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The Body – Human, Humanoid and Other – in Young Adult Literature

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I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted elsewhere.

Contents

Abstract

Although a relatively new category of literature, the rapid growth in popularity, diversity, and production of YA (Young Adult) literature over the preceding decades has prompted this thesis to focus on texts released between 1995-2015, a period that coincides with the rise and prevalence of internet use. In a world that is increasingly focused on the digital, the importance YA literature places on the body is significant and worth closer examination.

Using philosophical and literary theories, this work explores how the body creates identity and a concept of self through experience and genetics. The range of bodies within YA literature is vast; the selected texts in this study demonstrate the variety of bodies and how they are used.

Beginning with a critical understanding of the human body, this work will consider how the body forms relationships and identity through choice, biology, and circumstance before expanding from familial to romantic relationships, to contemplate how the body enacts and presents the themes of beauty, sex, sexuality, and gender. The thesis questions how these qualities change, and are challenged, as the body shifts from human to 'other'. By investigating these non-human bodies, the thesis aims to reach a better understanding of the human condition, and humanity emerges as these cyborgs and supernatural beings allow for reflection on how their bodies differ and what these differences mean. The thesis concludes by discussing how these fictional bodies are transposed into fanfiction and what this reveals about the perceived ownership, use, and purpose of such beings textually and in a wider social context.

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Introduction

This thesis aims to explore how the physical form creates meaning for the self, kinship, sexuality, and humanity. The body in YA literature is a conduit enabling relationships, experience, and transformation. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine and explain how particular bodies in YA texts are used to engage with the challenging spiritual and moral dilemma of what it means to be human. To effectively evaluate the human condition through the lens of the corporeal body, I have chosen to use a range of literary and philosophical frameworks.

Understanding how the body challenges the concepts of life, death, human and non-human beings, requires a robust and comprehensive defining of these states. There is precedent for literary critics to draw from philosophical theories to better understand the body in literature. Judith Butler's work uses philosophical theory and understanding to find meaning in bodies, gender, sex, and self. While this is arguably ground-breaking work which helped to create queer theory, and also a useful framework for examining bodies in the selected texts, there remain aspects of the body that Butler does not consider. Consequently, this thesis broadens the scope of critical work deemed relevant to help comprehend the body, identity, and relationships. YA literature is a relatively new field of study and while work has been undertaken to explore aspects of the body in YA literature, there is limited work that attempts to use existential philosophy as a prism through which to perceive the body and its purpose.

Although it may appear unexpected, or perhaps overlooked, YA literature does discuss the nature of existence through the medium of the body. YA literature is saturated with human and non-human beings all striving to find their identity and place. This journey to discover, affirm or change their interpretation of self is inescapably tied to their physical form, and the relationship between how the concrete and the abstract are used to create a body has special relevance.

Readership

YA literature readership is not passive; it is active, reactive, and reciprocal, with readers responding to the texts and other readers with their own interpretations, works, and actions. The use of the body in YA literature spills from the texts into the very body of the reader, with readers tattooing themselves with key phrases, symbols, or imagery from the texts[1], or dressing as their favourite characters. No longer is the body in YA literature committed to paper, it has become flesh, with the bodies of the textual recreated by living beings. This desire to embody or represent a textual character is not new but supported by the film adaptations of many YA texts; the once few physical manifestations of a fictional character have become mainstream.

Because of its flexible and diverse content, subject matter, and style, YA literature attracts a correspondingly diverse and sometimes unexpected readership. The readership of YA literature is wide ranging as shown by the mixed ages of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005) fan base. Evidence of the divergent, and on occasion, niche, readership of the *Twilight* saga and other YA literature can be found throughout the internet. There is a *Twilight* fan group on the social media website Facebook that is dedicated to mothers who are fans of the saga. The group, as of April 2017, had 7094 likes and defines itself as follows:

> THIS GROUP IS ALL ABOUT THE TWILIGHT SAGA! WE ARE HERE TO HAVE FUN, MEET OTHER MOMS, AND FORM FRIENDSHIPS, ALL WHILE DISCUSSING OUR FAVORITE CULLEN OR TWILIGHT CHARACTER. IN THIS GROUP WE WILL ALSO PASS ALONG ANY MOMMY RELATED THINGS!
> (https://www.facebook.com/pg/TwilightMomsClub/about/?ref=page_internal – accessed 17/04/17)

The page also contains a link to an online shop selling Twilight fan merchandise, much of which is targeting the 'Twimom' audience. Though demonstrating that YA

[1] https://www.buzzfeed.com/laraparker/incredible-tattoos-inspired-by-the-fault-in-our-stars?utm_term=.qmwDmZkLK#.nroNJ1Z8O – Accessed 16.06.2018
https://www.thedailybeast.com/twilight-tattoos-breaking-dawn-edward-bella-jacob-and-more-photos- Accessed 16.06.2018

undoubtedly attracts an adult audience, it does prompt the question of what do we mean by ‘adult’?

During the 2014 YALC event *Crossover – Not just for Kids,* Meg Rosoff mused on what the word ‘adult’ implies. She questioned the age range of ‘adult’, pondering if the upper limit should be twenty-one or twenty-five. This suggests an American outlook with Rosoff’s aligning the age of adulthood with the legal drinking age in America. While it is generally accepted that the readership of YA literature is wider than the ‘Young Adult’ title would suggest there is very little concrete evidence of exact numbers and ratios of readership. This would be an area of further study that would greatly benefit the whole field of YA literature research, although organising and regulating such a study would be an intense and complicated piece of work. Though there is evidence of adult readership as seen through the ‘Twimom’ fan group it is difficult to build a clear picture of how many adults read YA literature, as they might read it but not engage with or make any expression of their reading habits online or in society. There is still a stigma attached to YA literature, and many still regard it as intellectually and academically inferior to adult literature; consequently, this may impact the number of adults willing to come forward to acknowledge their readership of YA texts.

Prior to its current incarnation as YA literature, there was a move to call the genre adolescent literature, but the move away from this title is telling. Adolescent literature would suggest a readership aged between thirteen and nineteen, which is not an accurate description of the real ages of readers; hence the change to ‘young adult’. There is now a further proposed sub-categorisation in the form of 'New Adult Fiction'. This arises from publishers’ demands for books focusing on slightly older young adults. As with all newly formed terms, there are discrepancies in the exact definition of the proposed titling. According to the website *goodreads.com,* 'New Adult fiction bridges the gap between Young Adult and Adult genres. It typically features protagonists between the ages of 18 and 30.' *The Guardian*, states, however, that this new genre is 'meant to be for readers aged 14-35', while Brian Klems at the *writersdigest.com* suggests that:

> Although the definition of New Adult is still solidifying, generally the term encompasses novels with characters in their late teens or early 20s exploring what it means to be an adult. While some sceptics have asserted that that

> sounds suspiciously like repackaged “chick lit,” there are key differences—notably, characters skewing younger, and the existence of New Adult subgenres, such as historical (as in Allison Rushby’s *The Heiresses*) or cyberpunk (Mari Mancusi’s *Tomorrow Land*).
>
> The term first appeared in 2009 when St. Martin’s Press launched a contest calling for novel submissions that would appeal to “new adult” readers in their early 20s.

It would appear perhaps, to a cynical viewer that new adult literature is nothing short of remarketed YA literature with the setting shifting from high school to college or university, but this ignores perhaps the necessary and subtle differences between the two. While it is impossible to tell if this suggested new label will prevail, and if so, whether it will continue in its current form, what it is possible to know is that it is an interesting and vibrant area of untapped study.

Another point of contrast between new adult and YA literature appears to be the increased sexual aspect and content of these new adult texts. Interestingly many of the bestselling new adult texts are self-published, suggesting that the link between YA literature, fanfiction, and new adult literature is very much alive and that there is a clear crossover between YA and new adult. An example of this is Meg Cabot's *Proposal* (2016), part of her *Mediator* series, which is defined on *goodreads.com* as both young adult and new adult. Cabot’s *Mediator* series itself is notable as it follows the supernatural protagonist Suze Simon from teenage to adult ghostbuster; this is unusual as many young adult writers often end their series before the protagonist enters full adulthood. As the *Mediator* series progresses and Suze ages, her concerns, and interactions become more mature and adult. Whilst this would easily explain why the novella has been classed as both new adult and young adult, it also gives an indication of just how thin the line between young adult and new adult can be.

The growth of YA literature between 1995 and 2015 was significant.In her essay *Young Adult Fiction and the Crossover Phenomenon* Rachel Falconer applies Julia Kristeva’s theory of adolescence to our current society to explain the growing popularity of YA literature:

> Being on the ‘edge’ of adulthood in the twenty-first century is a more daunting experience than previously because ageing can flow in both directions: the ‘edge’ is now double sided. And this process can unfold not

> only in either direction but at varying speeds. Not only are there children zooming to adulthood at an accelerated rate ('tweenagers') but there are also adults tumbling back into adulthood (**kiddults**). Teenagers can become arrested in pre-adulthood, failing to secure jobs, mortgages or university degrees or, having taken the first step, may fall back into dependence on their parents ('kippers' and 'boomerangs'). That we need new words for these virtual-age categories suggests that the precarious slipping and sliding between once distinctly marked stages of life has become a recognized social phenomenon in the new millennium. (2010:92)

Falconer argues that YA literature is a perfect vehicle for discussions surrounding identity, transition, and change. In a society that is beginning to reject traditional structures such as gender, class, age, family, and sexuality, YA literature, with its limited need for rules, time constraints, and constant search for self, has become the forum in which meaning of the body and self may be found, or as Falconer expresses it:

> YA fiction, having once been dismissed as an ephemeral and transient **genre,** has, by its very emphasis on transience, become a kind of cultural lightning rod, attracting to its conductive space questions and debates about what it means to be human in the twenty-first century. (2010:88)

The body in YA literature, which can be frozen in time, as seen in *Twilight*, or stretched to live far longer than one human lifetime, as seen in Holly Black's *Tithe* (2002), is the perfect literary representation for those individuals trapped in double-edged society as described by Falconer. Adults returning to their parents' homes, or unable to move into their own homes may feel a sense of perpetual teenage existence which is mirrored in YA texts through characters that do not follow a standard linear time or maturity pathway. Meyer's vampires are forever students trapped in a cycle of high school and college. Despite being beautiful, intelligent, talented, and much older than the school-age beings they appear, they too have not been able to leave the family home or establish their own identity or life apart from their 'family'. YA literature is filled with these non-traditional beings living very non-traditional lives; in a society in which it is becoming increasingly harder to follow a 'traditional' path of school, university, job, house, marriage, and children, these 'other' beings suddenly seem far more relatable than perhaps might be expected at first glance. The changeling fairies of Holly Black's world, despite their ability to transform leaves into money, or glamour themselves into other guises, may share with their real world counterparts a lack of formal education, career path, stable

home, or secure future that may be more familiar to the reader than the settled or structured adult worlds of many adult novels containing characters whose houses, mortgages, cars, or education may seem as remote to some readers as being able to turn leaves into money. These YA novels also act as a form of escapism, allowing those who do not fit into the narrow categories of society to flourish and succeed, providing hope for readers who identify with and find themselves in these outsiders or others.

This alternative or outsider existence is manifested in the bodies of these characters. The bodies and physical features of these beings indicate they are different, or non-human, and may be viewed as physical representation of their internal or 'spiritual' difference, demonstrating that they are living a life which is 'other'. The fangs, wings, or horns are a physical manifestation, or symbol, of a being on another path, with an alternative ideology or lifestyle, which many readers may connect with. These non-humanoid beings suggest another form of existence separate from conventional society, which allows for a questioning of human traditions, norms, and morality. In the physical representation of that which is non-human, we find the essence of what makes a 'human' when free from the biological constraints of the body. To paraphrase Irigaray's theory of that which is not, we may find the human in what it is not, and define the body and humanity by what it is not. Through the absence of the human, we perceive what 'human' is. In exploring the morality and physiology of these creatures through our human framework of biology and morality we are forced to reflect on our humanity and question it. What do these beings reveal about our human bodies and our relationship to them? This will be explored further in upcoming chapters.

Which Texts and Why?

As YA literature is a vast and ever-expanding field it has been a difficult task to select a small sample of texts to analyse. Whilst it would have been preferable to consider as many texts as possible, due to the limitations of time and length it has been possible to examine only a limited number of texts within this thesis. The following criteria were applied to determine my selection of texts and authors to be

included. First, each work was to have been published between 1995 and 2015, and second, to have a particular connection to the body and the physical. The texts chosen were written by American and British authors, and set in their respective countries. The reason for choosing both British and American authors is that many of the texts overlap, with American authors setting novels in Britain and vice versa: for example, Meg Rosoff is an American author but her novel *How I Live Now* is set in the English countryside, albeit featuring an American protagonist. In addition, there exists a significant cultural crossover between British and American society with shared influences flowing between the two nations. As a result, many of the texts share significant similarities and speak to one another across the Atlantic divide.

The texts chosen demonstrate a broad spectrum of YA literature and cover a range of themes, topics, and issues. The texts have also been selected as being widely read and popular works of YA literature. They have been carefully collected from within a twenty year period spanning from 1995- 2015. This period was identified and chosen as it permits the texts to be contemporary, whilst allowing enough room for understanding how YA literature may have evolved over the two decades. The timeframe, 1995 to 2015, is also of significant interest as it covers the rise, rapid development, and increased use of the internet. Later in the thesis, the question of how fans and writers employ online platforms to create and interact with a piece of work will be considered, with particular reference to the development and use of fanfiction.

The selected texts all feature a female lead, often with a male companion in a supporting role. This was not an intentional decision but is reflective of the prevalence of female lead novels within the chosen subsections of low fantasy, romance, realism, and dystopian YA fiction. The selection of female lead texts enables the study of beauty, family bonds, sex, sexuality, and humanity from a widely female perspective, allowing for discussion of how these female characters view themselves and others. Having easily comparable females leads in multiple texts (most are around 16 years old, female, and predominantly human) helps identify similarities and also highlights the differences between attitude, ideas, themes, and morality. Although the majority of the chosen texts have female authors, two notable series in this thesis are written by male authors, Philip Reeve and John

Green. Whilst author gender was not a deciding factor in the selection of texts, it has been important to have authors of different genders represented.

Many of the texts analysed within this thesis are series, such as Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga or Philip Reeves' *Mortal Engines* quartet. The reason for selecting series is that they allow for multiple works of one author to be considered, enabling a better understanding of how the body is built, maintained, and developed over several texts. The series selected also offer exploration of several key issues around the body, for example, the *Twilight* saga contains romantic, familial relationships, and human and non-human bodies, all of which offer different bodily experiences and interpretations. This permits the consideration of how the body is used to develop kinship, familial bonds, romantic liaisons, and attachments, as well as providing a space in which to examine the bodily transition from human to the supernatural. Many of the selected texts are well-known and popular texts and series, such as *The Hunger Games* trilogy, which have been selected for their cultural and social impact. In contrast, the other texts have been chosen because they are not as well known; consequently, there is limited research surrounding them. This thesis intends to bring to prominence less recognised YA authors such as Holly Black, and Philip Reeve, in order to broaden and increase the variety of YA texts and authors studied, allowing for a better understanding of the range of YA literature.

The selected texts are predominantly a mixture of low fantasy, realism, and dystopia. Though this selection of texts covers a range of topics, subject matter, and issues, it is not assumed to be representative of all YA literature. Only a few realist texts are included in this thesis and though they act as an important counterbalance and contrast to the more prevalent fantasy and dystopian texts that this thesis makes no claims to be considering all bodies, human and other, presented in YA literature. The inclusion of human and non-human bodies in the selected texts does, however, allow for a consideration of how humanity and the non-human are presented and enables a discussion of how these texts use the physical form. There are other YA texts that feature different bodies with other purposes that have not been included in this thesis due to space. Although these works might expand the understanding of the body in YA literature in a more nuanced way, the overall questioning of what it

means to have a body, and to exist in society with this body, can often be perceived as a running theme through not just the selected texts but also much of YA literature. As such though this thesis cannot speak for all of YA literature and the numerous bodies it contains, it is hoped that the chosen texts will explore a reasonably representative variety of bodies in YA literature and how these bodies are used to define self, society, and meaning.

YA literature as a whole is vast, with many themes, issues, topics, and subjects contained within the multitude of works classed under the term YA literature. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore every type of novel YA literature offers, or even to consider every theme contained within YA literature and how this pertains to the use of the body within these types of texts. Although I would like to consider the body as it is presented in all subsets of YA literature it would not be practical. Hence, I have selected a sample of YA texts which explore the body and present it in different and interesting ways whilst still sharing enough key elements to allow for reasonable comparison and contrast. The focal texts bridge a relatively small section of YA literature focusing mostly on immersive or intrusion low fantasy/dystopia and realism, the author's choice of which inevitably influences (or even dictates) their decisions on narrative voice. Farah Mendlesohn in her work *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008) identifies four categorisations of fantasy works: The Portal-Quest Fantasy, The Immersive Fantasy, The Intrusion Fantasy, and The Liminal Fantasy. A brief and heavily summarised explanation of the categories follows:

The Portal-Quest Fantasy posits that these works transport the protagonist from one place to another be that a different world, geographic location, dimension, time or another setting. There is a ‘portal’ that is used to move the characters from one setting to another and often the plot takes the form of a quest. Mendlesohn classifies J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy as an example of Portal-Quest Fantasy, arguing that Frodo leaves the safety and familiarity of the Shire to journey to unknown lands with one set purpose.

The Immersive Fantasy posits that these works place the reader into the world of the protagonist and we understand and witness that world from the perspective of the narrator. Mendlesohn argues that the worlds are fully formed and the characters

belong to the world they inhabit. She cites Terry Pratchett's world of Ankh-Morpork in his *Discworld* novels as an example of immersive fantasy.

The Intrusion Fantasy posits that these works feature some form of fantasy which invades the character's 'normal' world. Through the protagonist, we are given a clear sense of what is 'normal' and what is fantasy. Many 'real world' fantasy texts are defined by Mendlesohn as belonging to this category.

The Liminal Fantasy posits that these works are fantasy works that offer the fantastic as a choice, in that it is presented as having the possibility of being both real and unreal. In these texts, it is up to the reader to decide if the fantastic they encounter within the text is real or not, and what the truth of the text is.

The Irregulars - these are works that Mendlesohn does not define as belonging to one category but rather sit between and within multiple categories. These are works that

Mendlesohn also argues that these categories are not binding but more suggestions of how a story is framed or told. The perspective of the narration helps to identify to which category a text may belong. Instead of considering the events of the text, it is vital to consider how the events are presented and interpreted in the text. For example, the character's reaction to seeing a dragon, or another fantastical element, will help decide in which category the text resides.

Due to the number of texts examined in this thesis I have chosen to include the table below to better illustrate the narrative voices contained within the chosen texts, the categories they span, and the representation they offer. This will also allow me to acknowledge the areas of overlap and also those not represented.

Text	Categorisation	Representation
The Fault In Our Stars	First Person Narration. Young Female Narrator. Tragic Realism.	Heterosexual couple. Terminal Illness and death. Traditional family unit (married heterosexual parents). Human characters.
Adorkable	First Person Narration. Young Female and Young Male Narrator. Romantic Realism.	Heterosexual couple. LGBTQ+ character. Absent parents.

		Traditional family unit. Human characters.
Confessions of Georgia Nicolson series	First Person Narration. Young Female Narrator. Romantic Comedy Realism.	Heterosexual relationships. Traditional family unit. Human characters.
Will Grayson, Will Grayson	First Person Narration. Two young male narrators one gay, one straight. Romantic Realism.	Heterosexual relationship, LGBTQ+ relationship, and characters. Present parents. Mental health Human characters.
Tithe and *Ironside*	Third Person Narration. Young Female Protagonist. Intrusion Fantasy.	Cross-species romantic relationship. LGBTQ+ secondary characters and relationships. Absent father. Human and non-human characters.
Twilight series	First Person Narration. Young Female Narrator. Intrusion Fantasy.	Cross-species relationship. Heterosexual relationship. Absent parent. Human and non-human characters.
Ash	Third Person Narrator. Young Female Protagonist. Immersive Fantasy.	Cross-species relationship. LGBTQ+ relationship and protagonist. Absent parents. Human and non-human characters.
Mortal Engines series	Third Person Narration. Male and Female Protagonist. Immersive Fantasy.	Heterosexual relationship. Absent parents. Human characters. Survival.
The Hunger Games series	First Person Narration. Young Female Narrator. Immersive Dystopia.	Heterosexual relationships. Absent parent. Human characters. Survival.
How I live Now	First Person Narration. Young Female Narrator. Immersive Dystopia.	Heterosexual relationship. Absent parent. Human Characters. Survival.

As the above table demonstrates the works fall into three main categories: Fantasy, Dystopia, and Realism. The majority of the texts are narrated from the perspective of a young female protagonist. Although there are a few exceptions which contain a male as well as a female protagonist, none of the texts is narrated from a purely male perspective or has an older protagonist perspective. This naturally limits the scope of this thesis as the selection of texts predominantly views the bodies

presented from the perspective of a youthful female gaze. The choice of narrative voice in the selected texts shapes the understanding and viewpoint of this thesis. As many of the bodies explored in this thesis are perceived through a female gaze, this often results in the overt sexualisation of the male characters whilst the sexualisation of the female characters is minimised. Family, society, gender, and the physical form are interpreted for us by the female protagonist and offer a feminised understanding of the world the text is set in. It could be suggested that the authors of the chosen texts are writing predominantly for an audience similar to the protagonist – young female readers - although, as discussed previously the readership of YA literature is far wider than young women and girls. This simplification of the selected authors' narrative voice also perhaps ignores the subtleties of many of the texts. Louise Rennison's Georgia Nicolson series appears at first glance to be addressing a young female audience. However, the true ridiculousness of Georgia's actions and the gentle mockery of youthful drama perhaps suggest that these texts speak to a secondary audience, an older audience, perhaps the parents of the intended younger audience. Following in the footsteps of Sue Townsend's *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, aged 13 ¾* (1982) Rennison's work may also be viewed as a softly satirical parody of teenage angst and romance. Similarly, it would be prudent not to assume that the narrative voice of the majority of the chosen works aims to address a particular demographic or audience. While Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series can be interpreted as a teenage supernatural romance, it can also be seen as confirming a traditional conservative lifestyle and speaking directly to a religious understanding of marriage, sex and sexual abstinence. It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the exact narrative voice of each of the selected texts due to the number of texts chosen. Therefore, although the categorisation and representation of each of the key texts have been briefly summarised in the above table, it in no way fully breaks down the nuances of each text's narration, intention or framing.

Another subtheme that will also not be covered extensively in this thesis is the theme of race, although many of the chosen texts feature a racially diverse cast. *Tithe's* protagonist Kaye has a Japanese father and Luis is black; Michael's father in *Adorkable* is Chinese; *Hunger Game* tributes Thrash and Rue are also black*;* as is Theo Ngoni in *Mortal Engines.* While a discussion of the racial presentation and diversity within the texts would be interesting and of value, there is neither the space

nor the capacity, within this thesis to give this topic the depth of exploration it deserves. The choice therefore has been made to consider humanity as a whole, rather than dwelling on specific racial divisions of the individual characters and texts. How race and the non-human or humanoid 'Other' intersect, present, and interlink would be an appropriate research project to follow this initial investigation.

While there has been extensive research on specific areas of YA literature and its relationship to the body, the discussion is relatively narrow in range. The body is often broken down according to gender, race, age, sexuality, disability, or other defining features, which are then analysed in the context of YA literature. Recent examples of this practice include Sharon Deans' 2013 thesis, *Teen Gothic: sex, death and autonomy in young adult literature,* Leah Beth Philip's 2016 thesis, *Myth (un)making : the adolescent female body in mythopoeic YA fantasy*;and Suriyan Panlay's 2014 thesis, *I crying for me who no one never hold before : critical race theory and internalised racism in contemporary African American children's and young adult literature.* Each of these works, though invaluable, considers only a small select part of the body within YA literature. It is therefore the aim of this thesis to provide a more holistic approach to considering multiple aspects of the body within YA literature rather than focusing on a specific bodily area or attribute. To achieve this, the texts chosen will not be limited to one genre, style, or a defining feature, such as specific ethnicity, or bodily act as examined in A.L. Evins' 2013 thesis, *The Missing Period: Bodies and the Elision of Menstruation in Young Adult Literature*.

This thesis aims to consider the whole body and what that body means to the individual and others. The research will consider how beauty, sexuality, gender, species, age, and mortality contribute to a character's sense of self and identity. It is the intention of this thesis to seek connections between these bodily attributes and assess how they interact, overlap, and intersect to produce a fuller understanding of what the body means in its variegated forms within both the texts and possibly wider YA literature.

This thesis has built on the work of many critics, starting with Michael Cart's *From Romance To Realism: 50 Years of Growth and Change in Young Adult Literature* first published in 1992. This was a brilliant introduction to the history of YA literature beginning in the sixties and working through to the nineties. Initially, Cart's

work did not cover the relevant years for this thesis. However, Cart heavily revised his 1992 work in his 2010 edition to explore the changes that had arisen in YA literature in the years following his first work, and as he neatly illustrates, there are many changes.

Cart's second work, *Young Adult Literature From Romance to Realism* (2010), discusses sex, as his previous work did, but acknowledges the variety of sexualities presented in these recent texts, noting that there is now a plethora of LGBTQ+ texts covering multiple sexual identities, gender roles, and experiences in comparison to the previously minuscule selection of YA texts which discussed or alluded to such debates. Cart also examines how sex in YA literature is more prevalent, detailed, and varied than in previous earlier works. Similarly, the attitude towards sex in YA literature is more relaxed and accepting than in past YA novels, with darker and more mature sexual scenarios being discussed, such as sexual abuse, incest, rape, and assault. Cart also draws out the increase in racially diverse characters and connects this to the growing racial diversity of the American public as a whole. The text finishes by discussing how the novel itself is changing and evolving, and how stories are consumed by readers of YA work. Cart investigates the shift towards producing stories in a multitude of media, such as audiobooks, graphic novels, manga, comic art, and the ever-present and growing world of fanfiction. Cart's work is clear, concise, and informative, with figures and statistics to persuasively support his arguments; it is such a broad overview however of the entirety of YA literature that there is no space for textual analysis or detailed critical readings. Though Cart's work touches on several of the themes this thesis will also consider, it does not focus on the body or recognise the role of the body within YA literature, and while there are many texts mentioned by Cart as landmark publications he does not have the scope to focus as this thesis will on the smaller, less recognised texts that populate the landscape of YA literature.

In addition to Cart's work which provided a solid framework for understanding the context of YA literature and its evolution from the sixties, Alice Trupe's 2006 work *Thematic Guide to Young Adult Literature* provided a helpful map of key YA texts organised by theme. While useful for finding and grouping texts published before 2003, Trupe's work unfortunately does not include more recent texts such as *Twilight*

and *The Hunger Games*. Her study is part of a wider project to catalogue and canonise key YA works to produce a concise and comprehensive canon. It is the aim of this thesis to help build and add to this newly forming canon of work by bringing to light less familiar YA texts and contrasting them to more recognised and established works. We can already see key canonical themes and subgenres forming in certain areas; for example, *Twilight* is a recognised canonical text within the field of supernatural YA literature. Like many YA texts, however, *Twilight* can also be classified and recognised as a text with relevance, not just to the supernatural category of YA literature, but to YA literature as a whole. As Falconer indicates in her essay on the crossover novel, many YA texts do not fall neatly into one category but rather span several thematic areas. Therefore, while notable YA texts are arising within certain sectors perhaps it would be prudent to conclude that the canon of YA literature is not limited by theme, but rather embraces a range of works that bring together multiple themes within one text.

Alongside the work of Cart and Trupe, Alleen Nisen and Kenneth Donelson's 1980 work *Literature for Today's Young Adults* helped establish a baseline understanding of what is considered to define YA literature. Nilsen and Donelson outline seven key characteristics of YA literature, which provided me with an initial framework:

> *Characteristic 1: YA Authors Write from the Viewpoint of Young People*
>
> *Characteristic 2: "Please, Mother, I Would Rather Do It Myself!"*
>
> *Characteristic 3: YA Writers Avoid Speechifying*
>
> *Characteristic 4: YA Literature Includes a Variety of Genres and Subjects*
>
> *Characteristic 5: The Body of Work Includes Stories About Characters from Many Different Ethnic and Cultural Groups*
>
> *Characteristic 6: YA Books Are Basically Optimistic, with Characters Making Worthy Accomplishments*
>
> *Characteristic 7: YA Literature Is Influenced by Mass Marketing and Pop Culture Trends*

Nilsen and Donelson use these headings to discuss various aspects they consider key to YA literature, many of which remain applicable and relevant to contemporary Young Adult texts, although I believe that they oversimplify and ignore certain key

elements of YA literature, such as the use of non-humanoid bodies which this thesis hopes to rectify.

In the creation of this thesis, it became apparent that there is a lack of underpinning critical work that encapsulates the body and its significance as it relates to the whole of YA literature. Because of this 'gap' in critical analysis, I drew upon a variety of feminist and philosophical theorists to provide an understanding of the body which I could apply to my chosen texts.

Judith Butler's work on femininity, family, sexuality, and gender provided a crucial understanding of the body and how it is used to convey meaning within a text, which was subsequently extracted and applied to YA texts. Using Butler's work on gender roles and 'bodies that matter' as a template it was possible to perceive how the chosen female leadYA literature breaks down and challenges traditional gender constructs as well as discussing which bodies are valued within YA literature.

In addition to Butler, Sartre was also invaluable in providing a reading of the body that allowed for consideration of the physical and spiritual body, which spans both the conscious and unconscious, creating a forum in which the importance of a body in defining the self can be considered. It also enabled a framework in which the actions of the body help to form the notion of self. Similarly, the work of Irigaray allowed me to perceive the body both within and outside of language, presenting an understanding of the body textually and separately. Understanding the body in what it is not, and how individuals and others perceive a body, provided a useful segue into scrutinizing the use of human and nonhuman bodies, and laying the foundations to question what it means to be 'human' in YA literature. Because of the profoundly philosophical questions the body inspires in YA literature - what moral codes of conduct and behaviour do we apply to non-human bodies? why does YA literature revere youth so passionately? what is family in YA literature? how do we define a being that has transformed a species? – it seems logical to apply a robust philosophical understanding and critique of the body, humanity, and that which can metamorphose from one body to another while retaining a consciousness and identity, namely the essence of a being.

Other critics linked to specific topic areas also provided frameworks for individual chapters: for example, J.B. Epstein's 2013 work *Are The Kids Are Alright?,*which explores LGBTQ+ representation in YA literature, was consulted widely in Chapter Two. This was an excellent resource that provided a base from which to explore the role of the body, as a sexual commodity in YA literature. Similarly, the work of Falconer, Younger, and Weston was very helpful when considering explicit issues. Younger's work on beauty and the feminine helped define the notion of traditional femininity and sexuality in historical YA literature. Weston's study of the family of choice was essential when considering the families presented in YA, and Falconer's interpretation of key series such as *The Hunger Games* was inspiring. However, none of these critics centralised the body in their examinations and thus whilst useful, did not present a holistic view of the body in YA literature. Because of the specificity of their work, these critics reinforced my decision to use a wider-ranging theoretical framework within which to place the body for analysis.

Other critics were helpful for the focus they brought to a specific text such as Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A.Clark's work, *Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy* (2012). This text enables a better understanding of the current critical research on the series as well as providing approaches to different aspects of *The Hunger Games* series, which, while different from the work of this thesis, offer supporting ideas. It also provides a platform for the study of clothing and motherhood as a means to explore how the body beneath the clothes comes to bear as much as, if not more, significance than the fabric that shrouds it.

The Critical Body

Before considering the complexities of the non-human body and its role in YA texts, it seems prudent to discuss the constitution of the human body and its place in literature as critically proposed by others. In their 2015 work,*The Cambridge Companion to The Body in Literature,* Hillman and Maude highlight multiple ways in which the body can be used within literature, discussing 'embodied experience' and

the rise of the exploration of the body as both the interface through which we interact with the world and also the surface through which the world interacts with us: how culture shapes the body. The shift to 'embodied experience' allows for a detailed discussion of how the body is used to discuss and relay experiences such as sex, sexuality, childbirth, pain, pleasure, cultural impact, and disability, to name but a few. This critical history of the body has been vital in creating an understanding of the myriad lens through which the body can be interpreted. It also enabled me to gather a comprehensive philosophical framework for conceiving the body's purpose.

However, as Hillman and Maude note, the existence of the body in literature is, in itself, paradoxical:

> The fact is that there are no bodies in literature. Not only is there no obvious way for the concrete materiality of the body to be fully present in or on the written page; even more profoundly, there would seem on the face of it to be an apparent mutual exclusivity of the body and language – the one all brute facticity, the other presupposing precisely the absence of matter. And yet, over the last three or four decades, critics and theorists have found myriad ways of addressing the representation of the body and embodied experience in literature. (2015:3).

Thus, the body, as they so eloquently indicate, must be composed of words and language; the experience translated through the body must be transfigured into language; it must be described, performed, and interpreted through the written word, whilst being presented as a decidedly physical bodily act. This is a double translation; first actions are put into thoughts, sensations, and feelings, which are then secondly translated into words and language.

Ultimately Hillman and Maude claim that the body in literature is used as a force for reflection, and revolution: 'In confronting us with the legible materiality of the body, literature often provides powerful forms of resistance to socially instituted perceptions and demands.' (2015:4). The body is used to challenge and evaluate societal norms and expectations, enabling us to consider not only the body in the text but also often our own bodies and their value. Hillman and Maude's work charts the change in literature from attempting to separate the mind and the body, to the combining of the two, and finally, the prizing of the body over the mind as the 'true' self. Historically the body was considered to be unimportant, seen as simply the fleshy container housing the mind, which was viewed as the 'real' essence of a

person. The mind, and also the elusive 'soul' was held as being that which made us human, raising us above the animals to which we were considered to be linked through our shared physicality, and physical traits, such as hair, nails, and bodily functions. Consequently, many academics have dedicated themselves to the discussion of how the body and mind can or should be separated in order to extract the definition of humanity and also existence. The separation of body and mind to locate true meaning and existence is discussed at length by Sartre.

Sartre in his seminal work *Being and Nothingness* (1943) discusses the rejection of 'dualism of appearance and essence' arguing that 'The appearance does not hide the essence, it reveals it; it *is* the essence.' (2:2012) Sartre goes on to explain that 'being' does not define an object, and thus an object cannot be defined by its being, it must be defined by 'being-for-revealing' and through the idea that 'The phenomenon of being requires the transphenomenality of being.' (6:2012). This would suggest that whilst the body is not a shell for a deeper meaning, or casing for a superior intellectual force, the body still requires something more to define it than merely existing as an item. Hence it could be argued that using Sartre's framework, it is through the experience and the use of the body that the definition of the body is revealed. We find that the body of the character is revealed through its use and experience. When Hester, in the *Mortal Engines* quartet, uses her body as a sexual vessel in order enter into a romantic relationship with Tom, resulting in the birth of their daughter Wren, her body is used to define Hester as lover and mother. Through bodily experiences, Hester's definition of herself and her role is explored and revealed.

Sartre argues that 'being' requires consciousness, 'consciousness is the knowing being in so far as he *is,* not in so far as he is known' (7:2012), yet this consciousness is a consciousness not just of self but of self in the world: 'The first procedure of a philosophy ought to be to expel things from consciousness and to re-establish its true connection with the world, to know that consciousness is a positional consciousness *of* the world' (2012:7), and this consciousness is aware: 'Every conscious existence exists as consciousness of existing.' (9-10:2012). As such, the body must be aware that it is existing and how it is existing. As it is the body which experiences and interacts with the world, it can be argued that it is the

body that has intimate consciousness of its being – it is the body that reacts to cold, to pain, to pleasure, demonstrating awareness of the world and hence consciousness, which allows for its essence, or self, to be defined. In short, it is the body which creates our definition of 'self' and, as Sartre goes on to argue, it is the body that is used for freedom of thought and expression – although paradoxically our freedom of thought is hampered by our physicality. As mentioned previously it is through the use of the body that Hester, and other characters, know that they exist and interact with the world. It is Hester's body that feels the pain of her father trying to murder her, it is Hester's body that bears the scars, and it is Hester's body that is used finally to bring new life into this world.

Yet Sartre does not consider that which is not human. Shrike, a cyborg and Hester's protector, is not human. He has no flesh with which to experience life, only machinery. Yet Shrike does feel – emotionally, if not physically – so where does a cyborg fit into this definition of human? Must a body be made of flesh in order to feel experience? Is only the experience that is felt through the flesh real existence? Shrike does not feel cold or hunger or pain but he does feel loss, sadness, and love. Shrike is aware of the world through his machine body which physically connects with the material world, but he also connects emotionally which would suggest perhaps that it is not just the feeling that the body physically experiences that matter, but the emotions that these physical interactions cause that really define what it is to exist and be sentient, if not 'human'. As Sartre noted, while the appearance is important, it is the use of the appearance to reveal the essence of the nature of the being that matters. Hester and Shrike appear different from the roles they eventually adopt. Shrike is a killing machine designed for war, yet he raises a child. Hester is a murderer, thief, and fugitive, yet she births and raises a child. It is not their appearance that defines them but, how they use the outer shell to reveal their inner selves. They also demonstrate the ability of the body to adapt, change, and be repurposed. The body is tirelessly flexible and ever-changing. Hester and Shrike embody the duality of life and death in their actions; they live the paradoxical nature of being that Sartre fights to explain and in doing so embrace the known and yet unknown qualities and mysteries of existence. In summation Hester and Shrike stand as examples of how the body is both *a* being and *being,* it is a material item which is both the house of the essence and also the essence. Sartre rejects the idea

that what makes a being unique cannot exist distinct from its body, as the body is essential in defining the being.

This is an interesting argument when considering bodies which transform, such as Stephenie Meyer's protagonist Bella Swan. When Bella transforms into a vampire her human body is replaced with a vampire body. Bella is the same being as before, but her new body is vital to how she now defines herself. Hence, as Sartre argues it would be impossible not to consider Bella's new body when defining her. The experiences she has undergone in her body are now part of her essence, and if we were to define her being, it would be impossible not to comment on her physical self. Bella has been both human and vampire and both experiences are part of her being and make her who she is, just as Shrike and Hester's experiences make them unique beings as well. If we were to extract or remove their bodies, as Shrike's original human body was removed and its memories erased, we would lose their essence. We do not know who Shrike was before his new body hence he can define himself only through his new body, experiences, and partial memories.

Sartre proceeds to argue that we can think anything but that our actions are limited, which causes a dichotomy of freedom. We have within our minds the capability, Sartre claims, to conceive of any idea, but we are constrained by our physicality in making these ideas reality, hence we are free within our minds, but cannot be fully free due to the boundaries imposed by our physical being. Hence, Sartre suggests that we might find peace and reconciliation between the freedom of the mind and the limitations of the flesh, by combining the goals of the mind with the physical goals of the body, although he expresses doubts as to the success of this activity:

> Existential psychoanalysis is going to reveal to man the real goal of his pursuit, which is being as a synthetic fusion of the in-itself with the for-itself; existential psychoanalysis is going to acquaint man with his passion... Many men, in fact, know that the goal of their pursuit is being; and to the extent that they possess this knowledge, they refrain from appropriating things for their own sake and try to realize the symbolic appropriation of their being-in-itself. But to the extent that this attempt still shares in the spirit of seriousness and that these men can still believe their mission of effecting the existence of the in-itself-for-itself is written in things, they are condemned to despair; for they discover at the same time that all human activities are equivalent (for they all tend to sacrifice man in order that the self-cause may arise) and that all are on principle doomed to failure. (646:2012)

So how does this theory of body as 'self' apply to YA literature? In Holly Black's 2005 work *Tithe* the protagonist Kaye originally believes herself to be human and consequently defines herself as human. When she discovers that she is a fairy and removes her human skin to reveal her real (green with wings) fairy body beneath, Kaye is forced to redefine herself. Kaye is trapped between two worlds, the physical and the emotional, as well as the human and non-human. Kaye, despite being physically non-human, chooses to maintain her human identity, identifying as both fairy/other *and* human. In contrast to Sartre's defining of self purely through the body Kaye defines herself through her body (her otherness) and her consciousness, which Kaye decides is distinctly human. Kaye's physical experiences in a body that she perceived as a human body enable her to identify as human, as her 'consciousness' is of one who has been conscious in a 'human' body. Once she sheds her human guise Kaye begins to have experiences in her fairy body which help her to identify as a fairy; thus Kaye can identify as having both fairy and human consciousness because of her physical experience of both, allowing her to define herself as neither fully human or fairy, but something in between. Kaye maintains her 'human' identity by choosing to stay in contact with her human 'family' as well as judging herself, her actions, and the actions of others by a distinctly human set of values and morals. Kaye can also achieve what Sartre suggests may not be possible by combining the freedom of the mind and the physical expression of the body. Whilst Kaye's 'human' body may have been limited, as all human bodies are, and therefore unable to achieve the goals set by her boundless mental capacity and imagination, her fairy body allows her to achieve the 'impossible', enabling her successfully to marry her non-human body with her human ideas, thought patterns and expectations, and allowing for her to step out of Sartre's prediction of inevitable failure. Kaye is made human by her choice and a fairy by her genetics.

While Sartre may doubt the ability of humanity to reconcile the divisions between mind and body in order to find happiness in 'being', other critics draw no such distinctions between the mind and the body, presenting them as a unified entity upon which the cultural forces of society act, and which acts upon cultural forces, notably in the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

Pierre Bourdieu's work explores how language creates, enforces, and forms social structures: for example, through the use of naming. Naming someone through the use of a title establishes power and authority. Language, Bourdieu argues, can be used to clarify, but also to mystify and obscure; it can form groups, identities, and hierarchies. Yet the creation of power through language is not limited simply to words, spoken and written power is also created and enforced through the unwritten language of symbols. Language and symbolism work in tandem to form social structures, such as political and religious structures, as Bourdieu succinctly explains. The body, Bourdieu, argues is used to enact these spoken and symbolic uses of power; the power of language manifested in physical form:

> All groups entrust the body, treated like a kind of memory, with their most precious possessions, and the use made of the suffering inflicted on the body by rites of initiation in all societies is understandable if one realizes, as numerous psychological experiments have shown, that people's adherence to an institution is directly proportional to the severity and painfulness of the rites of initiation.... More convincingly than the external signs which adorn the body (like decorations, uniforms, army stripes, insignia, etc.), the incorporated signs (such as manners, ways of speaking – accents -, ways of walking or standing – gait, posture, bearing –, table manners, etc. and taste) which underlie the production of all practices aimed, intentionally or not, both at signifying and at signifying social position through the interplay of distinctive differences, are destined to function as so many calls to order, by virtue of which those who might have forgotten (or forgotten themselves) are reminded of the position assigned to them by the institution (123-4:1990)

Bourdieu argues that the body is the representation of the many cultural practices, rituals, and societal pressures that we are subjected to daily and which form our notion of identity and self. The pressures that society places on the body are felt keenly in YA literature as demonstrated by the emphasis placed on how the bodies act, look, and are judged by others. Clothing in YA literature can be used as a symbol of status, role in society, or rejection of societal norms. It can disguise or define a character's place in society. Symbols, like clothing, are used by society to present an image or idea about those embodying them. Although used for comedic effect Georgia's outfit choices are a deliberate act used to present a particular impression or message to society:

> Ready. I must say I think we looked v. Sophis. We'd got loads more more make-up on than we normally wear, and darker lipstick. And we wore all

> black. Black is very aging, as I continually tell Mum so I can get her black T-shirt and leather trousers. (103:2005)

Here Georgia is using clothing and make-up to make herself appear older so that she can gain entry into a nightclub. While the incident is humorous it still reinforces the societal clothing trope that brightly coloured clothing is designed for children and darker clothing is intended for adults. Georgia's manipulation of this for her own purpose and her defiance of society's laws regarding the legal age for accessing a nightclub demonstrate the duality of symbols. Symbols can reinforce authority and society but can also be used to contradict and challenge the status quo. Manipulation and reimagining of symbols of power or oppression is a common tool used by many marginalised groups.

Cinna, Katniss's stylist, in *The Hunger Games,* uses her tribute wardrobe as a way to subvert and fight society's expectations. When Katniss wears his creations she metamorphoses into 'the girl on fire'; she is a new symbol, rejecting the Capitol narrative as a story of sacrifice and servitude and replacing it with a narrative of resistance and rebellion, consequently demonstrating that whilst the body and symbols may be used to oppress and subdue, they can also be repurposed and redefined. Symbols are no longer the tools of an institution, they have been seized by the individual and given a new meaning, and narrative, just like the body.

