Orkney Isles,
> A target for his charm, his smiles,
> Eager for love, no fool was she,
> She knew the secret of Skule Skerrie.

> And so, while Silkie kissed the lass,

She rubbed his neck with Orkney grass,

This had the magic power, you see -

To slay the beast from Skule Skerrie

Source:

Child Ballad 113, The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry, "Version 1"

Listed at "Lesley Nelson (aka the Contemplator)'s Child Ballad Website." *Francis J. Child*
Ballads: Biography, Lyrics, Tunes and Historical Information. Created March 7
1999. Accessed 21 May 2007. http://www.contemplator.com/child/silkie.html.
(Nelson sources Volume II: 54-113 of Francis J. Child's five volume work, *The*
English and Scottish Popular Ballads (1882-1898)).

*This rare tale of a malignant selkie can be perceived to have influenced at least one
children's selkie narrative: Mollie Hunter's *A Stranger Came Ashore* (1975).

3. "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry": The Folktale Version

A castaway sailor on Sule Skerry surprised a number of silkies bathing, and playing
on the shore, who had discarded their seal-skins, without which they could not re-enter the
sea. The sailor stole one of these skins, but the mate of the stranded silkie came up, and
offered to carry him on her back to safety in return for the skin. He was allowed to cut two
holes in the skin to give him a firmer grasp while riding on the silkie's back.

Not long afterwards, a large seal was found dead on the shore, with these two holes
clearly visible, to prove the truth of the sailor's story.

Source:

Briggs, Katharine M. [1970-1971]. *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the*
English Language. Part B: Folk Legends: Volumes 1 and 2. Reprinted, London:
Routledge, 1991b, p.261.
(Briggs in turn sources the tale to Black, G. F., ed. 1903. *County Folk-Lore, Vol.*
III, Orkney and Shetland Islands. Folklore Society, p.182)