Roberta Seelinger Trites, in her work *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature* (2000),also links the body and social power structures describing how in his stand against the institutionalised power of the school, Jerry, of Robert Cormier's 1974 work *The Chocolate War*, must be physically destroyed so that his symbolic stance against the school's power may be removed: 'In a final showdown, Archie, the leader of The Vigils , and his sidekick Obie manipulate a boxing match in which Jerry is ritualistically slaughtered.' (2000:2). Seelinger Trites goes on to explain how 'in the adolescent novel, protagonists must learn about the social forces that have made them what they are. They learn to negotiate the levels of power that exist in the myriad social institutions within which they must function, including family; school; the church; government; social constructs of sexuality; gender, race, class; and cultural mores surrounding death.' (3:2000). Seelinger Trites, like Bourdieu, locates the body as the implement with

which a protagonist is shaped by society, but also which the protagonist uses to resist society. Again, nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the character of Katniss Everdeen, the reluctant face of a social uprising.

Consequently, the body often bears particular note and worth within YA literature as a vehicle for expression and enactment of power and authority. This is perhaps because of the lack of other available routes or methods to which characters within YA literature have access. Characters within YA are typically young adults and thus do not usually have ownership or use of material possessions, property, or a public voice to raise their concerns or wield power. Hence, they must use what is realistically available to them within the text, namely their body. The body is one of the few available outlets that the character may use as a weapon, tool, canvas, or alternative means of expression. While the body may have acts performed upon it both by the character and by others, it still remains one of the few available methods of demonstrating choice and agency. Michel Foucault discusses the links between the body and power, notably in his works regarding the penal system. In this work, Foucault explores how the body of the condemned is punished either through 'ritual marks of vengeance' or 'signs' or 'training', and how the body of the condemned enters the power of the authority and becomes the property or 'responsibility' of the authority: 'a meticulous assumption of responsibility for the body and the time of the convict, a regulation of his movements and behaviour by a system of authority and knowledge' (130: 1995). We see this in *The Hunger Games* in which Katniss's and the other tributes' bodies are ritually sacrificed by those in power in her society. Katniss's body comes to bear the marks and 'signs' of her experiences, culminating in a body that is covered with scars, and skin grafts - evidence of the gruelling physical traumas she has undergone.

In this way, the body, or rather the freedom of the body, can become limited and restricted, with those in authority using their power to suppress or subdue the 'prisoner's' freedom. Those in positions of influence enact their dominance on those individuals, or groups, deemed inferior by demonstrating their control over the bodies of those belonging to the disempowered groups. Foucault uses the bodies of eighteenth century soldiers to examine how the machinations of power exert their control over the body, suggesting that people are controlled through strict regulations

on their physical freedom through a variety of methods rooted in established authority centres such as monasteries, schools, factories, and barracks. In these systems, people are effectively trained to become part of a larger operation that serves the authority's purposes. The aim, Foucault argues, is to normalise behaviour and individuals to a consistent standard. Those who fall outside the norm are seen as deviant, bad, or 'abnormal', and must be punished or retrained to bring them back into line with the societal norm. To be an individual is to bring judgement and danger on oneself. However, whilst Foucault maintained that bodies are used by those in authority to retain control he does not address how the suppressed can use their bodies to regain autonomy and rewrite their narratives, roles, and identity as witnessed in countless socio-political movements such as the women's liberation movement, gay pride campaigns and Civil Rights movements, each of which has seen a disempowered group reclaiming their bodies, and rewriting their identities in the face of authority-driven oppression. Though Katniss may bear the scars of her experiences, ultimately, they come to represent, not her subjugation, but her triumph over society, a reminder of the choices she made, the actions she took and the impact she had on society as a whole.

Textually there is evidence of many disempowered groups often finding great value in the body because of how little else they may have, and also because of how others may try to impose restrictions on the marginalised groups' bodies. One such historically disempowered group that reclaimed and repurposed the body for themselves was female writers. These writers, notably those such as Charlotte Brontë, writing in periods when women lacked the freedoms they have today, attached great significance to the body and closely explored its meaning and use. In Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) great emphasis is placed on Jane's fay-like form and how it compares to other characters' bodies within the text, both male and female. Jane, a disempowered individual for much of the text, relies on her body and uses it as a tool to advance her agency through walking, fighting, acceptance, and belief in her physical being. Jane rejects the limitations and restrictions placed upon her physical being; she creates her own standards by which to judge herself. YA literature follows this tradition of re-writing the body and its purpose in order to find self-fulfilment and meaning. Just as Jane uses her body as a weapon to defend herself and fight back against tyranny, bullying, and oppression – as we see in the confrontation in the

library between Jane and John Reed –so also do the characters we find in YA literature, such as Katniss and Hester, two of the multiple protagonists examined in this thesis. Both of these characters use their body to fight and survive in hostile dystopias. We also see the evolution from fairy like characters to actual fairies, through characters such as Kaye, who take Jane's fairy qualities and magnify them by becoming that which Jane only alludes to being, a real fairy; thus, stepping from the human to the non-human.

Like her YA counterparts, Jane redefines beauty and the sexualisation of the female body. She allows the 'plain' girl sexuality, love, desire, and eventually motherhood. Though she remains an 'ugly duckling' it is enough, she does not need to be a 'swan' nor does she need to transform: she finds her 'happily ever after' without conforming to the expected societal and literary norms and conventions of Brontë's era of femininity. As such we find that the narrative of the body as a source of rebellion and defiance for those in marginalised or limited positions of power has roots which stretch back beyond just YA literature. Yet what sets YA literature apart in its use of the body and the narrative of the body is the unique significance and importance YA literature attaches to the materiality of the body.

In a poststructuralist era the physicality, or materiality, of things – natural, manmade, animal, human, humanoid and other – can be overlooked or dismissed. In her work *Bodies that Matter* (1993) Judith Butler argues:

> One hears warnings like the following: If everything is discourse, what happens to the body? If everything is a text, what about violence and bodily injury? Does anything *matter* in or for poststructuralism? (4:2011)

Butler goes on to explore how postructuralism has deconstructed all material constructs, including sex and the body. Butler then attempts to reinstate the materiality of the body arguing that it is the body that predates the perfomativity and roles that are placed upon it, and that 'On the contrary, it is productive, constitutive, one might even argue *performative*, inasmuch as this signifying act delimits and contours the body that it then claims to find prior to any and all signification' (2011:6). However, she acknowledges the difficulty of casting in language that which is outside of language, as by placing that which is outside of language into language, we endow it with the constructs and symbolism of language:

> This is not to say that the materiality of bodies is simply and only a linguistic effect which is reducible to a set of signifiers. Such a distinction overlooks the materiality of the signifier itself. Such an account also fails to understand materiality as that which is bound up with signification from the start; to think through the indissolubility of materiality and signification is no easy matter. To posit by way of language a materiality outside of language is still to posit that materiality, and the materiality so posited will retain that positing as its constitutive condition. (2011:6)

In short by putting into words that which is not language we shape and define it, despite language being inadequate to fully or completely capture, explain or define the essence of what is being described. Butler questions whether language can refer to materiality or whether materiality is defined as existing by language and thus cannot exist without language. She explores how the body is matter, and matter is what things are made of. Matter, she argues, can be saturated through its interactions and thus become part of the construct of power. In a feminist exploration of the body within philosophy, literature, and psychoanalysis Butler discusses the idea that the feminine can be seen only in what it is not, that it is the absence of the feminine that defines these areas, and that the feminine can be found only through catachresis, existing as the shadow that defines the light.

> The problem is not that the feminine is made to stand for matter or for universality; rather, the feminine is cast outside the form/matter and universal/particular binarisms. She will be neither the one nor the other, but the permanent and unchangeable condition of both – what can be construed as a nonthematizable materiality. (2011:16)

By existing ‘outside’ and mimicking the actions of that which the feminine is excluded from the feminine usurps the power of the inside and passes through to the feminine ‘elsewhere’. Butler discusses how society enforces gender performativity which in turn is enacted upon the body, arguing that the sex of a body is consequently the factor in society deciding which bodies matter. Ultimately, at risk of being reductionist or oversimplifying, Butler argues that those that matter, and their bodies, are defined by those, and their bodies, who do not matter.

This idea of bodies that ‘matter’ or bodies that have higher value or significance suggests that there must be bodies that are less valued, less significant, less important, or in other words bodies which exist in the ‘outside’; namely bodies that are ‘other’. The idea of marginalised or ‘other’ bodies is not just limited to the feminine but also to a whole host of other humans and humanoids that are in some

way different, or outside of what society has deemed acceptable, normal, 'correct' or, as Butler and Irigaray would say, 'proper'. From this, we may extrapolate that the feminine can also be defined by that which is also female, in that a woman may define herself by what she is not in comparison to another woman. Hence even within the sphere of the female there still exist those that are 'feminine' and those that are defined in opposition to this interpretation of feminine which thus forces them to become other despite being female. To summarise, often in literature there is a 'proper' feminine and an 'other' feminine in which we find societal values enshrined in print.

In Daphne du Maurier's 1938 novel *Rebecca,* the protagonist is female, yet her femininity is defined by what, or rather who, she is not - her husband's first wife - Rebecca. Rebecca seemingly embodies the qualities of society approved femininity and is thus regarded by others as 'proper' whilst the narrator does not embody these qualities so is perceived to be 'other'. Both women are defined by what they are perceived to be not, by their relationship with and to a man – Maxim - and how they play the role of his wife. This defining of femininity is based on the perception of others, not fact, as Rebecca's seemingly perfect socially-approved femininity is revealed to be an illusion, with Rebecca rejecting the role of a faithful and dutiful wife. When Rebecca's actions are made known to the protagonist, she redefines herself in response to Rebecca's new impropriety and finds the confidence to declare Rebecca the 'other' and herself as 'proper'. Yet these roles are defined only by the gaze of others: Rebecca has not changed; it is simply the perception of her by another that has. Thus, femininity and the perception of being 'feminine', as defined by societal norms, are conveyed by others not the individual. Femininity is a mantle placed upon an individual by the collective gaze and perception of them by the outside world.

Like the second Mrs de Winter, Katniss is also defined by her lack of perceived femininity in contrast to her mother and sister. She is also defined by those watching her in the hunger games arena as not feminine; it is Peeta's actions towards her that re-shape the perception of her as feminine. Katniss does not change herself; she simply adjusts her reactions to Peeta's actions so that the outside viewers will shift their gaze to perceive her as 'feminine' in line with their

societal expectations and thus reward Katniss. Katniss herself only refers to her femininity, or lack of it, in regard to her mother and sister, whom she perceives as being more feminine. However, again this is another's gaze and perception that awards or decides femininity; it is not the individual declaring femininity for herself. Here Katniss has assigned femininity to another, resulting in her deciding who is feminine and who is not feminine, based on her perception of another. Are we to suggest that femininity can thus only be defined or assigned by an outside source rather than by the individual in question? Is femininity a preconceived notion of others, which can exist only when two or more people are present? Does femininity vanish when a person is alone and there is no other gaze through which to categorise them? Is femininity consequently the shadow which can exist only in presence of the 'sun' of another and thus is not a physical state but is simply a judgement cast by others? In which case can we ever truly perceive the feminine if it exists only for others? Suggesting perhaps that the feminine should be defined as the presence of any masculine or feminine entity which enables contrast, rather than the surface dressing of beauty, clothing, or manner which we arbitrarily class as producing the elusive 'feminine'.

These ideas of beauty, femininity, defining of self, power, and the use of the body by the individual and others will be considered in further detail in the forthcoming chapters which are outlined as follows.

Chapter Outlines

The first chapter considers the use and purpose of the body as related to family. It relies heavily on the work of Judith Butler and Kath Weston, with particular reference to their respective works *Antigone's Claim* (2000) and *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship* (1997) to explore how family is created and defined. There are two key definitions of family explored in these works: either that family can be defined/created by blood and biology, or, by ties of affection and

choice. Consequently, the body becomes the lynchpin connecting one to another, binding individuals through the bonds of shared physicality and genetic material as well as shared experiences and emotional connection. The work regarding kinship that both Butler and Weston have developed has been invaluable as a framework through which to perceive and comprehend the idea of the body as integral to the family within the selected texts. Weston's work primarily focuses on kinship groups and families of choice formed in the queer community as an alternative to the heteronormative families that are often presented in many societies. YA literature also features groups that may be considered outside of the heteronormative structure: these groups also form family-like structures bound by non-body ties. In contrast, Butler's work regarding familial kinship formed through blood offers an equally compelling argument and understanding of the bonds and boundaries of family. By using the work of Butler and Weston in tandem it has been possible to construct a new framework or comprehension of family as displayed in YA literature. This new framework combines approaches from Butler and Weston's work to suggest a slightly altered perspective, proposing that all families, both blood and kinship-based, can, and should, be defined as families of choice. Butler's work supports the idea that family is created through bodily earthly ties rooted in the physicality of the being, whilst Weston's work supports the notion that the family is formed by a mental cognitive choice that relies on the experiences the body has borne witness to, rather than the actual body itself. In each case, the body is necessary for housing the required components needed for each interpretation of family and kinship groups, be it the blood of biology or the emotional and spiritual connection of the mind. The selected texts for this chapter illuminate or highlight the many forms of families that exist, and demonstrate how family can be difficult to define as a single unchanging unit. Through struggles and adventures, both physical and spiritual, characters come to understand, redefine, reshape, or reconfigure their family set-up. The body acts as a record of blood ties and the adventures or journeys undertaken to find acceptance, peace, or answers about family.

Chapter Two considers how the body acts as a sexual vessel, evaluating how gender, sex, and sexuality are enacted by the body and the use of the body in each of these roles. Clear and defined sexual activity is one of the main components that set children's literature apart from adult literature. Although sex may be referenced in

children's literature it lacks the eroticism of adult and YA literature. The discussion, depiction, and inclusion of sex or sexual activity in children's literature is not intended to arouse or excite its audience. By including or referencing sex or sexual activity between characters in a sexualised manner YA literature enters the realm of adult literature. This chapter also considers how beauty, sex, gender roles, and sexuality have changed within YA literature over the decades. Beauty is defined by societal norms and is a constantly changing ideal, though the main tenets of beauty, specifically feminine beauty have – in Western society – remained largely consistent. For over a century, typically the Western ideal standard of feminine beauty has been presented as white, female, thin, and young. While some may argue that larger women were presented more positively in previous centuries we have not seen larger women comparable to today's body-positive models held up as the ideal feminine physique for generations. Although historical depictions of beauty allowed for a fuller feminine ideal - Botticelli's famed *The Birth of Venus,* features a curvaceous figure, as do many of Rubens' works - the models remain consistently pale, female, and young. In the last century, we have arguably moved to incorporate a more slender form as the ideal of feminine beauty. Women that are significantly overweight or obese or with small breasts in proportion to their waist and hips, do not feature prominently suggesting that the range of what is deemed 'beautiful' has been limited and that other forms have been presented either as 'other' or marginalised.

For example, if we consider the winners of PEOPLE magazine's *Beautiful* Issue from 1990 to 2018, out of 19 women to feature on the front cover there are three women of BAME backgrounds, the rest are white, and none of the women presented have larger figures or openly identify as being anything other than cis female.While it is important to acknowledge the move towards a changing idea of beauty in Western culture, with icons like Kim Kardashian, Beyoncé, Megan Markle, Tess Holliday, and Ashley Graham offering an alternative beauty narrative, there persists still an undercurrent of valuing white, thin, youthful female bodies, evidenced by practices both online and in reality, including chemical skin whitening, photo filters which code whiteness and fewer wrinkles as more attractive[2], and the vast array of body shaping wear and photoshop software to slim and contour figures both real and

[2] https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/apr/25/faceapp-apologises-for-racist-filter-which-lightens-users-skintone

virtual. In the period that this thesis explores, 1995-2015, the figure of the skeletal, white, teenage supermodel still looms prominently and though the texts and society question this form of beauty and promote a wider understanding of its variations, they do so often by comparison to those who fit this perhaps outdated model of beauty, suggesting that though this image is being challenged it has not been erased. That we have to describe certain models as 'plus-sized' rather than just models illustrates what is still expected when we use the word: that it still implies a particular physique and frequently codes for 'thin'. We have not yet reached a point where the term 'model' simply refers to someone who displays clothing or their body for a living regardless of size. Hence, though it is vital to note how far the image of beauty has progressed and altered, this change can be fragile and sometimes tokenistic. There is more to be done, more to be included, more to be confronted, and more barriers to break down. Change is happening but is it not complete and often it can be problematic as well as empowering. Unless care, communication, openness, and real representation are encouraged, fetishizing, pigeonholing, stereotyping and cultural appropriation are a risk, even by those held up as challenging the historic ideal. Kim Kardashian though often hailed as an alternative representation of beauty has been accused of cultural appropriation multiple times[3]. Beauty is a complex idea and provokes an emotional and physical response in others. Beauty holds a mirror to society and forces us to consider the forms and bodies we value and those we do not.

Historically, those who do not fit this image of beauty are 'other' and often perceived as lesser. Using the work of Beth Younger, *Learning Curves: Body Image and Sexuality in Young Adult Literature* (2009), which draws parallels between thinness and personal sexual agency, and focusing in part on Judy Blume's novel *Forever* (1975), we can track and discover how far the presentation and representation of sex, sexuality and the body have changed and shifted over the decades leading up to the period of discussion.

[3] https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/27/fashion/kim-kardashian-west-kimono-cultural-appropriation.htmlhttps://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/kim-kardashian-braids-cultural-appropriation-fulani-hairstyle-a9373421.htmlhttps://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/kim-kardashian-blackface-magazine-cover-7hollywood-cultural-appropriation-racism-a9255346.htmlhttps://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/kim-kardashian-west-cultural-appropriation-instagram-maang-tikka-a8857656.html

This chapter builds on the work of Younger by considering how this framework she created for human beauty can be tailored and used to explore the beauty of the superhuman or humanoid; thus considering how the body is used to present beauty, sexuality, and self-image in the human and the non-human; and asking whether the same attitude towards beauty prevails in both human and non-human characters. This chapter aims to decide whether YA literature continues to conform to the expected standards of Westernised beauty or whether YA literature has begun to deviate from this so-called 'ideal'. This chapter also considers how the body is used to enact sexuality, be it heterosexuality or queer sexual identity. In finding a framework to view this presentation of sexuality, the work of Caroline Jones and J.B. Epstein has proved immensely useful. Jones' and Epstein's work has helped to identify how queer stereotypes and queer characters are presented physically and emotionally within contemporary YA literature. These stereotypes often rely upon bodily tropes with the body being used to align a character with a particular stereotype.

Finally, Chapter Three studies the physicality of the body and deliberates the difference and divide between human, humanoid, and supernatural. YA literature within this period, 1995-2015, has witnessed a significant rise in the number of texts featuring non-human beings, and this thesis strives to understand what these non-human beings mean in relation to their human counterparts, and how these human and non-human relationships are presented. With many young adult texts featuring human and humanoid beings the body is no longer limited to one species but is used to house a wide variety of sentient, but non-human, traits. I consider the adaptations, limitations, and boundaries of the body, in order to examine and define what purpose the body has within YA literature. Donna Haraway's work *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (1991) has been used as a starting definition for classifying what a cyborg or non-humanoid might be. However, whilst Haraway's work is indeed vital, it focuses on cyborgs and the creation of hybrids by merging man and machine. Consequently, this chapter expands Haraway's work to investigate other non-human beings: namely the supernatural beings that populate much of contemporary YA literature. In doing so the perception of beauty and physical appeal is once again challenged by these new young adult texts with many aligning the supernatural body with beauty, a shift from the traditional viewing of the 'other' as monstrous. Rhonda Nicol's work

studying beauty and the monstrous in contemporary YA literature provided support and guidance for examining the role of attractiveness and ugliness in other contemporary works helping to piece together a comprehensive understanding of beauty and the other within contemporary YA literature. In exploring the transformation of the body from human to other, this chapter explores the role of death and the spirit within YA literature, investigating if and how supernatural and un-dead bodies fit into a human framework of morality.

Introduction Summary

The body in YA literature is both symbolic and literal; it is the forum in which the ethereal and the corporal meet. Katniss's body is simultaneously her physical self and the symbol of a rebellion. Her body is more than the sum of its parts, and its purpose is both personal and communal. Similarly, Edward Cullen is symbolically and literally life and death; he is youth, age, adulthood, and childhood in one contradictory physical manifestation. This is the dichotomy that YA literature embraces and captures. It is the junction between adult and children's literature, it is the magical and the realistic combined, it is the pain of adulthood intertwined with the hope and joy of childhood, it is an intoxicating mix that appeals to all ages of readership and is presented perfectly in the use of the body in YA texts. This thesis aims to unravel the multitude of bodies presented in YA literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the body functions and how these bodies are used to explore the human condition.

Chapter One

Family

'Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.'
(Tolstoy.1995: 1)

Family is the beginning, and while the protagonists will inevitably grow, evolve, and finally come to define themselves and their purpose, the family is the start and in that start, we usually find the reason for the protagonist. It is impossible to fully eradicate or dismiss family from stories because family is the origin; even clones and test-tube babies have creators which can classify as parental figures, and it is these parental figures that are at the centre of the issue of family. Whether the parental figures are absent or present they must be explained. Protagonists cannot just appear, and as such, the issue of family or rather the origin of the protagonist and their childhood must at least be mentioned before they can be ignored in favour of bigger or more interesting issues. Therefore, from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818)to Libba Bray's *The Sweet Far Thing* (2003), the spectre of unresolved family and parental issues continues to haunt the literary world.

This chapter will explore how the body is used to define family and how the family defines the body within much of YA literature: a key theme, as the family is often the motive for much of the narrative, plot, and events within YA texts. Whether the protagonist wishes to discover his or her family, or escape the family altogether in favour of another family, family, or lack of family, is an integral part of the fabric of YA literature.

The core texts in this chapter are Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010), *How I Live Now* (2004) by Meg Rosoff, *Tithe* (2002) and *Ironside* (2007) by Holly Black, and *The Confessions of Georgia Nicolson* series (1999-2009) by Louise Rennison. These texts were chosen because each demonstrates a new understanding of family and how family shapes and creates the body, whilst

simultaneously being created and enacted through the body. While many of the texts incorporate multiple genres (particularly *How I Live Now,* described by Rachel Falconer as including 'elements of the childhood idyll, magic adventure story, war novel, mental illness narrative, chick-lit, girl's diary and dystopia' (2010:90)), this chapter will focus on how these texts discuss the definition of family, absent and present parents, siblings, families of choice, blood and kinship. It asks what family is in YA literature and how the body is used to signify it. It also considers how biological family differs from the non-biological family and explores the significance of this difference.

According to the often-quoted Jean Belovich, there are twelve variations on the family structure:

> There is the traditional family, where Mom stays home and Dad goes to work; the Dad-stays-at-home and Mom-works family; the both-spouses-work family; the single parent family; the re-married family; the homosexual family; the unwed-teenager-with child family; the non marital family; the foster care family; the interreligious family; the interracial family; and the communal family. (1987: xv)

This list of possible family variations and regroupings of the family unit clearly shows that the 1940s and 1950s stereotype of family - a married mother and father, and their two children, usually a son and a daughter- is no longer applicable. As we can see from the above list, the family has evolved. However, whilst fairly extensive and varied, this description of family focuses only on the parents and their offspring, implying that Belovich is, firstly, viewing the family from the parents' perspective, not the child's, and secondly, that Belovich interprets family only as a unit consisting of parental figures and children. Such an interpretation ignores other possible interpretations and alternative parameters of what family can be considered to be. There is no mention of families made up only of children or young adults, or of families consisting of friends or siblings. The family as presented by Belovich is a vertical family consisting of authority figures and their dependent younger charges, resulting in the neglect of horizontal families, made up of siblings, step-siblings, half-siblings, or partners. Also neglected in Belovich's list is the family with multiple parental figures, the gay or queer family, and the mixed family which blends several family structures into one. These new or emerging families are, as noted by Judith Butler, becoming increasingly common in our current social climate:

> I ask this as well during a time in which children, because of divorce and remarriage, because of migration, exile, and refugee status, because of global displacements of various kinds, move from one family to another, move from a family to no family, move from no family to a family, or in which they live, psychically, at the crossroads of the family, or in multiply layered family situations, in which they may well have more than one woman who operates as the mother, more than one man who operates as the father, or no mother or no father, with half-brothers who are also friends - this is a time in which kinship has become fragile, porous, and expensive. It is also a time in which straight and gay families are sometimes blended, or in which gay families emerge in nuclear and nonnuclear forms. (2000: 22)

Here Butler recognises and identifies many of the family structures or forms missing from Belovich's admittedly rather dated summary of the family. More importantly, though Butler uses the term ‘kinship’ with regard to her definition of family. Kinship as a concept for creating, forming, and bonding a familial group will be explored further in the latter sections of this chapter.

Although it is possible to view Belovich's definition of family as incomplete or lacking, she nevertheless raises the important suggestion that this neatly balanced family of four is not a literary tradition, but an inaccurate social stereotype. Evidence of rejection by the literary world of this clichéd societal family stereotype is easy to source as there exists a long literary history, stretching back centuries, of alternative families and missing or absent parents. To name but a few:

Cinderella (Deceased Mother)

Jack and the Beanstalk (Missing Father)

Snow White (Deceased Mother)

Oliver Twist (Orphan)(1838)

Jane Eyre (Orphan) (1847)

Little Women (Absent Father) (1868)

Heidi (Orphan) (1880)

The Railway Children (Absent Father)(1906)

Peter Pan (Absent Parents)(1906)

Pippi Longstocking (Absent Parents)(1945)

Lord of the Flies (Absent Parents)(1954)

James and the Giant Peach (Orphan)(1961)

Tracy Beaker (Absent Mother and Missing Father)(1991)

Northern Lights Trilogy (Absent Parents)(1995)

Harry Potter (Orphan) (1997)

A Series of Unfortunate Events (Orphans) (1999)

As shown by a glance at the above list, which is by no means complete, there is a strong and consistent canon of children's and YA literature featuring the theme of missing or absent parents, resulting in a string of texts over the centuries which feature orphans as the main protagonists. These texts support the idea that there is a long-established literary tradition of stories that do not contain the standardised traditional family set-up.

Often, this lack of traditional family is key to the plot and narrative of the texts, manifesting itself in the protagonist's desire to find or create a family for themselves, be it a return to their biological family evidenced in *Oliver Twist,* or the creation of a new family unit as seen in *Tracy Beaker*, in which Tracy creates a new family consisting of herself and her adoptive mother Cam. Frequently, these reformed family units are themselves not a return to the traditional stereotype but a socially unconventional alternative entity such as the family formed in *James and the Giant Peach*, in which a fresh family is created by a group of anthropomorphised insects and a young human boy, James.

Though there are obvious historical examples of a return to the traditional family set-up of two heterosexual parents and their children, biological or adoptive, as seen in the Darling family in *Peter Pan,* or the modern return in the *Confessions of Georgia Nicholson* series, for the main part family in children's and YA literature is something that needs to be either excluded or made the focus of the text. There appears to be very little middle ground; either the family must be absent so that they do not interfere in the actions and events befalling the protagonist, or the family or

lack of family must be the driving force and motivation behind the plot, whether the motivation is to resolve and reconcile family differences, or to reform the family unit completely.

If we consider the idea of family as motivation and driving force for a text's narrative, *Harry Potter* is a perfect example. Harry's parents are dead and consequently absent. However, their absence is the cause of Harry's hatred and vendetta against Voldemort, thus Harry's absent parents and his desire for a loving and supportive family are combined into one overarching narrative which sees Harry forming a new family, the core nucleus being composed of the Weasleys, Hermione, and Sirius. In a wonderful combination of the need to remove and replace the family, Harry by moving to Hogwarts, simultaneously manages to remove his biological family, the Dursleys, from the action whilst discovering and forming a new family at Hogwarts. Harry's need to find a replacement nuclear family for his unsatisfactory life with the Dursleys is a theme of many young adult and children's texts; another example of the dropping of one family in favour of a better or more suitable family is seen in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988) or Anne Fine's *Tulip Touch* (1996).

In contrast, a text that showcases the need to remove the family to focus solely on the protagonists is *Lord of the Flies* (1954). Though the boys create a new impromptu group which could be classed as a family of sorts, the traditional family structure must be eradicated for the plot to progress. Likewise, in many adventure stories the family, or more accurately parents and other authority figures, need to be kept at home or away so that adventure can thrive, as seen in texts such as *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000), *Tithe* (2002) and *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010).

Family is swiftly removed in *The Hunger Games* trilogy. Set in a dystopian world, the trilogy focuses on an annual game of survival featuring contestants chosen from each sector of the country. When Katniss volunteers to take her sister's place in the games she unwittingly becomes a symbol of resistance and eventually the figurehead of the underground uprising that overthrows the current governing regime. She also leaves her family to undertake a dangerous quest which will challenge and change her. Family in this series shifts as the trilogy progresses, moving from a simple biological structure to a less rigid and more complex mix of biological and non-biologically related individuals.

Like *The Hunger Games, How I Live Now* also features war as a backdrop to the text's narrative. In *How I Live Now* Daisy, a young American with an eating disorder is sent to live in England with her aunt and cousins. Her aunt leaves the country to attend peace talks abroad but does not return. War breaks out, leaving Daisy and her cousins to fend for themselves. Daisy and her female cousin Piper are separated from their male relations and must travel alone to try to be reunited with them. Family in this text is further complicated by the romantic relationship Daisy forms with her cousin Edmond, resulting in the blending of family ties with sexuality and romance.

In contrast to the alternative realities of *The Hunger Games* and *How I Live Now, Tithe* and *Ironside* are set in our contemporary world. However magical creatures feature in the text, thus creating a world simultaneously real and unreal. This mixing of the normal and the unnatural is personified in the protagonist Kaye; Kaye originally believes she is human but discovers in *Tithe* that she is a pixie changeling. In the sequel,*Ironside* Kaye locates the human girl she replaced, Kate, and returns with Kate to her family. In her quest for an understanding of herself, her family, and her heritage, Kaye comes to redefine family both as a human and nonhuman.

The final series examined in this chapter is *Confessions of Georgia Nicolson*. Like *How I Live Now,* this series is also set in England, albeit a realistic and contemporary England. The texts feature a traditionally recognised nuclear biological family consisting of Georgia, her heterosexual parents, and her younger sister Libby. In contrast to the families presented in the other series, the family unit in the *Confessions of Georgia Nicolson* series is whole and present. The series charts the daily life of Georgia and her interactions with her family, friends, and school.

Each series is studied within the framework of the family, but first, we must define ‘family’. The defining of family is both a personal and intuitional matter. The family is enshrined and defined in law, through language, through the body, and by the state. Yet the family is unique for each individual. Families can be the foundation of society whilst simultaneously being rejected and outcast by society, hence families can be both rebellion and law. This dichotomy exists because the definition of family can be so varying and wide-ranging. For instance, a queer family, though defining

itself as family, can, and often is, rejected by society and ignored or denied in law. As Kath Weston notes in her work *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship* (1997):

> Although people in the United States tend to imagine kinship as a discrete and private domain, many ostensibly nonfamilial areas are infused with heterosexist presumptions and regulated by kinship. As the law currently stands, lesbians and gay men cannot sue a third party for wrongful death of a partner, nor can they qualify for the exemption from probate that many states offer when all property is willed to a spouse. (1997:6)

Here it is quite easy to see that though family is often held to be a personal and private group, unique to the individual in question, a family can be questioned, ruled, disregarded, controlled, regulated, and forbidden by the state or society.

The body is essential in the defining of a family; it is the tangible matter, or form, that connects biological families, housing the shared DNA that runs through their separate bodies. This bodily bond allows for shared physical characteristics, shapes offspring, and marks them as a product of their parents. It is the materiality of being that forms an undeniable and often powerful attachment. The connection of one body to another is both linear and horizontal, through their parents; individuals have a bodily link to the past, whilst through their offspring they have the potential to link to bodies in the future. In addition to the vertical lines are the horizontal lines of siblings, which enable a vast web of beings tied to one another by shared blood, and replicated chromosomal matter. The relationships between these bodies or families are the ultimate physical binding. While individuals may choose to, and often do, pursue an emotional relationship with those that they share DNA, it is not compulsory. As such, despite a lack of relationship, connection, knowledge of, or feelings for another that one shares genetic material with, there remains a bodily or ‘blood’ tie.

As discussed previously the body, to many critics, – Foucault, Baudrillard, Bourdieu, and Sartre - is more than just a mass of flesh, it is also the mind, soul, and whole of human ‘being’ in one package. As such it is the body that allows us to form and experience the emotional and sexual experiences which make up the bonds between those we are not bound to by blood but still consider ‘family’. These families

formed through non-biological connections are described by Weston in her book of the same title as, *'Families We Choose'* (1997).

Weston also uses the term 'kinship', which is vital to this chapter and to the discussion of families as a whole, as kinship recognises familial bonds beyond those limited to blood links; although blood links or biological bonds are also of interest within this chapter, as there appears to have been a shift within western literature over the centuries regarding the importance of blood. Historically, blood was essential, legitimate, and binding; families were formed by biology, and lineage was prized above all. In short, the body made family, and family made the body – one could not exist as family outside of the framework of the body and its material ties to the family through the physical. The subsequent shift in the importance of blood over time can be simplified thusly; in ancient Greek tragedies and comedies, as in Shakespearean plays, families are solely defined by blood. By the time of popular Victorian novels like Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1860), however, the family is beginning to accept non-biological members, although, as we see in *Oliver Twist* (1838), often these additions or adoptions fortuitously turn out to be also biologically and blood-related to the family.

If we return to the idea that blood defines family, we find a perfect example in Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone* (circ. 441 BC). *Antigone* tells the tale of two sisters Antigone and Ismene, and two brothers Polyneices and Eteocles, the children born from the incestuous marriage of Oedipus and his mother Jocasta. Family in this text is presented as being above the laws of man, held up as an institution answerable only to the laws and wishes of the gods. In the play, Eteocles and Polyneices slay one another in a war of succession and their maternal uncle Creon dictates that only Eteocles is to be buried and treated with honour, while Polyneices' body is left on the battlefield to rot in disgrace. Antigone defies her uncle, the law, authority, society, and the state when she chooses to bury her brother Polyneices, claiming that family is beyond the laws and governance of man. Antigone argues that her brother is irreplaceable and that their blood link cannot be replicated. She is willing to risk being ostracised, punished, and ultimately die to act as she feels is right to honour her family. The placing of family above all else is significant. This focus on blood and

biology demonstrates the importance of blood in defining a family in historical literature.

However, the parameters of what can constitute a family are constantly in flux, ever-changing to fit the needs of society. This is clearest in the difference between what is accepted as family by Antigone and by current society; Antigone's family is formed of incest, doubling the blood lineage, something that would be taboo in our current western society. Yet in Ancient Egypt, the practice of actively pursuing incestuous relationships in the royal family was common as it was seen as a way of protecting the bloodline and keeping it pure. As such we can see how the parameters of family, and the families permitted by society and the state, have a direct physical impact on the body of those dictated to. This notion of incestuous families and the bodily connections between them is explored in Meg Rosoff's text *How I Live Now* (2005) which is examined later in the chapter.

As such the modern family in literature is a many-faced being, defined as much by individuals as by society. Using as a starting point the framework of family and kinship as defined by Butler in her work *Antigone's Claim* (2000) this chapter considers the body of the family in current contemporary YA literature. It may seem unusual or even irrelevant to link Butler's work on an ancient text with these contemporary texts, but when studied more closely each has a decided link to the myths of old. In some texts, the link is even overt and intentional. *The Hunger Games* trilogy was deliberately shaped to echo the myth of Theseus, as Suzanne Collins explained in an interview:

> The Hunger Games themselves, for example, were inspired by the story of Theseus, the mythical king of Athens, who slew the Minotaur, the horrible monster imprisoned in the Labyrinth, the gigantic maze designed by Daedalus. According to the myth after subduing Athens militarily, King Minos of Crete accepted a peaceful settlement which included a regular tribute by which the Athenians would be reminded of their subjugation to Crete. Every nine years (when the full moon falls upon the equinox) seven Athenian boys and seven Athenian girls would be sent to Crete to be devoured by the Minotaur. As a young prince, the Athenian hero Theseus took the palace of one of the young tributes, killed the Minotaur, and solved the puzzle of the maze. I appropriated the Greek mythological premise of a conquering power that bent all of its subjects to its will through violence and maintained fear and domination through a not so subtle reminder to the neighbouring peoples that they are not free and autonomous (remember that District 13 essentially is a wasteland because the people there had tried to revolt against the Capitol and

> suffered gruesome consequences). My 24 boys and girls who must fight to the death for the entertainment of the Capitol are also called "tributes", like the Athenian youth, and after taking the place of her sister, Prim, who would surely have died, the story's heroine, Katniss, joins the other tributes but is continuously defiant of the Capitol. (2009:726-727)

While some of the links are indeed intended and deliberate, as seen above, the connection with other texts is perhaps not so clear, although faint traces and memories of the ancient legends can still be found. In *Tithe* and *Ironside,*we find the dual world of Persephone. For, like Persephone, Kaye is divided between the mortal world that her mother resides in and the supernatural world of her partner. Again, as in the myth, Kaye remains connected to both worlds, although, unlike Persephone, Kaye has the freedom to choose her fate and place in both realms.

Literature has a long history of reinforcing or defining heritage and family through biology and inherited physical traits. More recently, in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997) Harry is told repeatedly that he has his mother's eyes. Harry has no memories of his mother, yet he is constantly linked to her through the remarks of others regarding his bodily features. Harry cannot escape his heritage: it is marked upon his very skin. As such, we can see how the body is used as a canvas within literature for authors to etch indelible characteristics and history upon a character. Similarly, we are told that Ron must be a member of the Weasley family because of his hair. Like Harry, Ron is marked by his body as belonging to a particular lineage, which brings with it a host of assumptions and expected shared characteristics. This notion of heritage, belonging, and familial expectations are particularly pertinent to YA literature. As discussed previously, much of the definition of YA literature comes from its eminent desire for its protagonist to grow, develop, and find their place within society. Part of that discovery is the finding of their place and role within a family – be it their original, or another, family. Consequently, we often find in YA literature and YA texts, protagonists rejecting or redefining themselves and their heritage through physical acts or changes. In Holly Black's novel *Valiant* (2005) protagonist Val discovers her mother having sex with Val's boyfriend at the start of the novel. Val chooses to leave the family home and cuts ties with her mother. In addition, Val shaves her head. This is a very clear physical change which Val has chosen to undergo to detach herself from her biological family; it is a physical demonstration of her choosing to reject the blood connection she shares with her mother. When Val

reaches back to reconnect with her mother, her hair has started to grow; as Val's hair returns, her relationship with her mother is renewed. Much of YA literature explores this rejection or negotiation of the blood family to find a situation with which the protagonist is happy.

Naming the Family

Names, like family, shape and define characters in ways that are often intangible and indefinable, but also vital. Names help to guide and aid our understanding of a character and are rarely irrelevant or meaningless. Kaye's surname for example is Fierch which sounds like fierce, and Kaye, her mother, and grandmother can easily be read as fierce individuals. As such surnames or family names, in particular, help us to categorise and group certain individuals, as they indicate that a character belongs to a specific family or group either through blood or marriage. Georgia shares the same surname as her mother, father, and younger sister Libby, indicating a close-knit group under one shared name.

Similarly, Katniss shares a surname with her mother, sister, and father. Katniss's surname also carries an extra resonance as it is a reminder that Katniss and Primrose are the living perpetuations of their father's name. What they achieve, they achieve with his name as well. It is no coincidence that Katniss's surname Everdeen sounds like evergreen, which brings forth the image of the evergreen fir tree and the idea of continued and sustained life and colour through every season and hardship, an image of endurance, perseverance and continuity, all of which are character traits embodied in Katniss. It also echoes Bathsheba Everdene, Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* spirited heroine. It is equally fitting that Katniss's opponent is President Snow. Like Katniss, President Snow embodies the qualities of his name, cold, ruthless, and life-sapping. President Snow's influence is slowly eroded like snow melting after a long winter and the symbol of new life and resistance is Katniss, the evergreen fir, the tree that even in the depths of winter when covered in snow, does not fade or perish, but remains defiant.

As noted earlier, Pierre Bourdieu's work regarding names, language, and symbols equates names with power and authority. Names can give individuals power

while also being used to suppress others. If the historical lack of surnames for slaves marked them as lacking a recognised family, it also highlighted the actions of others in the separation of slave families and reinforced the power of those in authority by removing the sense of lineage, history, and connection to others through a shared name. Surnames in Western society are for humans and show a link to another human, if an individual is denied a surname, they are relegated to subhuman status similar to a pet or objectwhich may have a given name but not a family name. This enshrining in language of bodily ties to others gives power and status: just as a title can also define a person. Titles are used to bestow or remove power and authority. The titles of peerage or aristocracy infer power and privilege, likewise, honorifics such as Doctor, President, Captain, or Father also act as markers of authority and responsibility. However, titles that reference someone's gender, ethnicity, or age, whilst they have the power to potentially define someone, do so in a way that limits their identity and suppresses their authority.

Unfortunately, Bourdieu, as discussed earlier, does not acknowledge the reclaiming of names and power from those in authority. The use of the surname 'Freeman' by former slaves for exampleis a force for rebellion and resistance against previous oppression. Similarly ignored is the repurposing of symbols and language by oppressed and marginalised groups to defy those in authority: for example, the reclaiming of the word 'queer' by the LGBTQ+ community. Likewise, the use of the mockingjay as a symbol of active resistance to the regime and a reminder of the Capitol's failing, and Tiny's ironic use of the name Tiny, demonstrate how YA literature embraces the subversive use of language, names, and symbols as a form of personal expression in the face of societal power.

Kaye has a complex relationship with her name as it is both a stolen name and a feminist statement. Traditionally in the UK and USA surnames are passed from father to child. Women often adopt their husband's surname when they marry, hence surnames and their perpetuation are a decidedly male-focused tradition, as a man may keep his surname his entire life, passing it on to his children, whereas a woman may lose her birth surname through marriage and thus will not pass it on to her children. Instead, her children will be named as belonging to her husband's family. In a reversal of tradition (or embracing of the historic Jewish tradition) Kaye's

surname comes from her mother, and Ellen in turn has taken her surname from her mother. Although it is unclear as to whether Ellen's mother's surname is her birth surname or a married surname, her family is still all united under one name, and more remarkably it is a female lineage. The roles have been reversed and it is not the father's family name that is continued but the mother's, perhaps suggesting that as Kaye has no present father figure, Ellen has adopted both the mother and father role in parenting Kaye. The shared surname is also yet another link showing the bonds between Kaye, her mother, and her grandmother. Ellen chose to give Kaye her surname rather than her father's, showing that Ellen identifies Kaye as belonging to her family and not as part of Kaye's father's family. The surname also ties Kaye to a human family and lineage, separating her from her biological fairy family as she does not have a fairy first or family name.

When Kaye believes that she has stolen Kate's name she wonders if she has become nameless which she equates to being undefined: '*They say nameless things change constantly - that names fix them in place like pins.* Kaye didn't want to be fixed in place. She didn't want to pretend to be mortal when she wasn't, nor did she want to have to leave the mortal world. She didn't want to belong to one place or another.' (2007:320). However, nameless or not she is still defined her choices and by her relationships; she is Ellen's daughter, Kate's sister, her grandmother's granddaughter, Corey's substitute sister, and Roiben's consort. Thus she has not just one family name of Fierch but many familial names and titles relating to her position within her family, all defining and shaping her. Kaye's name also protects her in the fairy world. In Black's fairy lore if someone knows the full given name of a fairy then they have power over that fairy and can control them: thus given names are deemed secret and dangerous. Kaye having taken the human name of her sister has no fairy name which we know of and is hence free from being controlled by her name. In her nameless state, she is free and autonomous, suggesting that perhaps Black, like Bourdieu, believes that names have power and that sometimes the power of names can be used against us.

Given names are also intriguing factors within the texts. Daisy, for instance, has the birth name Elizabeth but likes to be called Daisy. Whether this is a nickname or a name she chose herself is not made clear. What is clear is that names can be

both defining and irrelevant simultaneously. While Katniss comes to be defined by her moniker of Mockingjay her name becomes a symbol, entwined with political ideals and revolution and, without intending to, her name grows beyond her and becomes more cause than a name. Names, each text suggests are something that others can control and give power to; Katniss's name is taken and used for publicity, while Kaye's name turns out to be the name of a stolen identity and was originally intended for another being.

Thus, a name is not something that protagonists can control: all they can do is choose whether to accept that definition of their name or whether to try to change it. Katniss fights against becoming the Mockingjay but eventually surrenders and accepts the label, Kaye offers to give back her name to Kate, and Daisy continues as Daisy, still rejecting the name Elizabeth. Only Georgia accepts and maintains her birth name throughout the text without changes, excluding of course the numerous and odd nicknames given to her by her friends and family, suggesting that in a realistic and non-magical setting, names do not attract as much interest, norperhaps have as much importance, as they do in an alternative world or fantasy setting.

In her work *Antigone's Claim* (2000) Butler discusses Lacan's theory that '(a) kinship is instituted at the moment that a child accedes to language, (b) kinship is a function of language rather than any socially alterable institution, and (c) language and kinship are not socially alterable institutions - at least, not easily altered.' (2000:15). Can we then perceive that naming the family under one shared name thus unites the family, while simultaneously defining and identifying it? Identifying a blood bond in language makes it binding, for how else can we refer to family if not through language, and our use of language makes it so. How else can we describe the woman that gave birth to us and shares half our genetic DNA without calling her ‘mother’? There is no word for a woman that has given birth to a child that is not ‘mother’; thus through language we are defined and made real. Even if the child dies, a mother is still a mother as Hazel’s mother in John Green’s work *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012) notes:

> “As long as either of us is alive, I will be your mother,” she said. “Even if you die, I-”

> “When,” I said.
>
> She nodded. “Even when you die, I will still be your mom, Hazel. I won’t stop being your mom.” (2012:296-297)

As such, there is no easy way within the parameters of the English language to untangle and detach oneself from one’s familial ties in language. One may not like one’s parents but it is impossible to deny that they are one’s parents. All protagonists can do is choose not to share their lives with them or, as Katniss does, replace them with others related or not.

If kinship and the family are defined and formed by language, then the naming of the family and the titling of each individual’s position in relation to one another within the family become paramount. As mentioned above Kaye, Katniss and Daisy are each defined by their families and their position within the family; likewise, their understanding or relationship to others in the family is defined through language as well as actions. This defining through language and action is echoed in Butler's interpretation of the play *Antigone,* in which she explores the conflicting nature of Antigone's actions and language, for although Butler states, 'To publish one's act in language is in some sense the completion of the act,' she also acknowledges the difficulties in Antigone's position, for in defying the state and authority she must become the authority, or as Butler neatly puts it:

> Not only does the state presuppose kinship and kinship presuppose the state but ''acts'' that are performed in the name of one principle take place in the idiom of the other, confounding the distinction between the two at a rhetorical level and thus bringing into crisis the stability of the conceptual distinction between them. (2000:11-12)

Likewise, in acting as they do towards their families of choice Katniss, Kaye and Daisy both define and defy the expectations of family. In rejecting their original family, they reject stability, order, and normality but in accepting a new or revised family they simultaneously embrace stability, order, and a semblance of socially constructed normality. Hence, like Antigone, Katniss, Kaye, and Daisy each paradoxically embody both tradition and the rejection of tradition.

Just as defining in language makes a relationship or connection true or real, so too does stating in language make actions real. Language gives meaning and context to actions; it provides motive, narrative, and understanding of the physical.

Language provides the lens and framework through which we perceive and analyse interactions and bodily experiences. It is language that enables us to fully tell the difference between a grimace of fear, pain, or embarrassment, and it is language that allows for the experiences of the body to be relayed to others, giving voice to the voiceless. However, as discussed previously because of this need to filter all experience through language, the true experience can never be fully relayed as it is impossible to translate fully the material to the non-material or linguistic.

The Impact of Absent or Missing Family

The impact of a missing family member is a key theme within young adult literature. The impact can be a positive or negative experience depending on the text; as seen in *How I Live Now* the experience the characters have without their parents is depicted as liberating. The arrival of new adult characters who act in loco parentis, separating and dispatching Daisy and her cousins to different parts of the country, only reinforces the idea that parental figures cannot be relied upon, and often act against the wishes of the young adult. Again, the re-emergence of Daisy's father towards the end of the text results in her being extradited to America against her will. Thus, the idea of missing parents in *How I Live Now* may be viewed as a predominantly positive and liberating experience. Free from the restrictions of parents or other adult authority figures Daisy and her cousins exist initially in a self-sustaining rural idyll. The space created by the lack of parents, Daisy's father, and her cousins' mother, is presented as an oasis of peace, equality, and love without criticism.

However, whilst the absence of Daisy's father soothes and allows her space to heal and grow, her mother's absence is presented as the cause of the wound that Daisy's father unwittingly aggravates. However, as Daisy comes to understand and reconcile herself to the knowledge that her mother wanted her, and loved her, the wound inflicted by her mother's absence is healed. This healing is aided by Daisy's aunt who provides her with the knowledge that her mother loved her; the subsequent absence of Daisy's aunt perpetuates the idea in this text, that while adults, particularly parents, can love and heal, they are also flawed, human and fallible.

They are not images of perfection, held up as role models, but rather are presented as people who, while they may have good intentions, nevertheless act badly. This in-between moment, or pause, results in authority and parental figures, while no longer being defined as 'good' or 'bad', being represented or perceived still as either allies or enemies, separate and different from the YA world and the YA characters.

This representation of adults as characters who fail to live up to the expectations of their children shows that Daisy still clings to the belief that adults should be better, wiser, more controlled, more organised, and more grounded than their YA counterparts. Indeed, there is a lack of sympathy for adult characters in the text, as there is a sense that they could or should have done better, and that more is expected of them because they are adults and are consequently deemed to have reached maturity.

There is also an expectation of the adult characters within many of the other chosen textsto conform to traditional parental stereotypes where applicable. Katniss is very disappointed with her mother's behaviour and worries about leaving her to look after Prim when she leaves for the arena. She expects her mother to fulfil the traditional mothering role and is angry and unforgiving when her mother cannot. Similarly, Georgia often complains that her mother behaves more like a teenager than she does, something that Georgia disagrees with and objects to, despite her mother being the most traditional mother figure in the selected texts. Perhaps then, it is the young adults' conception of a mother and the mother role that is the issue. Not being mothers or parents, themselves do the YA characters set the standard for parenthood too high, expecting their parents and parental figures to fit into an impossible and unattainable vision of what they perceive the ideal parent to be? Notably, while YA characters condemn their parental figures for not acting maturely, sensibly, or meeting their ideals, they do not apply the same restrictions or expectations to themselves.

The comparison of the child to parent is often frequent both in text and in society. Children are repeatedly scrutinised for the way they do, or do not, resemble their parents. This defining of one being in correlation to another being is found throughout Irigaray’s work. Irigaray uses the absence of the male to define femininity. In her work *The Sex Which is Not One* (1977) women are a commodity

and their bodies are traded between men; femininity and the defining of femaleness, stems from being not male or other. Femininity and femaleness are defined by how they relate to others; they are created through the gaze of others and exist only as a reflection of what they are not. If we use Irigaray's work as a template we can perceive the protagonists through the reflections left by their absent parents and define them in comparison to what they are not, i.e. their parents. While the protagonists often strive to define themselves in direct defiance of their parents, however, they usually come unwittingly to mirror them. This connection to and reflection of self in the parent will be explored further in this chapter, beginning with the bond between mother and child.

Mothers

From time immemorial, the link between mothers and their offspring is undisputed. There is a proverb - maternity is a matter of fact, paternity is a matter of opinion - which characterises the undisputed link between mother and child. Traditionally the mother is the primary caregiver for an infant and the bond between mother and child is often expected to be lifelong and strong. Fathers, though traditionally expected to provide for their children, are often presented as more distant figures. Mothers, as the proverb implies, are bound to their children, unable to deny their existence, heritage, or birth as their fathers may. While in this modern age DNA testing would swiftly resolve a paternity dispute, it remains that mothers by their very biology are essential to the production of a being. What the proverb also presents is a limited view of parenthood, defined purely by genetics and the body.

How we define a mother is important, is a mother someone who has carried a foetus, or is a mother someone who has cared for and raised a child? Usually, the two definitions are combined but if we separate the definitions, we have two very distinct perceptions of motherhood, yet each definition relies on physical activity and choices.

Motherhood by body is a definition rooted in the DNA of the body. It is an act which changes the body of the mother. In creating a new being, the very blood and bones of the female are taken by the foetus for their own. The flesh of the mother

becomes something new, both part of herself and other. Mother and child exist paradoxically as joined but separate beings, one whole but two entities, before the birth that produces two people. Motherhood in this regard is a primal bodily act in which the mother uses her body as a vessel to nurture and grow another human. This definition of motherhood encompasses all women who have carried a foetus regardless of the outcome of the pregnancy or length of pregnancy (abortion, stillbirth, miscarriage, or live birth). In short, a mother is defined as a woman who has conceived. In medical terms, a biological mother is a very specific definition, defined by the Farlex and Partner Medical Dictionary (2009) as: 'A woman whose ovum was fertilized and became a foetus. This term does not apply to a woman who provided the uterus for the gestation of a fertilized ovum obtained from a donor.' Therefore, the act of birth is not the act that defines a mother in biological terms; a 'biological' mother is defined by having created a new being with their genetic information, not by the outcome of the conception. Women who carry and birth babies not containing their genetics are referred to as 'surrogate mothers', someone who takes on the role of the mother but is not the genetic or 'biological' mother. Though they might not be considered the 'mother' in medical terms surrogate mothers are legally defined as the child's mother. For the genetic mother to be recognised in UK law as the mother of the child the surrogate mother and genetic mother must apply for a Parental Order which transfers the legal guardianship and parental rights from the surrogate to the genetic parent. Therefore, being a mother is both a role and a physical act; it is a title, action, and maybe a choice.

Motherhood as defined by nurture is a different concept. To mother someone is to look after, care for, and raise them. A person can mother someone else without a biological relationship being present. A mother, or someone who can mother, is compassionate and protective. The language used in adoption proceedings demonstrates the myriad ways the word mother can be used. 'Birth mothers', 'natural mothers' and 'adoptive mothers' are all terms used, although these terms are not without controversy. The 'Positive Adoption Language' or PAL framework created in 1979, popularised the term 'birth mother' to try and replace the phrase 'real mother'. Later, the Honest Adoption Language (HAL) was created by those who took exception to some of the phrasing used in the PAL framework, notably the phrase 'birth mother,' arguing this signifies that the woman's only purpose was to give birth

and that they are no longer a mother once the birth has occurred. The UK government currently uses PAL in reference to the adoption process.

A person can thus have multiple mothers, who may fulfil different roles and purposes. For example, we believe that Kaye has a fairy birth mother, but it is Ellen, her ‘adoptive’ mother, who raises her with her grandmother, who also acts as a mother figure. Mother figures and the idea of ‘mothering’ permeate YA literature with the figure of the mother often presented as both the beginning and the end role for female characters.

The representation of mothers in YA literature has evolved. Mothers are no longer static, unchanging background characters, either purely angelic or completely demonic, but have shifted to become characters of multiple dimensions. Mothers now have their own agendas, goals, ambitions, and most importantly a past and future. They are now able to exist in the texts independently of their children rather than being viewed, interpreted, and categorised in relation to their child. The parent no longer exists solely for the child, as noted by Nadine Röpke: 'Mothering was no longer regarded as women's primary and sole mission but one of many roles women could and did assume.' (2005:3). The idea of the mother has consequently adapted to fit society's changing view of the role. In current British and American society many mothers work, and there is a growing expectation for women to pursue both a career and motherhood. This idea of mothers pursuing and furthering their own lives rather than living for their children is reflected in all three texts. Katniss's mother is a healer, and chooses to continue this career path after the hunger games have ended; Kaye's mother is a singer; Daisy's aunt is engaged in trying to prevent war in her country. They each pursue these careers regardless of being ‘mothers’.

However, these careers allow for the mother characters in each text to be interpreted in multiple ways. Viewed in one light Daisy's aunt is a strong independent woman, who has both a career and children. She is engaged in both the public and home spheres, apparently without a partner to help or support her. In a different light, however, Daisy's aunt is a woman who chooses to put her job before her children and leaves them alone to fend for themselves while their country stands on the brink of war. Similarly, Kaye’s and Katniss's mothers are complex untraditional mothers.

Daisy's relationship with her birth mother is further complicated by her belief that she killed her mother, and that her cousins by the end of the text have killed theirs too. Daisy does not blame her cousins for their mother's death but she does view them as the cause: 'She told me Aunt Penn's death had finally been confirmed two years after she first left for Oslo. I knew that. But I didn't know she'd been shot trying to re-enter the country a few months after the war started, desperate to get back to her family. Poor sisters, I thought. Murdered by their children.' (2005:191). Thus, reason is not the same as blame in Daisy's eyes. Although she sees herself as the source of her mother's death, she does not see it as her fault: 'It's a shame, starting out your first day on the planet as a murderer but there you go, I didn't have much choice at the time.' (2005:22). Consequently, the text appears to suggest that not every action can be assigned as someone's fault, but more that some things just happen, and there can be no blame, only acceptance of the event. This conviction of certain things being fated is the attitude Daisy adopts towards her entire life,and it is this attitude that permeates the narrative: '...but I was coming around to the belief that whether you liked it or not, Things Happen and once they start happening you pretty much just have to hold on for dear life and see where they drop you when they stop.' (2005:52).

In contrast to Daisy's positive experience of absent parents is Katniss's negative experience of absent parents. Like Daisy, Katniss has lost one parent, resulting in a strained relationship with the survivor. Like Daisy's aunt, Katniss's mother is an ambiguous character. Though not physically absent at the start of the series, she is emotionally distant, due to her previous depression after the death of her husband. After the death of Prim, Katniss's mother also becomes physically distant and absent from Katniss's daily life, finallychoosing to leave Katniss to work in a hospital in another district. In contrast to her relationship with her mother, Katniss's relationship with her father was close, and it is no coincidence that Katniss finds an unlikely replacement father figure in Haymitch: 'Eventually I'm released from hospital and given a room in the President's mansion to share with my mother. She's almost never there, taking her meals and sleeping at work. It falls to Haymitch to check on me, make sure I'm eating and using my medicines.' (2010:411). It is Haymitch who guides Katniss and Peeta through the arena, watching from above and trying to protect them, and afterward, it is Haymitch who fights in Katniss and Peeta's best

interests, attempting to shield them from the worst of the political manipulations of District 13. Haymitch, though deeply flawed and not a good role model, is the unlikely adult ally and guardian. Again, it is Haymitch who is chosen to return to District 12 with Peeta and Katniss to monitor and watch over Katniss, demonstrating that whilst it is never formalised or stated, Haymitch is truly Katniss and Peeta's mentor in every sense of the word, and also part of her family of choice, her replacement parental figure.

Unlike Daisy, who is liberated through the lack of parental presence, Katniss is forced to become the adult in the house, taking on her father's role of provider and carer. It is Katniss who provides a means for the family to eat and survive, and it is Katniss who looks after and cares for her younger sister Prim, thus showing that absent parents can force the young protagonist into the mature responsible adult role.

Like Katniss, Kaye is also forced into the adult role in her relationship with her mother. Yet unlike both Katniss and Daisy who ultimately lose their mothers and remain separated from them, Kaye's mother is never permanently separated. She chooses to take Kaye with her when she travels to different cities, pursuing her dream of being a singer, unlike Daisy's aunt, although it must be noted that Daisy's aunt's trip is intended to be a short trip as opposed to the permanent trip it becomes. In addition, Ellen's insistence on taking Kaye with her is not a purely selfless act, as it is clear that this nomadic lifestyle and Ellen's erratic parenting have damaged Kaye's educational and social life. Kaye, due to her mother's insistence on behaving like a teenager herself, has been forced to grow up and see the world through cynical, experienced eyes.

Yet for all her flaws, and Ellen is a deeply flawed mother figure - she smokes, drinks swears, and has little interest in exerting any influence on Kaye's life - she never ceases to be a presence and source of love in Kaye's life. This unswerving, unconditional motherly love is best demonstrated in *Ironside* when Kaye reveals to her mother that she is a changeling. Though at first shocked - "I don't understand. I don't understand what you are. Where is my daughter?"... "*What the fuck did you do with my child?"* Ellen shouted' (2007:108-109) - Ellen later tells Kaye that nothing has changed in their relationship and that Kaye is still her daughter. This

acceptance of Kaye by Ellen despite their lack of biological connection, reveals just how strongly this text believes in the idea that families are made by choice, not blood. When Kaye returns Ellen's biological daughter to her, the child that Kaye replaced, Ellen does not view the child as Kaye's replacement but as Kaye's sister. Similarly, although she knows that she is a fairy, and has no biological relationship with Ellen, Kaye still considers Ellen and her Grandmother to be her family.

This act of choosing to find and return Kate to Ellen is not a simple or kind act; by doing so Kaye unwittingly and unintentionally changes Ellen's future and reinstates Ellen as a mother with a young infant again.

> 'She was never ready to be a mother. How will she manage in that tiny apartment? I'm sure she's happy to have Kate - what mother wouldn't be happy to have her child?'... Giving her mother a changeling child had been a terrible plan. Ellen had just been getting ahead with her job and her band, and having a kid completely derailed that.' (2007:240).

In returning Kate to the family, Kaye has altered its structure permanently, Ellen has become the mother of two daughters, and Kaye is now a big sister. It also perfectly shows how having a child and being a mother is at odds with having a career, as Ellen's career will be significantly affected by Kate's sudden presence in her life. Yet there is also no question of whether Ellen will accept this new child: Ellen takes Kate in and acknowledges her as her daughter, choosing to love her just as she loves her non-biological daughter Kaye. Thus Ellen, though not a classically 'good' mother, always chooses to keep her children and not abandon them for the sake of her career.

Interestingly, although Kaye views Ellen's biological daughter Kate as a missing child, stolen away by fairies, she does not perceive herself to be a fairy child stolen away by humans. Kaye displays no interest in finding out who her biological parents are or discovering more about her background. Kaye chooses to define her family as the people that raised her, not as the people who created her: thus family is shown to be a choice rather than a right. Likewise, Ellen chooses to remain as Kaye's mother, demonstrating that in this text motherhood is a choice, not a biological obligation. This idea of choosing children links into Weston's ideas about adoption: 'In the United States, adopted children are chosen, in a sense, although biological offspring can be planned or selected as well given the widespread

availability of birth control.' (1991:30). Consequently, when Ellen's unexpected adoption of Kaye is revealed, Ellen gets a second, or rather first, opportunity to choose whether or not to keep Kaye in her family, reinforcing Weston's idea that adopted children are chosen. Likewise, she also gets to choose whether to keep her biological child Kate.

Kaye and Kate are both referred to as changelings. Kaye in particular, after bringing Kate back, refers to Kate, not herself, as the changeling. Kaye also has no memory of when she and Kate were swapped, making their early childhood a potentially shared joint event. They can be seen as two shoots of the same plant, both growing out of one original memory seed. Kaye after all, was externally at least, wearing the image of Kate, adopting her physical features as a second skin. Perhaps Kaye should be seen only as Kaye after she removes her glamoured human skin for the first time in *Tithe.* In this moment Kaye is reborn in her true physical form, a green-skinned, extra-finger jointed, winged pixie. Usually, younger siblings are perceived as copying their older siblings, yet in this text, it is Kaye who has copied Kate, copied her very DNA. Kaye has also taken Kate's name, thus Kaye should be nameless, but she is not. Instead, having lived as Kaye for so long she is now Kaye, and it is Kate who can no longer be Kaye.

The defining moment in Kaye and Ellen's relationship comes when Ellen expresses why Kaye is her daughter:

> "When I saw Kate, I was so afraid. I figured you did something dumb to get her back from whatever had her, didn't you? See I know you. *You.'* ... 'See, you're exactly who I think you are.' Ellen's arms went around Kaye's shoulders and she laughed her deep, cigarette-rough laugh. 'You're my girl." (2007:242)

Ellen loves Kaye because she knows her. They have been together for years, experienced life with each other, and that is what Ellen is defining as family, understanding of one another and a decision to be with that person. It is not the blood they share, but the bond they have which matters to Ellen.

While being presented with a range of imperfect and flawed mothers we also find several of our own protagonists becoming mothers. Katniss is briefly referred to as being a mother at the end of the trilogy, but not in detail: we do not discover whether Katniss is a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ mother. We do not know if the mistakes of her

mother are repeated, or whether she becomes a different type of mother to her offspring. This is in contrast to Hester, of *Mortal Engines* (2001), who becomes a mother midway through the series. The third and fourth novels focus not just on Hester and Tom but also their daughter Wren. Hester and Wren have a troubled relationship, and in it, we see many of the flaws present in our other imperfect mothers. Hester argues with Wren, threatens Wren, and resents the close bond Tom and Wren have. Hester abandons Tom and Wren to follow her own adventure as she feels that in some way she has lost herself, perhaps by becoming a mother. In Hester, we see Ellen, Daisy's aunt, and every other mother that has been torn between parenting and following their ambitions. Do we feel more compassion for Hester because we have witnessed her grow up, because we understand her struggles and insecurities, or do we judge her as harshly as we judge the other mothers? Through Hester, we understand how the flawed parent comes to be; we witness the life experiences that have shaped her, and impact how she parents Wren. Hester loves Wren, but she struggles with their relationship. Hester's deepest love and affection appear to be reserved for Tom, perhaps because Tom was a choice she made but motherhood was not. Hence though Wren is Hester's biological family she may not be Hester's family of choice. Additionally, we have witnessed the lack of, or flawed, mothers Hester has encountered in her life. After the death of her birth mother early in her life the only other older female that Hester encounters who we might perceive as a mother figure is Anna Fang. Anna cares for Tom and Hester, she protects them and guides them, her ship becomes their home and she refuses to kill them when in her Striker form. Through Anna, we can perceive Hester, for they share a mutual love of travel, both equating life aboard the *Jenny Haniver* with freedom. Neither Anna nor Hester likes to remain still, both are fighters, killers, and explorers. Each overcomes personal tragedy and forges a life of her choosing, becoming legends within their lifetimes. They are not traditional mother figures but they do fulfil the protective role of motherhood. Anna gives her life to save Tom, and Hester risks her life to protect Theo. We witness in them the sacrifice of the body for the benefit of another; the shedding of 'maternal' blood to perpetuate the life of a 'child'.

Hester becomes the parent that Wren rebels against, echoing the rebellion of so many other YA teen characters, suggesting that there is a circle of unchanging

family roles. Perhaps it is the destiny of the YA protagonist to become what they once fought against, and maybe inevitably they will become the adults they once so objected to. This may be why there is such a focus on halting adulthood, or changing so that a character remains forever young, free from the realisation they are now the absent parent, or worse.

Fathers

In contrast to the impact caused by absent or missing mothers in each text is the startling lack of impact of the missing fathers. Only Daisy and Georgia have a father, as Katniss's father is dead and Kaye's is missing. As discussed above, this is not a new device, but what this fatherly absence implies has changed over time. Edith Nesbit's *The Railway Children* (1906) features a missing father, whose plot function is theorised by Chamutal Noimann:

> In *The Railway Children* Nesbit, whose "soul was against the government all the time"(Wells 515), explores the common social phenomenon of the absent father from the home as a metaphor for the absence of patriarchic [sic] hierarchy in England... In other words, she presents the absent father as an opportunity that opens new possibilities for an alternate social arrangement. Nesbit questions the three patriarchal institutions of empire, nation, and the family by removing the symbolic head of each in one fell swoop. Father's absence allows for change and exposes often undetected obstacles to reform. (2005:368)

This reading of *TheRailway Children* puts the text into context, helping to locate it within a wider understanding of Edwardian political and social change. Consequently, we must place *How I Live Now* into context. While Daisy is trying to fight against her father, it is not because he is a man or her father, but rather because she dislikes his choices. Again, this is not a new fight - indeed young adults disliking their parents' choices has been the backbone of YA literature for decades - but what is different is that unlike in *The Railway Children* it is not the father that needs to be removed for freedom and change to occur, but all parents. As we can see in *The Hunger Games, Tithe,* and *Ironside,* it is now more frequently a matriarchal family structure that the protagonist is trying to escape or find a way to exist within. As such we can see that the absent father role, representing the absence of control, repression, and societal norm, and the beginnings of freedom,

liberation, and an alternative existence, has been succeeded by the absent parent role, meaning that either the mother or father figure can now be interpreted as the representation of order, normality, and hierarchy. As such, we now find that both parents need to be removed for the young people to explore the 'new possibilities for an alternative social arrangement' (2005:368) as Noimann eloquently phrases it.

This change from the father figure immediately being the representative of order, family, and tradition to the inclusion of the mother figure as an equal representation of these values is a result of the shifts in family structure. As many families now consist of single parents, particularly single mothers, the image of the father as head of the house is redundant; instead, the head of the house can be the mother, grandmother, aunt, or older sister, as found in *Tithe* (2002), in which Kaye's maternal grandmother is the household head. Equally, household heads can be surrogate parental figures of either sex or even peers, as the 'house' may not always consist of one biologically related family.

Daisy's father is an interesting addition to the text, preventing her from falling into the orphan archetype; he also acts as a pseudo villain and plot motivator. He also gives her the impetus for her first rebellion, her refusal to eat. In refusing food Daisy defies her father, rejects her stepmother, and takes control, albeit negatively, of her body. This physical control is the necessary replacement substitute for the lack of control she feels she has for the rest of her life. Through this physical constraint and restriction of food, Daisy hopes to be able to control her father and punish him for his marriage to her stepmother. Daisy's father is not presented as a sympathetic figure in her eyes, though his actions in retrieving Daisy and in sending her to England in the first place, can, through a different lens, be viewed as the final desperate acts of a parent who is unable but still wanting to help his child. If being with her stepmother makes her sick, is Daisy's father being kind in sending her away, or should he as her father value her above her stepmother and send her stepmother away? This matter is further complicated by the arrival of his second child, who can be viewed as a replacement for Daisy and a new start for her father. It is difficult to answer these questions as we are forced to perceive her father through Daisy's eyes;however, what we can conclude is that perhaps what Daisy's father is, is not a

good or bad father, but a useful plot device for transporting her from continent to continent.

Sometimes, however, the father can be absent, and yet his presence resonates throughout the text, either because the protagonist craves a connection to this absent male, or because they believe in some way that the absent father still influences them and their lives. This is most clearly seen in *The Mortal Engines* series in which Hester starts the series searching for her father to avenge her mother and stepfather's death. In her quest, she finds Shrike who becomes her surrogate father figure. When Hester eventually finds her father, Valentine, she cannot bring herself to kill him, but she does leave him to die, and ultimately as the series progresses, she decides that she shares more than just blood and biological ties to Valentine; she has his ability to kill without remorse:

> Hester had never killed anyone before. She had expected to feel guilty, but she didn't. She didn't feel anything. *This is what it was like for my father,* she thought, helping herself to the dead man's cloak and fur hat and pulling on his cold-mask. *Just a job that had to be done to keep his city and his loved one safe. This is how he felt after he killed Mum and Dad. Clear and hard and clean, like glass.* (2009:283)

It is telling that even when comparing herself to her biological father Hester acknowledges her affection and ties to her stepfather: one is her 'father' and one is her 'Dad'. Again, the split between the hereditary and the chosen is marked, with Hester deciding that she has at least two male figures in her life that she classifies as her family, one through blood and one through experience and choice.

Unlike Hester who acknowledges both her biological and chosen parental figures, Kaye and Kate's complete lack of father - no reason is given for his absence and no details about him are provided - questions the role of the father in YA literature, asking us to consider if we need fathers in YA literature or whether the mother alone is enough. In *Tithe* Kaye does not question her lack of a father, nor does Kate, implying that they do not miss him or feel that they require a father. As Kaye has both her mother and grandmother as role models and providers, what place or role would the father figure occupy in her life? If we look at the role of the father in *Confessions of Georgia Nicolson* the father is presented as a comical figure rather than a figure of authority. While he is a provider financially, he is not needed

emotionally and practically in the same way that Georgia's mother is needed. This is shown by his absence in the first text when he travels to New Zealand. While her father is absent Georgia continues with her life, and his absence seems to make little practical difference to her daily life. In contrast, it is her mother that Georgia relies on more frequently, for advice, help, food, and clothing, suggesting that it is the mother role that needs to be filled in YA literature more than the father role, which appears in each text to be secondary and in certain texts, like *Tithe,* superfluous.

As such, the image of the father has evolved within YA literature as has the image of the mother; no longer is the father always the protector, provider, and leader, and the mother the carer, domestic organiser, and support of the father. This change in mother and father figures within YA literature is the result of shifts in gender roles and expectations in society. Such shifts are echoed and reflected in the diverse and varying representations of parents in YA literature.

Siblings

Having discussed parents, both absent and present, it is imperative that siblings and their impact on both the text and the protagonist are also considered. Siblings are an interesting feature of YA literature, for while they, like parental figures, can be both present and absent, siblings also occupy the unique position of being able to be either older or younger than the protagonist. This age difference makes a significant change in the sibling dynamic and relationship. If the sibling is older, they can act as an extra parental figure, guide, mentor, or role model; conversely, if the sibling is younger than the protagonist, they can adopt the parental, caring authoritative role. There are of course exceptions to this rule of older siblings acting as mentors and protectors to the younger, but in *How I live Now, The Confessions of Georgia Nicolson, Ironside,*and *The Hunger Games,* the protagonist's older sibling adopts a caring role towards their younger sibling.

The impact of the protagonist in each text being the older sibling is vital. This hierarchy of age allows the older sibling to adopt not only a protective and caring role but also more interestingly, the adult role. As the older sibling often becomes a surrogate parental figure, this allows the female older sibling protagonists to show

that they are more than just survivors and fighters. In looking after and loving their younger siblings the protagonist can reveal their caring and more emotionally vulnerable side, without becoming compromised as a leader. This is most clearly demonstrated in *The Hunger Games* when Katniss's softer, more maternal side is visible only in her interactions with her younger sister Primrose, and the young contestant Rue. It is through these interactions with Rue in the arena that Katniss unwittingly wins many of her supporters, and the respect and loyalty of Rue's district, District 11. Katniss's affection and kindness toward Rue allow Katniss to become, and be viewed as, more than a ruthless hunter as instead, she becomes the protector of the weak. This allows Katniss to adopt and perform both traditionally masculine and feminine roles.

Similarly, Daisy evolves her role from that of the dependent outsider to the sole guardian of her cousin Piper. She takes charge of the situation and assumes the leadership role, attempting to be the mother she never had for Piper. If Daisy is not a perfect surrogate mother figure, we must remember that not only is she young and inexperienced in raising children, Daisy has also never had a positive mother figure to emulate and learn from. Her aunt, the only positive female influence, is such a fleeting figure in her life that she cannot possibly be of any practical use to Daisy when she considers how best to look after Piper. But perhaps we are being too harsh towards Daisy, for ultimately, she fulfils the traditional role of a mother, to enable and help her charge grow, survive, and if possible, thrive. Daisy ensures that Piper is fed, has somewhere to sleep, and is protected from harm to the best of her abilities, allowing Piper to return home relatively unscathed.

Besides acting as surrogate parent figures, relations or friends can also act as surrogate siblings. Kaye becomes a replacement surrogate sister for Corny when Kaye's friend and Corny's sister, Janet, dies. In mourning Janet together, Kaye and Corny become more than friends, and their bond deepens into a far more familial relationship. As Corny is gay, there is no need to explain why their relationship will not develop romantically, as is expected of most male/female friendships in YA literature. Instead, their relationship will remain purely platonic, with Corny jokingly referring to Kaye as 'my trusted elven sidekick' (2007:314), again reinforcing the idea of their friendship as a partnership, team, and finally a family.

In *Ironside* Kaye becomes a big sister, adopting the older sibling role, when she returns the human child she was swapped with, Kate. Focusing solely on returning Ellen's biological daughter, Kaye does not stop to think how the return of this child will affect her. She does not see her quest to retrieve Kate as a mission to find her missing sister, but younger sister to Kaye is precisely the relationship that Ellen decides that Kate will have with Kaye. Ellen informs her mother, Kaye's grandmother, that Kate is Kaye's sister, not Kaye's replacement. As a result, both Ellen and Kaye's grandmother expect Kaye to conform to the big sister role as a role model, protector, and impromptu babysitter. This role of big sister also bestows on Kaye a level of responsibility towards Kate: "Kate's going to look up to you,' her grandmother said. 'You can't be running around anymore, missing important family things. We don't need two wild children." (2007:240). Rather than returning Kate and losing her place in the family, Kaye retains her place and gains another family member.

However, this introduction of Kate is not seamless and without flaws: Kate does not like or trust Kaye, and they will need to work to build a relationship, as Kate, like Kaye, struggles to view or accept that they could be sisters. '"She's not my sister," the girl said. "She just stole my name."' (2007:307). Similarly, Kaye is not sure how she feels about having a sister: '"I guess I'm not used to sharing you," Kaye said softly. Ellen smoothed Kaye's green hair back from her head. "You'll always be my baby, Baby."... "But your kid-sitting days are just beginning."' (2007:310). Kate is the outsider and interloper in this situation, and it is clear she resents fairies and Kaye.

The younger sisters themselves are also intriguing characters. Both Primrose and Piper have an innocence that their older siblings or surrogate siblings want to protect. Similarly, both Primrose and Piper have a healing disposition, and both dream of being doctors. They also have an intrinsic love for animals and connect well with their respective pets. These healing and softer attributes bring out the softer sides of their older sisters' personalities, and as such Piper and Primrose act as a counterbalance, mitigating the harsher attributes of Daisy and Katniss. Sisters are often presented as opposites in YA literature. Hester is a direct contrast to her half-sister, Katharine, who is beautiful, highborn, and rich.

As well as the main protagonist sibling pairs we encounter in all three books, we also discover in *How I Live Now,* Edmond and Isaac, who are twins, as are Nicnevin and Silarial in *Tithe*. Other sibling pairs in *Tithe* include Luis and Dave who are brothers, and the brother/sister pairs of Roiben and Ethine, and Janet and Corny. Indeed, the whole of *Tithe* is saturated with sibling pairs who act either in opposition or as allies. Nicnevin and Silarial function as opposing Queens of two warring courts, potentially representing light and dark, good and evil, yin and yang. As the text progresses, however, we come to discover that each court contains its fair share of corruption, death, and cruelty, thus suggesting that neither court is good, but rather that the courts are in opposition based on appearance more than morality: engaged in a war of aesthetics, not politics.

This idea of siblings becoming rivals or enemies is echoed in the relationship between Ethine and Roiben. While starting on the same side, or at least in the same court, they gradually drift apart until they are so separate that they find themselves in a duel against one another. Yet, when she realises that she has been betrayed and sacrificed along with her brother, Ethine kills Silarial, her current Queen and Roiben's past Queen, not for hurting her, but as revenge for Silarial's treatment of her brother: '"He did not deserve to be used so"' (2007:298). Likewise, Roiben, in a similar act of sibling love, steps in front of a sword strike intended for his sister. Sibling partnerships are thus presented in *Tithe* as more than biological chance, they are a duty. Regardless of Kaye's other feelings towards Kate, her overwhelming feeling is one of duty - she accepts her new role as a babysitter without argument- a sentiment that Luis echoes in his relationship with his brother Dave, a drug addict. Kaye, Corny, and Luis all share a feeling of responsibility towards their younger siblings, perhaps because they wish to be better than the guardian figures they experienced while growing up. Thus, biological or not, the bonds of kinship bind siblings together creating new families and new relationship dynamics. The idea of sibling duty is also examined by Butler in her study of Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*. Butler explores the bonds of biological kinship that compel Antigone to act in direct defiance of a command given by the ruling authority of Thebes, King Creon. In performing the traditional burial rites Creon denied her brother Polyneices, Antigone, though defying the state, argues that she has committed no sin in the eyes of the gods and that her duty to her brother is more important than her loyalty to her city's ruling body.

Antigone defends her loyalty to her brother by defining his very being as irreplaceable;

> Yet in the eyes of the wise I did well to honour you; for never, had children of whom I was the mother or had my husband perished and been mouldering there, would I have taken on myself this task, in defiance of the citizens. In virtue of what law do I say this? If my husband had died, I could have had another, and a child by another man, if I had lost the first, but with my mother and father in Hades below, I could never have another brother. (1998:87)

Thus, for Antigone, her brother is to be valued above all else and his body to be respected in death though it will cost her life. This willingness to sacrifice and suffer for one's siblings, as exhibited by Antigone, is similar to the suffering Roiben endures for Ethine and the suffering Katniss weathers in the arena on behalf of her sister Prim. Sibling bonds though often overlooked in comparison to the bonds between parents and children can, especially in YA literature, be deeper, more coercive, and capable of inducing a far greater obligation, loyalty, and even love than the parental bond. Perhaps this is because, as discussed before, there is less understanding and compassion for the mistakes of a parent while the mistakes of a sibling can be forgiven as the mistakes either of an inferior or of an equal who too lacks experience, knowledge, guidance, or sufficient restraint. Antigone does not hesitate to make clear the mistakes of her parents, and though she loves them she is not so compassionate as not to blame her misfortune and that of her siblings squarely upon the head of her father and mother:

> Ah, the disaster of marriage with his mother, and my father's incestuous couplings with his ill-fated mother! From what parents was I born, miserable one! To them I go, to live with them, accursed, unmarried! Ah, brother who made a disastrous marriage, in your death you have destroyed my life. (1998:85)

In her acceptance of her parents' sin and consequent curse, Antigone seems to realise that her bloodline or family bond requires bloodshed and that her brother's blood must be bought with the price of her blood, or as Butler interprets Antigone's sacrifice, 'Thus, by signifying "blood", Antigone does not precisely signify a blood*line* but something more like "bloodshed" - that which must be remaindered for authoritarian states to be maintained.' (2000:4). Ultimately, Antigone will be reunited with her family in death, thus in life and death, the family is one whole sacred unit. Hence, Antigone's indomitable and unerring devotion to her family can be perceived

as a template for the chosen bonds of kinship and allegiance that Kaye, Katniss, and Daisy each form within their family of choice. Regardless of the personal cost of the relationship to the individual the belief that the family must come before all other concerns is central to both *Antigone* and the other chosen texts.

Families of Choice

The idea or theory of a family of choice has been explored by several critics, notably Judith Butler, Holly Furneaux, and Kath Weston, although in very different contexts. Butler talks of families of choice within the context of gay marriage, Furneaux within the context of Dickens' work, and Weston within the context of the gay and lesbian community. Furneaux argues that Dickens' writings demonstrate much greater flexibility in the thinking and modelling of family, offering elective, affective formations of a kind that have been influentially described as 'families of choice'' (2009:28). Furneaux then discusses Weston's work regarding the family of choice within the framework of kinship. Weston suggests that the gay community offers to be a replacement family for those who have been rejected by their own families and that these families of choice are bonded by kinship, or as Weston phrases it, 'Rather than claiming an elective gay identity as its antecedent, the category ''families we choose'' incorporates the meaningful *difference* that is the product of choice and biology as two rationally defined terms' (1991:40). Weston suggests that even if they have not been rejected by their birth families, the families that these gay and lesbian individuals form also offer the support, understanding, and empathy that their birth family may not have been able to provide. For Weston, family is not a hereditary biological bond but a decision that an individual makes.

Thus families of choice are not units bound only by blood or biology, as Furneaux neatly notes about*Oliver Twist;* 'Dickens' Brownlow queers the family in just such a way, separating kinship from questions of biology' (2009:32) - suggesting that kinship, as defined by Marshall Sahlins - 'The specific quality of kinship, I argue, is ''mutuality of being'': kinfolk are persons who participate intrinsically in each other's existence; they are members of one another.' (2013:preface) - is the indescribable link or connection that characters feel towards one another. This bond or kinship is

not one of force or obligation, although it can arise out of social pressures, instead, it is a way of seeing certain people as separate from the rest of society, and as belonging to one's intimate circle which is important or key to one's happiness and life. Bound by kinship these families of choice are groups which are formed through conscious decision as opposed to random genetic chance, and nowhere can the importance and power of these feelings of kinship be seen as clearly as in *The Hunger Games* series, when Primrose explains exactly how Katniss can be controlled and motivated: "Katniss, I don't think President Snow will kill Peeta'... 'If he does, he won't have anyone left you want. He won't have any way to hurt you'... 'So what do you think they'll do to him?'... 'Whatever it takes to break you." (2010:177). Here it is evident that through her feelings of kinship towards Peeta, Katniss can be manipulated, as the bonds of kinship are so strong that Katniss will do anything to ensure Peeta's continued existence, so that he may remain alive and within her family of choice.

With the eradication or absence of the parental figures a new supportive structure arises within young adult literature and children's literature, the family of choice. This choosing of a new family unit consisting of peers and contemporaries is not uncommon within children's and YA literature. In children's literature the protagonist, if a child, is often forced because of their age, either to return to their family or find another guardian figure, suggesting that while children can form a family unit by themselves, as evidenced in *Peter Pan* and *Lord of the Flies*, these children-only groups cannot be sustained permanently; there needs to be an older figure to assume responsibility for the children to protect them from society's need to make sure that children are accounted for. This older figure, or more accurately guardian figurehead, acts as a barrier between the children and society, allowing the children freedom as society believes they are not its responsibility, but the responsibility of their guardian figurehead.

I use the term guardian 'figurehead' simply because the amount of control or authority that this guardian has over the children they appear to be responsible for is widely varied. In *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839) Fagin acts as a guardian to the young pickpocket gang who adopts Oliver although his control over the boys is limited and his responsibility towards them is lacking. Similarly, Miss Honey is also initially a

figurehead guardian as she is in reality a cover, giving Matilda the freedom to indulge her passions and interests. Whilst Matilda has a genuine affection for Miss Honey, one wonders whether, had Matilda been older, Miss Honey would have been necessary. Although Miss Honey adopts Matilda forming a family of choice, there remains the question of whether Matilda's motivation to reside with Miss Honey arises purely from affection or because she is forced by the practical and legal requirements of society.

Consequently, we must recognise that YA literature differs from children's literature in that often its protagonists are of an age that they can legally and realistically remove themselves from a traditional family setting and form a new peer family, as shown in Meg Rosoff's text *How I Live Now* (2004) without the need for guardian figureheads. In this text, a new family unit is formed consisting of four siblings and their cousin; due to the absence of the siblings' mother, and the disruption of society caused by war, the group are allowed to remain as a self-functioning unit. Though the group is split up, this does not occur as a result of their inability to function as a self-contained unit. The importance of age and guardian figureheads is highlighted in this text, as being only fifteen Daisy, the cousin is forcibly removed from Britain and sent back to America by the wishes of her American father, or as Daisy so eloquently expresses the situation:

> I wish I hadn't picked up the phone that day but I did and by the time I realized what his plan for me was there was nothing I could do because he knew where I was and he had International Connections and despite all my journeys and triumphs over adversity I was still just a fifteen year old kid stuck in a war, powerless in the face of an Official Medical Certificate Requiring Immediate Hospitalization. Abroad. (2005:199)

If she had been older or had a suitable guardian figurehead to oppose her father's authority, this would not have been possible, and as such, the fragility of family units consisting of young adults is demonstrated.

Though such new family units can indeed be fleeting, fragile, and temporary they can also be enduring. *Tithe* (2002) by Holly Black, demonstrates how new family units, or rather groups of friends and peers who band together to support each other, can function without interference from adults. Kaye, Corny, and Janet form a group that offers each other the understanding, acceptance, recognition, and

freedom that the wider world and their families sometimes cannot provide. These peer groups or replacement family groups of friends and companions can be described as families of choice. They are the close-knit network of people that the protagonist chooses to surround herself with, either with a long-term commitment or temporary bonds.

As mentioned previously, these families of choice are not a new phenomenon, as the bonding of friends as a surrogate family is a common literary device, witnessed in both adult and children's literature as well as YA literature. Yet, what is important about families of choice in YA literature is that they are vital in allowing and enabling the exploration and development of the young adult. The lack of traditional adult authority and family structure is essential as it allows freedom for the young adult to begin making the transition from child to adult, from innocence to experience, and from ignorance to knowledge. Whether that knowledge and experience be physical or spiritual is immaterial, the change is still emotional and character-forming.

As we see in *How I Live Now* Daisy's family of choice, her cousins, allow her the freedom to come to terms with her eating disorder and her feelings towards her deceased mother. Likewise, while it is possible to interpret Daisy and her cousins' lifestyle without parents as one of freedom, liberation, and love, it is also possible to see it as an anarchistic flouting of the conventional societal norms, mainly the social convention of refraining from engaging in a sexual relationship with a first cousin. Although such a relationship is not illegal, it is the closest sexual relationship allowed by current British law.

To put into context Daisy and Edmond's relationship, a similar cousin encounter occurs in the *Georgia Nicolson* series, in which Georgia's cousin James attempts to kiss her. Georgia's response is perhaps more telling of society's reaction to such a relationship, 'James tried to kiss me!!! It was disgusting. He's my cousin. It's incest. I can't even think about it or I'll be sick. Erlackerlack. (2005:69). While Georgia is incorrect in her pronouncement of the incident as incest, she does present a more expected response to a sexual encounter with a first cousin in current and contemporary society. Though not illegal or incestuous it is considered deeply taboo by many in society: a change which may be considered quite modern given the

prevalence of cousins still intermarrying in the Victorian era, as found in many seminal Victorian texts such as *Jane Eyre* (1847), or *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

We must also consider whether the relationship between Daisy and Edmond could have existed in a well-populated urban setting. Would such a relationship have occurred if there were other young people in the area for Daisy and Edmond to choose from, and would the relationship have survived the scrutiny and criticism of conventional society? Arguably the relationship could still have occurred, as Daisy engages in no other relationships while in America, and dreams only of returning to the UK and Edmond. Yet, perhaps if the situation had been different - if Daisy's aunt had been present, or the family had not remained so isolated - the relationship between Daisy and Edmond might have evolved differently, into a platonic rather than a romantic relationship. However, this idea is rejected by Daisy when she notes:

> It would be much easier to tell this story if it were all about a chaste and perfect love between Two Children Against The World At An Extreme Time In History but let's face it that would have been a load of crap. The real truth is that the war didn't have much to do with it except provide a perfect limbo in which two people who were too young and too related could start kissing without anything or anyone making us stop. There were no parents, no teachers, no schedules. There was nowhere to go and nothing to do that would remind us that this sort of thing didn't happen in the Real World. There no longer *was* any Real World. (2005:51)

Thus for Daisy, her relationship with Edmond is inevitable as is her decision to return to Edmond and England after the war ends. There is also no discussion of practical contraceptive matters, although later in the text, when Daisy and Piper are travelling alone back to the house, Daisy mentions that she is too thin to have her period, so perhaps it is to be assumed that Daisy is always too thin and undernourished to be fertile. There is however a reference to the fact that Daisy does recognise and acknowledge her relationship with Edmond to be so outside the social norm that her aunt's return would be an issue:

> You could tell Piper missed her mother and there were things I still wanted to ask her but aside from that her arrival right now in the middle of the world's most inappropriate case of sexual obsession would have been inconvenient to say the least. As for me? I was pretty far gone, but not so far gone that I thought anyone with half a toehold in reality would think what we were doing was a good idea. (2005:53)

In short it does appear that Daisy is well aware that her relationship with Edmond will be frowned upon, but when she returns to England after the war, it is a new world anyway; nature is reasserting its power, there is a movement towards self-sustainability and greater environmental awareness, and it is quite likely that in the upheaval and rebuilding of England, the relationship between two cousins will be the least of anyone's worries - until perhaps they have children. Butler also investigates the nature of kinship and incestuous kinship, describing Antigone as 'herself the daughter of an incestuous bond, herself devoted to an impossible and death-bent incestuous love of her brother' (2000:6).

The subsequent separation from, and fight to return to her family of choice not only highlights the commitment of Daisy to this family, it also defines and shapes Daisy into her new self; a self who is sure and confident of who, and what, she wants in her life:

> By saving Piper I saved myself, and all the things that might have killed us were also the things that saved us. Saved from the ravages of war by stubbornness and ignorance and an insatiable hunger for love... And anyway, fighting back is what I've discovered I do best. After all this time, I know exactly where I belong. Here. With Edmond. And that's how I live now. (2005:210-211).

Daisy is saved by her family of choice and her love for them. It is this love and desire to be reunited with them that forces Daisy first, to resume eating and overcome her eating disorder, and secondly, to keep striving day after day to get back to her family of choice. Daisy chooses to leave her other nuclear biological family, consisting of her father, stepmother, and half-sister Leonora, in New York, to return to war-torn Britain to be with her cousins: 'When I left England I entered limbo. For all that time I was waiting to come home.' (2005:183-184). England has become Daisy's home, but the home is not purely geographical but spiritual; where her cousins are is home to Daisy. Thus, family and people can become home and this is a decided feature of YA literature. Katniss, Daisy, Kaye, and Georgia all find and define their home as their family, and this family is the family that they have chosen. Thus in YA literature, the family of choice is more than just a chosen group of people, it is also a spiritual space and forms an intangible place of comfort and security.

When surrounded by their family of choice the protagonist is supported, nourished, and secure; it is also a logical choice for protagonists in YA literature to find peace and a home in people, not geographical locations, as the protagonists in YA literature are nearly always young adults. As a result of this, the protagonist will most likely, due to their age, not own a physical home, they will at best live within a family home, and as such will not have a physical space that they own and control. Consequently, the protagonist in YA literature is often transient, moving from place to place, situation to situation, never forming or creating a physical space of their own to call home. Therefore, to designate people and a family of choice as a home is both a logical and practical next step; to invest the emotional connotations of home in a person who can be transported along with them, rather than a stationary location.

Katniss, like Daisy, also forms a family of choice consisting of Peeta, Gale, Rue, Primrose, Haymitch, Cinna, and Finnick. In Primrose, Katniss finds the motivation to fight and continue, for like Daisy, Katniss is also striving to get back to her family of choice, and it is her love for this family that powers and ignites her desperate wish to survive the arena at the start of the series. At the end of the text although both Daisy and Katniss return to the geographical location they loved most, Daisy returning to her cousins' home in England and Katniss to District 12, they return to these locations because of the connections they have to their families of choice. The physical space is not valued as a home but for the memories it contains of their real home, their family of choice. As Daisy states, 'The only thing I knew for certain that was all around me was more life than I'd experienced in all the years I'd been on earth and as long as no one shut me in the barn away from Edmond at night I was safe.' (2005:61). As seen here Edmond is Daisy's home, safety, and happiness, his physicality and presence, is the home Daisy chooses; likewise in Peeta, Katniss too finds her hope and home: 'What I need is the dandelion of spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that.' (2010:453). In Peeta and Edmond respectively, Katniss and Daisy find their reason to live and their sanctuary.

The Physical Impact of Family

In *The Hunger Games*, *Tithe*, and *How I Live Now*, the female protagonist's relationship with her body evolves, and her body and external appearance come to act as a visible display of the emotional and spiritual journey they have undertaken to create their new family.

Katniss's new body, formed of scars and skin grafts, reminds her of the fight she endured to make her world a better place for her future children, Kaye's green skin reminds her of her true heritage and dual identity, and Daisy's body reminds her of the eating disorder she has conquered and the journey she has taken to come to peace with her father. Daisy's decision to make her body suffer to demonstrate her internal pain and anguish is the reverse of Katniss's situation. Katniss's scars are inflicted by society in her fight to protect her family, while Daisy's damage to her body is self-inflicted as an attack against her family. Yet, though Daisy begins the text with a dangerous desire to use her body as a weapon against her father, as the text progresses her image of her body changes and it is no longer a weapon but a tool for survival.

Each text can be interpreted as a survival text, in which a female protagonist must battle against the odds to survive and win. This survival though is more than just a struggle to live; it is a struggle to find a safe place, a place of security and comfort. It is also the story of a young person learning and proving that they can survive without their parents. The parents in each text can no longer, or have never been able to, provide a safe, secure environment for their children, and as such the narrative of these texts is ultimately about the protagonist learning to survive both alone, and in the context of their new chosen family. To achieve a space in which the protagonist can enter a survival situation, the texts are located either within an alternative universe, dystopia or have supernatural/ magical elements. These breaks from ordinary everyday life in the UK or America enable the conventions of realism to be suspended. Nilsen and Donelson in their text *Literature for Today's Young Adults* argue that there are four main types of plot:*Protagonist Against Self, Protagonist Against Society, Protagonist Against Another* and *Protagonist Against Nature.* While it could be possible to argue that these are the plots of all literature, and not just of YA literature, *The Hunger Games, Tithe, Ironside,*and *How I Live Now,* all fall into the

category of *Protagonist Against Society.* Kaye fights fairy society, Katniss the Capital society, and Daisy the whole of her warring and divided society.

Because of the carefully selected setting of each text, the protagonist does not have to face the expected ramifications of her actions that would occur if she existed in a fully realistic setting. Kaye does not need to have a career to make money as she can simply glamour leaves to look like money, therefore ensuring that her perpetual absence from school and education will not negatively impact her life. Nor will she need a pension plan or health care as she is an immortal pixie.

Like Kaye, Katniss does not need any formal education or qualifications as such things are rendered inconsequential in Katniss's alternative world. Instead, her boundless forest living skills, as a hunter-gather, become not just survival skills but also translate into financial security. Like the fairy world, the main currency of Katniss's world is trade and bartering, and Katniss, like Kaye, has the necessary skills to excel in this exchange. Kaye exchanges secrets, names, and riddles in a verbal dance that culminates not in physical transactions but exchanges of information, and though Katniss starts by exchanging physical objects (animals for bread), she too ends by bartering information, secrets, and finally herself. Although the trades may seem to have a concrete or tangible outcome for Kaye and Katniss, the underlying motivation is always the same: these transactions are necessary for survival. Nowhere is this trading ethic more clearly seen than in the Hunger Games arena as Katniss trades her acting skills and false romance with Peeta for tangible gifts from outside sponsors.

Unlike, Kaye and Katniss, Daisy has no inherent skills or abilities to trade upon, save for her passion to be reunited with her family and to protect Piper. However, like Kaye and Katniss Daisy's world is also engineered to produce a situation in which she can prove her survivor's nature and determination. In each text but particularly in *How I Live Now* and *The Hunger Games,* Katniss and Daisy realise that they partially define themselves not by what they do, but by what they *can* do. Daisy learns to kill and gut fish, something that she does not enjoy but can do while Piper cannot: 'I had to follow her instructions about killing and cleaning it while she turned away. I had no complaints about Piper but I could have lived without ripping the guts out of dead trout to save her from doing it... I hated doing it but I COULD do

it and I guess that was the difference between us.' (2005:171). Likewise, Katniss can kill without hesitation by the end of the series: 'The expression on her face says she recognises me. She opens her mouth to call for help. Without hesitation I shoot her through her heart.' (2010:367)These are the acts of the survivor, necessary and decisive.

They are also acts of strength and more vitally willpower. Willpower and fortitude are the driving force of Kaye, Katniss, and Daisy's survival. They will it to be so and then act to try to make it so. However, this force of will is not without a darker side: Daisy becomes anorexic through her willpower not to eat and Katniss attempts suicide through willpower alone so that even her death is something that she controls and wills: 'I resolve to lie on the bed without eating, drinking or taking my medications. I could do it, too. Just die.' (2010:438). These acts of self-damage are external signs of the internal strength of will that both Daisy and Katniss have and also show how far they are willing to physically push themselves to achieve their goals.

To showcase these acts of willpower and fortitude, it is necessary to engineer and redesign each world to fabricate spaces in which the protagonists can discover and demonstrate their ability to cope and overcome danger and adversity. It is only because of these altered worlds that the characters can adventure as they do and live such wild lives. Either our world is altered slightly, as it is in *How I live Now,* to produce a recognisable dystopia; entirely reformed as it is in*The Hunger Games*; or the content of our reality is slightly adjusted, so that mythical, magical, or supernatural creatures and beings inhabit or share part of our reality, as demonstrated in *Tithe* and *Twilight.*

So what would happen if a text's reality was not adjusted or changed in the slightest? How would the characters prove their ability to survive, what would happen to the protagonist's family, and more importantly what would be the consequences of choosing to live the liberated rule-free lifestyles that Katniss, Kaye, and Daisy each strive for? One example of young adult literature set in reality without any form of magic or supernatural otherworldliness is Louise Rennison's *Confessions of Georgia Nicolson* series, which focuses on the daily life of a British teenage girl living with her family. The text takes the form of a diary, and unlike the other texts is humorous.

What is most noticeable about this text in contrast to the other three texts is that the protagonist is not separated from her family, and more importantly, cannot survive on her own.

Like the other three protagonists, Georgia does form a family of choice, consisting of her school friends, but unlike them, when given the chance to leave her family and friends for love, fame, and adventure - she chooses not to. Does this then show that for a story to become a survival story the element of choice must be removed? Do Kaye, Katniss, and Daisy act as they do only because they have no other choice? Or perhaps Georgia simply makes another choice, the choice to stay with her friends and family because she recognises that it is the best place for her to grow up, and it is not adventure and fame that she needs to be happy, as her friend Jas explains: 'Well [he] always made you nervous, and you know, we're only like, well we're not like Jule, are we? I mean we aren't going to get married, are we? Just yet... or... well, I think we need our pals. And we need to grow up together. Like a little family.' (2010:313). Here both Georgia and Jas recognise that they and their group of friends constitute a family of sorts and as a family, they will nurture and support each other, as they grow up.

Although *The Confessions of Georgia Nicolson* is, unlike the other three texts, a series focusing mostly on romance and humour, there remains an echo of character development and growth. Georgia starts the series with a desperate wish for a boyfriend and love and ends the series with a deeper understanding of love, relationships, and vitally a better understanding of herself and her true needs.

While each text can be viewed as a survival narrative they can also be seen as crossover novels, defined by Rachel Falconer: 'Within the individual YA text, too, one finds a tendency to hybridize genres, as if a single generic worldview were not enough to convey the complexity of the adolescent experience.' (2010:90). Falconer goes on to classify *Tithe* and *Ironside* as part of the emerging 'urban faery' genre, which she defines as blending 'the comic *élan* and magic of young children's stories with the higher levels of violence and more darkly ironic perspective of urban realist fiction.' (2010:90). Although this is a very accurate and succinct definition it ignores the sense of journey, evolution, and survival which permeates the text so thoroughly. In *Tithe,* Kaye is on a quest to unravel the mystery of her identity, the purpose of the

tithe, and to stop all-out war; such a quest is filled with the need to survive. If Kaye fails the quest or fails to uncover her true part in the tithe ceremony in time, she will die.

Yet Falconer is indeed correct in her reading of YA literature as fluid, slipping between and combining genres to produce texts which try to express or capture some of the shifting, moving, changing spirit of being a young adult. Nothing is fixed or certain in adolescence; the very body, life, and world of the adolescent are fast-paced, a constantly developing space in which new possibilities and endless choices are sprouting. The pressure to deal effectively with such a world is both a challenge for the author and the characters. Hence the nature of young adult literature to span multiple genres to attempt to cover as much of the malleable and faceted existence that is the space between child and adult.

Chapter Summary

In YA the possibilities for the remaking of the family are endless. The young adult protagonist, having left childhood, is suddenly able to think about reforming and choosing a family of their own. This ability to choose gives the young adult the power and freedom protagonists often lacking in children's literature. They can choose to leave their current family structure, reform it, or start their own. Being young adults they are usually free from permanent obligations and so can form their life around new individuals and new ideas. By creating and forming these new families the protagonists gain a better understanding of themselves and can develop an awareness and depth they previously lacked.

Although the protagonists are placed in difficult situations, they are ultimately responsible for the decisions they make, and in the end, they all choose their future paths. Katniss chooses to return to the traditional family structure, by living with her romantic heterosexual partner Peeta and their two children, while Kaye and Daisy both choose to return to their families of choice. Georgia also chooses to remain with her family, and perhaps it is this choice that makes all these families, families of choice, rather than simply biologically related groups of people living together because of convention and necessity.

In the choosing of families parental figures, though occasionally necessary, are seen in these texts to be imperfect beings that often hinder the young adult protagonist: the implication being that the young adult is consequently tolerating the parental figure rather than needing them. The role of the parental figure has also shifted within YA literature. No longer a flat stock character the parental figure has started to become more developed and varied. Although not completely understood by the young adult protagonists, parental figures are recognised as being defined by more than just their relationship to the young adult. Family has become not a necessity as it is children's literature but an option or choice.

It is in this varied and unrestricted ability to choose that YA literature finds a new understanding and interpretation of family structures, obligations, and responsibilities. Despite encompassing a diverse range of topics and issues, each text contains a family. Family, as mentioned above, is more than just a group of humans living together: it is reason, necessity, and love combined to form a place and space which shelters, creates, allows for and enables, the growth, development, and evolution of a character. Family in these texts is not necessarily formed or confined by biological bonds as the texts have demonstrated but is formed from bonds of kinship, love, and choice.

Family in each text is presented as changeable, as each family morphs and evolves throughout the text, to fit the protagonist's needs. If the family is happy and functional why would it change? As Tolstoy said, only unhappy families need to be altered, and the alteration is unique to each case. The definition of what and who is deemed family is determined by the protagonist who selects the family that best suits them, their situation, and their requirements. The family need not be the expected structure of parental figures and dependants as seen in *How I Live Now* as this structure is no longer always necessary within YA literature. However, whilst the form of the family may have changed, the need for some sort of family remains, indicating that family is still important within YA literature. Each text contains a family of sorts and this family as we have seen, is an essential theme of the text. The family in each text is needed to provide love and support: something that the protagonists all require. It is not implied in any text that the protagonist would be better or more

capable alone, suggesting that these texts all promote the idea of family as vital to the happiness, and development of the young adult protagonist.

Chapter Two

Beauty, Sex, Sexuality and Gender

"And lo, the beast looked upon the face of beauty. And it stayed its hand from killing. And from that day, it was as one dead." (*King Kong:*1933*)*

YA literature traces the growth and development of a character. It tells a story of discovery, exploration, and realisation, yet it is not complete. The characters do not, usually, become adults; instead, the novel acts as a snapshot, a glimpse or episode, of a character's life. We see part of the transition from childhood to adulthood, we see the beginning but not the end. As a result of this pausing, or lack of adulthood, Roberta Seelinger Trites refers to some young adult novels as *Entwicklungsroman*:

> But the idea of growth – the investigation of which characters have developed and which have not – is one of the most common principles in the study of children's and adolescent literature. Since novels of development are *Entwicklungsroman,* virtually all children's and adolescent novels participate in the genre. For purposes of clarification, I tend to refer to *Bildungsromane* as novels in which the protagonist comes of age as an adult. If I refer to a novel as an *Entwicklungsroman*, that is because the protagonist has not reached adulthood by the end of the narrative. (2000:10).

In these *Entwicklungsromans*certain aspects of adult life are explored, tested, and sometimes adopted by the young adult protagonists, such as sex, drinking, romantic relationships, pregnancy, or change of home. However, although one or more adult experiences might be included in the protagonist's life, the more mundane or more life-defining adult experiences are often put off or avoided. For instance, a protagonist might enter into a romantic relationship, they might have sex - both of which are usually aspects of an adult's life, not a child's- but they will not usually begin a career, buy a house, or get married *(Twilight* being a notable exception*).* These experiences typically belong to the adult world and the adult world is not yet the domain of the *Entwicklungsroman.* Instead the *Entwicklungsroman*occupies a

space between the world of the child and the world of the adult, and in this space, the issues of childhood and the issues of adulthood converge, merge and co-exist.

Sex is an important part of YA literature as it marks the end of childhood and innocence, and the start of, adulthood; experience, and knowledge. Children's books may reference or discuss sex and sexual activities but do so to educate children not to entertain or excite them. Thus, sex in children's books is not eroticised or included for the enjoyment of the reader.

If in children's texts relationships are not usually overtly sexual, in young adult texts they start to be. This chapter will investigate this shift, and explore how sexual relationships, gender roles, and sexuality can be presented through the body in YA literature. Sex (the physical act) and sexuality are the pivotal moments in YA literature. The body, sex, and sexuality are intrinsically intertwined as sex is a bodily action; it is a physically-based experience in which language plays a secondary role to the physical interactions. We define sex in relation to the body, as it is an emotional and physical experience that is rooted in the body and its materiality.

Therefore, this chapter will not only explore the body as a sexual device but also how the body appears to others and itself: namely by considering how the idea of beauty is applied to the body. It will evaluate how beauty is gendered within YA literature and how beauty is enacted by different characters. Linking to gender this chapter will investigate how gender roles are presented and embodied both in heterosexual and homosexual characters, as well as comparing the representation of heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The nature and impact of these pairings will also be questioned. In addition to the sexuality of the characters, the diversity and significance of the interspecies romances also presented will be observed. This chapter will evaluate how these themes are explored using the following texts Melinda Lo's*Ash,* Holly Black's novels *Tithe* (2002)and *Ironside* (2007)*,* Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010), Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga (2005-2008), Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* quartet (2001-2005), John Green and David Levithan's work *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (2010)*,* Meg Rosoff's text *How I Live Now,* Louise Rennison's*Georgia Nicolson* series (1999-2009)and Sarra Manning's *Adorkable* (2012).

Beauty

Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack's 1933 film *King Kong* is built on the premise of the following prophecy: "And lo, the beast looked upon the face of beauty. And it stayed its hand from killing. And from that day, it was as one dead." In the film the beauty of Ann Darrow, played by Fay Wray, charms King Kong and persuades him not to kill her but to protect her from other 'threats'. Thus the 'monstrous' King Kong could be perceived as being tamed by 'beauty', personified by Ann, which would equate beauty with power, control, and dominance over those deemed not beautiful. However, Ann does not have agency over the actions or events she is involved with. Instead of giving Ann authority, her beauty is the instigator for the actions of others not her own. Ann's beauty compels others to act regardless of her wishes and creates meaning for others, not herself. The narrative suggests that beauty can transcend boundaries such as species and gender, as well as more problematically equating beauty with thin, white females, a trope which has persisted for decades, if not centuries. If beauty is presented as triumphing over the beast (King Kong is slain, but Ann survives), it is also presented as a silent physical force; it is not Ann's words, reason, or abilities that 'save' her or endear her to King Kong, but the fortuitous genetic makeup she has inherited. This image of beauty is a voiceless, visible entity which is to be coveted and possessed by another. This presentation of thin, white beauty is also heavily sexualised, a pattern which is found in early YA literature such as Judy Blume's *Forever* (1975).

Judy Blume's classic YA novel *Forever,* not only introduced sex but also conformed to the then current societal ideal of acceptable 'beauty'. It is suggested that only girls who fit a stereotyped image of beauty - for which read thin and white - can successfully enter into a sexual relationship and achieve their 'happily ever after' ending. Beth Younger talks about the significance of weight and body image for female characters in her work, *Learning Curves: Body Image and Sexuality in Young Adult Literature,* stating that 'Judy Blume's *Forever* (1975) contains an ultrathin protagonist, who by early twenty-first century standards might appear anorexic but who in 1975 seemed to be just a normal teen concerned with her appearance.' (2009:1-2). Younger argues that thinness is presented as being symbolic of control,

personal sexual agency, and power. Being fat is not only perceived as a negative quality but is also punished in Younger's interpretation:

> In *Forever,* the character of Sybil, who has multiple sexual partners and is portrayed by Blume as flawed because she is fat, reinforces the danger of not being thin for readers. The explicit connection between Sybil's body size and her perceived promiscuity suggests that sexual misbehaviour and even passivity can be correlated to a larger body size. Sybil's lack of control over her weight explicitly connects to a lack of sexual control... YA literature depicts monogamy as the appropriate relationship choice, reinforcing social constraints on sexual freedom. In *Forever,* Katharine's appetite for sex is moderate and regulated; she has sex with only one person, and an entire chapter is devoted to her trip to Planned Parenthood to obtain birth control. Katharine is in control; Sybil is not. Katharine is extremely thin and in apparent control of her weight and her sexual activity. Sybil is fat and therefore unable to control her body's size or her sexual experiences. Consequently, Sybil is punished for her sexual activities (and her weight) by getting pregnant. (2009:10-11)

Whilst we can still find thin protagonists in contemporary YA literature, the equating of thinness with power and success is waning, and is rejected in some contemporary texts. Jeane, in *Adorkable*, is not conventionally attractive, nor does Michael validate or change her by describing her as beautiful, as occurs in previous YA texts, in which the female protagonist is suddenly able to perceive herself as attractive or beautiful only when called or labelled so by the male characters; highlighting and eliminating the idea of beauty as a state or quality that can be bestowed upon a female character only by a male character. When Michael enters into his relationship with Jeane it is a relationship based not on her physical being but her personality as Michael does not see Jeane as beautiful:

> It wasn’t even like Jeane was secretly pretty. Though maybe if you got rid of the horrible grey hair and the even more horrible clothes and the nasty shoes then she might be passably cute. Or even plain and ordinary, which wasn’t say as bad as, say, being ugly. (2012: 116-117)

This is an image of Jeane that she also identifies with:

> Because I was me and not even my mother (well especially not my mother) could pretend that I was pretty or loveable or had a winning personality or was in any way the kind of girl who got the kind of boys that looked like Michael Lee. We didn’t match, we weren’t suited, and we didn’t go together. (2012:140)

However, although Jeane is not described as beautiful, she is described as ‘exotic’; she is different, unusual, and still sexually attractive if not conventionally good looking. Jeane also raises the idea that beautiful beings (in this case human – but often in YA this applies to humanoid and other supernatural beings) should be partnered only with equally attractive individuals. However, this idea of beauty being equal in a relationship is rejected in multiple YA texts, suggesting that beauty is no longer the basis on which two characters must be judged and compared. Hester in the *Mortal Engines* quartet is similarly presented as not beautiful because of her facial disfiguration:

> She was no older than Tom, and she was hideous. A terrible scar ran down her face from forehead to jaw, making it look like a portrait that had been furiously crossed out. Her mouth was wrenched sideways in a permanent sneer, her nose a smashed stump and a single eye stared at him out of the wreckage, as grey and chill as a winter sea. (2001:26)

This description of Hester as a ruined image is repeated within the series, reminding the reader of Hester’s shocking and unchanging appearance. It is a startling gender reversal that Reeve embarks upon in his casting of the male character as beauty and the female character as the beast, yet Tom and Hester do not jar against one another: rather, their flaws and skills complement each other. Tom provides warmth, naivety, hope, and compassion, while Hester provides strength, bravery, cunning, and fortitude. Their physical form is tied completely to their internal being. Hester's scarred face reflects her troubled and turbulent past; it echoes the hardships she has survived and the damage she has sustained, while Tom's handsome visage reflects the hope and faith he still fights to retain. Hester is the warrior, the survivor, the killer, and Tom is the dreamer, the reluctant fighter, the scholar.

At the beginning of the text, Hester is defensive about her looks: she hides her face and uses anger and violence to achieve her aims. She is ruthless, smart, and determined but insecure in her outward appearance. Her greatest struggle is not to kill others or to let Valentine - her parents' murderer - live, but romantically toreach out for Tom. It is this moment, at the very end of the text that causes Hester finally to pause; to feel afraid:

> She sat down beside him, wanting to comfort him but afraid to touch him, while her reflections sneered at her from fractured dials and blades of window-glass, more monstrous than ever in the fluttering glare of MEDUSA. Then she thought, *Silly, he came back, didn't he? He came back for you.* Trembling, she put her arms around him and pulled him close, nuzzling the top of his head, shyly kissing away the blood from the fresh wound between his eyebrows, hugging him tight until the dying weapon had spent itself and the first grey daylight crept across the plain. (2009:292)

To create a female character with a severe and disfiguring facial injury is a bold statement. It is noticeable that in the 2018 film adaptation of the first novel in the series, Hester is presented with two eyes, and minimal facial scarring. This is similar to the beautification process that Hester's image undergoes within the series itself. When Pennyroyal writes about Hester and Tom's adventures Hester appears on the publicity for the novels as to quote Hester, a 'bimbo':

> It showed Pennyroyal, sword in hand, fighting off a horde of savage Huntsmen, while at his side a beautiful young woman expired prettily. It was only after she had stared at the picture for a minute or more that Hester noticed the martyred girl wore an eye-patch and had a fetching little scar on her cheek. (2001:214 – 215 *Infernal Devices)*

Even within Hester's apocalyptical society, a facially scarred girl must be 'prettified' to be accepted. Hester cannot be presented in print with her real face as her society has been deemed, by Pennyroyal, unable to accept a visual or literary depiction of her true injuries. Whilst Pennyroyal lies about many of his adventures, the need to lie about Hester's appearance is telling of the audience Pennyroyal is writing for. There are multiple first reactions by different characters to Hester's face and none is positive. The novels allude to Hester's pain when her daughter Wren, grows older and becomes aware of how Hester's face sets her apart from everyone else and how she is embarrassed by her mother's differentness.

The decision made by the creators of the film adaptation of *Mortal Engines* to also remove Hester's injuries and make her appear more conventionally attractive and more able-bodied suggests that our current contemporary society is equally judgemental, rejecting and repulsed by female body disfigurement such as Hester's. In defiance of this attempt to whitewash disabled or disfigured people, however, both by the 2018 film adaptation creators and Pennyroyal, the final message of the

quartet, revealed as Tom is dying, is that he ultimately sees Hester as beautiful: 'But he didn't care, because Hester was with him, holding him tight, watching him, and he thought how lucky he was to be loved by someone so strong, and brave, and beautiful' (2009:517-518). This moment highlights the true nature of beauty, that it *is* in the eye of the beholder. Hester's face does not change but how Tom perceives it does, and again we circle back to the notion that beauty and femininity are qualities bestowed by the gaze of others. Hester does not perceive herself as beautiful, but she becomes comfortable with her looks, and as the series progresses, she does not hide her face from shame but through choice. She is notorious and easily recognisable: hence her disguises are for her safety rather than the comfort of others as they were previously in the series. By the final novel of the series, Hester presents herself confidently and is sure of herself and her appearance:

> The woman was tall, and very thin, and she carried a long gun on her shoulder. She was dressed all in black; black boots, black breeches, black weskit and a long back duster coat that flew out behind her like black wings when the wind caught it. In a place where everyone went masked or veiled you might have expected her to wear a black veil too, but she chose to go bareheaded. Her grey hair had been tied back, as if she wanted everyone to see that she was hideous. ... Her name was Hester Shaw, and she killed people. (2009:100-101)

Like Hester, Jeane also finds that she does not need to classify herself as beautiful to respect and like who she is, and again like Hester, Jeane is found to be beautiful by others in rejection of conventional beauty standards.

Often the female character is defined as beautiful only by comparison, or by another character, as the female protagonist often struggles to see or accept herself as attractive. The female protagonist's attractiveness is normally described covertly or in passing, almost as an afterthought rather than in the active, excessive style used to describe the male characters, as seen previously. These casual, sly descriptions or hints as to the female protagonist's appearance are present in *How I Live Now* when Daisy is compared to her mother:

> When I got up again there was soup and cheese and a huge loaf of bread in the kitchen and Aunt Penn was there and when she saw me she came right up and put her arms around me and then stood back and looked at my face and just said Elizabeth, like it was the end of a sentence, and then after a while, You look just like your mother, which was obviously a gross exaggeration since she was beautiful and I'm not. (2005:16-17)

Here Daisy is permitted to be beautiful without being intimidating because her beauty is only a reflection of her mother's beauty and Daisy rejects this comparison. The notion of Daisy's beauty is implied rather than explicitly stated, with Daisy correlating looking like her mother with the idea of beauty. This suggestion of beauty also lies in stark contrast to Daisy's evaluation of her appearance, which she describes as 'plain' (3:2005). Female beauty is constantly denied by those characters to whom it is attributed, with most female YA protagonists describing themselves in modest or unflattering ways. To accept or describe oneself as beautiful seems to be forbidden in YA literature and to a large extent in contemporary western society. Girls and women are expected to play down or reject their beauty whilst simultaneously trying to present a facade that is deemed 'pretty' or 'beautiful' by conventional social standards. In short, women are expected to try to look beautiful whilst not admitting they are beautiful. They can then be allowed to be beautiful by the grace of others. The ideal female beauty is an 'artless' or 'natural' beauty, an idea that is mocked by Georgia Nicolson's make-up routine:

> It's taken most of the day to achieve my natural make-up look. Just a subtle touch to enhance my natural beauty(!). I wanted the just-tumbled-out-of-bed look, so I only used undercover concealer, foundation, hint of bronzer, eye pencil, eight layers of mascara, lip liner, lippy and lip-gloss, and I left it at that. (*It's OK, I'm wearing really big knickers!* 2005(2000):62)

Beauty, as presented in the Georgia Nicolson series, is a socially constructed mask reliant on makeup, carefully selected attire, and the need to hide self-diagnosed 'flaws'. Whilst this is a parody of the stereotype of self-absorbed, fashion-conscious, and makeup-obsessed teenage girls, there remains a very serious undertone highlighting the pressure on girls to conform to traditional beauty standards. Georgia and her friends – self-titled the Ace Gang – spend much of the series discussing beauty tips, their flaws, scoring their attractiveness on a scale, and generally attempting to present an image of themselves to the rest of the world as mature, attractive, and sexually appealing to impress boys. Interestingly, while there is a decided focus on conventional beauty standards, the Ace Gang routinely breaks beauty conventions with deliberate actions designed for their own amusement e.g. the wearing of comedy beards and Viking horns. This would suggest that although the series embraces and displays a socially accepted image of beauty norms it actively subverts these norms in the pursuit of purely female-focused and driven

entertainment. The Ace Gang chose the merriment and enjoyment of their female-only group over the wish to appeal to the males they interact with. This is demonstrated in their willingness to wear these comedic devices publicly and proudly whilst voluntarily performing a Viking-inspired dance at a local nightclub:

> And then it was time for the *piéce de* whatsit: the Viking disco hornpipe extravaganza. We put on our ear muffs and mittens, and picked up our paddles. Then we got into position with our backs to the crowd and when they had quietened down, we waited for our musical cue. (2008: 112)

As well as using clothing to subvert gender stereotypes, the group also use their sexuality to challenge male sexual harassment and intimidation, reclaiming and empowering their bodies as vessels for their sexual desires and pleasures:

> And he said, “Show us your nungas.”
> They all started snorting and saying, “Yeah, get them out for the lads.”
> Rosie came up behind me and loomed over them. She is not small. She said, “OK, that’s a good plan. We’ll show you our nungas, but first of all we need to see your trouser snakes, to check that all is in order.”
> Ellen and Jools and Mabs and even Woodland Jas came and ganged up in front of them.
> I said, “Come on, lads, drop the old trouser-snake holders.”
> They started backing off, holding on to their trousers.
> Jools said, “Are you a bit shy? Shall we help you?”
> They started walking really quickly backwards as we kept walking. Then they just took off and got over the fence at the back of the park. (2008: 60-61)

Rennison acknowledges that teenagers are sexual beings and that young females have sexual desires, needs, and ambitions just as males do. While Rennison’s characters are not as sexually active as other characters, such as Jeane and Michael in *Adorkable*, there remains a persistent message that female teenage characters are sexual beings with agency and that they choose to engage in sexual activity for their gratification and not to please a male partner.

In contrast to female beauty, which is often hidden, disguised, or unrecognised male beauty is clearly documented, as we see in Kaye's first meeting with Roiben:

> He was long-limbed - he would be tall if he were standing. Taller than most people, taller than any faerie she had ever seen - still, she had no doubt that was what he was, if for no other reason than the pointed tops of his ears knifing through his wet hair - and he was beautiful in a way that made her breath catch. (2005:23)

If Roiben is beautiful, Michael is also.

> Then Michael smiled. It was a slow, sexy smile, and with him sitting in a rumpled bed with rumpled hair and his muscles rippling in a pleasing manner, he looked like a model in an aftershave ad in a men's style magazine and I finally got what all the fuss was about. It wasn't the pretty. It wasn't the join-the-dots-cool. It wasn't his being good at everything. It was because he was ridiculously sizzling hot and I was *so* glad that I wasn't the type of girl who simpered or blushed or giggled, because I'd be doing a sickening combination of all of those three things. (2012:208-209)

And so too is Augustus:

‘He really was beautiful. I know boys aren’t supposed to be, but he was.’ (Green 2012:36)

As with female beauty, male beauty is attributed and bestowed by others as noted in the introduction. Characters that are described as beautiful are defined as such by others and not themselves. This may be a show of modesty, or more likely, it is that beauty is a quality that must be experienced through the senses, predominantly through a visual medium. Without a mirror or other reflective items, people cannot truly see themselves. Thus in the absence of a mirror, they must rely upon the gaze of others to describe and explain how they appear. Beauty is thus a feature that another may ascribe to someone.

While an individual’s internal thoughts, emotions, and feelings can be hidden from others, a being’s external appearance, though it can be adapted, disguised, or changed, remains visible to all. Though the internal may remain private and personal, the external is subject to the gaze of society and thus can almost be considered to belong to the public. Beauty is not for those who embody it, but for those that witness and pass judgement upon it. So, what is the significance of these beautiful males that populate YA literature?

In each text, it is the female character who defines the male character as beautiful. They bestow this quality upon them, and in doing so elevate the standing of the male character, as beauty is presented as an enviable and coveted quality, which bestows social status upon both the beautiful and their partner. By obtaining or entering into a partnership with a beautiful being, the other person is raised, as their worth is increased by their ability to attract a beautiful mate. Beauty can equate to a

social power, which can be conveyed to the partner of a beautiful being. The socially attractive male character is a status symbol and almost a trophy, ironically replacing the traditional trope of beautiful female partners often presented with no other qualities or features other than their beauty. Although the male characters do have other features and characteristics, it is their beauty that garners the social envy and appreciation of others. Bella is envied by her friends and contemporaries at school for entering into a relationship with Edward, not because he is entertaining, funny, kind, or intelligent, but because he is 'beautiful'. As seen in the above quotations Jeane acknowledges that the reason Michael is so highly regarded at school by their peers is that he is very physically attractive and that this physical appeal is valued over his academic ability and all other personal qualities he may embody. Thus, beauty in YA literature is highly valued and has great social standing and meaning attached. It is interesting to note that within the texts I have considered the only male character I have found that is described as 'ugly' is Corny who sees himself this way. However, this description may be viewed in the same light as the self-depictions of Daisy and the other female protagonists who label themselves as unattractive – in that it may not be accurate, or how others perceive them.

As Butler notes in her work *Bodies that Matter* (1993) there are bodies that are considered to be more valued by society than others. If we understand that beauty is an attribute prized by society then it would be reasonable to assume that beautiful bodies are more highly prized or *matter* more than those bodies that are deemed not beautiful or 'other'. Hence partnering a beautiful being with a being that is considered other, conveys status to the 'other' being respectively. Michael and Roiben have bodies that matter because they are beautiful, whilst Jeane and Kaye create bodies that matter through their actions. Their actions make them valuable to society, and they come to embody other qualities prized by society. They force the reader and the characters to redefine beauty and consequently reconsider which bodies 'matter'. The other defining feature of these beautiful beings is their maleness, which also makes them, according to Butler, bodies that matter. Butler argues that historically the bodies that do not matter are feminine and it is only male bodies that have been perceived to have worth and be placed in language. Thus in becoming valuable through the use of the body rather than the body itself, female characters subvert and take the power of the male body and use their female bodies

as vehicles to gain power rather than being allotted power simply because of their physical form. Katniss, Hester, Kaye, and Jeane are not born with power; they forge their power by stepping outside of the narrow expected parameters of what society defines as their sex's behaviour. Whilst Foucault argues that societal power enforces its will on to the very body of the subject, I would argue that these women use their bodies to enact their will against the power of society. Though their bodies are marked by society, society is in turn marked by their bodies and the struggle becomes one of resistance, not subjugation.

Although the male characters are expected to love the female characters for their non-physical characteristics the female characters are given free rein to objectify and pick their partner based firstly and primarily on physical attraction. Both *Tithe* and *Adorkable* have a decidedly female gaze that sexualises the male characters while normalising the female. If the female characters are beautiful or physically appealing, it is presented differently from the overt attractiveness of the male characters. If we return to the first meeting of Kaye and Roiben, the description of Roiben is very physical, and we see how Roiben's body invokes a bodily reaction from Kaye, 'and he was beautiful in a way that made her breath catch' (2005:23). Kaye responds not to Roiben's personality, skills, moral values, or beliefs but his corporeal being; she is drawn to him before she knows him and it is in this moment that we see the power in YA literature of the female gaze in sexualising the male form. Similarly, when Bella first encounters Edward she is immediately entranced by his physical appeal, because Edward, like Roiben, Augustus, and Michael, is also beautiful:

> The last was lanky, less bulky, with untidy, bronze-coloured hair. He was more boyish than the others, who looked like they could be in college or even teachers here rather than students..... I stared because their faces, so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful. They were faces you never expected to see except perhaps on the airbrushed pages of a fashion magazine. Or painted by an old master as the face of an angel. It was hard to decide who was the most beautiful – maybe the perfect blond girl, or the bronze-haired boy. (2006:16-17)

Before she knows his name, Bella is intrigued by Edward. In her new school he, and his 'siblings', are the only other students she takes an interest in or asks the names of. What sets them apart from the other students and fascinates Bella is their beauty, which is described as inhuman. It is suggested later in the novel that the

vampires use their beauty to lure and attract their human prey. While this may suggest a more animalistic quality to their beauty and give it a purpose beyond the aesthetic, it does not eliminate Bella's initial response to Edward in that she views him as worthy of notice because he is beautiful.

There are exceptions to these beautiful male characters found in YA literature. In Meg Rosoff's 2004 novel *How I Live Now,* Edmond is neither particularly tall when we first encounter him, nor described as beautiful, although he is thin:

> Now let me tell you what he looks like before I forget because it's not exactly what you'd expect from your average fourteen-year-old what with the CIGARETTE and hair that looks like he cut it himself with a hatchet in the dead of night, but aside from that he's exactly like some kind of mutt, you know the ones you see at the dog shelter who are kind of hopeful and sweet and put their nose straight into your hand when they meet you with a certain kind of dignity and you know from that second that you're going to take him home? Well that's him. (4-5:2005)

Perhaps Edmond's lack of beauty is due to his age. Although he and Daisy are sexually active, Edmond is only fourteen and perhaps Rosoff felt that describing him in an overtly sexual manner would not be appropriate. Or perhaps Edmond is not required to be beautiful as there are no other characters or peers against whose looks and appearance he could be judged.

We find a pattern of the male characters being presented as beautiful alluring beings that the female characters ensnare and enchant, not with their looks, but with their wit, bravery, cunning, and intelligence. Is it then the female characters who are the shallow superficial ones, interested more in looks than personality? Or is that it is safer, easier, and more socially acceptable to sexualise males, as the sexualising of young women, is often perceived negatively? Perhaps it is because of the expected readership of these texts. Currently marketed at young female readers the texts can titillate their imagination with physically attractive male characters while avoiding the risk of alienating them by creating overtly sexualised or physically perfect female characters. The female characters are noticeably under-described in comparison to their male counterparts, perhaps because it makes it easier for the expected female reader to imagine herself in the role of the protagonist. By not repeatedly referencing the female lead's appearance the text enables the reader to forget exactly what colour her eyes or hair are, and therefore better picture herself as the character. In

developing female characters who rely on their personality rather than their looks to attract partners, the authors create a double standard and unexpected role reversal. We are expected to admire the female characters because of their skills and personalities, while the male characters are often reduced to superficially attractive beings before we discover their personalities, suggesting that whilst the internal is important, in YA literature for males the outside is vital in gaining the female character and the reader's attention. Georgia Nicolson, in *Luuurve is a many trousered thing*(2007), perfectly summarises this reduction of males to their perfect visages by her reference to two of her romantic partners as, 'Masimo, lead singer and Luuurve God' and 'Robbie the original Sex God' (2007:11). While Georgia frequently declares an intense admiration for the physical appearance of Masimo and Robbie, throughout the series she struggles to relate to them socially. Often, she becomes tongue-tied, awkward, and generally feels that she must pretend to be a different person to interact with them. In the concluding text of the series, *Are these my basoomas I see before me,* (2009) Georgia decides not to continue pursuing a relationship with either Masimo or Robbie but instead intends to renew her relationship with 'Dave the Laugh' who is not defined as 'beautiful' but as entertaining. Throughout the series, Georgia slowly progresses from picking a partner based on looks to considering a partner that she enjoys spending time with and can be herself with. Dave, unlike Robbie and Masimo, seems to understand Georgia and she is more relaxed and honest with him than with the other male characters. This rejection of both Masimo and Robbie reinforces the trope that while looks are important they do not guarantee a lasting relationship.

Male beauty in YA literature takes many different forms, with different races, species, and ages all being classed as beautiful, the only common traits being thinness and tallness. This perhaps suggests that Weston's theory of thinness equating to beauty in female YA characters has now shifted and should be applied to male YA characters. Yet beauty remains a source of power and a tool for manipulation and social control, as witnessed in *The Hunger Games* when Katniss becomes 'beautiful' to gain favour with the Capitol and use this to her advantage in the arena. Katniss is declared 'beautiful' by conforming to the standards of the Capitol in her dress and manner. Her beauty however is not innate but created by

Cato and the team of dressers, stylists, beauticians, and hairdressers. It is a carefully curated display, which is both political and aesthetic.

Overall, beauty remains a social construct which changes over time and with society. It is a reflection of society and bows to the whims and foibles of trends and fashions. It is not lasting and it is not easily defined. It is an opinion, not a fact, and can be given and taken away by anyone, almost rendering the word meaningless. It is like defining the soul: everyone has their interpretation. Many agree that it exists, and yet it cannot be quantified or counted, measured, weighed, or stored. It is both literal and figurative and matters more and less than it should perhaps. This idea of the soul or the essence of a being that can transcend the body while retaining an identity will be explored in Chapter Three.

There are many theories of beauty, too many for this thesis to examine: thus given the supernatural elements that many of the chosen texts contain, this thesis will consider beauty as an inhuman quality. It is no coincidence that beauty is often linked to or considered in the divine or otherworldly. In his work *The God Who Is Beauty: Beauty as a Divine Name in Thomas Aquinas and Dionysius the Areopagite* (2014), Brandon Thomas Sammon explores how beauty and the impossibility of capturing it or defining it has challenged theological and philosophical thinkers throughout the millennia from Plato and Socrates to Aquinas, and into current debates regarding beauty as divine. He discusses whether beauty is good, useful, or powerful, and the purpose of it, stating:

> In the beginning was beauty, and beauty was with God, and beauty was God. If the tradition of divine names, which (in its Christian form) originates with Dionysius the Areopagite and includes among its ranks Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and others, is correct in identifying God with the name beauty, then repurposing the prologue to John's Gospel in this way seems hardly controversial. For if beauty is a divine name then not only is it fitting to say God is beautiful, but it is equally fitting to say that *God is beauty itself.* (2014:1)

While this argument is essentially theological it does suggest that like God, beauty cannot be quantified by human standards and that it is perhaps beyond human understanding, comprehension, or definition. This would challenge the notion that beauty is a social or human construct, and suggest that perhaps beauty is a heavenly or superhuman state. If so, perhaps the supernatural creatures that

populate the world of YA literature are more beautiful because they are not human? They exist outside of the normal and societal, so may seem closer to this mysterious and otherworldly beauty.

Sammon also explores the difference between appearing to be beautiful and being beautiful, or rather the surface of beauty and the depth of beauty. Beauty is, and can be, simply superficial or it can be a deeper state of being. Sammon analyses how Plato and Socrates align beauty with 'good', although Sammon, Plato, and Socrates each acknowledges the difficulties this then presents, with Sammon summarising his findings: 'Plato thus ends his inquiry with Socrates coming to fuller realisation of the proverb, "all that is beautiful is difficult". '(2014:22)

Beauty as 'good' is an interesting, albeit flawed, theory. Not only does it require deeper knowledge and understanding of that which is considered as beautiful, it then relies upon the judgement of either oneself or others to be able to define what is 'good'. But how to decide who or what is 'good' and 'evil'? If we continue to apply Christian doctrine to decipher that which may be considered 'good' and 'evil' we discover that this ability is attributed to the divine: You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' (Genesis: 3.5). Judgement of good and evil is the domain of the gods or that which is not human, yet this ability is taken by humans when they eat from the tree of knowledge. Consequently, humans may share in the powers of the divine in choosing whom or what is 'good' and 'evil', and by extension also knowing or deciding that which is beautiful. While this thesis rejects the idea that beauty can be equated to goodness, the relationship between surface and internal beauty does invite more consideration.

It is important to note that the rejection of beauty as good is not dismissed unduly but after careful consideration. Many characters are presented as beautiful antagonists, or forces for 'evil', if we ascribe the admittedly complex and weighted terms of 'good' and 'evil' to a text. Sidhean in *Ash* is notably beautiful and sinister, as is Silarial in *Tithe*; similarly, as all of Meyer's vampires are unnaturally beautiful, we must assume that the Volturi in her *Twilight* saga also fall into the category of beautiful and 'evil' beings. It must be noted that each of these examples features a supernatural being suggesting that perhaps rather than being aligned with goodness, beauty should be aligned with 'evil': thus answering the previously posed suggestion,

that the more beautiful should be considered more divine, by instead presenting the idea that rather than being a force for good, beauty may be interpreted as a weapon of seduction and power wielded against those we consider 'good'. After all, Lucifer himself was titled 'son of the morning' (Isaiah: 14.12) or 'morning star,' a title symbolic of power, change, and beauty, which was also attributed to Jesus Christ: 'I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star' (Revelation: 22:16). As we find in Ezekiel, beauty can be corrupted and fall from grace, changing from good to evil but still beautiful:

> Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth and I have set thee so: Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; Thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned. Therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: And I will destroy thee O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of the brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. (Ezekiel: 28: 14-17)

Here God casts out a 'perfect' and beautiful creature because he has sinned, demonstrating that beauty can be sinful and profane whilst appearing as 'perfect'. Thus both 'good' and 'evil' can share a common quality - beauty. The beautiful as sinful beings, forever trapped outside of redemption, or happiness, is not a new image: consider F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1922 novel aptly titled *The Beautiful and the Damned.* Here the beautiful are not 'good', nor happy, suggesting that outer beauty cannot provide inner satisfaction or serenity. To return to Sammon's debate on the internal and external nature of beauty we discover that outer beauty as suggested above can hide a multitude of flaws whilst inner beauty can transcend a conventionally unattractive facade. The YA texts under consideration for this chapter seem to question how we can separate the inner and outer beauty, and how we judge beauty when it is the casing for a morally or ethically questionable being or artefact.

In her work *Beauty and Evil: the case of Leni Riefenstahl's 'Triumph of the Will'* (1998) Mary Devereaux investigates the intersection of art and evil, ultimately concluding that a work of art can be morally evil, but still visually stunning. She discusses the need on occasion to separate, or at least acknowledge, the different

lenses through which we view art: either as a neutral aesthetic or as an evocative morally or politically skewed piece of work. Devereaux uses Edward Bullough's 'aesthetic distance' within the framework of formalism to achieve this impartiality:

> The basic strategy here is simple: when approaching a work of art that raises moral issues, sever aesthetic evaluation from moral evaluation and evaluate the work in aesthetic (i.e. formal) terms alone. This is the formalist response to the problem of beauty and evil. Formalism treats the aesthetic and the moral as wholly independent domains. It allows us to say that, evaluated morally, *Triumph of the Will* is bad but, evaluated aesthetically, it is good. (1998:242)

This framework allows us to separate beauty into different categories: those who are aesthetically beautiful, those who are not, and those who are made beautiful, not by aesthetics but by another facet of their being - which this thesis argues is more vital – their actions. Jeane appeals to Michael not because of her facade, but because of her actions: '"I like girls that are different and make me see the world in a way that I've never seen it before"' (2012:382). Jeane might look different but more importantly, she acts differently, and it is her actions that make her attractive. Jeane is the 'other' not because of her physical body, although that is also 'other', but because of how she uses her form.

Hester's face may scare and repulse others but it does not stop her because faces, particularly in YA literature, are not permanent, but actions can be. We repeatedly see YA characters transforming and changing their faces, and other physical features: Bella becomes a vampire, Katniss gathers scars, Hazel's body changes as the illness progresses, and Kaye is revealed to have green skin. Yet these outward changes, whilst significant and important, demonstrate that the body is a malleable and shifting entity. It is what you do with the body and how you utilise it that has the power to make real and potential permanent change, both internally and externally, for the individual and others.

In each text Katniss, Hester, and Daisy find strength in their otherness. It is their 'flaws' that save them, not conventional physical attractiveness: beauty is not necessary for greatness. Rhonda Nicol explores beauty and power, proposing that rather than beauty it is the 'monstrous' beings that have power:

> monstrousness is equated with power and agency, especially for women. To be a monster is to be one who steps outside the social order, and by making the journey from human to monster (sometimes literally; three of the five protagonists examined in this chapter change species from human to fairy) an affirmation of female agency, both Black and [Melissa] Marr implicitly argue that inhabiting the subject position of "monster" can be empowering. The protagonists' transformations demonstrate the potentially liberatory powers of becoming a monster; all five young women come to wield personal, cultural, and social power as a result of their embrace of monstrousness. (2014:169)

Confirming Nicol's argument Hester, Kaye, Katniss, and Daisy all find peace and authority by accepting their 'monstrousness'; they come to find solace in their differentness, their otherness, and in accepting themselves, they liberate themselves.

Beauty and ugliness are an enduring trope of the fairytale structure. The morality and meaning of beauty differ from story to story; in *Cinderella,* beauty is good and rewarded, whilst the ugly are bad and wicked. Similarly,*Snow White, Sleeping Beauty,*and *Rapunzel* all celebrate the beautiful and reject the ugly or monstrous. However, some fairytales twist this norm -*Beauty and the Beast, The Princess and the Frog,* and *The Swan Princess* - but in each story, ugliness or monstrousness is the result of magic, a curse which disfigures and deforms the characters' original beauty. Once the spell is lifted, or broken, usually by the romantic other learning to love the 'monster' despite their visage, the magic unravels and the monster reverts to their original, and often conventionally attractive, physical form. In these tales whilst the primary message could be read as meaning that love is deeper than surface appearances, the secondary message is that love can transform the monstrous into the beautiful, and that love is rewarded and equated with beauty; beautiful characters get the 'happily-ever-after' and the ugly perish. It must be noted that beauty in fairytales is the perfection of form and appearance, and has minimal correlation to other physical attributes. *Sleeping Beauty's* princess is still beautiful despite being comatose, as is Snow White*;* likewise, despite losing her voice in exchange for legs, The Little Mermaid is still a beautiful being; beauty, it would appear is often silent, as noted previously in *King Kong*. If we consider the moment in which Katniss is at her most 'beautiful' we might think of the tributes' chariot ride which opens the Hunger Games: Katniss is the 'girl on fire', beautiful, visually

striking, but silent. As the trilogy progresses Katniss becomes more vocal; it is her words and her speeches that ignite the nation. As she breaks her silence she also becomes more 'monstrous', her body is damaged, war-torn, and scarred; thus, Katniss exchanges 'beauty' and silence for power and autonomy. As Butler and Irigaray would argue, language makes actions real. Language is power, and by speaking out, and giving voice to her narrative, Katniss wields power but also control over her story and body.

Though there is more work to be done to widen the definition of beauty in literature and society, the progress made already means that Younger's suggested image of perfection in YA literature is no longer fully applicable to current YA texts. Although Younger's easily identifiable stereotypical image of perfection (thin, white, and middle class) can still be found in YA literature, many YA texts are beginning to move away from such a characterization. *Adorkable* features a tall, attractive, Asian male lead and a short, stocky white female lead. Other examples include *Ironside* in which Kaye has the human appearance of a half-white, half-Asian girl with blond hair, Luis is black and gay, with one eye, and Corny has acne. In such texts, it is the misfits, the outsiders, the ‘others’ who are celebrated. Perfection and the accepted, or ‘correct’, body image are being redrawn.

Sex

One of the first YA literature texts to be widely and publicly debated and examined because of its sexual content was Judy Blume's *Forever* (1975). Blume's text, though decried as scandalous, outrageous, and banned in parts of America, was revolutionary. However, although it opened the door to sex in YA literature, this change was not a simple or easy task. According to librarian Patty Campbell:

> *Forever* , of course, was the bombshell. Not so much because of the content - it was pretty graphic, but we had seen graphic before. No, the reason it caused a furore among teachers and librarians was that Judy Blume's audience up to that point had been comprised of little girls. Bradbury Press, although it published *Forever* as an adult book - with a double bed on the cover - left us with a horrendous selection problem; at the same time we recognized the novel's greatness. Was it a YA book or not? ... But it is a

> misunderstanding to say that *Forever* freed authors to write about sex. The truth is that it did the opposite; its notoriety brought parents' attention to the free speaking that had been going on under their noses in books for teens, so that a wave of censorship followed (2010: 9)

What stands out in this interpretation of *Forever* is that the scandal arises not from the text but its readership. The issue appears to be that this was a text for young girls featuring the sexuality and sexual development of young girls. What was shocking was the idea that YA literature might be used to aid the sexual education of young adults, particularly young female readers. This desire to avoid or remove graphic or detailed sex scenes from YA literature has drastically altered over the passing decades, as discussed later in this chapter. What is noticeable about *Forever* is the unapologetic and frank manner in which sex is introduced, with the opening line setting the tone for the entire novel: 'Sybil Davidson has a genius I.Q. and has been laid by at least six different guys' (1:1975). Here sex, intelligence, and gender are linked together to describe one character. It is also a clear acceptance and acknowledgment that girls are having sex and with more than one partner. However, the text is not without judgement. When Katharine's friend Erica, claims that Sybil has sex with multiple partners because she is overweight and self-conscious, she implies that being sexually free is something that only girls who dislike themselves, or who are desperate, do. Therefore, seeking multiple partners without the intent of forming a serious relationship is looked down upon by other characters within the text.

In *Forever,* Katharine has sex for the first time in the belief that she will be with Michael forever, as the title implies. As the text progresses Katharine meets and falls in love with, a boy called Theo. Her relationship with Michael consequently ends. The novel, whilst admitting that teenage relationships are not permanent, still clings to the fairytale notion of true love which lasts forever. It is suggested that sex should take place only between young adults intending to stay together. There is also no sexual past for the lead female protagonist. Although the text is critical of young adults engaging in multiple relationships it is also intended as a manual or educational device, to instruct and guide the assumed young adult readership. Thisis an intriguing juxtaposition: Blume’s work implies that sex is something teenagers should be educated about but not partake in carelessly. Sex, presented by Blume, is

an act that should be part of an established relationship; there is a strong condemnation of anyone that enters into a sexual relationship purely for fun. Sex in older YA texts is a serious business, which reminiscent of wedding vows, should not 'beenterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God' (The Church of England: *The Form of Solemnization of Marriage*).

In contrast, contemporary YA texts are far less instructive, and practical issues, like contraception, are rarely discussed. Perhaps this is because it is expected that a current reader will have greater access to sexual health information and guidance than their 70s counterparts. Similarly, there is a significant change in the sexual activity of female characters which appears to mirror the change in social acceptance of sexual behaviour for young adults. As such, Jeane in *Adorkable* is not a virgin, she has had multiple sexual partners and does not enter the relationship as a sexually ignorant individual but as an equal. Jeane does not, as Katharine does, rely on her partner for guidance, confirmation, or support, but confidently initiates sexual contact between herself and Michael. Female characters are no longer unsure virgins, but forward-thinking, proactive sexual beings who take charge of their sexual identities. Although virgin characters do still exist, like Georgia Nicolson, the mystery or excitement about a character having sex for the first time appears to have dissipated slightly. While still an important moment in any character's sexual history or sexual identity, the textual prestige or significance placed on the loss of one's virginity is minimal. It is almost expected that young adult characters will have been in past relationships, before entering the current relationship, resulting in a feeling, hinted at but never fully realised in *Forever*, that these relationships, though happy, successful, or positive experiences, are the product of now. They may last but they may not; the future of these relationships can be suggested but is rarely encountered. We are not told if these relationships continue or end, only that in their current and present state they are functional, loving, and wanted. This existing in the present is symptomatic of YA literature: the future is often presented as hazy, unfixed, or malleable, while the past is used mostly to help explain or develop the present and the character.

This new experienced young adult character appears to be replacing the naive and unworldly teen of the past. Not only are young adult characters more experienced: they are also not punished for their sexual behaviour. There is a lack of stigma, judgement, or criticism levelled at contemporary YA characters for their sexual history. While Michael and Jeane discuss their previous sexual partners they do not condemn one another for having a sexual past or see it as impacting on their current relationship. Similarly, when Tiny (in *Will Grayson, Will Grayson,* 2010) reflects on his previous relationships, he does so not to judge himself for these relationships but for how he acted in them. He is not ashamed of having multiple past partners, but for how he treated these prior boyfriends. Although many YA texts allude to the protagonist and other characters being sexually active, the *Twilight* saga is a notable exception. Both Bella and Edward are virgins when they meet, and the build-up to the consummation of their relationship is a central theme within the series. Many critics have drawn parallels between Edward's abstinence from feeding on Bella's blood and his refusal to partake in sexual relations with Bella before marriage. Equating Edward's temptation and resistance to drinking Bella's blood with teenage sexual desire, the novel presents sexuality as a dangerous, even deadly, and life-changing force which must be carefully guarded against and resisted at all cost. Indeed, Edward and Bella exchange blood and have sex only after they are married; consequently, reinforcing Meyer's traditionalist views that sex is a product of marriage. On the surface, it may appear that Meyer is championing a traditional relationship supporting the notion of waiting until marriage to become sexually active, but a deeper reading of the text reveals a decidedly non-traditional relationship between Bella and Edward that has more in common with such adult texts as *50 Shades of Grey,* as it describes a relationship in which sex and violence are intrinsically linked. Tison Pugh perceives a darker side to Bella and Edward's sexual relationship, framing it within masochistic and sadistic rhetoric:

> Purportedly a rejection or desire, or at least a delay of desire, abstinence bears with it a masochistic valence because, by depriving themselves of sexual pleasure, Bella and Edward cause physical and emotional pain for each other. (2011: 147)

Pugh cites the bruises left upon Bella's body by Edward during their first sexual encounter as further evidence of the relationship bearing the hallmarks of a sadistic/masochistic relationship, with Edward adopting the role of a dominant

masculine presence and Bella a submissive feminine role. Bella's social withdrawal and focus on Edward to the point of fixation are also interpreted by Pugh as signs of an abusive or controlling relationship. Instead of encouraging Bella to make new friends when she arrives at her new school Edward instead draws Bella into his world, effectively isolating her and ending any of the fledging relationships she has begun to form with other human students. Edward reacts with jealousy to Bella's friendship with Jacob and sees him as a threat rather than trusting Bella. This behaviour stands in stark contrast to the behaviour of Michael, Barney, Jeane, and Scarlett in *Adorkable.* The two couples, Michael/Scarlett and Jeane/Barney, essentially break up and swap forming the new couples Michael/Jeane and Scarlett/Barney. However, despite the past romantic attachments the group all remain friends and are supportive of one another's friendships with their previous partners: 'It made me [Michael] like Barney even more that he'd stick up for his ex [Jeane]' (2012:160). Michael appreciates the strong and loyal bond that Jeane and Barney share despite no longer being romantically involved. Michael does not view Barney as a rival but as a friend and someone who supports Jeane. Unlike Bella and Edward, Michael and Jeane have their own friendship groups which remain intact despite their new relationship.

The domestic abuse support service *Women's Aid*offers an online questionnaire to help individuals identify if they may be in an abusive relationship. The questions are yes/no and aim to highlight areas of concern in a relationship:

- **Has your partner tried to keep you from seeing your friends or family?**
- **Has your partner prevented you or made it hard for you to continue or start studying, or from going to work?**
- **Does your partner constantly check up on you or follow you?**
- **Does your partner unjustly accuse you of flirting or of having affairs with others?**
- Does your partner constantly belittle or humiliate you, or regularly criticise or insult you?
- **Are you ever afraid of your partner?**
- **Have you ever changed your behaviour because you are afraid of what your partner might do or say to you?**
- Has your partner ever destroyed any of your possessions deliberately?
- **Has your partner ever hurt or threatened you or your children?**

- Has your partner ever kept you short of money so you are unable to buy food and other necessary items for yourself and your children or made you take out loans?
- **Has your partner ever forced you to do something that you really did not want to do?**
- Has your partner ever tried to prevent you from taking necessary medication, or seeking medical help when you felt you needed it?
- Has your partner ever tried to control you by telling you that you could be deported because of your immigration status?
- Has your partner ever threatened to take your children away, or said he would refuse to let you take them with you, or even to see them, if you left him?
- **Has your partner ever forced or harassed you to have sex with him or with other people? Has he made you participate in sexual activities that you were uncomfortable with?**
- **Has your partner ever tried to prevent your leaving the house?**
- **Does your partner blame his use of alcohol or drugs, mental health condition or family history for his behaviour?**
- Does your partner control your use of alcohol or drugs (for example, by forcing your intake or by withholding substances)?

Out of the eighteen questions asked, Bella and Edward arguably demonstrate behaviours in the saga which connect and resonate with eleven of the questions (relevant questions highlighted). Although the relationship between Bella and Edward is not a human relationship, it still falls worryingly short of the expected behaviours and parameters of a healthy relationship as defined by current society.

Bella's obsession with Edward spirals throughout the series, culminating in her endeavour to draw Edward back to her by attempting to commit suicide. Thus both Bella and Edward enact powerful and manipulative control over one another, and claim love as a justification for their often troubling or problematic actions and thoughts:

> It was only when he was disapproving like this that I could hear the true memory of his voice – the velvet texture and the musical intonation that made up the most perfect of all voices. "Don't do this," he pleaded. .... He was angry now, and the anger was so lovely. (2007:315-316)

As Bella prepares to jump and does jump off the cliff, the emotions Edward expresses are anger and disapproval, yet Bella describes these very negative emotions as 'perfect' and 'lovely'. Bella reacts positively to Edward's rage and disapproval as though it is something she craves:

> I saw *him*, and I had no will to fight. It was so clear, so much more defined than any memory. My subconscious had stored Edward away in flawless detail, saving him for this final moment. I could see his perfect face as if he were really there: the exact shade of his icy skin, the shape of his lips, the line of his jaw, the gold glinting in his furious eyes. He was angry, naturally, that I was giving up. His teeth were clenched and his nostrils flared with rage. (2007: 318)

As Bella sinks into the ocean, convinced that she is dying, her final thought of Edward is that he has reacted to her death with anger, which she feels is a correct and acceptable response. It may be argued that this is how Edward shows he cares but anger is repeatedly Edward's first response to situations and Bella's determination to make him angry to prove he 'cares' is symptomatic of an unbalanced and damaging relationship. She views anger and bruises as proof of affection – suggesting that it is because he loves her that he hurts her – that pain and suffering are love. Bella stops listening to the words he speaks, dwells on the sound of Edward's voice, and muses on his 'perfect' visage. This reaction captures the very unhealthy nature of Bella and Edward's relationship and reinforces Pugh's argument that Bella and Edward are indeed embroiled in an abusive relationship. Bella does not listen to Edward: she instead chooses to focus on his looks, and Edward simply responds to a very harrowing experience with one emotion – anger.

We must ask ourselves why Edward is so angry. Is he angry that Bella has died, is he angry that she may soon be outside of his control, or is he angry that she has taken back control of the situation forcing him to relinquish the dominant position he holds? Anger towards death is a natural part of the grieving process, but it is not the only response; fear, worry, concern, panic, sadness, or disbelief would present Edward as a being with a greater emotional range. Even if we accept that anger is a natural response for Edward, his consistent use of anger towards a variety of situations suggests that he is volatile and remains constantly on the cusp of physical violence. Perhaps Meyer simply wishes to highlight Edward's non-humanness by presenting his emotions as different from those experienced by mortals, or perhaps as Pugh suggests: 'Their [Bella and Edward's] romance bears numerous markers of emotional and physical abuse that further strengthen its hierarchical facade and cause Edward to assume the guise of a controlling and sadistic villain' (2011:146). It is well recognised that the most dangerous stage of an abusive relationship for the victim is when they try to leave, as this action is one that threatens the perpetrator's

control over the situation, and consequently, this is when the most violent and deadly attacks take place. Edward is already resisting the urge to kill Bella, an urge which is pressing and constant, and as such it is tempting to wonder if Edward's anger arises because Bella's action denies him the possibility of one day giving into this urge and killing her. Bella and Edward's relationship is marked by the possibility of death; both Bella and Edward desire Bella's death for different reasons. For Edward, it is a bodily compulsion caused by his vampirism, and for Bella, it is the means to become a vampire. Bella comes to realise that Edward is reluctant to have sex with her human form, thus her becoming a vampire is entangled with her becoming sexually active. Although they do have sex whilst Bella is human this is a dangerous and unequal act that leaves Bella physically if not emotionally damaged. Sex and bodily interactions, for Bella and Edward, are not the meeting of bodies or the touching of limbs, but a merging of the living and the dead, from which Bella may not emerge alive.

Although Edward's objections to physical intimacy are presented as a remnant of his past life in the previous century, many critics have interpreted Edward's reluctance and insistence on marriage as support for a religious, conservative lifestyle. Sara K Day discusses this possibility in her article, 'Pure Passion: The *Twilight* Saga, "Abstinence Porn," and Adolescent Women's Fan Fiction':

> Although Edward emphasizes Bella's physical safety, his own preoccupation with the possibilities of an afterlife signals that his concerns about sex relate primarily to moral guidelines. Ultimately, despite her own initial distaste for the institution of marriage, Bella adopts Edward's point of view, declaring to him that "I *will* tie myself to you in every human way. . . . I'm following all the rules, Edward" (618–19; original emphasis).
>
> Meyer's privileging of an abstinence-only message is unsurprising: the Mormon author has publicly acknowledged that her faith has influenced her writing. In a 2005 interview, she specifically addressed the question of abstinence: "When my editor wanted premarital sex in my story, I explained that I won't write that" ("Interview").... While Meyer does not explicitly frame their relationship in religious terms, Edward's old-fashioned values and the limits he places on their physical intimacy, as well as both Bella's and Edward's insistence upon understanding their connection as more than simply dating, echo the messages of Christian courtship. Likewise, in keeping with many young people's lived experiences of courtship, Edward and Bella marry young—just months after graduating from high school—after a three-month engagement. Indeed, despite the general absence of religious language or markers in the saga, the wedding ceremony that occurs early in the final novel, *Breaking Dawn* (2008), is performed by a minister. (2014:30)

Bella and Edward's love is presented within the saga as beyond human and therefore superior. Jacob's relationship with Bella is shown as her 'human' choice - in her vision Bella sees that Jacob is the partner and the life she could have had if she had not met Edward and had remained human:

> "I [Jacob] was the natural path your life would have taken ... If the world was the way it was supposed to be, if there were no monsters and no magic..." ... He [Jacob] was my soul mate in that world - would have been my soul mate still if his claim had not been overshadowed by something stronger, something so strong that it could not exist in a rational world. (2007:598-599)

Edward and Bella's relationship is presented as not a human or real love, it is an impossible, post-human love, with a being that is elevated above simply humanity; it is a love that can be likened to spiritual love. Jacob represents the human world and human love, but Edward is religious love, the love of the divine. However, as we have concluded before this ‘divine’ love is not without problems or concerns.

The differences between Bella's and Edward’s bodies are repeatedly noticed with Bella unfavourably comparing her body to Edward’s. Bella degrades herself in comparison to Edward and her constant feelings of being unworthy of him repeatedly reinforce the suggestion that this is not a pairing of equals: ‘“I really don’t know why you bother. I don’t deserve either of you.”’ (2008:180). Tom and Hester are a similarly unmatched pair in terms of their physical appearance, and yet Hester, though conscious that she is not as conventionally attractive as Tom, does not denigrate her looks or herself in the manner in which Bella does. Hester may have doubts at the beginning of the relationship but she overcomes these:

> Hester Shaw was starting to get used to being happy... She had her own airship... and she had Tom: gentle, handsome, clever Tom, whom she loved with her whole heart and who, in spite of everything, seemed to love her too. For a long time she had felt sure it wouldn’t last. ... And yet it had lasted; ... Hester found herself beginning to believe that it might last for ever. (2009:9-10)

Hester recognises her strengths and comes to feel that she is Tom’s equal because she brings her own skills and qualities to the partnership that Tom appreciates: ‘Hester would have been able to cope with this, but he wasn’t at all sure he could, not alone.’ (2009:174). Hester is far more damaged physically than Bella, and yet

she believes in herself and has a confidence that Bella does not. While Bella relies on Edward to give her worth, to give her confidence, and to confirm her identity, Hester does not. Hester is not unaware of her flaws, or less socially accepted qualities, which she attempts to hide from Tom, notably her ability to kill or harm others without feeling remorse or guilt. Hester and Katniss are survivors and killers, and though they do not celebrate these qualities within themselves, they do acknowledge the usefulness and necessity of these skills in situations. Unlike Edward, who is also a killer, Katniss and Hester do not kill for a biological need or feel pleasure from the act. Edward's need to kill, whilst a physical urge, is also a desire that can be interpreted as almost sexual in its intensity and physical response.

The other convoluted and complex aspect of Bella and Edward's relationship is the discussion of whether to involve Jacob as a second partner for Bella. Edward suggests this as a solution to provide Bella with children without vampire genetics. Edward suggests this to Jacob without consulting Bella, demonstrating that he sees Bella as belonging to him and as an entity he can give or share with another male figure. Jacob considers this offer, and is tempted, also without consulting Bella: 'I couldn't think about what he was suggesting. It was too much. Impossible. Wrong. Sick. Borrowing Bella for the weekends and then returning her Monday morning like a rental movie? So messed up. So tempting' (2010:166-167). Bella has been reduced to an object, an object that Edward believes he has complete autonomy over. What is equally concerning is that Jacob is willing to accept and embrace this view of Bella as a possession to satisfy his desires. When she finds out that this has been discussed Bella sees it as Edward's being selfless rather than controlling: '"He really would do *anything,* wouldn't he?" she whispered.' (2010:180). Again, this exchange demonstrates the unbalanced and unusual nature of Bella and Edward's relationship as Bella equates Edward's offering what is essentially at best an open relationship without her consent or knowledge, as a romantic gesture.

Bella's view of love and relationships is deeply unhealthy. She claims to love both Jacob and Edward, and yet both of her choices and physical encounters with each male are laced with violence. Like Edward, Jacob can overpower and kill Bella,and like Edward, Jacob also reacts to situations with anger and aggression that seem misplaced:

> I knew he would take advantage of the situation. I expected it. I held very still – my eyes closed, my fingers curled into fists at my sides – as his hands caught my face and his lips found mine with an eagerness that was not far from violence. I could feel his anger as his mouth discovered my passive resistance. ... My arms were already around his neck, so I grabbed two fistfuls of his hair – ignoring the stabbing pain in my right hand – and fought back, struggling to pull my face away from his. And Jacob misunderstood. He was too strong to recognize that my hands, trying to yank out his hair by the roots, meant to cause him pain. Instead of anger, he imagined passion. He thought I was finally responding to him (2008:526-527).

Jacob, like Edward, appears unable to interact with Bella sexually without violence; in this very troubling incident, he interprets Bella's resistance as encouragement. This episode highlights the need to discuss sexual boundaries and actions as well as making sure consent is given. An alternative reading of this scene would suggest sexual assault with Jacob reacting to Bella's bodily cues that she was not a willing participant in the act with aggression and force. Yet Bella interprets this violence as love. Perhaps because of her overwhelmingly low self-esteem, she believes that this controlling, manipulative abuse is what she deserves, or perhaps it is ignorance. Bella is not sexually or romantically experienced, and this is her first relationship. She does not have the knowledge and experience that other YA characters such as Jeane have.

The journey to confidence in the physical form of self, despite the changes or hardships that form may undergo, is the cornerstone of positive self-identity. It is only through acceptance of the physical that acceptance of the non-physical can occur. The exploration of young adults coming to terms with their physical form is a common theme in YA literature. The alternations that non-human characters undergo may be seen as mirroring the changes wrought by puberty in human adolescents. The illness, injury, or transformation of the physical is reflected in the psyche and personality of a being, and true happiness of self can take place only when there is harmony and resolution between the body and the mind. This harmony of body and 'soul' is seen in Hester and Daisy's acceptance of their physical presence which then allows them to accept and embrace their spiritual selves.

Sex is a complex and essential component of these character's lives. It is often also viewed as a process of discovery with the characters experimenting and defining themselves sexually.

Sex in YA literature when described, rather than simply alluded to, is often less graphic than in adult literature; usually there is less explicit detail, and the sexual activities involved are usually limited to conventional sexual practices, with fringe, fetish, or alternative sexual practices, such as BDSM, placed more typically in the realm of adult literature. This is understandable when we consider that the readership of young adult texts may be either sexually inactive or sexually inexperienced. Often in YA literature, the locations or opportunities for the protagonists to engage in sexual congress are limited. For instance, Daisy and Edmond in *How I Live Now* are forced out of necessity to find a variety of hidden locations in which they can engage in sexual activities:

> Piper and Edmond and Isaac and I used to watch this lunatic fringe milling around every day at sunset and then Edmond and I would slip away to the tiny bedroom at the top of the house or the big storage closet under the eaves or the lambing barn or one of about a thousand places we'd found where we could try and try and try to get enough of each other but it was like some witch's curse where the more we tried to stop being hungry the more starving we got. (2005:58)

Here we find Daisy and Edmond attempting to hide the sexual nature of their relationship from their chosen social group, as the importance placed on sex by a peer group or by society is usually far greater in YA literature. Jeane and Michael also hide their relationship from their friends and peers as they attempt to decide upon the nature and parameters of their relationship:

> She was a really good kisser, but hanging out with her and having to listen to her diss all my friends, then have all my friends repeatedly ask me why the hell I was hanging out with her wasn't something I could deal with. (136-137:2012)

Consequently,Jeane and Michael decide it is easier for them socially if they hide their relationship from their peers, although their respective families are made aware of the true nature of their involvement. This demonstrates the impact that a peer group has on a relationship within YA literature. Both Jeane and Michael have concerns about how their friends will react to their relationship, and it is not until the end of the novel that their relationship is confirmed openly to their wider social group.

Sex and relationships are discussed and dissected by groups of friends frequently within young adult texts. This phenomenon usually arises from the setting of the texts, which is often a school. *Adorkable*, *Will Grayson, Will Grayson,*and

Confessions of Georgia Nicolson, are all set within a school and feature groups of school friends. The effect of these groups and setting is noticeable: it is markedly easy to meet people of the same age within the school setting, making the chance of finding a potential friend or romantic partner simple and realistic. The nature of the school setting also allows for a closed world in which the inmates create social rules. Peer pressure and group norms can thus arise; for instance, Georgia and her group of friends have a 'snogging scale' which allows them to numerically rate and order their sexual experiences. This encourages all experiences to be compared within a group and to be quantified. It also enables the girls to exert control over the situation and to be supported by their friends and peers in making decisions. The sharing of experiences in this text is positive, and demonstrates the level of trust within the group, as well as providing a forum in which the girls can raise their concerns, questions, or needs in a safe and non-judgemental environment.

The finding of a non-judgemental audience can be a struggle within YA literature as there are often social or cultural issues that may affect or hinder a relationship. These societal obstacles can usually be summarised as the following: a partner or friend is rejected by society, parents, or other friends due to their age, gender, sexual history, race, social standing, cultural background, or even species. The clearest example of one relationship which might struggle to find a sympathetic or non-judgemental audience would be the relationship between Daisy and Edmond. Not only are they biological cousins, they are also engaging in illegal underage sex. Daisy is fifteen and Edmond is fourteen: given that the legal age of consent is the same as current UK legislation Daisy and Edmond, by consummating their relationship, are committing a crime. Intimacy within YA literature is thus complicated by the fact that in engaging in sexual congress the characters may be breaking the law, and so however loving, emotionally stable, and healthy the relationship may be, it is illegal. Therefore, the writer in choosing to present a sexually active underage couple is making a legal and provocative statement.

Intimacy in YA literature is usually a new occurrence, and so is laced with naivety, hesitation, and embarrassment, with characters often worrying about their lack of experience, knowledge, or physical appearance. When Michael and Jeane have sex for the first time, Michael worries that he has not managed to satisfy Jeane,

and there is a frank discussion around consent and pressure. This is important, as it incorporates the very pressing social issue of consent. Before each significant sexual activity, Michael and Jeane both check that the other willingly consents:

> Anyway, we'd established some ground rules for the kissing and the maybe touching so there was no good reason not to walk over to Jeane. (2012:138)
>
> 'Should we ... like, we could do what we just did but together, or do you thinkitwouldberushingitifwehadsex?' That was how he said it, one long clump of words all stuck together, his voice breathy and shrill. I hadn't expected him to be the one to ask first. 'Is it bad that I asked? Am I pressuring you?' (2012:192)

Here Michael and Jeane both set out what they want physically in the relationship and also discuss the parameters of their relationship as they expand. There is no assumption that because they committed certain physical acts together, they will be able to commit other acts. For each action consent is sought, which reinforces the message that consent and communication are fundamental and vital parts of a healthy relationship. Manning is reiterating repeatedly that both parties should be able to consent to what they do and do not want to do sexually, and that when one person says stop, the other stops. Manning makes it very clear that consent is equally important for both the male and female partner with Jeane explicitly telling Michael to tell her to stop if she does something he does not want or like. This acknowledges that sexual abuse is not a purely female issue and that males not only can be abused but often are not given the opportunity to speak out or asked for consent before partaking in sexual acts.

In the wake of legislation regarding coercive control, and the Me Too and Time's Up movements of recent years the importance of verbal consent has been highlighted internationally across all media platforms, and as we can see, is also starting to be woven into the fabric of YA literature. The act of asking for consent is presented as a normal and routine part of sexual intimacy and makes the female characters active, willing, and engaged partners in the act. By requesting consent female characters have agency and control over the situation; they are no longer passive participants in a sexual relationship or activity, but equal partners in one shared action.

The contrast between these scenes and those from Meyer's *Twilight* series, as noted previously, is colossal and important. Whilst Meyer perpetrates very traditional heterosexuality, in which male sexual dominance and female submissiveness are seen as desirable traits, Manning carefully presents a balanced and equal heterosexual relationship, in which the needs and boundaries of each partner are considered by the other. Meyer's males take, while Manning's give. In Manning's text, there is a level of respect for the physical form that is missing in Meyer's, as evidenced by the abuse to which Meyer subjects her female protagonist.

The repercussions of sex in YA literature also differ from those of sex in adult literature. Pregnancy, for example, is usually more of a concern for teenagers than adults, as accidental pregnancies in YA literature can generate greater social stigma, disappointed or hostile parents, social pressure to have (or not have) an abortion, interrupted schooling, and limited legal or governmental support. There is also less social stigma in consenting adults having sex, which contrasts with the reputational damage or social stigma young adults can experience through becoming sexually active. Girls in particular risk being labelled as sluts, slags, or as 'easy'. Boys by contrast, while not usually so obviously penalised socially for being sexually active, do risk losing face for sexual inexperience. The double standard created by society towards sexual activity can affect how young adults present themselves sexually. Jeane does not flaunt her sexuality or try to sexualise herself, but Michael does. Similarly, in *Tithe* Kaye does not identify herself as a sexualised being, but Roiben is presented as a decidedly sexual object. Perhaps we are seeing a shift from the female characters being sexualised to the male characters being sexually objectified. As indicated earlier, both Roiben and Michael are presented as very attractive, sexual beings whose looks are a fundamental part of the female characters' attraction to them.

As we have just seen, while a physical attraction is recognised, acknowledged, and required in YA literature, romance and love are often held in far higher regard than the simple physical act of sex. Although a character may be beautiful, it is the emotional bond that is coveted, not the physical.

Queer Romance

While many YA novels are heterosexually focused there does exist an expanding sub-genre of queer-focused novels and YA characters. The variety of LGBTQ+ characters and themes is growing exponentially with many 'straight' novels featuring non-heteronomative characters as well as more 'queer' novels being published: for example, Patrick Ness's *Release* (2017), promoted as an updating of *Forever* for gay teenagers. Previously many LGBTQ+ characters were stereotypes – camp gay males or butch lesbian females – however more recent texts have decidedly moved away from these stereotypes and presented a more rounded and diverse range of characters. YA novels now feature bisexual characters, pansexual characters, and characters that identify elsewhere on the sexual spectrum. In an age where the most pressing romantic issues in YA literature revolve around interspecies romantic interactions, LGBTQ+ interactions between two human characters seem ordinary, as many of these LGBTQ+ romances now feature interspecies relationships too. As discussed above the gender roles, like the characters' sexuality have also become more fluid. Gender is no longer a role but a choice. As Butler argues in her work *Bodies that Matter:*

> At stake in such a reformulation of the materiality of bodies will be the following: (1) the recasting of the matter of bodies as the effect of a dynamic of power, such that the matter of bodies will be indissociable from the regulatory norms that govern their materialization and the signification of those material effects; (2) the understanding of performativity not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but, rather, as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains; (3) the construct of "sex" no longer as a bodily given on which the construct of gender is artificially imposed, but as a cultural norm which governs the materialization of bodies; (4) a rethinking of the process by which a bodily norm is assumed, appropriated, taken on as not, strictly speaking, undergone *by a subject,* but rather that the subject, the speaking "I", is formed by virtue of having gone through such a process of assuming a sex; and (5) a linking of this process of "assuming" a sex with the question of *identification*, and with the discursive means by which the heterosexual imperative enables certain sexed identifications and forecloses and/or disavows other identities. (1993: xii-xiii)

Here Butler suggests that sex is not the same as gender, and that sex and gender are identities that whilst chosen, are also formed and shaped in relation to societal norms. The body may have a sex, but sex is also assumed and chosen as an

identity by an individual. How this notion of sex is displayed by a character is impacted by how society perceives sex and the role of that sex. Hence a character may identify as male in their sex and body but perform that identity in a manner that society may not deem to be male. e.g. if they are to adopt the material attributes of what society perceives as female then in the view of society they are not perceived as belonging to the male sex fully. This idea of individuals choosing their gender, sex, and identity accordingly fits current YA literature well, as we find several characters that do not fit within the rigidly constructed social identities of male, female, straight, queer, bisexual, masculine, or feminine.

Some critics, however, continue to align characters with fixed and dated definitions and stereotypes. Epstein also argues that young adult texts often stereotype queer characters, presenting the possible stock choices in a table[4].

Type of queer male	Explanation	Type of queer female	Explanation
Masculine	Butch, athletic, manly, not-gay-seeming	Butch	Butch, athletic, often uses a male name, stereotypical lesbian, often friends with men
Feminine	An in-between type, softer than masculine, but with stereotypically feminine traits such as doing what his (usually masculine) boyfriend wants and being a supportive partner,	Femme	Often attractive, feminist, serious, perhaps man-hating
Feminised	Stereotypically gay, may wear make-up or women's clothes, may have dyed hair, sex-obsessed, may use a woman's name		

Whilst Epstein makes a very compelling argument regarding 'problematising' queer relationships in texts, this table is particularly flawed as evidence of texts stereotyping queer characters. The definitions of these stereotypes are archaic,

[4]Table 3: Types of queer characters in YA books (Epstein, B.J. 2013: 118)

narrow, and far too easily applied. To label a character based on one or two aspects of their personality would suggest that the reader rather than the writer is the one stereotyping. Corny dyes his hair in *Ironside* but is not a 'feminised' gay, nor is he an athletic 'masculine' gay, he may perhaps be a 'feminine' gay but the definition is so vague it is impossible to tell. The 'masculine' and 'feminine traits as defined by Epstein are also incredibly regressive, clinging to the notion of gender being tied to sex. The focus of much of Epstein's argument is that queer characters are defined, identified, and labelled not by their actions but rather by their looks in many young adult LGBTQ+ texts. Also, the clear divide between the number of categories for male characters compared to female characters is very telling of the clearly male focus that has been applied when viewing this subject area. To limit and define all lesbian characters as being either butch or femme ignores the subtleties some characters present and discourages diversity.

Whilst this may be true of other YA texts the queer characters in *Ash, Will Grayson, Will Grayson,* and *Ironside* mostly avoid neatly falling into any particular stereotypes. Ash and Kaisa's relationship lacks the typical butch/femme dynamic often presented in LGBTQ+ literature, similarly Corny, Luis, and gay Will Grayson lack the campness or extreme 'masculinity' expected in stock gay characters. Tiny, although demonstrating certain aspects of both hyper -'masculine' and 'feminine' as described by Epstein in her table (Tiny plays for the school American football team, loves musicals, and is president of the Gay-Straight Alliance at his school) combines these elements in such a way as to defy categorisation. Tiny is not a regular character, nor even a realistic character: he is a character larger than life physically and metaphorically. He acts as a gay icon, proud, unapologetic, and triumphant. He is not without flaws but he wears his flaws like everything else about him, openly. Tiny's fearlessness acts as a conduit for gay Will Grayson's liberation. He inspires Will to reach out to others, to open up and allow himself to be hurt again, to take risks, and move on with his life. It is in these acts that meaning should and can be found.

If we accept Butler's argument that gender is performative we each self-define and exhibit our own interpretation of traits and gender regardless of our sex. Although Butler emphasises that this performance is not a choice but rather an

identity forged through countless repetitions and actions enforced by society, this is a very constrained view that does not allow for individual choice or change. Perhaps a different view would incorporate the essence of Butler's work, that gender and sexuality are only constructs designed by society, but allow for more personal control over performance, thus enabling greater fluidity and change within an individual's enacting of gender and sexuality. Such performative agency would allow for characters like Ash, to flit between heteronormative roles and queer roles simultaneously. Ash is both the straight fairytale Cinderella and the divergent queer lover of Kaisa, performing both roles side by side. However, although she enacts both roles, the final role is her choice.

> Within the twenty-first century, most authors writing lesbian characters for young readers create an explicit link between girls' sexual subjectivity and their agency: understanding and embracing her own sexuality opens to a young woman the possibilities and potential inherent in that understanding. Accepting herself as a sexual agent, desirous and desirable, empowers a young protagonist to act on those desires, opening her not simply to the possibilities of sexual exploration and fulfilment, but also to the possibilities of knowledge, loss, and pain inherent in any relationship—in growing up. Essentially, empowering young female protagonists as sexual agents helps them become agents in the adult world. Thus, a significant element of YA lesbian novels is the protagonist's self-identification as lesbian (Jones. 2012:76).

As Caroline Jones states, the embracing of a lesbian identity or the realisation of a queer identity allows for an acceptance and understanding of a character's true self. This understanding of self and her love for another woman can be seen in Malinda Lo's text *Ash* (2009). *Ash* is a queered fairy story in which the protagonist is caught in a Cinderella-like plot. With the death of her father, Ash - the protagonist - is left at the mercy of her stepmother and stepsisters, and is forced to become a servant in her own house. The male fairy, Sidhean, watches over and supports Ash from the shadows of the woods surrounding her house. When Ash meets and falls in love with the King's Huntress, Kaisa, she is torn between the debt she feels towards Sidhean and the love she has for Kaisa.

In an interesting twist, the otherworldly and dangerous are represented by a heterosexual male figure whilst the human and safe are represented by a lesbian female. Thus heterosexuality is presented in this text as the 'other', the unknown and the dark, whereas homosexuality is portrayed in terms of light and love, healthy and secure: 'Then they took the last step together, and when she kissed her, her mouth as warm as summer, the taste of her sweet and clear, she knew at last she was home' (2009:291). It is because of the love that Ash feels for Kaisa that she realises how to break Sidhean's curse: 'The knowledge of love had changed her. It focussed what had once been a blur; it turned her world around and presented her with a new landscape. Now, she would do anything to bring Kaisa happiness. And if the knowledge of love could change her, would it not also change Sidhean?' (2009: 277-278). As Jones notes, the acceptance of a character's true sexuality facilitates the character's development and understanding of their own identity. In recognising her love for another woman, Ash can see clearly who she is, what she wants, and how she will live her life. Her world comes into focus because she is no longer confused about her sexuality or love; she declares her same-sex relationship and in doing so declares herself.

While queering a fairy story allows for the rewriting of the traditional fairy story and a queer interpretation of the genre, it also lends an air of fantasy to the idea of homosexual acceptance. The world in which *Ash* is set is so welcoming and accepting of Ash and Kaisa's relationship that this in itself is almost as magical as the existence of fairies and the fairy realm. The lack of fighting to be accepted as a lesbian couple by friends, family or society presents this text as decidedly unreal, but also hopeful, as the text can be viewed as an image of the wish that one day our society will reach the stage in which queer relationships are so accepted that the only hindrance to such a relationship is the presence of a cursed fairy, or in the real world, nothing. This easy, willing acceptance of Ash and Kaisa's relationship by the other characters in this text suggests that Lo is presenting this not as a radical political text with an agenda to make social change, but rather as an offering towards simple acceptance of love in any form. Although Sidhean is cursed to love Ash, this is not an act of malice but rather an act driven by wanting to help another being understand and repent for their previous actions, thus making love a changing, redeeming, and healing force. Although the curse is not a fully malevolent force, but

rather a force wishing to educate through experience, the presentation of Sidhean's love is decidedly darker than Kaisa's.

Ash pays her debt to Sidhean with herself, prostituting her very being as payment. This idea of payment, punishment, or an ordeal that must be endured to find true love and happiness is key to many fairy stories, but Ash's deal with Sidhean is different. Ash recognises that one night in Sidhean's realm is not the same as one night in the human world, and as such Ash potentially lives two lives, the first with Sidhean and the second with Kaisa. It is implied that Ash can reject a heterosexual life and relationship only once she has experienced it, indicating that Ash can justify and validate her relationship with Kaisa only in comparison to, or within the framework of a heterosexual relationship. This interrogates the nature of Ash's method of payment and also questions the power that each sex has within the text. Sidhean, as a male, appears to be able to control and manipulate Ash, whereas Kaisa exerts limited influence or control over Ash and her actions. That Ash chooses Kaisa is vital, as not only does it suggest that she is rejecting Sidhean's selfish and obsessive love, it also suggests that choice is valued and more powerful than magic, money, power, or eternity. Ash could have power and wealth if she entered into a relationship with the prince; she could have magic and time beyond imagining with Sidhean, but Ash chooses Kaisa, not because Kaisa can save her from the life with her stepmother and stepsister -it is Sidhean alone that Ash believes can save her - but because Kaisa enables and empowers Ash to save herself. Thus self-actualisation and self-respect are prized above all, a sentiment that is echoed in *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (2010). This novel, like *Ash,* presents choice, self-discovery, and self-acceptance as the necessary ingredients for personal satisfaction and self-actualisation.

Written by John Green and David Levithan, *Will Grayson, Will Grayson,* features homosexuality in a real world setting. The two lead characters - both named Will Grayson - unexpectedly meet, resulting in a relationship developing between straight Will Grayson's gay best friend Tiny and gay Will Grayson. The text focuses on the relationships between the characters, mostly the friendship between straight Will Grayson and Tiny, the budding romance between gay Will Grayson and Tiny and the pseudo gay relationship between gay Will Grayson and the imaginary Isaac.

Other relationships include the relationship between straight Will Grayson and Jane and the friendship between gay Will Grayson and Gideon.

Ash and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* each present love as a bonding and saving force that will overcome hate, oppression, and prejudice. All forms of love are accepted and welcomed within each text and all relationships are acknowledged. Both texts preach tolerance and the social inclusion and recognition of all bonds between sentient beings, including Ash's relationship with Sidhean, which can be viewed as a cross-species relationship. Ultimately, it is understanding, compassion, and love for our fellow beings that enable each character within each text to reach their fulfilment. In understanding and acknowledging his failings in his previous relationships Tiny is able finally to realise that his crushing desire for love is so self-absorbed that the other person in the relationship is reduced to a caricature reflecting who Tiny wants them to be. In recognising and addressing his failings Tiny is able through his musical to exorcise the ghosts of his past relationships, turning his flaws into art, satirising himself, and ultimately shedding his past in the form of musical expression. It is a huge moment of self-discovery, realisation, and acceptance which enables Tiny to change and to choose the new life and future he wants for himself, just as Ash does in her narrative.

Similarly, gay Will Grayson also has several moments of self-realisation within the text, when he realises that his mother accepts his homosexuality and loves him regardless, when he realises that Gideon is his friend, and finally when he comes to terms with who he is and what he wants, accepting that he is worthy of love. Indeed, both texts are ultimately about the central characters accepting that they can be loved, that there are different types of love and different relationships, but that they alone choose the relationship they want. As Tiny's musical proudly proclaims: "Love is the most common miracle... Love is always a miracle, everywhere, every time" (2010:290). Love in this text is presented as more than a sexual desire or impulse, it is the fabric that defines us as human, ties us to one another, and gives us purpose. It is, as the straight Will Grayson states, the backbone of friendship:

> "NO. No no no. I don't want to *screw* you. I just *love* you. When did who you want to screw become the whole game? Since when is the person you want to screw the only person you get to love? It's so stupid, Tiny! I mean, Jesus,

> who even gives a fuck about sex?! People act like it's the most important thing humans do, but come on. How can our sentient fucking lives revolve around something *slugs* can do. I mean, who you want to screw and whether you want to screw them? Those are important questions, I guess. But they're not *that* important. You know what's important? Who you would *die* for? Who do you wake up at five forty-five in the morning for even though you don't know why he needs you? Whose drunken nose would you pick?!'' (2010:257).

Love and sex are perceived as separate but easily combined entities within this text. Sex is a physical act that is presented as more animalistic, while love is presented as an emotional and mental state that goes beyond the physical and is evidence of our more spiritual human nature. Love is also portrayed as a uniting force which overcomes the division of sexual preference. Tiny and straight Will Grayson's love for one another is no less important, significant, or life-changing despite their lack of sexual desire for one another. Similarly, neither is straight Will Grayson's and Jane's relationship given more prominence or status than any other relationship, demonstrating that in this text all relationships are considered important and equal, be they heterosexual or homosexual. This hope for acceptance and inclusion persists in both texts regardless of the homophobic comments and attacks that Tiny and gay Will Grayson encounter. Although Ash and Kaisa's relationship is easily accepted within their alternative universe, Tiny and gay Will Grayson are both subjected to homophobic comments and attacks in a real world setting. Straight Will Grayson is also subjected to verbal abuse because of his friendship with Tiny. These homophobic comments, whilst hurtful and ignorant, do not curb, repress or limit the characters. They succeed in the face of this opposition and while complete social acceptance of queer relationships can be perceived as something that can occur only in fairy tales, the overall message in both texts is one of hope and positivity. Tiny, gay Will Grayson, and Ash all find their place within society, within their social groups, and ultimately achieve their respective 'happily ever after'.

We see a similar acceptance in *Adorkable* in which Michael discovers that one of Jeane's previous sexual partners was female. Although he at first worries that Jeane may not want to be with him because she may prefer female lovers, he soon overcomes this worry and without criticism, judgement or overt curiosity accepts this past partner without the need to fetishize or focus on this relationship more than any of her other partners.

In *Ironside,* Luis and Corny's relationship differs slightly from the other queer couples, in that Luis and Corny are a side or secondary couple, overshadowed by the main heterosexual, albeit a nonhuman heterosexual, romance. Yet whilst they are supposed to be a subsidiary couple they have more romantic interaction than Kaye and Roiben, the supposedly key couple. Kaye and Roiben are for the majority of the text separated as Roiben sets Kaye an impossible quest for her to win a place beside him as his consort. Although Kaye completes the quest and becomes Roiben's consort, this does not occur until the penultimate scene of the novel. Consequently, the majority of romance in the novel arises from the budding relationship between Corny and Luis.

The relationship between Corny and Luis is, like Roiben and Kaye's, mostly implied. There is little formalising or analysing of the relationship, instead the focus is on the adventure and trying to outwit Silarial. Corny and Luis do not discuss what their relationship is, or what they want from it; instead, we are permitted only to see glimpses of it as they move through the text. We see them kiss in the car as they collect Luis' brother's ashes, one of the few physical or intimate moments within the novel, but other than that the relationship is overshadowed by the need to succeed in their quest. Our understanding of the relationship is therefore filtered through our guesses, assumptions, implied situations, and own personal interpretations. It is left to the reader to decide the status of Corny and Luis' relationship. Are they boyfriends, just sexual partners, friends with benefits, or even soulmates? The lack of definition allows the reader not only to interpret the relationship as they wish but also to categorise it. Luis might not be gay, he might be bi-sexual, the relationship might be temporary, or it might be permanent; the flexibility or true nature of the relationship is veiled from us as readers, thus forcing us to piece together a possible picture of the whole from dropped hints and actions.

As noted in the previous chapter it is language that defines and explains actions, making them real. Without language describing Corny and Luis' relationship, it is without narrative, we have no labels to attached to it or words to describe it, we are forced to draw our interpretations from what it is not. It is not enmity, nor hatred nor heterosexuality, thus as Irigaray finds the feminine in the absence, we begin to glimpse Corny and Luis' relationship properly in what it is not.

What is clear though is that this relationship is a queer human one set in the real world. Though Luis and Corny have dealings with the fairy folk, they are human and reside in the human world, not in the fairy realms. Their relationship consequently, unlike Kaisa and Ash's, will be judged by the standards and values of contemporary human America. Set on the east coast of America alternating between New York and Jersey, Corny and Luis' relationship seems to be accepted and respected by others. There are no homophobic comments or slurs directed towards Corny and Luis like those that appear in *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* and though we can attribute some of this acceptance and tolerance to the unusual company or social groups they mix with - fairies, homeless, cursed - overall the reaction to Corny and Luis' romance is very positive, welcoming and accepting.

This could then suggest that in Black's urban fairy crossover world sexuality is not an issue and that queer relationships can occur, thrive, and exist without comment or criticism. In her 2013 work *Are the Kids Alright,* J.B. Epstein discusses how by affirming or defending a queer relationship an author may unintentionally 'problematise' the relationship. By marking the queer relationship as different and in need of explanation, the writer marks the relationship as outside the bounds of convention, and as unusual and different. Consequently, in not rigidly labelling and categorising Corny and Luis' relationship Black gives the same status and respect to it as she does to Kaye and Roiben's relationship.

Black also allows the same level of physical contact and intimacy between her queer and straight characters; both may kiss, and it is hinted that the physical might go further than that, but never explicitly stated. As such the full intimacy of both relationships is unknown and oddly private.

Each text is one of reconciliation, forgiveness, love, and acceptance: in each, the main characters make peace with their respective former friends or lovers, they forgive, apologise, accept and move on, and in this, we find the true spirit of love. Each text is a queer affirming tale of love conquering all; heralding a new age of acceptance and integration of all sexualities, this hope, optimism, and possible naivety, are, as we have seen previously in the chapter, very characteristic of how YA literature presents sex, love, and romance. While there is a clear shift towards acceptance and inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters in the most recent texts considered

this is not reflected in some of the older texts selected for this thesis. The *Georgia Nicolson* series contains multiple problematic references to actions or behaviours deemed 'queer' by Georgia and other characters; for example, in *...Then he ate my boy entrancers,* first published in 2005 Georgia makes several negative remarks about lesbians: 'Libby is in Libbyland making scuba-diving Barbie and Sandra do "snoggling". If Sandra wasn't in fact our Lord in a dress, it would be lezzie snogging. I blame my parents because of their lack of moral code.' (2005:111). She later expresses concern that she may be perceived by others as a lesbian: 'I very nearly hugged her. But then I remembered we are back in Stiff Upper Lip Land and I don't want any rumours of lesbianism to spread; you never know who might be watching' (2005:160). Georgia's worry is perhaps intended to be a comedic remark but it is a dated statement which would be unlikely to be published now.

Chapter Summary

To conclude, YA literature often regards and presents sex and love as romantic, spiritual, and full of meaning. Sex is frequently not just a random event devoid of emotion or connection, but rather a moment heavy with implications, consequences, meaning, and motives. Characters regularly reflect on each romantic or intimate episode, often viewing the experience as valuable learning, helping them to better understand themselves and the relationships they find themselves in, and to develop a better awareness of sex, romance, and self-discovery. The intimate scenes are often presented delicately, with a focus on pleasure and enjoyment, yet with an acknowledging nod towards the characters' usual naivety, inexperience, or ignorance in such matters. These contemporary texts are not the sexual instruction manuals of bygone decades, but rather explorations of relationships which healthy, or unhealthy. are intimate and often life-changing events.

Chapter Three

Humanity, Cyborgs and the Supernatural

‘Oh what I'd give for a hundred years
But the physical interferes
Every day more, O my Creator
What is the good of the strongest heart
In a body that's falling apart?
A serious flaw, I hope you know that’

(Andrew Lloyd Webber: *Waltz for Che and Eva*)

Human and non-human relationships are not a new occurrence in YA literature; recently the trend for non-human characters has become not only fashionable but almost compulsory. The range is constantly expanding as writers desperately search old myths, folklore, and legends looking for obscure or forgotten beings to recast and repurpose in their work. Familiar non-humans, vampires, witches, werewolves, ghosts, demons, angels, zombies, fairies, mermaids, pixies, trolls, goblins, and dragons, appear regularly within YA literature with many writers adding or removing features from the stock description to make their re-imagining of supernatural beings stand out.

This chapter will explore Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga (2005-2008), Holly Black's works *Tithe*(2002),*Ironside* (2007)and *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*(2013), Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* series (2001-2006), Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010) and finally John Green's novel *The Fault in Our Stars*(2012), to attempt to understand how the body, human and other is used to explore and warp societal norms, changes, and expectations. The chapter will also endeavour to evaluate how the body is used as a forum to discuss and debate issues of mortality, trauma, ageing, morality, and transformation. The chapter will consider how the physical in contemporary YA literature challenges the traditional tropes and values found in fairytales and other historical supernatural works. Ultimately this chapter will attempt to answer the question, what does YA literature define as human?

Death and Cyborgs

The body in YA literature has radically altered over the decades. Once a human, gendered figure, the body has changed from human to humanoid, from mortal to immortal, from gendered to non-gendered, from natural to supernatural. Unlike science fiction which is filled with cyborgs - the merging of the organic and the synthetic - the current landscape of YA literature is littered with mythical beings pulled from the stories of old, from folklore, legend, fairytale, and even religion. These beings are organic, and yet other. They inhabit not a future vision of our world but live or exist within and among our current world. In parallel or hidden spaces they dwell, disguising or concealing their supernatural identities as they move through the human world. As they are presented frequently as non-aging, immortal beings with powers and abilities that far outstrip those of an ordinary human, being 'other' or being different is no longer a derogatory trait: instead, it is a desired and coveted state.

Creating a supernatural being allows an author to overcome the challenge of ageing, deterioration, true adulthood, and extinction. Although it does not overcome death or eliminate it, as many characters die in their human form to be reborn in their supernatural form, it does repurpose death. Death is a common threat within YA and children's literature: the protagonist often duels and dances with death many times within a text, as they watch their friends and foes alike fall, but the true fear that haunts YA literature is not death but aging. Death can be glamorised, made meaningful, dramatic, or purposeful, it can be given romance and drama, but old age cannot. By granting the protagonist immortality authors give their character perpetual youth. They will never have to grow up nor become full adults; the mundane and boring world of the adult is fully rejected and denied. Similarly old age, decay, and weakness in the body are also rejected, replaced with impervious immortal youth and vitality.

The glamorisation of death is not a new phenomenon, nor is romanticising the death of the young. Literature has a long history stretching back centuries exploring the death of those cut down in their prime. Shakespeare's*Romeo and Juliet* (1597) is the classic example of romantic youthful death, but more modern examples could include Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The*

Great Gatsby (1925). Following in the footsteps of these works is *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012), by John Green. How Green addresses teenage illness and death will be discussed later in this chapter.

The romanticising of the beautiful young dead is not limited to literature. Within our own contemporary culture, there exists a veneration of those who have died young, the infamous '27 club' being a notable example. Consisting of celebrities who have died at the age of 27, the 'club' includes such iconic cultural figures as Amy Winehouse, Kurt Cobain, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, Kristen Pfaff and Richey Edwards

This principle of prizing youth, lack of responsibility, eradication of the boring, rejection of convention or 'normality' and the embracing of the migrant, the adventure-filled world of possibilities and opportunities for change, rebirth, and unlimited potential is a clear reflection of our current social climate, as was J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) with its distaste for adult 'phoniness'. Catharine Hosmer refers to this rejection of the adult as a generational symptom, suggesting that the rejection has arisen out of social change: 'Many social commentators have called this youth-centred culture the "Peter Pan generation" because advertising and media stresses living in the present, indulging in the self as well as fear of aging and distrust of adults and growing up.' (2008:6). József Hajdú also discusses the phenomenon that is the Peter Pan generation whilst looking to the next generation:

> "Generation Y", also known as the "Millennial Generation", is the demographic cohort following Generation X. Millennials are sometimes referred to as the "Boomerang Generation" or the "Peter Pan Generation", because of the members' perceived penchant for delaying some steps into adulthood, postponing this period longer than before. These labels were also a reference to a trend among those living with their parents for a longer period than previous generations. (2014: 38)

Hajdú makes an interesting observation that the 'Peter Pan Generation' is 'delaying' adulthood. So if one does not wish to grow up and inhabit this world of adults, how to avoid and escape it? The answer is the supernatural. We see this delay in many YA supernatural texts as by becoming supernatural the physical is frozen; adulthood is delayed temporarily or permanently. Thus adolescence is extended indefinitely, allowing extra time for the protagonist to enjoy being young, and to avoid forcing the protagonist to make life-defining decisions about their future. By suspending the

impact of the flow of time the author allows for an escape from reality. These supernatural texts reflect our society's contemporary wish to dwell continuously in our youth, to remain young, to live selfishly, and to exist for ourselves. This suspension of aging also forces us to consider the physical body of youth. Whilst the characters might develop mentally, emotionally, or spiritually, their physical growth is halted. The body of the young is thus privileged above that of a mature adult.

Youth and beauty are the focus of the physical; the body is a source of strength, desire, and self-expression. The body in these young adult supernatural texts is a tool; it does not falter, it is responsive and under the control of the protagonist. The physical form is also intrinsically linked to the identity of the supernatural in young adult texts: how else would we define the supernatural if not by their differing non-human physical attributes? We define vampires, werewolves, pixies, fairies, trolls, goblins, angels, demons, witches, and mermaids by that which makes them non-human in their external appearance and abilities. They may have humanlike personalities, morality, or characteristics, but their true identity as non-human arises because their organic or biological physiology is different from that of a human.

The physical body is vital in shaping not just non-humans but also humans in YA literature. How the human protagonists present themselves through their physical form is essential to their character. Katniss' identity in *Hunger Games* is that of a hunter and soldier which would not be possible if she did not have the necessary physical ability and control over her body. Similarly, the control over, and painful awareness of her own body and her eating disorder are a key part of Daisy's identity. Likewise, Bella's interpretation of herself as weak, clumsy, and human is central to her identity and self-perception. Kaye also struggles to reconcile herself with her physical form as her true skin colour and non-human anatomy force her to rediscover and consider her identity. Consequently, YA literature forces its characters to address their physical form, to discover its abilities, limitations, possibilities, and adaptability. This focus on the physical can be seen as a variation on puberty, with many characters, like Bella, undergoing a physical transformation, not unlike that of a child to an adult. The change can be startling, confusing,

frightening, and is irreversible, much like growing up which requires extreme measures to halt the process.

While physical change is explored within these texts continuous aging is not; the fear of the adult, as Hosmer noted, persists. We see this fear and mistrust of adults in how they are presented in the texts; as discussed in Chapter One, adults are presented as unreliable, flawed, failing individuals. The world of the adult is too permanent, too decided, too rigid; it has a finality to it that the world of the young adult does not.

Hajdú also raises another interesting point in his discussion of "Generation Z" and that is the use of technology that permeates our western society. Communication has been redefined: no longer is it a physical act but a removed distant action. Through our use of technology, it has become necessary to form an online identity. This online identity is both inhuman and human, intangible, and yet a vital presence. This combination of human personality and technology to form a new identity is reminiscent of much science fiction work and introduces another form of the non-human body, the cyborg. Donna Haraway in her seminal work *Simians, Cyborgs and Women,* defines the cyborg as:

> a hybrid creature, composed of organism and machine. But, cyborgs are compounded of special kinds of machines and special kinds of organisms appropriate to the late twentieth century. Cyborgs are post- Second World War hybrid entities made of, first, ourselves and other organic creatures in our unchosen 'high-technological' guise as information systems, texts and ergonomically controlled labouring, desiring, and reproducing systems. The second essential ingredient in cyborgs is machines in their guise, also, as communications systems, texts, and self-acting, ergonomically designed apparatuses. (1991:1)

Here Haraway classes cyborgs as part creature - a term both unspecific and suggestive of animal or animal-like being - and as 'ourselves'. This would imply that her definition of 'organic' encompasses all living matter regardless of such trivialities as species, genus, or family. Such a reduction of humanity to merely 'organic' could be read almost as an eco-critical perspective. By aligning humans with nature Haraway places humanity in an eco-biological sphere in which humanity is but one more species of ape. This de-privileging of humans places humanity on a parallel not only with the rest of nature but also with machines. Man, like machine, is a product

that is created, albeit by different processes, and so in the creation of a cyborg both aspects of heritage - organic and machine - are equally valued in Haraway's conception of the cyborg entity. Cyborgs, Haraway suggests, are not other, alien or enemy, but a combining of matter both organic and machine to form a new being which is not us and yet is us[5]. Thus the body of the cyborg is doubly intriguing; it is not fully human but neither is it fully machine. As Haraway notes:

> There are several consequences to taking seriously the imagery of cyborgs as other than our enemies. Our bodies, ourselves; bodies are maps of power and identity. Cyborgs are no exception. A cyborg body is not innocent; it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generates antagonistic dualisms without end (or until the world ends); it takes irony for granted. One is too few, and two is only one possibility. Intense pleasure in skill, machine skill, ceases to be a sin, but an aspect of embodiment. The machine is not an *it* to be animated, worshipped and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for the machines; *they* do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they. (1991: 180)

By finding 'ourselves' in cyborgs it is also possible to find 'ourselves' in the supernatural creatures of myth and legend that populate young adult literature. These humanoid figures hail not from the future as Haraway's cyborgs do but from the past.

The idea of cyborgs aiding our understanding of humanity and ourselves, as Haraway suggests, is repeated in Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* series. Set in a futuristic steampunk[6] dystopia, the novel divides humanity into those who dwell in static settlements and those who reside in automated moving settlements. The war between the two factions is splintered and complex, with multiple forces and agencies fighting for their agendas. Within this world we find cyborgs, or as they are

[5] Haraway's definition of, and argument for, cyborgs' existence and purpose is not without critical response notably in the work of Joseph Schneider. Schneider's article *Haraway's Viral Cyborg* published in *Women's Studies Quarterly* in 2012 outlines much of the critique of Haraway's work.

[6] Steampunk is not just a literary form but a wider subculture aesthetic that has permeated current society. Although a relatively new phenomenon arising in the 1990s the steampunk movement has experienced rapid growth and development and consequently has progressed and spread far beyond its literary origins. Defined by Jeff VanderMeer as: 'First, it's simultaneously retro and forward-looking in nature. Second, it evokes a sense of adventure and discovery. Third, it embraces divergent and extinct technologies as a way of talking about the future' (2011:13), Steampunk repurposes, re-imagines and revives visual elements of the industrial revolution era, usually from the Victorian period, and transposes these elements into often futuristic or alternative forms of living, art or clothing.

referred to in the text, Stalkers. The two Stalkers featured in the series are Shrike and Stalker Fang. Reeve's cyborgs are a mix of machine and human, designed to exist for thousands of years. They are automated killing machines which can be rebuilt and reprogrammed, and yet are capable of free thought and rationality. Originally designed to be devoid of human emotion and feeling, both Stalker Fang and Shrike manage to retain part of their human sentimentality and compassion.

Stalker Fang, the cyborg created from Anna Fang's body, chooses not to destroy the world after Tom talks to her and reminds her of their time together when she was human. Likewise, though programmed to kill Hester, Shrike cannot. Reeve's cyborgs can love deeply and devotedly; enough that Shrike's love for Hester becomes his purpose and drive throughout the series. Reeve implies that however much the external and physical body might have changed in the transformation of these humans to cyborgs, the human memories and feelings linger, and it is these feelings and memories that have the power to motivate Stalker Fang and Shrike. The cyborgs are humanised by their connection to their past human lives, suggesting that although they have undergone a significant transformation, it has been impossible to fully eradicate their human history. This lingering humanity is a theme that many other young adult texts confront, including the *Twilight* saga, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Shrike and Stalker Fang operate in a unique space; they are both human and yet not. What sets them apart from the supernatural beings that also populate YA literature is that their non-human part is human-made. In this respect, they are, as Haraway has noted, twice-born, once through natural means and the other through mechanical means. Both births are created and orchestrated by humans; thus cyborgs, though not fully human, can be considered the offspring of humans in a way supernatural beings cannot. Supernatural beings occur through mutation or some other process without human involvement. Vampires create vampires from humans, infecting them with their dominant genetics which supersede and replace the previous human characteristics. Black’s fairies and other creatures are a separate race from humanity, and though interbreeding is possible, these beings can exist and reproduce without the need for humans. Thus, humans do not make vampires, or

fairies, or other supernatural beings: some other non-human force or entity creates them. Cyborgs, as presented in Reeve's world, exist because of human actions, and cannot, as far as we are aware, reproduce themselves. Therefore, unlike supernatural beings that may exist within a separate world, society, and moral framework, cyborgs are connected and belong in the world of humanity; hence we may logically perceive them through the lens of human society and morality.

Cyborgs allow us to consider the human body from a spectator perspective. We can pick apart the bodily elements that define us as human, and reshape and redesign the human body into a new form that fits our purpose better. Transformation enables us to evaluate how much alteration can occur before the body is deemed no longer human and therefore a cyborg. Linking to the ideas of beauty and technology, we could explore how plastic surgery, body modification, physical reconstruction, or technological advancement are reshaping the human body. Are trauma survivors, with bionic limbs, cyborgs? Should beauty queens with plastic and silicone implants be considered cyborgs? Arguably not, so what does constitute a cyborg? How much change must the human body undergo before we can classify it as having crossed over and become something other than human?

To return to Haraway's defining of the cyborg as revisited in her collaborative work with Cary Wolfe, published in Wolfe's 2016 work *Manifestly Haraway,* Haraway notes the impact of medical advancement in creating cyborgs:

> Contemporary science fiction is full of cyborgs – creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted. Modern medicine is also full of cyborgs, of coupling between organism and machine, each conceived as coded devices, in an intimacy and with a power that were not generated in the history of sexuality. Cyborg "sex" restores some of the lovely replicative baroque of ferns and invertebrates (such nice organic prophylactics against heterosexism). Cyborg replication is uncoupled from organic reproduction. (2016:6)

Haraway goes on to argue that we are all cyborgs and that to be a cyborg is more than the combination of man and machine (perhaps we should revisit the definition or classification of those with medical or surgical involvement) for as Haraway explains: 'The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centers structuring any possibility of historical transformation.' (2016:7). Yet this argument ignores an individual's right to choose how they define

themselves. If gender, as according to Butler, can be defined by a being's will, as well as societal norms, then does not a being have the right and the ability to choose whether they define as human or not? Repeatedly within this thesis, we continually return to the idea of choice, of beings choosing their family, their gender, their sexuality, their morality and their humanness. As we explore in this thesis Kaye chooses to define herself as part of the human world, and in some way still human, despite having a non-human body. She has lived a human life and therefore in her opinion is entitled to claim human as part of her heritage and identity. Similarly, despite the physical changes Katniss endures as part of the medical procedures to repair the injuries caused to her form by various sources both inside and outside of the Hunger Games arena (skin grafts etc.), she still defines herself as human and the title 'cyborg' seems unfitting for her, especially given her rejection and disdain for the cosmetic and bodily alterations and modifications that many in the Capitol undergo willingly. Perhaps 'cyborg' might be viewed as a title or quality, that like beauty is bestowed upon an individual by others, for few seem to openly claim it for themselves.

Haraway goes on to state that 'The cyborg is a creature in a postgender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labor, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity' (2016:8). This is an interesting concept; the de-gendering of cyborgs particularly when considering both Stalker Fang and Shrike have such distinctly demarked binary genders which are recognised and acknowledged by both themselves and others. Shrike is referred to as 'him/he' by Hester and other characters, just as Stalker Fang is referred to as 'her/she'. Despite their changes, their identity remains fixed to their original human gender. The term 'gender' is used specifically, for as discussed previously, critics such as Butler, view gender as a chosen state which may, or may not, reflect the sex of a being. Though Shrike and Stalker Fang in their human form possessed a gender identity that matched their physical sex, it is their gender they carry into their new forms, not their sex.

For Haraway and Wolfe, the cyborg is more than a physical being: it is a state of being which is political, radical, and unifying. It is vital to note that Haraway aligns

cyborg writing with survival and empowerment: ‘Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other’ (2016:55). The importance of writing or narrative to give voice to a cyborg is highlighted not only by Haraway but also by Reeve, as it is revealed at the end of the series that the entirety of the narrative has been narrated by Shrike to a human audience many years in the future. Here Shrike uses narrative to define himself not as a ‘Stalker’ but as something that remembers. Though the protagonists of the series are human, the storyteller (Shrike) and lens through which the events, characters, and emotions are viewed is other, which poses a question as to the motive, reliability, and agenda of Shrike in his role as narrator. Is Shrike’s world view, understanding of events, and reading of human actions and emotions accurate, or is his understanding compromised, as he is no longer human?

Shrike has redefined his purpose, his role, and sense of self; he is not the killing machine he was intended to be by his human makers, but a new being,capable of deciding his future destiny. It is in cyborgs, Haraway ultimately argues, that we find a possible answer to the dualism of human bodies, stating:

> Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia. It is an imagination of a feminist speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the supersavers of the new right. It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories. Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess. (2016:65-66)

Like Irigaray, Haraway also finds meaning and definition in what something is not: that in the reflection or shadow of the being we must destroy to make, we find both ourselves and the other. For Haraway, the cyborg is the means to understand and challenge these perceived dualities present in Western society and literature. The cyborg now consists of more than just the body or that which is ‘encapsulated by skin’; the cyborg can be an unattached, intangible entity that exists both within and without the body.

However, these are only Haraway’s initial thoughts and theories. In her follow-up manifesto *The Companion Species: Dogs, People and Significant Otherness*

(2016), she discusses the idea of companion species through the medium of dogs. She draws parallels between the human and canine relationships she has witnessed and is part of and the relationship between human and cyborg:

> So, in "The Companion Species Manifesto," I want to tell stories about relating in significant otherness, through which the partners come to be who we are in flesh and sign. The following shaggy dog stories about evolution, love, training, and kinds or breeds help me think about living well together with the host of species with whom human beings emerge on this planet at every scale of time, body, and space. (2016:116)

Haraway speaks about the love and relationships that can occur across species, and how the barriers of communication are bridged between species. She writes of the affection and awe that she, and other humans, have for species so separate from themselves, and whilst the relationships she describes are never sexual, as is expected, it cannot help but bring to mind the interspecies relationships that we find within YA literature, notably in the work of Stephenie Meyer. Meyer's depiction of Renesmee's and Jacob's relationship is suitably relevant as it considers the relationship of a demi-vampire/demi-human child and a werewolf, which could be considered as an anthropomorphised vision of the relationship between human and dog. While Jacob is not a traditional werewolf - he does not change form as a result of the full moon and is no more affected by silver than any other metal - he still transforms into a wolf and belongs to a pack. As is explained at the very end of the saga, Jacob and the other wolves are not 'werewolves', despite their reference to themselves as such, but 'shape-shifters'. Interestingly several of the vampire characters refer to Jacob, and the other wolves, in terms more commonly reserved for dogs. Although Haraway's work does not analyse, or suggest, romantic or sexual relationships between species, her discussion of how the love between species can be condensed into a willingness to recognise, accept and enable the otherness of another strikes a chord reminiscent of Jacob's imprinting on Renesmee. As Haraway notes:

> Tulip (Queenie, in real life) was the great love of [J.R] Ackerley's life. An important novelist, famous homosexual, and splendid writer, Ackerley honoured that love from the start by recognizing his impossible task – to wit, first, somehow to learn what *this* dog needed and desired and, second, to move heaven and earth to make sure she got it. (2016: 125)

Like Haraway's depiction of Ackerley, Jacob becomes what Renesmee needs and wants him to be in that moment. His life and purpose revolve around her, and he is driven by a force, unnatural though it may be, to ensure that his existence fits her desires and whims. However, unlike Ackerley, Jacob does not make this choice of his own volition but as a result of an ancient mystic bloodline, he was born into. Thus while the comparison is not perfect, Haraway's argument that love can occur between species, not because of magic, but because of choice, is compelling. Her argument that love between species requires an acknowledgment of the other's *otherness,* as well as recognising that differentness and seeing the other for what they are, is vital to YA literature. Love, or meaningful love, can occur only once those within the relationship understand and comprehend the other, or if not entirely, then at least they must accept what they do and do not understand or perceive, about the other. Ellen's love for Kaye is made meaningful and real when Kaye reveals her true form. Ellen accepts that she does not, and may never, know all of 'Kaye' because they are different species, yet she loves her regardless and does not try to change her but simply tries to provide for and help Kaye achieve her wants and needs. As with the cyborg, we may appreciate another species' otherness, their strengths, their form, their abilities, or their behaviours, but we will never truly understand them. We can only try to perceive and accept them as they are - as beings both separate and connected to us that make us question everything, or as Haraway boldly proclaims:

> Clearly, cyborgs – with their historical congealing of the machinic and the organic in the codes of information, where boundaries are less about skin than about statistically defined densities of signal and noise – fit within the taxon of companion species. That is to say, cyborgs raise all the questions of histories, politics, and ethics that dogs require. Care, flourishing, differences in power, scales of time – these matter for cyborgs. (2016:113)

Thus we are encouraged through the body of the cyborg to step outside our own bodies and consider how little we understand about the human form and how it functions. It forces the realisation that, despite the advancements in technology and medical research, we still do not fully comprehend how the brain works, how memories exist and how our own minds and bodies can continue to exist despite our lack of knowledge or understanding.

The Body and Consciousness

Sartre in his work *Being and Nothingness* (1943) explores the concept of the body and its relation to consciousness. He explores how the body links to identity, to our concept of being, and to others. In his opening paragraphs on the body, he notes how we will never see our brains and yet we believe, through research on other bodies, that we must have a brain within our skulls. Hence, we use the bodies of others to understand our bodies, just as we use our bodies to understand the bodies of cyborgs. We look for similarities and differences. We define the cyborg in relation to how it differs from ourselves.

Just as Sartre explains that surgeons who have operated on him have a 'direct experience' of his body that he does not, the creators of cyborgs will also have a direct experience and knowledge of these cyborg bodies that the cyborg may not have. Hence the idea that though we may inhabit a body our knowledge of it and experience of it are but one facet of that body, and that others may also know our bodies in ways we do not because the body is not just ours but exists as an entity with which we and others interact. Sartre also explores the possibilities of the body; how, for example, an injury to a leg is not just a physical wound but damages the potential of that leg for running, walking, or other activities. Therefore, Sartre argues our bodies are both part of the world, and also the centre of our world: 'My body is co-extensive with the world, spread across all things, and at the same time it is condensed into this single point which all things indicate and which I am without being able to know it' (1943:318).

In his writing about life, the world, existing and the connection to all through the living body Sartre is forced away from science and into the realm of the magical to try to explain how we experience everything and yet nothing of our bodies:

> Thus *life* is a magical connection which I establish between a passive environment and a passive mode of this environment. The mind does not produce its own sensations and hence they remain *exterior* to it; but on the other hand, it appropriates them to itself by living them. The unity of the "lived"

> and the “living” is no longer indeed a spatial juxtaposition nor a relation of content to container; it is a magical inheritance. The mind *is* its own sensations while remaining distinct from them. Thus sensation becomes a particular type of object – inert, passive, and simply lived. (1943:313-314)

Sartre wrestles with trying to establish how we can feel internally and externally and how these sensations are both the product of the world, and the mind, yet felt through the body with limbs we cannot fully feel. To clarify, we cannot feel the molecules that make up our being, and yet we use these molecules to interact with and feel sensations and parts of the world. Our body limits our experience as we can only see certain levels of existence with our human eyes, we cannot see certain light spectrums nor feel certain vibrations and yet they exist and impact on us. Thus we find the dichotomy of being – the difference between what we know and what we can experience. Yet even what we know is still filtered through our human and physical brain.

How Sartre combines these dichotomies is by the notion of living and lived. Our bodies live and are living, therefore we can be acted upon and act ourselves which allows for a multitude of experiences. We are the centre of our lives and our experience, which is all filtered through the physical form of our being. When Shrike becomes a cyborg he carries with him the memories of his former life and physical self, which are memories of a body and bodily experiences he can no longer have in his new cyborg body. Therefore, Shrike, although he filters the world and his experiences through his new body, still can recollect an interaction with the world in another form, with different sensations and feelings both internally and externally. He remembers the feeling of human skin on human skin, of love and compassion, which his Striker form is not built to understand, and yet he does. Shrike represents Sartre’s dichotomy of feeling the non-physical in a physical world. He feels emotions linked to a body he does not possess, that should be experienced with a brain he no longer has. This can be compared to Bella’s transformation into a vampire when she reflects on her human memories. Both Bella and Shrike retain memories of a body they no longer possess. In short, Sartre explains: ‘The body is *lived* and not *known*’ (1943:324). What we experience can be beyond comprehension or explanation; it is almost as though we understand the body in how we do not understand it. Like Haraway, Sartre argues that we must understand the body (or cyborg/other species),

or more accurately accept our lack of full understanding, in order to transcend the body so that we might perceive the world:

> To have a body is to be the foundation of one's being; I am my body to the extent that I *am; I am not* my body to the extent that I *am* not what I am. It is by my nihilation that I escape it. But I do not thereby make an object of it, for what I am is what I perpetually escape. The body is necessary again as the obstacle which I am to myself. In this sense it is not different from the absolute order of the world, this order which I cause to arrive in being by surpassing it toward a being-to-come, toward being-beyond-being. We can clearly grasp the unity of these two necessities: being-for-itself is to surpass the world and to cause there to be a world by surpassing it. But to surpass the world is not to survey it but to be engaged in it in order to emerge from it; it is necessary always that a *particular* perspective of surpassing be effected. (1943:326-327).

We must recognise our boundaries and limitations imposed by the physical world and our physical beings that thus limit our freedom. In acknowledging these boundaries, we can seek to look beyond them whilst still being constrained by them. We are though, in Sartre's opinion, forever unable to act or exist outside these boundaries, thus through our thoughts may free us we cannot act upon them in our physical form. Hence, we are caught between *being* and *nothingness.* We are at once defined by our bodies, for we experience and are part of the world because of them, but Sartre argues we must seek to overcome this physical form in order to transcend it.

Sartre divides the physical being into 'being-in-itself' - roughly translated to the physical being of things - and 'being-for-itself,' again roughly translated to consciousness, although this is a very simplified reading of Sartre's work. Consequently, Sartre argues we can only strive to free ourselves through the nihilation of ourselves, which renders freedom impossible, for how can we exist without ourselves? Perhaps in the cyborg body, we find the freedom Sartre so desires, notably in the Stalkers, which have destroyed their human selves and thus are beyond the human body. Yet even the Stalkers are now limited by their bodies, although these are not human, so should the limitations Sartre perceives in the human body still apply to them? Cyborgs are both human and other, thus they are part of the world but have also transcended the human form. Thus although they exist without their human physical being, they still possess and require a material form. The question is therefore raised: by transcending one form for another, has the

cyborg ceased to exist as their self, and instead become a physical form of 'being-for-itself', having destroyed their primary form of 'being-in-itself', or, is the transformation nothing more than the movement of 'being-for-itself' from one vessel to another? I would suggest that despite being freed from a human body cyborgs still require a tangible form to interact with the material world, and are thus bound by the physical limitations of this new form, which would imply that the cyborg still exists as another form of 'being-for-itself'.

The ability of the body to become and transform into such a range of beings emphasises the potential and possibilities that the human body represents; it can become a cyborg or supernatural being, it can create and birth new life, become sick or well, or change and adapt beyond recognition. This leads to an important deliberation: if a body can change to such an extent does it remain the same 'person', so to speak? If this is possible, and most YA texts maintain and rely on the premise that it is, how can the 'person', or being, be the same when the fabric of their corporeal body has been so altered and become so divergent? How can Edward Cullen identify himself as the same 'person' when he becomes a vampire and is no longer human if such a large part of our identities is entwined with our physical form? We rely on the assumption that our identity, at least part of it, is tied to our distinct physical markers - gender, race, height, weight, birthmarks, hair colour, eye colour, the size of our feet, or our able or disabled bodies – how can we still be us if these physical markers are erased or changed?

Perhaps Edward remains as 'Edward', despite his bodily changes, because his personality remains, although surely this too must be affected by such changes as his new ability to hear the thoughts of others? Thus if it is not the personality that persists, perhaps it is another innate, intangible part of a human being that endures within a body, regardless of the physical modifications that occur?

Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his work *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), explores the idea that we perceive the world through our bodies, and that the differences in our bodies shape our experience and interaction with the world. In direct contrast to Descartes, who argued (in a very simplified overview) that our existence is defined by our minds, Merleau-Ponty states (again in a very simplified overview) that we are defined by our bodies and their presence in the world.

Merleau-Ponty attempts to dismantle Descartes' famous 'I think therefore I am' by arguing that by acknowledging he thinks, Descartes is also acknowledging that he is, 'I am', and therefore must acknowledge his physical form which makes the 'am' and the 'think' possible, or as Merleau-Ponty explains:

> To return with Descartes from things to the thought about things is either to reduce experience to a sum of psychological events for which the I is merely a common name or the hypothetical cause, but then it would not be clear how my existence could be more certain than that of any other thing, since it is no more immediate, except for an imperceptible instant, or it is to recognize, beneath events, a field and system of thoughts that would not be subjected to time, nor to any limitation, a mode of existence that owes nothing to the event and that would be existence as consciousness, a spiritual act that grasps from a distance and contracts into itself everything that it intends, an "I think" that would be an "I am" by itself and without any addition. (2012: 390)

Merleau-Ponty posits all existence from the body, which he places in the centre of how we understand and perceive everything, arguing that the body and experiences of the body, which is how we understand the world, reality, time, and existence, are subjective. We interpret the world through our body, and our perception of our body; even if our body changes, our understanding of it may not, and yet in trying to act physically as we once could we are reminded of our current form. Merleau-Ponty illustrates this idea in his discussion of phantom limbs. He describes how having a phantom limb means that the individual can perceive the world as though they still had the limb despite not being able to engage physically with the world as they once did.

> To have a phantom limb is to remain open to all of the actions of which the arm alone is capable and to stay within the practical field that one had prior to the mutilation. The body is the vehicle of being in the world and, for a living being, having a body means being united with a definite milieu, merging with certain projects, and being perpetually engaged therein. In the evidentness of this complete world in which manipulable objects still figure, in the impulse of movement that goes towards it and where the project of writing or of playing the piano still figures, the patient finds the certainty of his [bodily] integrity. But at the very moment that the world hides his deficiency from him, the world cannot help but to reveal it to him. For if it is true that I am conscious of my body through the world and if my body is the unperceived term at the centre of the world towards which every object turns its face, then it is true for the same reason that my body is the pivot of the world. I know that the objects have several faces because I can move around them, and in this sense I am conscious of the world by the means of my body. At the same moment that my usual world gives rise to habitual intentions in me, I can no longer actually unite with it if I have lost a limb. Manipulable objects, precisely insofar as they

> appear as manipulable, appeal to a hand that I no longer have. Regions of silence are thus marked out by the totality of my body. The patient knows his disability precisely insofar as he is ignorant of it, and he ignores it precisely insofar as he knows it. This is the paradox of all being in the world. (2012: 84)

This idea that our past and present bodies shape and impact how we perceive and interact with the world may explain how Shrike, Stalker Fang, and Edward retain their understanding or perception of the world and their interaction with it despite the limitations/alterations of their new physical forms. They perceive the world and attempt to engage with it in the manner in which they did when they had their human bodies. In doing so, however, they are reminded of the state of their new bodies, how these bodies have changed, and how they interact with the world. How we perceive our bodies and their impact on our identity must also be acknowledged. Kaye cannot, or rather does not, do magic when she believes herself to be human. Once she discovers she is a fairy, however, she performs magic. The question is not why Kaye can do magic as a fairy, but whether Kaye could do magic when she thought she was human. Did her body always contain the potential for magic, but she did not try to use it, or did it become possible for her to use magic only once she understood her true heritage? By not knowing or remembering a past form, the knowledge, skills, or abilities a being once had become lost, and their identity shifts.

Thus, Merleau-Ponty's subjective bodies theory works only for those that can remember their past bodies. Shrike and Stalker Fang both have limited memories of their human form, yet they seem to cling to and be deeply affected by these snatches of human memory they retain. So what if a being cannot remember their past form, identity, or life: how can they continue to contain their human essence in a body that has been purged of its humanity if they cannot recall being human? What, if any, part of their past identity, as a human, remains in their new form, and how do we understand or quantify this residual humanity/identity? Shrike defines himself as a 'remembering machine', he recalls the lives of Hester and Tom and relays them to the humans he meets once Hester and Tom are dead. Though he cannot remember his own human life, he records theirs and exists as tangible documentation of their being:

> "I AM A REMEMBERING MACHINE," he said. ... And then he turned his face towards the expectant faces of the once-born, and began. "IT WAS A DARK, BLUSTERY DAY IN SPRING," he said, "AND THE CITY OF LONDON WAS

> CHASING A SMALL MINING TOWN ACROSS THE DRIED-UP BED OF THE OLD NORTH SEA...". (2009:533)

Shrike perpetuates Hester and Tom, he renews their existence through storytelling, and in his retelling of their actions, they live on in the minds and thoughts of others who they will never meet or know, but who will know some form of Hester and Tom. Hester and Tom are also survived by their daughter Wren, and though it is not confirmed, may have living descendants continuing to keep their residual genetic legacy ongoing. In these ways, through the recounting of tales and the bloodline of their children, humans can achieve some form of immortality. It is not comparable to the immortality of Shrike, Edward, or the other forms of immortal beings populating YA literature, but it is a human method to conquer the passing of time and death. The question asked by YA literature is whether there is more than one way to distill a human essence so that it can continue after death.

Consciousness beyond Death: A Being without a Body

We have considered how the physical body and its interactions with the physical world impact a being's identity, and how identity can change and develop as a being undergoes different experiences: in Chapter One we explored how the physical change of motherhood can result in an identity change, and in Chapter Two the idea of beauty as a divine or supernatural quality allowed for a discussion of how beauty intersects with 'good' and 'evil' and the importance of the physical in creating the other, the monstrous and the beautiful. If external beauty is an inherent physical trait and yet plays such a large part in a being's identity – influencing how the character perceives itself and is perceived by others – what happens when beauty and the other physical qualities that define an individual are removed? How important is the body in creating identity? For example, would Anne of Green Gables still be the same character if she had blond hair instead of red? What would happen if the body were removed, what would be left, and how would we define and identify that being without a corporeal form? Such a question is perhaps outside the framework of literary criticism, which is why this chapter continues to draws upon a theological and philosophical framework.

Religion has many names for this idea of a human essence that is both defining, and yet separate from the material, the most common of which in contemporary western society is the soul. The soul is defined in its simplest and most basic form by the Oxford Dictionary as:

> The spiritual or immaterial part of a human being or animal, regarded as immortal.
> (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/soul - accessed 29.11.2018)

If the soul is immortal and contains the essence of a person without the need for a body, then this may be how we are expected to understand or accept, regardless of what the physical undergoes, that some, untouchable, unidentifiable part, which makes that person unique, remains unscathed and continues to reside in the body, containing the unknown elements which define that person as themselves. Whilst the majority of YA texts are not overtly religious, many may be described as containing a spiritual subtext, which may permit the notion of souls, despite a lack of overt recognition or acknowledgement of such an idea.

This separation of the spiritual and the bodily in defining a being is an old theoretical model, presented in much medieval writing by dividing the human body into the base physical form and the revered 'other' – a spiritual essence or soul. Thomas Aquinas firmly presented the body as a vessel for sin, depravity, and weakness, in which the 'other' or soul - defined by Aquinas as the true identity of a being - resided. In doing so Aquinas presented the soul as an eternal force that could exist and continue beyond bodily death, eliminating the need for a physical form in defining a being's identity. The body, therefore, was presented as a flawed form which existed only to house the spiritual essence of a being and was not integral, nor needed, in understanding a being's existence or identity. Such an understanding would allow for the transformation of the body without limit as the body is merely a vessel: hence Edward could remain Edward despite becoming a vampire, or another creature. In short, the soul acts as a passport of sorts, distinct from the body, able to exist without the body and used for defining a being. If we are to accept this understanding of a soul, this would allow for Stalker Fang and Shrike to undergo any form of bodily modification without losing their identity/definition/true essence as this is independent of their material being.

However, this does not fully consider the implications for a being's identity of being transformed into another species, or gender, for example. Would Edward remain, Edward, if he were transformed from a 'male' human to a 'female' vampire? Would his identity be affected if his body no longer matched his formerly identified gender? To Aquinas, the physical change would be immaterial in that being's identity as the true essence of that being would be contained in an immaterial form, not the flesh. It would be interesting to consider whether, to Aquinas, Jesus would still be the same spiritual being if God had been made flesh in a female form; likewise despite the argument that the physical is secondary, Mary, mother of God, is defined entirely by her physical attributes – a virgin- and her physical actions – giving birth.

Yet if we assume that 'male' is a central component of Edward's identity whether human or other, then the importance of the physical in defining a being is highlighted and demonstrates why in the last centuries critics have raised the body to prominence in the discussion of human identity. As discussed previously both Stalker Fang and Shrike retain their original human genders, again suggesting that either the soul 'codes' for gender, which would imply that gender is an identity choice rather than a bodily act, or that the body plays a key role in a being's self-identity which cannot be erased by the act of removing their body. Critics such as Bourdieu, as examined earlier, have presented the physical as vital in defining both a person's own identity and place in society. They argue that the bodily form of an individual cannot help but impact how they perceive and interact with the world, which in turn shapes their identity as the world and society respond to their corporeal form.

Whilst the hierarchy of mind versus body as presented by Aquinas may be challenged, the medieval vision of the body as fragile, prone to disease, illness, aging and death, and the soul as an unchanging and timeless entity which surpassed the physical, may perhaps find a contemporary counterpart in YA literature. Just as many medieval theologians and writers condemned the flesh of the body, subjecting it to torment and suffering, promoting the spiritual as a means to overcome the physical, YA literature also hosts a variety of physical suffering which is overcome only through accepting and embracing the physical to transcend it.

Katniss' trials in *The Hunger Games* stand as evidence of the physical suffering YA characters endure and how through their acceptance of the body they can use it

to rewrite or recast their physical narrative. Katniss accepts the uses of her body so that she can transcend the narrow structured narrative the Capitol attempts to enforce upon her.

However, unlike medieval religious doctrine which advocates spiritual enlightenment as a means to transcend the physical, YA literature has the ability to transcend the body literally and transform it into another form entirely, as witnessed in *Twilight* and *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*. As a result of this transformation, whilst the physical no longer remains intact, there must be some essence of the body which however immaterial continues to exist within the new body. This essence, or soul, is reflected in the choices, decisions, and actions of the new body. What Edward clings to of his new vampire body is the customs and moral values of his human life; thus though he is no longer human, his decision to continue with human traditions such as marriage connects vampiric Edward to human Edward, forging a link built on continued choices which help enforce Edward's identity as 'Edward'. As noted earlier, if placed into a body of another gender, it may be that Edward's choice would be to continue to identify as 'male' despite the sex of his form being 'female'. As a result, even gender can be presented as a choice, as discussed in Chapter Two regarding Butler's work on the subject.

Following on from Butler's argument that sex is in part imposed upon a being by socially constructed norms, we could perceive that a soul is perhaps the spiritual embodiment and reflection of how a being feels and thus chooses to identify. Perhaps it is the 'soul' that is gendered, not the body, and it is the soul that accepts or rejects society's labelling of it regardless of what societal norms their physical body might conform to. This rejection of society, or society's defining of a being, can be seen in how Stalker Fang and Shrike choose to present and identify themselves: what defines the Stalkers more than their humanity and inhumanity, is their choices.

Like Butler, Sartre argues that choice is what ultimately comes to define us. Shrike and Stalker Fang are consequently defined not by their physicality but by the choices they make with this physicality. How they act and the decisions they make shape them. Both Shrike and Stalker Fang are killers, yet both choose to spare the lives of those they feel a connection to, a connection that is forged from their residual 'humanity'.

This residual humanity within Shrike allows him to become a father figure for Hester. Hester and Shrike make an unusual but functioning family unit. Perhaps part of their attachment to one another is because they are both outsiders: Shrike because he is a Stalker and Hester because of her disfigurement. Hester's disfigurement demonstrates human vulnerability; compared to cyborgs and supernatural beings we are a weak and fragile race, as the cyborg Shrike remarks: 'Looking down at her, Shrike hoped that she would die without waking. When she was a Stalker like him he would not have to suffer so much worry. Once-born were so fragile; so disposable. Loving one was agony.' (2009:302) Shrike, despite his existence as a cyborg, loves Hester as if she were his child, referring to her as 'His immortal child.' (2009:294). He hopes that she will become a Stalker like him and live with him for millennia; however, when Shrike finds Hester and Tom's dead bodies, although his first thought is to try to revive Hester as a Stalker, he ultimately decides against this, stating it would not be the choice she would make:

> Shrike went down on his knees beside them, and gently drew out the knife which Hester had driven through her own heart. At first he thought that if he were quick he could still carry her to Batmunkh Gompa and make Oenone Zero Resurrect her. But when he started to lift her he found that she had clutched Tom's hand as she died, and she was still clinging tightly to it. If Stalkers could cry, he would have cried then, for he knew all at once that this was the right end for her, and that she would not want him to take her from this quiet valley, or from the once-born she had loved. (2009: 528-529)

As will be discussed later in this chapter respecting, or not respecting, a being's dying wishes or wishes after death is a repeated discussion in YA literature, prompting the question, if you can bring a being back to life, should you? Again, it comes back to the notion of choice, that a being should choose whether they are resurrected or not: a choice both Anna Fang and Shrike were not given. Despite his love for Hester, Shrike accepts she will no longer remain as a living entity in his life but will continue to exist in his memories. Memories are important, for while they exist what is remembered also continues to exist in some form. As Terry Pratchett wrote, "A man is not dead while his name is still spoken." (*Going Postal:* 2004: Chapter Four Prologue). The significance of memories and the desire to preserve them, and by extension perhaps some part of Anna, is seen when Shrike views Stalker Fang's dying body:

> In a chamber full of carbonized machinery he found the remains of the Stalker Fang, and knelt beside her. The gimcrack Engineer-built part of her brain had stopped working, but he sensed faint electrical flutterings fading in the other, older part. He unplugged one of the flexes from his skull and fitted it into a port on hers. Her memories whispered to him, and his mind drank them. (2009: 528)

Perhaps Shrike's willingness to let Hester go comes from his own wishes one day to cease to continue:

> As he crossed the causeway the slack weight of their bodies shook a faint memory loose in him. He checked to see if it was one of those he had just absorbed from Anna Fang, but it was his own. Long ago, before he was a Stalker, he had had children, and when they were sleepy and he had carried them to their beds, they had lain just as limp and heavy in his arms as Tom and Hester lay now. The memory was a fragment; a gift; a down-payment on that knowledge of his past which Oenone Zero had promised would come to him when he died. But that would not be for a long time. He had been made to last. (2009: 529)

Shrike does not know his past or his past body - although shards of memory remain - consequently his identity is challenging; he must form his own understanding of himself, based on his current body and experiences, and create an identity from this. However, Shrike wishes to know his past, his origins, his heritage, for in knowing this a being can choose to accept or reject their lineage and past, but without knowing, a being has no roots, no starting point, and feels, as Shrike does, almost lost.

The Body and Trauma

Hester's disfigurement and Anna Fang's death and resurrection are not the only physical traumas encountered in young adult literature: the body in many YA texts can act as a means of discussion, or as a vehicle for introducing difficult or challenging topics. In *How I Live Now,* Daisy's body is used to explore her eating disorder, which links to her troubled relationship with her father and stepmother. Like Hester, Daisy's body becomes a map documenting her struggles and suffering. As Haraway noted, 'Our bodies, ourselves; bodies are maps of power and identity' (1991:180), and consequently in YA literature we find that it is impossible to unravel and separate the body from a being's identity. While Daisy can heal her body, Hester cannot repair her scars: nevertheless, as Hester accepts herself, she stops hiding

her face and refuses to be shamed by her appearance. In each text the female protagonist battles not only external forces but internal conflict about her body. It is only when Daisy and Hester accept their bodies that they can fully express and identify themselves, not in relation to how society has perceived and labelled them but as they have chosen to be. Daisy and Hester's bodies are judged and expected to conform to particular societal norms, yet as we have discussed previously each character rejects the societal norm laid out for her by society, and instead wields her body in different ways. Perhaps in carving their new identities through the use of their body, they can express the identity of their 'soul' or the internal, immaterial presence that refuses to accept the pigeonhole society has deemed suitable for them.

As discussed in previous chapters, the body is often a tool, used both for a purpose and as a channel connecting the physical and the spiritual. In each text the body is a conduit for the emotional development of the characters. As the protagonist grows and changes, the body and its meaning also transform. The body can shift to reflect an altered identity as it does in *Twilight* and *Tithe,* as both Bella and Kaye transform from human to supernatural. The body can also represent the physical manifestation of the protagonists' inner torment: however as stated before it is only by accepting the external that the internal can also heal.

The Morality of Transformation

Having considered bodily transformation as a spiritual shift, it would be logical to consider next the morality of such transformations. As noted, Shrike and Stalker Fang are not given a choice in their conception but have their transformation forced upon them. This is not an isolated incident within YA literature as this next section will explore. In addition to the morality of transforming these bodies, this next section will also investigate how these bodies are used and the moral compass or understanding that these new beings exhibit.

The evolution of the vampire demonstrates perfectly how the representation of the supernatural has changed from the traditional fairytale to contemporary YA literature. Bram Stoker's Dracula, often regarded as the origin of the modern

vampire, is a charismatic but physically repulsive being. He is active, forward-thinking, with global aims and ambitions. He is not moral, heroic, romantic, or beautiful as contemporary vampires are. This transition from vampiric villain to heroic romantic lead has been discussed and examined by many critics, notably, Nina Auerbach in her 1995 work *Our Vampires, Ourselves,* and Susannah Clements in *The Vampire Defanged: How the Embodiment of Evil Became a Romantic Hero* (2011) which considers the transformation of the vampire through the lens of Christianity. Although a far more complex and interesting issue than we have room to examine in the scope of this thesis, there is a clear link between the supernatural, beauty, and the change from villain to hero. As vampires became figures of attraction rather than revulsion, they began to become not monsters but love interests, and ultimately romantic leads within their own right. Anne Rice's vampires offer the clearest example of the shift: her vampires are not full heroes, they drink blood, kill, fight, and are still creatures of the dark - damned souls with unnatural appetites- yet they are physically attractive. Meyer takes this one step further in her creation of Edward Cullen, freeing him from the dark, and offering him as a creature supposedly full of self-sacrificing love and morality, although on deeper dissection this morality is questionable.

Twilight while seemingly embodying the romantic formula set out in many romantic novels - boy meets girl, they fall in love, then together overcome all and any obstacles preventing their continued relationship so that they can live happily ever after - twists and distorts this pattern, warping it into something darker and more sinister, as discussed previously in Chapter Two. Meyer also revises the image of vampires, transforming them from the tragic villain to ‘romantic’ hero. Her vampires are unaffected by sunlight (although they shun it due to their skin becoming diamond-like in the presence of it), impervious to garlic, and able to enter dwellings uninvited. Meyer's vampires do retain the traditional traits of immortality, blood-drinking, and unusual coloured eyes. However, they can survive by substituting animal blood for human blood, therefore making killing humans for food a choice. Unlike the vampires of the past they are no longer presented as evil, nor as the enemy, but as supernatural entities which are physically and mentally superior to humans. Her vampires do not sleep, they are much faster and stronger than any human, they are talented, skilled, and highly educated; they could be anything, and

yet they choose to spend their limitless existence following the repeated routine of high school, college, and marriage. Only Carlisle has a job or career, albeit one he has practised for centuries.

What is stranger than the Cullens' refusal to grow up, change, or challenge the little world they have built, is their relationships, both with each other and those they meet and interact with. Particularly troublesome relationships that Meyer creates include those of Bella and Edward, Carlisle and Esme, Carlisle and Rosalie, and most concerning, Jacob and Renesmee. The relationship between Jacob and Renesmee will be explored later in this chapter. Firstly, we shall reflect upon the unusual family structure that is the Cullens.

If we look at the Cullen family as an outsider, aware of what and who they are, we find three couples -Alice and Jasper, Esme and Carlisle, and Emmett and Rosalie- living together with a romantically single Edward. Ignoring outward appearances and ages, we have what could be the cast and setting of any number of television shows; having unrelated individuals dwelling together in one house opens up unlimited plot possibilities and opportunities for storylines. It also presents the potential for limitless romantic partnering. If each of the Cullens is of age and sufficient maturity why do they insist on pretending to be one family, rather than form a kinship group of friends and equals? As they do not change physically, and yet we are told they complete high school and college regularly, they must be able to pass for a range of ages including twenty-one. Passing for a twenty-one-year-old in America would ensure that they are fully able to enter into the adult world, so why do they not choose to move to a large city where they could blend in better and live as friends? With the progression and rising prevalence of plastic surgery their lack of aging would not be remarked upon as much, nor would a nocturnal lifestyle, if they chose one, be questioned. With so many possibilities available, that Meyer limits her vampires to endless school and college cycles tied together as one family unit is telling. Not only is it necessary for the plot, but it also presents a very stilted image of immortality. Rather than offering the time for endless exploration, discovery and growth, Meyer's version of immortality is frozen:

> His skin, white despite the faint flush from yesterday's hunting trip, literally sparkled, like thousands of diamonds were embedded in the surface. ... His glistening, pale lavender lids were shut, though of course he didn't sleep. A

> perfect statue, carved in some unknown stone, smooth like marble, glittering like a crystal. (2007: 228).

Beautiful and cold and unchanging, they are stuck, condemned to one unending cycle of playing at the picture-perfect American family. On the surface, they embody the archetypal American dream of a happy family, financially successful and physically flawless. Underneath this facade however they are trapped, flawed, tormented by unnatural hunger, unable to change. Part of this trapped feeling could arise because they are parasites, feeding on humans, living on the fringes of the world, hidden, without a full or cohesive society. The Volturi may offer a partial vampire society but it is not a welcoming, nor understanding, community. Consequently, though the Cullens have created their own group with a sense of belonging and identity as 'vegetarian', they remain an isolated group clinging to human mortality, human family structures, and human feelings; copying the human society they once were part of. Meyer's immortality seems like a tragic existence, forever watching from the outside, pretending to be part of the human race, but always separate and other.

In contrast to this marginalised existence is the supernatural world of Holly Black's *Tithe* (2004) and *Ironside* (2007). Black creates an entire community dwelling alongside humanity. The magical world is separate but it is a chosen, willing separation. Unlike the frozen existence of Meyer's vampires, Black's world continually evolves and changes; leaders arise and fall, supernatural beings grow, mature, and sometimes die. Black's world has momentum, it has a culture and an identity which are completely its own. It does not copy or rely on human existence to survive. In Black's world being immortal does not mean being unchanging: Siliarial, for instance, was born, grew up, became Queen, and importantly is very much an adult. She is immortal, but has not remained a youth; she has embraced her maturity and is a clear authority figure. This willingness to grow and change is what separates Black's supernatural beings from Meyer's.

Meyer's vampires cling desperately to the values and moral understanding they learnt in their human lives. They feel compassion towards humans and believe they should find alternative food sources to human blood. In essence, they deny their vampiric heritage and attributes in favour of maintaining their 'humanity'. Clearly, Meyer believes that despite being supernatural, vampires should be bound by the

same moral and ethical codes as humans, implying that human morality and western ethical thought are universal and apply to all free-thinking beings that dwell within the modern western world. She denies her vampires a separate code, culture, or understanding, and we, as readers, are encouraged to judge the Cullens and other vampires' behaviour by the standards of humans. The Cullens are held up as morally superior vampires because they do not feed on humans. However, as we shall consider later in this chapter other aspects of their behaviour, mostly regarding age gaps in romantic relationships, do not match human expectations or societal norms.

The body of the vampire is used by Meyer to explore a range of issues including the traditional role of the vampire as a devourer of humans. By allowing her vampires the ability to feed on animal rather than human blood, Meyer makes the act of feeding on humans a moral dilemma. Though she firmly supports the choice the Cullens make to be 'vegetarian' – the Cullen's phrasing of their diet - an argument could be made that Meyer is encouraging denial of self. Vampires are defined by their non-human characteristics, the most obvious being their need to feed on blood. By creating an alternative to human blood Meyer is suggesting that vampires, and by extension others, can, should they choose, pick which traits and qualities they wish to embody. Instead of its being a necessity, vital to continued existence, human blood becomes a weakness, a preference, an addiction that lesser beings give into.

If we consider the physical form Meyer bestows upon her vampire characters we find that much of the saga, in particular the first text *Twilight,* is spent denying or repressing the vampiric nature. The Cullens avoid direct sunlight to disguise their skin; they avoid sports because of their superior speed and strength; they avoid friendships or relationships with humans to avoid temptation, and they feed on animals to avoid feeding on humans. Their entire existence is spent willingly hiding and repressing their desires and abilities. They do not revel in or enjoy being vampires, they are not proud of their otherness; instead, it appears like a curse, a burden they must live with and adapt to. This denial of the physical through superior force of will and belief may be a product of Meyer's own strong religious beliefs, suggesting that true power and greatness come not through indulgence in the physical but through the ability to control desire, to focus on the emotional connection, to retain 'humanity' and human morality despite the physical urge to

abandon them. Hence, though vampires are physically stronger, Meyer reserves her greatest admiration for her hero Edward, whom she upholds as remarkable and heroic, not for his physical strength or deeds, but for his mental fortitude and strength of conviction. Edward denies his physical hunger for Bella because he values the non-physical, emotional link he has to her more. This rejection of, and devaluing of the physical, possibly for religious reasons resonates with Aquinas' view of the body (human or other) as a source of weakness and depravity which must be carefully controlled and restricted by the mind/soul which is the true essence of a being. Yet although Meyer rejects physical desires and urges, she continues to dwell repeatedly on the looks and physicality of her supernatural beings, suggesting a paradoxical 'look but don't touch' policy, which appears to revel in the attraction her characters feel and yet cannot act upon.

The idea of the vampire body as a site of juxtaposing feelings, actions, and experiences can perhaps be explored through Sartre's theory of "living" and "lived". The vampire form embodies both the understanding and experiences of the human in a body which is not human, encapsulating Sartre's dichotomy that though we use the body to experience, our experience is limited compared to our knowledge. Vampires remember the taste of food, yet cannot consume it. They remember the feeling of having a heartbeat, of bleeding, of sleeping and so many other human actions and yet they cannot perform these actions or experience them – there is a divide between their knowledge and their experience. These contrasts spill over into the vampire psyche as well, with the Cullens embracing a morality that forces a continual fight between their physical desires and their psychological sense of self. They have within them a split between the experience their body has on sensing the blood of a human and their emotional response to this physical urge. How the different vampire communities balance this divide between the emotional/mind and the physical/body is indicative of their willingness or unwillingness to hold on to their human identity. The Cullens value their link to their past selves, whilst other vampire communities perceive their vampire self as a new form free from human constructs, such as morality.

Contradicting the human values and morality that permeate the *Twilight* saga, Holly Black's works *Tithe* and *Ironside* present an alternative world complete with its

own culture, and by extension, morality. Inside the fairy realm, we witness acts of pure violence and cruelty; there is no democracy, only feudal hierarchy, and rule by brute force:

> A satyr with a curly beard and ivory horns was hunched over, carefully ripping the wings off a small faerie trapped in his meaty fist. The thing screeched, beating its other wing hummingbird-swift against the fingers that held it. Pale green blood dribbled over the goat-man's hand. Kaye stopped, stunned and sickened to watch as the satyr tossed the little creature in the air. It flew in desperate circles, spiralling to the earthen floor. Before Kaye could step close and snatch it, the man's boot stamped down, smearing the faerie into the dust. (2005:136)

There are no prevailing human values that control the fairy world, only Kaye's human morality filtering how we view the events that transpire within the non-human realm. As discussed previously Kaye retains much of her 'humanity' with regards to how she perceives and interacts with the world. This links back to Merleau-Ponty's work which suggests that the body is vital in shaping our understanding and interaction with the world. As discussed earlier in the chapter by being able to remember a past body the being can use those memories to interpret and understand the world around them, while simultaneously realising how different they now are. Kaye and the Cullens use their human past to judge and value their new non-human reality. As vampires are created, not born, their societies are not self-sustaining or self-contained like the fairy community Kaye discovers she belongs to. Vampires must go outside of their species to expand it and create new vampires; consequently, their communities are born of choice, not biology, and are a mixing pot, blending beings from all walks of life, time periods, and ideologies. With each vampire bringing the memories of their past human life to their new vampiric existence, it seems that it would be indeed challenging to form one cohesive shared interpretation of the vampire identity. This is evidenced in the different moralities and attitudes towards humanity exhibited by the various 'families' or communities of vampires. There is no overarching vampire society, nor is there one universal or national, legal or moral framework for judging vampires.

In contrast, Black's supernatural world is self-perpetuating and does not rely on a source of humans to repopulate or feed it. The beings found in Black's world may choose to have ties to the human world, but they may also choose to remain separate from it, enabling an entirely independent community. Because of its

sovereignty, Black's supernatural community has shaped and formed its own unique identity, with a societal framework and understanding of self that Meyer's vampire communities lack. The creatures that populate Black's fairy world are not human, but unlike Meyer's vampires, they do not pretend or wish to appear as human. Their outward appearance is as different as their culture and values. With Black's supernatural beings the physical exterior matches the behaviour; both looks and actions in the fairy realm are 'other', governed by laws and forces alien to our western culture. Black's fairies do not assimilate with, or copy, human society or behaviour. Instead Black presents the fairy world as a world of vice, in which every human sin may be permitted and enjoyed. It is a world in which the strong prey upon the weak and humans are not examples but playthings. In contrast to Meyer's rejection of the physical, Black's world is a riotous celebration of all that is physical, on an almost gratuitous scale.

We have considered both human and non-human supernatural beings, and the worlds in which they reside, but what of the supernatural human or demi-supernatural creatures who belong to both the human and supernatural worlds? Examples of these half beings include Renesmee, Jacob, and culturally, if not physically, Kaye. Kaye grows up in the human world and considers herself to be human before her true heritage as a pixie is revealed. Although she is a changeling child Kaye still maintains strong links to her adoptive human mother and grandmother. She accepts the human child Kate, whom she replaced, as a sister, and identifies herself as belonging to the human world as well as the fairy world. In keeping with her changeling nature, Kaye is mercurial; she cannot be pigeonholed, she is at once both human and non-human. Similarly, Jacob and Renesmee occupy space within both the human and non-human worlds.

Renesmee is the unplanned and unexpected daughter of Bella and Edward; she is also half human and half vampire, inheriting a mix of human and non-human traits. Most of her human attributes seem to exist only to enhance her already supernatural beauty: the majority of her supernatural abilities place her firmly in the world of the vampire.

More than her speed or strength what separates Renesmee from the world of humans is her unnaturally fast-growing and aging. As vampires are immortal and

werewolves can phase repeatedly to live forever, one wonders why Meyer felt the need for Renesmee to grow up so fast. Time is something the Cullens have in abundance. Renesmee's growth rate is such that she will reach physical maturity in seven years; she will then retain the appearance of a seventeen-year-old for the remainder of her life, which is predicted to last several centuries at least. It is interesting that Meyer chose seventeen as the physical age to freeze Renesmee, forever younger than her parents, Jacob, and her adoptive family; she is also never physically an adult. She is denied physical adulthood, she will never look old enough to vote, to drink, or be seen as anything other than physically a teenager.

As well as her rapid physical growth Renesmee's mental growth is also unnaturally fast. She can understand what her parents are saying whilst she is still in her mother's womb; her mental capacity and ability are the only aspects of her that outstrip her physical growth in development. What emerges is a young woman who looks physically seventeen, who is very mentally able and aware, and yet is only seven years old. As well as being a vampire hybrid Renesmee is also the being that Jacob has imprinted on. Imprinting is a werewolf trait that forges a deep lifelong connection between the werewolf and the imprint. The werewolf puts the imprint before all else and dedicates his life to the imprint. Werewolves respond and shape their feelings to fit those of the imprint. Meyer uses the bond between Jacob and Renesmee to overcome the rift between the werewolves and the vampires and also to tie Jacob to the Cullens permanently. The relationship between Renesmee and Jacob is troubling. Whilst Renesmee is still growing the relationship is platonic, with Jacob taking on the role of protector and guardian; however, when Renesmee reaches maturity and stops growing, the relationship is expected to become romantic.

There are many unsettling aspects of this relationship: firstly that it can be seen as an exercise in child-grooming; secondly, that Renesmee's physical appearance does not match her actual age; thirdly, Renesmee's parents' role in the relationship; and fourthly, the notion of consent and free will within the relationship.

First, the consideration of age. If we remove the characters' supernatural abilities and nature we are left with a deeply unnerving situation: a seven-year-old

daughter, a twenty-five-year-old mother, a father who is over one hundred years old, and a potential romantic partner of around twenty-three years old.

Is Meyer trying to suggest that because Renesmee looks older, acts older, and is not human she is not subjected to the laws or moral values of most Western Euro-American societies? Jacob is Renesmee's mother's contemporary; he is also her former romantic partner. As such, the idea that he can also be a romantic partner for Renesmee, despite the generational difference, sheds new light on the Cullens as a family. Although human morality was suggested as a model for vampiric morality previously, we can see a divide. Whilst the retention of 'humanity' is prized within the Cullen family, their ideas regarding age between romantic partners are radically different from those present in contemporary western culture. Why are these age gaps allowed by Meyer, without comment? Is it a titillating plot point, is it exploring difficult topics such as consent, child exploitation, and grooming, or is it unpicking and challenging notions regarding paedophilia?

One potential answer lies in the previous discussion surrounding the suggestion that the Cullens are frozen. If we accept that the Cullens are immortal, unchanging beings, trapped or frozen, unable to evolve, grow or develop, supported by their cyclical repetitive existence, we could argue that Edward is not the aged being he appears, but a seventeen-year-old forever incarcerated at his moment of change. Thus, the relationship between Bella and Edward is not one between a one-hundred-year-plus vampire and a mortal teenager, but a frozen suspended teenager trapped outside of time, and a mortal teenager. The body is used to circumnavigate time. If the body has not aged, is Meyer arguing that the mind has not aged either? Thus, Meyer is suggesting that the body is the significant part, and that what happens to the body defines the whole of a being's identity. By placing the body outside of time, Meyer removes time from the equation, eliminating the age gap. This argument, however, relies upon the suggestion that Edward has never matured, grown, or developed physically, emotionally, or spiritually throughout his entire existence as a vampire: an unconvincing, but necessary, suggestion. The supporting evidence is that by continually repeating high school and college, Edward has not had the opportunity to partake of any 'adult' experiences. The other issue with this argument is that whilst it may apply to vampire/human relationships it does not apply

to werewolf/human-vampire relationships. In other words, it does not explain the relationship between Renesmee and Jacob.

Renesmee and Jacob are not vampires; they are part-human and thus cannot step beyond time. They are subject to the ravages and passing of time albeit on a very different scale from human aging. By belonging to the human world of time, Jacob and Renesmee also belong to the world of growth and change; vampires may be frozen, but werewolves and humans are not. Jacob and Renesmee are part human - they have heartbeats, they sleep, they dream - because of this it cannot be argued that Jacob is a frozen teenager and that as Renesmee is also physically a teenager when she stops growing, they can be classed as equals. Jacob is an adult and Renesmee is a child, as defined legally, with a super-accelerated growth rate.

When Jacob imprints, it is not of his own will. Jacob does not choose Renesmee; instead, it appears to be a biological and physiological transformation, enacted without planning or intent:

> 'Everything that made me who I was - my love for the dead girl upstairs, my love for my father, my loyalty to my new pack, the love for my other brothers, my hatred for my enemies, my home, my name, my *self* - disconnected from me in that second - ... I could see that now - how the universe swirled around this one point... The gravity of the earth no longer tied me to the place where I now stood. It was the baby girl in the blonde vampire's arms that held me here now. Renesmee.' (2010: 330-331)

Consequently, he is powerless to control, prevent, or change the imprint: he and his emotions, and desires are second to those of his imprint. Therefore, Jacob becomes the slave of another; his actions and role are controlled by Renesmee. While Renesmee appears to have the majority of power within her relationship with Jacob she is not completely free: Jacob's imprint has bound him to her for life and she is obligated to maintain the bond between them. She too is emotionally trapped. Her mother's friendship with Jacob prevents Renesmee from being able to distance herself from him; similarly, Jacob's constant presence in her life limits Renesmee’s choices for romance or love outside the close-knit world of her family and Jacob. Her rapid growth and development also alienate Renesmee, ensuring that while she is growing, she cannot be part of the human world because she will attract too much attention: thus, she is denied the opportunity to form relationships outside of her overbearing, oppressive family unit. Again, her chance to leave the family unit, learn

from others or find another perspective on her situation is repressed. Renesmee is effectively limited both emotionally and physically to her small self-contained family circle.

Renesmee is perhaps the incarnation of the dichotomy of femininity that Irigaray speaks of in *Veiled Lips* (1983), for Renesmee is born of life and death, she is supernatural and human, she is youth and age, and exists in a space between worlds, communities, species and beings: 'Unless she is dead from birth. Immortal virgin, from never having been a young girl. Flower, hypostatized in truth, appearance, pretence... according to your will, the vicissitudes of your power, the moments of history. All at once, all together, to please you. Arrest, and a sentence of death, without end.' (1983:119). Like the women Irigaray describes, Renesmee is formed partly from what she is not and the expectations of others. As Jacob's imprint, she is part of Jacob and her identity is absorbed and compromised by his. Renesmee will pass from the guardianship of her father to the guardianship of Jacob, without pause, without reflection, and will forever be denied the opportunity or chance to discover herself alone, free from male, or other, influence. In becoming Jacob's imprint Renesmee binds the werewolves to the Cullen family. With her body as collateral, peace between these two warring factions is made. This peace and new alliance are made without Renesmee's consent, without her understanding, and are unbreakable. Like aristocratic daughters of the past, Renesmee is promised to the male leader of a rival power in a ritual born not of choice but societal pressure. Thus, Renesmee and Jacob are both bound together in a relationship neither chose, wanted nor expected. It is a relationship formed by the unusual properties of their bodies and will exert as much power over them as the vampiric desire to feed on human blood. To deny the bond between them would be to deny Jacob's heritage and perpetuate Meyer's cycle of self-denial and restraint.

Even Renesmee's thoughts will not be private as her father's power enables him to view the fabric of her mind, preventing any form of privacy, rebellion, or freedom. Considering this constant surveillance perhaps we should perceive Renesmee in the 'gaps', as alluded to by Irigaray:

> Woman's exile from herself entails her inexhaustible mimesis/mimicry for the father's benefit. The/her death – which she sustains, which she redoubles, but which is only the form of him who removes her from "herself" – which amounts

> to this, making her reproduce anything, to the point of confusing it/herself, losing it/herself: the *abyme*, the abyss. Making her pass through, in approximation, the entire horizon of space-time. The gap between – where her retouching is always hidden. All discourse: a repetition, but at a distance, of/from "nature." A reply which has already been mastered. She, gliding under, over, all along, against, across ... these manifestations or appearances, empty of herself/them. Always wandering, distracted, floating, fugitive, lost – by nature. (1983: 107)

Women are expected to perform a role or purpose for the patriarchy. In this role, their abilities and qualities are placed under the dominion of male power, but in the 'gaps' or in their not-maleness, Irigaray describes how the nature of women and the feminine can be perceived and enacted, outside of patriarchal control. Women can, Irigaray suggests, discover themselves in the subversion of these roles. Irigaray explains how women are in a constant state of flux, in which their nature, and nature itself, is denied by the father and yet exists. Women, and the feminine, are found in what they are not; they are found in the gaps, in the dichotomy of the patriarchy which attempts to control and yet deny women and the feminine.

The male patriarchy of *Twlight* as represented by the Volturi views Renesmee as an abnormality, a mistake, and a violation of the natural. They seek to destroy her, for in her they see a new form of existence, new power, and a threat to their established order. By existing between the 'gaps', Renesmee's very being is threatened, and her body is fought over. Renesmee, though not unique, is the first recognised being of her kind and her presence redefines and challenges the current vampiric society. Renesmee's body thus becomes ground zero in the conflict between the Cullens and the Volturi, an entity which is wanted by both sides.

Irigaray argues that women are linked to nature, and like nature, they represent a force outside of male understanding and thus are viewed as 'other' and rejected. They cannot be understood or perceived fully, so if accepted, are only accepted through the male gaze, which allows them to be viewed in a way that the patriarchy can comprehend within the structure and framework they have created. To summarise, very simplistically, women and nature are entities which men chose to perceive not as they are but how they wish them to be, and they refuse to acknowledge the parts of women and nature they identify as undesirable. Thus they regard both women and nature as through a 'dream' or 'veil'. When they (women and

nature) do not follow the ‘rules’ as decreed by the patriarchy, they are re-imagined, and hidden away:

> Nature can only love itself or be loved in dissimulation: as in a dream. Barely experiencing nature, resenting it, men of former times and of today scale the roofs and spires of fantasy. Born as they are to ascend – to raise themselves up/erect themselves. And without the least vertigo, if this ascent is hidden from them. If they see nothing but art, these somnambulists of the day, these seekers of God, these moonstruck men with open eyes.
>
> Their dream: to cover the natural with veils. To climb always higher, to remove themselves even further, to abandon themselves to the certainty which, from the hazardous summits, they no longer ever discern as an evasion – but their plains, and their plans. Averted from their thoughts, from all the repulsive things to which nature subjects every woman (?). Impatience, contempt, when their soul touched these matters which seem to encroach on their possessions: hands which profane their ideals. Deafness, horrified by what is no longer concealed by the skin, the ultimate artistic support, in which any slight gap or opening would be inadmissible for lovers – a sacrilege against love. Aversion towards the sordid aspects of nature: the blasphemous, aggressive aspects. Moral and esthetic faults in that which the lover intends to restore the voluntary and the arbitrary.
>
> But since no one can render him this service, he conceals nature from himself and lives in a dream.
>
> The lover’s dream, attributed to women. Dreams which wish for: the dissimulation of nature. The remoteness of the heights which escape from the repugnant aspects of love. (1983: 108)

Edward’s power allows him to divine the thoughts of those around him; he cannot ignore the hidden desires, intents, and wants of those he encounters. The whole of any human mind is open and clear to him. Bella is the exception to this, her mind cannot be read by Edward, her thoughts and ideas are shrouded from him, save for later in the series when she develops the power to be able to open her mind to him when she chooses. If we are to believe Irigaray that men refuse to perceive the darkness, or aspects, of womanhood they find so repulsive, instead choosing to view them through the veil, then Edward is handicapped in this regard. Edward’s power denies him the ability to ignore the true nature of beings, yet the woman he falls in love with is the only being he cannot truly understand or perceive. By being unable to read Bella’s mind, Edward can project on to Bella his interpretation of her thoughts and actions. Perhaps then it is not Bella Edward loves, but the ability Bella has for Edward to perceive her as he wishes, unencumbered by the harshness of reality.

Bella is a mystery to Edward; she alone remains veiled from him and perhaps it is this unknown quality of Bella that entices him.

The age of characters is also a concern within other young adult texts. In *Tithe,*we are given no precise age for Roiben, Corny, or Luis. We can presume that they are around Kaye's age but they could be much older. Roiben, in particular, could be much older than Kaye, as his physical form gives no clue as to his age. We are told that Roiben belonged to Siliarial's court many years ago, implying that he is indeed an older being. Whilst this potential age gap is less concerning because Kaye is significantly older than Renesmee, there remains the implication that so long as a character looks young and attractive, they remain a possible suitor for girls much younger than themselves. Although the assumption is that Kaye is a young girl and Roiben is much older, there remains one complication; we assume that Kaye is the same age as her outward human ‘glamour’. However, as Kaye cannot remember being swapped with Kate we cannot be sure that Kaye and Kate are the same biological age, as because of Kaye's pixie heritage she could be much younger or older than Kate. As we are given no indication as to how quickly or slowly fairies age, Kaye could be, in fairy years, significantly younger in age, growth, and development, than Roiben, again lending support to the argument that it is the external appearance that counts - at least in the human world. We cannot apply the same morality to Roiben and Black's fairy world as we can to the Cullen family,because as we have seen previously, Black makes the moral divide between the human and fairy worlds very clear.

Like the age of a character, free will is another troubling and difficult concept within Meyer's saga. When the Cullen 'children' - Edward, Rosalie, and Emmett - are turned to become vampires there is minimal discussion about the situation and the repercussions. (Jasper and Alice are not truly Cullen 'children' as they join the Cullens as vampires and as such are not turned into vampires by Carlisle.) Edward was dying of influenza when his mother asked Carlisle to do everything in his power to save him. Whilst this may be construed as a loose form of parental consent pertaining to a child, Edward himself was not consulted in the matter. Similarly, Rosalie, who was gang-raped, beaten, and left to die in an alley by her human fiancé and his friends, was also not given a choice in her becoming a vampire. Emmett,

who was mauled by a bear before being found by Rosalie, was also given little choice, although it was Rosalie rather than Carlisle who made the choice that Emmett should be turned.

In each case, Edward, Rosalie, and Emmett were not asked, informed, or given any guidance or advice. Their free will and ability to choose were removed from them and their happiness with their new life was compromised. Rosalie and Edward in particular struggle with their vampire identity. Rosalie resents that she did not choose to become a vampire and all that it entails: '" Rosalie struggles the most ... with what we are. ... You're human."... "She wishes that she were, too.'"(2007: 285-286). When Bella wishes to become a vampire Rosalie votes against Bella's wishes stating: '"I don't mean that I have any aversion to you as a sister. It's just that ... this is not the life I would have chosen for myself. I wish there had been someone there to vote no for me.'" (2007:471). Likewise, Edward claims that given the choice he would return to being human: '"If there were any way for me to become human for you - no matter what the price was, I would pay it.'" (2007: 272). Rosalie's dream of becoming a mother ended when she became a vampire and this unwilling loss of her motherhood remains a point of contention and pain for her. Similarly, Edward, although very attached to his adoptive father Carlisle, is at first unwilling to change Bella into a vampire. While Edward has come to terms with being a vampire, he is reluctant to inflict the same existence on another, arguing that vampires are soulless creatures forever denied a place in heaven.

It is interesting to note that the amount of physical suffering experienced by the bodies of those that become vampires is perhaps linked to their perceived adulthood. The characters that may be classed as more ‘adult’ -Carlisle, Esme, Rosalie, Jasper, and Emmett- experience far greater suffering than their more adolescent counterparts, Edward and Bella. Although the characters are turned at quite similar ages, the perception of whether these characters have crossed over to adulthood in their time period and society is directly correlated to the suffering they endure. Rosalie is of an age to be wed, she is no longer considered a child or teenager, but is recognised as an individual that has entered the sphere of adulthood. Similarly, Esme (a married mother), Carlisle (working adult), Jasper (soldier in the confederate army), and Emmett (working adult) are too considered to

have become adults by the standards of their prior societies, regardless of actual age. Bella and Edward conversely are presented at the start of the series as decidedly teenage characters that have not yet reached full adulthood. Whilst this may be a result of the lengthening of childhood in more recent decades, it still remains significant that the bodily harm undergone by each ‘adult’ character outstrips the harm inflicted on the non ‘adult’ characters, suggesting that once again that the YA bodies in the chosen texts are held to different standards and treated differently from adult bodies, even if the bodies themselves are almost the same age and physically very similar.

Meyer's vampires, like the vampires of folklore, are not born but made. To become a vampire is to change, from human to other, to enter a new world, lifestyle, and existence. However, apart from Bella's transformation, none of the other vampires is active in the decision for them to become vampires. Vampirism then becomes a disease or act, transferred or enacted upon an individual without the individual's knowledge or consent. Subsequently, it can be interpreted as rape. Like rape, there is no consent, no debate, and no compromise. In the event of the transformation, one holds the power, the control, and the decision-making while the other is powerless. Like rape or disease, vampirism leaves a lifelong shadow over a person's life. The event cannot be undone, nor the damage fully erased: it is an event that alters a life.

As a result of this lack of consent that Edward and the others experience, Edward is very insistent that Bella is given the choice in her transformation. She is given information about the process, the results, and time to evaluate the impact of the decision on her life as a whole. The focus on consent and the importance of the female character being given the ultimate say over any choice or action affecting her physical body is a powerful statement. Although it is positive that Edward encourages Bella’s acquisition of knowledge prior to her transformation as discussed in chapter two, his need for consent when engaging in other actions regarding Bella is limited.

Whilst vampirism as enacted by Carlisle can be contrasted with an unwilling and unwanted act over another, and the traits of vampirism compared to the symptoms of a disease, the werewolves of the Twilight Saga differ significantly. The

werewolf condition is hereditary, a biological trait that surfaced in response to the emergence of vampires. It cannot be chosen as an identity, instead, it is a birth condition determined by their bloodline. Biology and family form their werewolf identity rather than the vampire identity which is formed after birth by an outsider. Vampire covens are formed thus by kinship rather than DNA, whereas the werewolf lineage is decided by genetic inheritance. As mentioned previously at the end of the saga the wolves are described not as 'werewolves' but as 'shape-shifters':

> "Though the creatures think of themselves as werewolves, they are not. The more accurate name for them would be shape-shifters. The choice of wolf was purely chance. It could have been a bear or a hawk or a panther when the first change was made. These creatures have nothing to do with the Children of the Moon. They have merely inherited this skill from their fathers. It's genetic – they do not continue their species by infecting others the way true werewolves do." (2010: 654)

Unlike Edward and Rosalie, who struggle to accept their vampire nature, seeing it as a rejection of their former humanity, the Quileute wolves perceive their lupine tendencies and abilities as part of their cultural heritage and birthright. They are the legends of old made flesh. However, being both werewolf and human is not without difficulty, and Jacob, in particular, can resent his werewolf nature. Yet, while he sometimes wishes to be free of his werewolf identity he does not stop considering himself as human. Hence, though werewolves are classed, both by themselves and others, as human or part human, vampires are not. Both vampires and non-vampires regard the state of vampirism as an altered and inhuman form of being. This is evidenced by both Jacob and Edward trying to prevent Bella from becoming a vampire as each believes that this change will affect her humanity and who she is.

Ultimately, what we discover in the *Twilight* saga is that although many of the characters are denied a choice in their changing, there still exists a choice. There is a choice between being mortal and immortal and this is the allure of the supernatural, that a person can change fate, can step outside of nature and time, and be an eternal but youthful presence. Youth is a key component of immortality in YA literature as rarely, if ever, is immortality without youth featured in YA literature. Yet what if a being were immortal, but not perennially youthful? What if a character were condemned, not to a cycle of perpetual adolescence, but continuous old age, eternally trapped in a body that grows increasingly weak, withered, and damaged?

The Aging and Dying Body

In his work 'Tithonus' (1860) Alfred, Lord Tennyson explores what immortality would be like without immortal youth. The poem follows the prolonged decay and suffering of a being eternally aging without dying; death thus comes to be viewed as a privilege, a relief and a longed for end:

> Me only cruel immortality
> Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
> ....
> Of happy men that have the power to die,
> And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
> Release me, and restore me to the ground (1991: 296-298)

There is no romance, no glory nor glamour in the slow decay of age. YA literature rejects this slow, undignified end, choosing to celebrate the brief and the beautiful lives of the dead youth.

As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, aging is a difficult or even taboo subject in YA texts. When texts do confront the issue, death is given extreme meaning. Death is always meaningful, but noticeably in YA literature, the death of a character is infused with great purpose and often functions as a driving force for a text. Death also appears to be presented more romantically or dramatically in YA literature. Death is not the slow wheeze of an old man who has lived a full and happy life; it is the tragic, untimely demise of those still young. It is an unexpected and unfair loss of years which is perfectly captured in John Green's work *The Fault In Our Stars* (2012). The novel follows Hazel, a sixteen-year-old cancer patient, as she falls in love with a fellow cancer patient Augustus. Although Augustus is in remission following the removal of his leg, it is discovered that his cancer has returned and that it is now terminal, as is Hazel's. Death, illness, and dying define this text, but the process is still romantic; Augustus attends a living funeral in which he finds some solace and meaning in his impending death.

In this text time is a precious commodity contrasting sharply with the endless time afforded to the supernatural characters in other texts. *The Fault In Our Stars* demonstrates the dichotomy that YA literature faces, considering which causes the greater suffering - becoming old or dying? Whilst Green stands firmly on the side of death being the greater of the two evils (Hazel wants more time and she does not

want to die), death is still presented as a tragic yet almost beautiful event. Green cannot escape the tradition of romanticising the death of the young. Augustus' death is poignant: it is moving; it is wasteful and extravagant and defies the expected societal order. However, by focusing on early death or eternal youth, YA literature ignores or dismisses the pleasures and joys of aging. Although more subtle the pleasures of growing older are denied. Old age, and to an extent middle age, are presented as unavoidably dull, empty, painful, or lonely.

Holly Black's work *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* (2013) interestingly embraces this choice, choosing humanity and decay over immortal youth. Tana is a teenager bitten by a vampire; unwillingly she journeys to join the rest of the vampires in Coldtown, a quarantined city of vampires and those wishing to become vampires. However, unlike Bella, Tana does not want to become a vampire and searches for a solution to her inevitable transformation. She chooses to be human and the novel ends with the outcome uncertain as to whether she will revert to being human or succumb to the vampiric disease. Tana's story offers a counter-narrative to Bella's, highlighting the flaws of vampire existence rather than focusing on the limitations of being human. Like Tennyson and Meyer, Black considers the effects of perpetual life; the conclusion she suggests, however, is far from the static picture-perfect family unit Meyer presents.

> *Haven't you ever thought about it- being a vampire?*
>
> It would be good-bye, Pearl; good-bye, Pauline: good-bye, dream of Los Angeles and palm trees and bright blue ocean. Good-bye, lying on a towel in the backyard under the summer sun, ants crawling across her foot, slippery cocoa butter gleaming on her skin. Good-bye, beating heart and burgers and having blue-grey eyes.(2014:197)

Here the small, forgotten pleasures of being human are remembered by Tana as she considers what she will lose and what she will gain in becoming a vampire. Although these may be seen as insignificant items -friends, family, food, and daylight - Tana considers these to be more significant and valuable than the qualities she would gain by becoming immortal: beauty, eternal youth, and superior strength. Just as Edward and Rosalie long to be human once more, Tana also wishes to remain in her human form. Humanity, though exhibited as the weaker, uglier, more mundane form of existence in many YA texts, still holds an appeal for certain characters. The one

exception that does encourage characters to become supernatural beings is if their romantic partner is also a supernatural entity. In this situation, it could be argued that the attraction of the transformation arises not from the supernatural abilities gained but from the equalising of the partners within the relationship. By transforming, the human partner is no longer at a physical disadvantage, nor are they prey; instead, they are reborn as the same species and consequently become equals.

Chapter Summary

In YA texts, the body is used to house and showcase trauma, both physical and mental. The effect of this trauma on the character and others is discussed and explored using the body. Ultimately, in each text, the character finds a way of acknowledging, accepting, and moving past the trauma. Trauma, both physical and mental, may test, shape, and challenge the character but it does not define them. Characters are not defined either by their physical limitations, rather these are obstacles that they overcome. Rosalie finds a surrogate daughter in Renesmee; Bella finds an alternative to her humanness; Katniss trains to become a better soldier and fighter; Daisy recognises and triumphs over her eating disorder; Tana views her vampirism as an illness that she can cure. Trauma pushes characters to adapt and evolve, and that is the purpose of the body in YA literature: a means of discussion, and a way of tracing and documenting growth and past events. Kaye's green skin documents her heritage, and Hester's missing eye and facial scars record the suffering she has endured; the body is tangible proof of experience. The body is the stage or platform on which the necessary acts are inflicted externally to prompt internal progression, development, and usually resistance.

The body acts therefore as a forum to challenge the social expectations of growing up, aging, gender norms, beauty, and acceptable behaviour. We are forced to consider what defines humans. Is it our physical form, our thinking, our morality, or our actions? What does being human mean? The answer lies perhaps in our physical form but even that is compromised by hybrids, be they supernatural and human hybrids like Renesmee, or cyborg hybrids blending human and machine.

Each text uses the body to question and push the limitations of the physical, resulting in a tentative suggestion that perhaps the physical is unlimited. The possibilities for re-imagining, re-designing, and re-purposing humanoid beings are endless, allowing for a conclusion that the body is simply a means to an end, a vehicle for issues, a blank canvas, a record keeper, and an ever-changing evolving means of challenging society.

Yet despite offering a multitude of choices, many authors of YA literature continue to reject the inevitable aging of characters, focusing instead on transforming, immortalising, and placing them outside the consequences of time. This perpetual youth, or suspension of the effects of time, echoes perhaps the fairytale tradition of suspending not just reality but the laws of time and space to create a pocket or capsule around a certain moment. Freezing a being at the peak of their physical form allows for a never-ending range of possible actions: it allows for mistakes, and for characters to enact and partake in all of the possibilities of a teenage or young adult existence without the limits of time. In a world that expects so much from young people, that sets life schedules that would intimidate most, this is the real magic. Each supernatural being may have extra abilities and weaknesses that appeal, but their common ground is their extended lifespan, and it is this ability that is tempting. Yet, though tempting, immortality is shown within these texts to have conditions that are undesirable or a burden; immortality comes with a price and can create a new set of issues and difficulties. So maybe what is wanted is choice, the ability to decide whether to live forever or not. Perhaps this is the allure of YA literature: that it offers the reader the chance not to grow up, to pause, and to linger in the realm of youth. In addition, the choice these characters make comes to reflect their chosen identity, suggesting that a being's identity, as either a human or other-worldly being, is partly at least a personal preference. Jacob, Kaye, and Tana each cling and fight to retain a link to their human identity and on some personal level, they still identify as part human regardless of their physical form.

Each outcome, however - immortal youth, aging, death, or transformation- is symptomatic of the human condition that no state of existence is perfect. As such, we find those with too much time fill it with nothing and those with too little fill it with everything. The only concrete conclusion that we can draw is that when all the

characters are human, they must grow up and eventually die. Subsequently, death is human and maybe it is this, our mortality that subsequently defines humanity?

Conclusion

The Future of the Body in YA Literature : Taking the dolls out of the dollhouse – Fanfiction

By defining the place of the body in YA literature the impact and influence of the literary body outside of the text itself is revealed. Whilst the removal and transference of a character's body from the original text into other mediums is not unique to YA literature, the YA body is re-imagined in other forms with increasing frequency at a rate and volume unsurpassed by any other genre. YA characters' bodies are taken from the text and transposed into film, fan art, cosplay, and most prolifically, into fan writing, referred to more commonly as *fanfiction.*

Enabling the sharing and spread of these new character body interpretations is the growth and availability of the internet, which developed in line with YA literature's rise in popularity, prevalence, and readership. With the creation of the internet came a means for readers to share not only their ideas, opinions, and thoughts regarding the text but also to allow for the birth of a new means of fan and text interaction, the genre of fanfiction.

Lev Grossman, in the foreword to Ann Jamison's study, *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World* (2013), argues that the contemporary form of fanfiction arose from three events in 1966: the publication of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), the first performance of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), and the premiere of *Star Trek* (1966). These events Grossman claims started the transition of changing how fans interact with texts. They saw characters being taken from their original texts and transplanted into new settings. In the case of *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Bertha Rochester, the mad wife in the attic, is given a back-story, a history, and an explanation. Likewise, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead,* allows us a glimpse behind the stage curtain enabling us to view *Hamlet* from the perspective of secondary characters. Whilst Rhys and Stoppard were able to showcase their reimagining publicly and were acknowledged to have produced work recognisably unique and worthy of consideration on its merit, the work produced in homage by *Star Trek* fans is somewhat different. Published in mimeographed zines the work reached a much smaller and more focused readership, with one goal: to

continue, to play with, and to enjoy the world created in the TV series. Ultimately, however, these fan-made stories achieved the same goal as Stoppard and Rhys in that they allowed fans to engage actively with a text rather than passively absorbing it. Or as Grossman explains 'In *Spockanalia* the fans dared to raise their voices and speak back to the TV screen - in the TV screen's language, the language of the narrative - just as Rhys spoke back to Brontë and Stoppard spoke back to Shakespeare. They turned reading and viewing from an act of silent consumption into one of active conversation.' (Foreword: Grossman)

In its most basic form, as an homage to another text, fanfiction has existed for centuries. Euripides, in his work *Phoenissae*, or *The Phoenician Women*, retells and re-imagines Sophocles' story of Oedipus. Euripides rearranges and revises the events of *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus,* and *Antigone*. Characters that have died are revived and given new roles, events are changed and the outcome altered. The Brontës as children were also keen writers of fanfiction, as evidenced by their surviving Juvenilia work. This work, written in miniature handmade volumes, featured literary and contemporary figures that inhabited an alternative universe created by the Brontë siblings. The use of multiple media within the work - maps, poems, and illustrations - is very similar to the multimedia approach adopted by much of the fanfiction community. Many fanfictions will have links to fanart or contain lyrics or poems suggesting that both the Brontës and modern fanfiction writers use fanfiction as a means of exploring the boundaries of writing, free from the restrictions and expectations of traditional literary publishing. We can also perhaps see the use of fanfiction for the Brontes and for other writers as a space in which to practise, and develop a writing style without judgement. Clearly, the transition from fan writer to original writer is not new, as will be discussed later.

A simplified view of fanfiction would be that it is the purloining and repurposing of characters, settings, and events for a writer or fan's use and pleasure. Yet this ignores the larger implications and use of fanfiction, that it can be used to subvert, to challenge, and to bring new meaning to texts; it creates new possibilities and counter-narratives that allow answers for the many unanswered questions voiced by fans. Can we now suggest that fanfiction is the voice of the masses, the

feedback of many, the response of the fan, and the reaction of the critic? Grossman proposes that fanfiction is a way of elevating the 'subtext to text' and that:

> fanfiction isn't just an homage to the original - it's subversive and perverse and boundary-breaking, and *it always has been:* ... It's about twisting and tweaking and undermining the source material of the fanfiction, and in the process adding layers and dimensions of meaning to it that the original never had. ... At this late date, fanfiction has become wildly more biodiverse than the canonical works that it springs from. It encompasses male pregnancy, centaurification, body swapping, apocalypses, reincarnation, and every sexual fetish, kink, combination, position, and inversion you can imagine and a lot more you could but would probably prefer not to. It breaks down walls between genders and genres and races and canons and bodies and species and past and future and conscious and unconscious and fiction and reality. Culturally speaking, this work used to be the job of the avant garde, but in many ways fanfiction has stepped in to take on that role. ... Writing and reading fanfiction isn't just something you do; it's a way of thinking critically about the media you consume, of being aware of all the implicit assumptions that a canonical work carries with it, and considering the possibility that those assumptions might not be the only way things have to be. (Foreword: 2013)

This desire to subvert, explore, and break boundaries to discover meaning, significance, or self is a constant theme of YA literature. Like fanfiction, YA literature often features characters that fight to challenge assumptions or to alter their reality, world, society, or just how things are done. It is no surprise then to discover that YA literature is the predominant inspiration for most fanfiction. As of February 2016 the ten texts with the highest number of fanfic stories on the largest fanfiction site - fanfiction.net - were:

Harry Potter (735,000 works)
Twilight (218,000 works)
Percy Jackson and the Olympians (66,500 works)
Lord of the Rings (54,500 works)
Hunger Games (44,200 works)
Warriors (23,400 works)
Maximum Ride (17,700 works)
Mortal Instruments (15,600 works)
Chronicles of Narnia (11,700 works)
Hobbit (11,600 works)

As of January 2019 the top ten texts had changed to the following:

Harry Potter (801,000 works)

Twilight (220,000 works)

Percy Jackson and the Olympians (75,500 works)

Lord of the Rings (56,900 works)

Hunger Games (45,800 works)

Warriors (26,000 works)

Mortal Instruments (17,600 works)

Maximum Ride (17,400 works)

Hobbit (12,500 works)

Chronicles of Narnia (12,300 works)

To clarify, the number in brackets is the number of works published within the subsection of the specific text i.e. In 2016 there were 11,600 individual works published within the subsection dedicated to J.R. Tolkien's work *The Hobbit.* However, there may be multiple works submitted by one author and the works are not limited to stories but can encompass a wide range of textual formats such as poetry or songfics (works inspired by or linked to the lyrics of a song). Like all genres, fanfic has its own style, codes, tropes, and language. An example of this would be the term 'AU' which refers to a work of fanfiction set in an alternative universe that differs in some way from the original setting of the original work. For instance, an AU *Startrek* fanfiction might set the story in a world in which space travel is not possible and all of the characters are fully human.

The number of works in each subsection varies significantly with the most popular texts having thousands of works, while the less popular may have only a handful of works linked to them. The number of works connected to a text can fluctuate greatly and it is very hard to monitor exact figures as the number of works can change rapidly. The cause of a rapid change in the number of works connected to a text often coincides with a rise in popularity for the text in the wider community; often this is due to a text moving into another medium: for instance, all the top ten most popular texts, apart from *Warriors,* have been adapted into movies. The number of works can also fluctuate as writers have the ability to remove their work

from the website, hence the canon of fanfiction is constantly revolving with works being posted, edited, and removed simultaneously. With this ability to remove works longevity and continuity become an issue, as earlier works can be retracted leaving no trace of their existence. Unlike traditional publishing, in which the reader owns a tangible copy of the author's work, fanfiction exists solely under the control of the writer, unless a reader has managed to download, save or print a copy. In addition, works may not remain in a consistent form as the author can constantly update and revise their work so that it may change significantly over time depending on their wishes.

As we can see, although there have been some small changes, *Mortal Instruments* has overtaken *Maximum Ride*; the same ten texts have remained constantly popular over the three years. Each area has grown in the number of works it contains although the growth rate remains highest in the *Harry Potter* section, a testimony to the series' enduring popularity. What also remains significant is the number of works connected to the *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* texts in comparison to the others; while the number of works in the *Twilight* subsection is not insignificant, those connected to the *Harry Potter* series are vast; the entire combined number of works connected to the other nine top ten texts is 484,000 – this is only 60% of the number of works in the *Harry Potter* subsection. Consequently, whilst it is important to recognise the diversity of texts, films, and other media featured in the fanfiction community, the vast majority of fanfiction work is based around the *Harry Potter* texts. To give further context as to the size of the *Harry Potter* fanfiction genre, the largest subsections in the other media catalogued on the website (Anime/Manga, Misc, movies, Cartoons, Plays, Comics, TV, Games) are, as of January 2019:

Anime/Manga: Naruto (426,000 works)

Misc: Wrestling (43,300 works)

Movies: Star Wars (50,300 works)

Cartoons: Avatar: Last Airbender (42,600 works)

Plays: Screenplays (49,800)

Comics: Batman (18,200 works)

TV: Supernatural (124,000 works)

Games: Pokémon (96,300 works)

Consequently, it is easy to see how the *Harry Potter* fandom dwarfs all other subgenres and represents a majority of the overall works published on the site. Interestingly the top five largest overall subsections of work are, as of January 2019, a mixture of western style literature and Japanese manga/anime:

Harry Potter (801,000 works)

Naruto (426,00 works)

Twilight (220,000 works)

Hetalia – Axis Powers (121,000 works)

Inuyasha (118,000 works)

Although*Hetalia – Axis Power* began as a webcomic it was quickly adapted into a manga and anime series. What is interesting about each of the biggest five subsections is that they each feature a series aimed at children/young adults, with multiple characters. Each of the original works has been adapted into multiple media already within the public sphere: *Harry Potter, Twilight, Inuyasha, Hetalia –Axis Powers,* and *Naruto,* have all been adapted into films. Similarly, many of the works have been made into video games or other mediums suggesting that these works lend themselves to adaptation, re-invention, and alteration by not just fans but also the wider marketing and merchandising agents connected to the works.

The use of the characters by fans in fanfiction is no more of an extension than the use of the characters by marketing or media executives to sell more products, and create more storylines and further develop the original world created by the author. Each of the works has a wide fanbase and a sizeable presence in the wider social community. These are not obscure texts which have found a fan base purely in the fanfiction community but are instead well established, recognisable works with clear fan bases outside of the fanfiction community. The works also demonstrate how a fan base can grow and develop over time as many of the works are not newly published and the most popular works were all published over a decade previously: *Harry Potter* (1997), *Naruto* (1997), *Twilight* (2005), *Hetalia – Axis Powers* (2006) and *Inuyasha* (1996).

What perhaps sets these texts apart from their counterparts and makes them canonical fanfiction texts is that they feature multiple characters and multiple plotlines. The multitude of characters and storylines enables fans to choose from a range of characters to 'play' with and a range of 'settings', so to speak. Fans can choose to write about a minor character and elevate them to main character status; they can reimagine the romantic pairings of characters, or set the characters in different worlds, in different predicaments, in different time periods. The options are endless. The more characters the original text has the more possibilities that exist, and perhaps this is what appeals to the writers of fanfiction. In a standalone novel, there are limited characters and limited storylines to explore as the world, no matter how well created, cannot match the scope and depth of a world fleshed out in multiple novels and texts. As a result, it may be worth arguing that not only is fanfiction a reflection of the wider fanbase of a text as a whole, but that also particular texts are more suited to fanfiction than others. The hallmarks of these works which stimulate the most fanfiction engagement can be identified as containing: the existence of multiple 'main' characters; multiple texts of series formats; and an intended younger audience.

It must be noted that the works that inspire the biggest number fanfiction works do not target an adult readership, nor can they be classed as adult works, which implies that there is some essence or quality about children's or YA works, featuring teenage or young adult protagonists that captures the imagination of fanfiction writers in a way adult texts do not. While it may be assumed that the prevalence of works linked to these publications is an indication of the authorship's age, due to the technological aspect of creating and uploading fanfiction, the readership and authorship of these fictions are not so clearly quantified or defined. The design and consumption of these works are not limited to one demographic, gender, age, race, or even country. Though the majority of the works for each subsection are published in English, the range of languages used gives a good indication of just how inclusive and global the appeal of these works is.

What is also significant is that all of the top ten most popular subsections of fanfiction, apart from the *Lord of the Rings,* were written specifically for an intended audience of young people. This raises some very interesting questions. Is the

prevailing use of young adult texts as original source material the result of, or indicative of, the reading habits of the fanfiction writers, the age of the writers, the popularity of the original texts, the accessibility of the original texts, or simply that these ten texts lend themselves particularly well to the writing of fanfiction?

Beginning with the authors themselves, we may want to ask who writes fanfiction? It is often presumed that the majority of fanfiction writers belong to Generation Z because of the digital nature of the genre. József Hajdú defines this online generation as:

> "*Generation Z*" (also known as "iGeneration", the "Net Generation", or the" Internet Generation") is a common term to refer to people born in a currently undefined time-period, variously defined as ranging from between 1989 or 2010, to recent years, and distinct from the preceding "Generation/Millennials". Generation Z is also known as the pluralist generation." Generation Z" is highly connected, as many members of this generation make extensive use of communication and media technologies such as the Web, instant messaging, text messaging, MP3 and MP4 players, mobile phones and YouTube, earning them the nickname "digital natives". No longer limited to home computers, the Internet is now made increasingly accessible on mobile Internet devices such as mobile phones. A major difference between Generation Y and Generation Z is that the older members of the former remember life before the take-off of mass technology while the latter have been born completely within it. This generation was also born into an era of postmodernism, multiculturalism, and globalization.
>
> Generation Z is known for curating information online at a rapid pace: sharing thoughts and observation on a variety of media, topics and products. (2014:38-39)

Though Generation Z may appear to be the logical producers of fanfiction, the structure and nature of the internet make cataloguing authorship difficult; authors use pseudonyms, they can lie about, or omit, their gender, age, location, or nationality. Stories can be removed, copied, or relocated, making it harder to trace authorship. This assumption that Generation Z is the main source of fanfiction authors has been questioned in recent years by critics, and the resulting research has identified a far wider range of writers than may have been expected. Ann Jamison in her research identifies the following groups as writers of fanfiction:

> Kids. Parents. Teachers. Married couples - together. Professional writers moonlighting, free from market forces. Tweens working out sexual and writerly frustration online, simultaneously; fumbling "first time" stories written fumblingly by and about middle-schoolers writing for the first time. ... The

> majority of this not-for-profit writing is written by women, or if not by women, then by people who are willing to be (mis)taken for women. ... Again, it's not *just* women, and I really cannot emphasize this enough: fic provides a venue for all kinds of writers who are shut out from official culture, whether by demographic or skill or taste. (no page numbers given)

There is also a crossover between published authors and fanfic writers, as noted by Jamison, with recognised authors like Naomi Novik, Meg Cabot and E.L. James having written, and sometimes continuing to write, fanfiction. To complicate matters further each fanfiction community - the fans connected to one specific text or series, for instance, the *Harry Potter* series - has different authorship, which may potentially attract writers of certain ages, genders or backgrounds. Mary Kirby-Diaz who studied the fan base writing *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fanfiction discovered that:

> Defying the stereotype of the female high-school teen fan, most online BtVS' shippers were revealed to be single, females, highly educated career professionals or college/graduate students 21 to 40 years of age. In fact, nearly three-fourths of them had graduate or professional degrees, and about one-third were mothers, mostly of young children under ten years of age. (2013:42)

Evidently, although the authors of fanfiction may come from all walks of life, they come together to partake in writing about a text that has meaning for them. They interact with and open a form of communication and engagement with a text, and though their motives and methods may differ, the impact that the particular text has had upon them cannot be denied. Especially significant is the impact of young adult work. Fanfiction can thus be seen as the opening of a toy box on a global scale with every text and literacy device broken down into its constituent parts which can then be arranged and adapted as the new writer wishes. Characters and settings become stock pieces that may be reconfigured, remodelled, and re-imagined for the amusement and entertainment of both the writer and others.

Therefore, it may be suggested that fanfiction is the organic growth of literature, notably YA literature, and could consequently be envisioned as a textual offspring. The original texts have thus given birth to these new texts that draw inspiration from, and link to the parent text. As such, fanfiction may be viewed as the ‘child’ or ‘kin’ of these ‘parent’ texts; sharing similarities such as the base characters and plot, the DNA of the text, which they have then adapted and changed. What is vital to note is that all fanfiction contains characters from the original text. These

characters may be adapted, altered, redrawn, and re-envisioned; placed in new and different settings, times, locations, situations, and even different textual worlds, but ultimately the characters are the key essence of the 'parent' text that is transferred into fanfiction. Hence, the characters are the fundamental DNA of a text, for whilst every other aspect of the character may be redrawn, their physical presence cannot. The physicality of the character cannot be eroded, and thus it is the *body* of the character that is the DNA of the text, which in turn is vital for pinning and rooting the old 'parent' text within the new 'child' text.

Therefore, how we interact with the text, view it, and relate to it and the 'child' text, is through the medium of the physical body. It is these physical bodies, these 'dolls' from the 'dollhouse', which are selected and taken over into the new dollhouses of the fanfics. These physical bodies become the link to the original text and also the vessel through which we view the new text. The new meanings, events and context of the new fanfiction dollhouses are interpreted and presented through the lens of the original characters' bodies.

Even fanfiction which places a fanfic writer's own invented characters in the world of the 'parent' text needs to contain at least one original character to root their own characters and to help provide access and context of the original textual world. For example, the new character is often a relation or friend of an existing character, and it is this original character that is used to allow the new character to integrate into the original world. Alternatively, the original characters can be used to provide backing scenery for the new characters to interact with. For example, a fanfiction story might contain a group of new characters, who accidentally enter the world of JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy. The fanfiction writer, in addition to using Tolkien's dollhouse, also uses his characters as set pieces, with whom the new characters interact to provide credence that the dollhouse is in effect 'authentic'. Without the original 'dolls' in place, it becomes impossible to fully identify a particular dollhouse or textual world. To clarify, if we were to place the original characters in another setting with new characters or dolls, we could still identify the story as linking to, or having a connection to, the original text and world, due to the presence of the original characters. Hence, the physicality of charactersis vital in defining a text.

We can also see how important characters or ‘dolls’ are to fanfiction as they are used to search and select texts from within a subsection. For example, it is possible on Fanfiction.net to search for texts by character, or multiple characters, alone. In the community section of the Fanfiction.net website there are communities which are often dedicated to specific characters. This demonstrates the connection a user, or group feels to a particular character, not just the text. The body is the lifeblood of a text, it is the heart and soul of a character and the essence that the reader connects to and bonds with.

The body in fanfiction is treated differently from the body in YA literature. The respect and reverence for the physical form as displayed in the selected texts can be lacking in particular works of fanfiction. Characters are also subjected to a variety of abuse not present in the original texts. The prevalence of this abuse is such that the term ‘Whump’ fanfiction has been developed. The top definition for ‘Whump’ fanfiction is listed on the website Urban Dictionary as:

> whump
>
> A fandom term, commonly used by fan fiction authors (particularly in the Stargate genre) to describe physical and/or mental abuse laid on a character in a story.
>
> She [the fanfiction writer] was known to be a shameless Daniel-whumper in her fanfics, inflicting every possible form of torture on the character, from hangnails to decapitation.
>
> by vegemite April 15, 2005
> (https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=whump)

This definition is over a decade old and demonstrates that placing characters into abusive situations is a recognised and established practice within the fanfiction community. The maltreatment of characters’ mental and physical states by fans reaffirms the conscious and intentional actions of YA authors to give the body dignity in the original texts. The authors’ refusal to gratuitously injure, debase, or otherwise victimise their characters simply for the entertainment or enjoyment of readers projects a culture of care for the body. The original texts encourage and promote love and acceptance of the material, and support characters to care for themselves and others physically. In a world that is growing evermore digital and remote, the emphasis YA literature places on physical connection and the use of the body to

interact with the surrounding environment is, I believe, an intentional statement. Although there is a market for work in which characters are hurt physically and mentally, as demonstrated by the existence of 'whump' fanfiction, by choosing to ignore this demographic and promote suffering as part of a journey towards hope and a better life, this YA literature suggests that human existence is not as characterised by suffering. There are YA texts that discuss dark, disturbing, and traumatic subjects, and do not contain hopeful endings or positive conclusions. For example Mark Oshiro's *Anger Is a Gift* (2018), Jennifer Brown's *Hate List* (2009), Adam Rapp's *The Children and the Wolves* (2012), Stephanie Kuehn's *Complicit* (2014), Laurie Halse Anderson's *Wintergirls*(2009), and Stephanie Oakes' *The Sacred Lies of Minnow Bly* (2015).In these texts the body is punished and subjected to harrowing abuse and the suffering experienced can be perceived as occurring without reward. Although it is important to acknowledge the bodily suffering and hopelessness that can be found in YA literature it is equally important to acknowledge the use of the body in promoting hope. The diversity of how the body can be used in YA literature is myriad and though there is not an overarching specific purpose or use of the body, this thesis has chosen to focus on the use of the body as a force for hope, emancipation, self-determination, and joy.

The Body Summarised

It is impossible to extract the body from or to perceive YA literature from outside the physical body, as the body is integral to the genre as a whole. In the texts examined the body is of paramount importance: it is revered, discussed, dissected, altered, and hated. It is a source of conflict, a force for change, and a monument to the impact of time either stopping or flowing. It provides common ground and diversity.

The principal body that most YA literature presents and preserves is the body of youth, not a body of 'beauty' or health, although it can often appear as though YA literature presents youth as synonymous with these qualities. This fictional youthful body is representative of an actual human body – therefore it is vital to note that in reality, current research suggests that on average human brains do not reach a

particular level of maturity until at least 25 years of age with some academics, such as Leah Somerville, suggesting that the brain, or sections of the brain, continue to mature after this point. There are a multitude of factors which can impact brain maturity and brain maturity varies significantly between individuals with some reaching maturity at far earlier ages. Human brains develop and change significantly through the period of adolescence and thus the cognitive processes of these young brains are indeed chemically and biologically different from 'adult' brains and 'adult' thinking.

In this period young people transition from family to peer influence and their attitude to risk changes. In their 2012 work *Adolescent Brain Development: Implications for Behavior,* Michelle K. Jetha and Sidney Segalowitz explore how the adolescent brain evolves and develops into an 'adult' brain and how this development sets an adolescent brain and adolescent thinking apart from adults and consequently impacts on young adult behaviour. Jetha and Segalowitz state that:

> The physical changes in the brain that occur during late childhood, adolescence, and into young adulthood are particularly dramatic and occur at all levels: molecular, cellular, anatomical, and functional. These physical changes are accompanied by notable changes in social behaviour. (2012:vii)

Jetha and Segalowitz also highlight the emotional volatility of adolescence and the expansion and growing complexity of an individual's social network:

> This development period is also marked by variations in emotionality and in self-regulation. In adolescence, emotions become more intense, fluctuate more often and are more subject to extremes than those experienced by children and adults. Concurrent with these emotional changes are shifts in behavioural regulation. In childhood, behavioural regulation is more externally derived from the guidance and constraints put in place by parents and caregivers, whereas in adolescence there is an increasing need for self-regulation. The way in which changes in emotionality and self-regulation are negotiated will greatly influence how well the adolescent navigates through his/her expanding social world. (2012:viii)

Their work goes on to investigate how brain development, genetics, and environment may affect how an individual behaves. The link therefore between the body of an adolescent and their behaviour cannot be ignored. The physical correlates directly to the emotional, spiritual, and behavioural; their material being separates them from

children and adults and makes them, their experience and their reactions, different. Jetha and Segalowitz argue that adolescents struggle to control their feelings, feel social exclusion and inclusion more strongly than adults, empathise emotionally rather than rationally, and are transitioning from being self-absorbed to considering others in their outlook, although this is far from a completed journey. They are also programmed to react strongly to situations and experiences, which thus increases their willingness to engage in risk-taking behaviour. These behaviours and attitudes towards situations, environments and others are clearly displayed in YA literature. Katniss' impulsive volunteering as tribute, Kaye's willingness to participate in life or death fairy politics, Daisy's unprotected sex with her cousin, and Hester's choice to leave Shrike to avenge her mother's death are all examples of YA characters choosing to enact risk-taking behaviours often as a result of an intense emotional reaction to a situation.

These teenage or adolescent brains do not reason as adult brains do. They do not feel, understand, or make choices as 'adults' do, and consequently, we see this fundamentally different mindset reflected in the choices and actions of our fictional characters. We see their naivety, their optimism, their romance, their passion, and their risk-taking behaviour; not because they do not understand the risk, not because they cannot evaluate or recognise danger, but because they, unlike 'adults', do not process or consider risk in the same way. Susan E. Rivers, Valerie F. Reyna, and Britain Mills argue that adults are 'risk averse,' and using Fuzzy-trace theory,[7] state that adolescents and young people are more likely or willing to engage in behaviours deemed risky as their perception and reasoning regarding a situation differ from adults'. Adolescents are still developing the 'gist' process, so often make judgements on risk based on 'verbatim' information, which can lead unexpectedly to

[7] Fuzzy-trace theory or FTT is a cognition theory devised by Charles Brainerd and Valerie F. Reyna and published in 1995 – it is used to explain how false memories, probability, decision making and risk are evaluated by the brain. The theory suggests that we use two types of information or summarising of information in parallel, 'gist' and 'verbatim' traces. 'Gist' is the overall or overarching meaning or message, 'verbatim' is the detailed and accurate information or situation. We use these traces in tandem but often rely on 'gist' traces or information to make decisions as over time it is harder to recall 'verbatim' traces. Studies also show that people prefer simplified and applied analysis of information i.e. 'gist', rather than raw data i.e. verbatim, for example surface A is cleaner than surface B, is preferred to, surface A has an ATP score of 7 and surface B has an ATP score of 36.

an increase in risk-taking behaviour. This is because adults use ‘gist’ to summarise a situation as ‘bad’ or risky, and so avoid it, but adolescents use ‘verbatim’ processing which does not always give a simple ‘bad’ or ‘good’ summary; instead, it evaluates risk versus reward. Given the example of Russian Roulette, adolescents or young people understand that the chance of death is one in six, but rather than seeing a one in six chance of dying, as most adults do, they see the five in six chance that they will survive and live. They calculate that the reward – the thrill, adrenaline, peer admiration, winning and the probable positive outcome – is worth the risk. It is this mentality and way of thinking – daring, adventurous, thrill-seeking, and optimistic - that is so entrancing, captivating and portrayed so vividly in YA literature. Or as summarised in *The Science of Adolescent Risk-Taking: Workshop Report,* published in 2011 by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC):

> Adolescents act despite awareness of risks. The key is that, although adolescents overestimate many risks, they often also rate the potential benefits as very high – and thus the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived risks. (2011:54)

The IOM and NRC also summarise that ‘Much of the primary work of adolescence – including developing an identity, building competence, and gaining acceptance from peers – requires some degree of risk-taking. (2011:56) In short young people are biologically hard-wired to evaluate a situation and the risk it poses, and act, whilst adults do not, even when the risk is in an adult’s favour. The ability to engage in risky behaviours while experiencing extreme emotional reactions is uniquely presented in YA literature, and it is what makes YA literature so passionate and optimistic. The characters are young, mostly human, adults and as such, they are living cocktails of heightened feelings, desires, passions, and actions. They are destined to take the leap of faith because unlike adults, young adult reasoning and processing allow them to see the benefits of risk and believe in the chance of a successful outcome. In the previous examples, each character acts because they believe the reward is worth the risk. Katniss believes saving Prim is worth entering the Hunger Games Arena; Kaye believes that her involvement in the fairy world and the excitement this brings are worth possible death; Daisy believes that a physical relationship with her cousin is worth the risk of pregnancy or an STI, and Hester believes avenging her mother’s death is worth giving up the safety of staying with Shrike. Each protagonist has

evaluated the situation, the risks, and the reward and decided that they are willing to accept the odds of failure. It would be interesting to see if they would analyse the situation in the same way and make the same decisions in fifteen, or more, years' time when they may be considered 'adults'. What is also noticeable is that each character, in evaluating the risk, either believes that they have a good chance of survival, or that they are willing often to endure suffering on a level that most adults would fear. Is this naivety, or do YA characters feel that they, like their real-life counterparts, are invincible and that they will beat the odds?

This unexpected and subconsciously positive outlook is not displayed openly by what the characters say but is demonstrated in how they act, which presents a universal truth of YA literature: that the young act as though they are immortal (and in the case of many YA characters – they are). We see YA characters continually charging into dangerous situations not because they don't realise how life threatening they are, but because somehow they seem to believe they will be all right. The idea of dying, though real, is still for most characters beyond imagining, and even for the characters that do experience death, such as Hazel, it still doesn't seem like the end. For YA literature retains the Peter Pan notion of death - '"To die will be an awfully big adventure."'(1995:99) - suggesting that death is not final and that it cannot stop youth from finding yet another adventure or experience.

This allows us to conclude that though the body is the vessel of the living, it may also be the vessel of the afterlife – if there is one – for as explored in Chapter Three, if the body houses the soul then some part of the body, will continue, once the mortal remains have perished. As discussed previously, if Edward, Shrike, and Stalker Fang can retain some essence of their human identity within their newly formed bodies could not this essence, which contains their identity, continue in perpetuity without the body? Perhaps this is a question beyond the scope of this thesis and yet it exhibits precisely the deep and controversial nature of the questions and discussions the body inspires within YA literature. For whatever else we may conclude about the body in YA literature, it is decidedly not a passive entity.

Though the body is given form in literature through language, it is impossible to fully transpose into language those experiences that are experienced through the body; in short, life itself. Life is enacted on and through the body; it is the body that

carries us from infancy to death, through childbirth and trauma, joy and desperation; it is the conduit through which we interface with the world, society, and others. The body changes as we change: it ages, morphs and develops, and is to all extents and purposes the vessel upon which the world makes its reflection.

Perhaps it is the purpose of the body in YA literature, and indeed perhaps the aim for all literary and artistic endeavours, to act as a conduit to explore and discover meaning for life and give that which cannot be spoken a voice. In her poetry, Emily Dickinson discusses this impossibility of enshrining in words that which is not language. Her work explores the idea of freedom; how words are used by those in authority to entrap and suppress others, yet how through the mind one becomes free. As discussed previously, if the mind is the body, and vice versa, then the body must be the receptacle for providing freedom. Language can be applied, but it is not a perfect medium of explanation for the bodily. Hence, language cannot truly bind or explain the body, for the body has the potential to subvert the linguistic. How anger feels, for instance, varies from person to person, and there is not one depiction of anger that will resonate with all readers. Some feel anger as a cold and detached emotion, whilst others feel it as a burning rage, yet these are words. They do not truly encompass how it feels to be filled with anger or any other emotion. Consequently, YA literature can try to capture only part of what it means to embody a physical form, and the form it usually chooses to attempt to dissect and present is youth.

The body is thus a force for agency. It enacts experience, gives action to thought, and hence makes it real. The body in YA literature is used for a variety of purposes by different characters: as a tool to create new life, as a weapon, to bring pleasure, to bring pain, and as a sacrifice for others. As noted previously, Jetha and Segalowtiz's work suggests that young adults feel emotions more intensely than other age groups, therefore the intensity of the emotions the protagonists feel is biologically programmed within their very cells to be strong enough to inspire the wild and dangerous acts we witness in the texts. The bodies of adolescents and young adults are built and created, not only to feel vast emotion but also with the capacity to see the reward in acts of passion, risk, and danger.

Final Conclusion

This thesis set out to answer the following questions. Within YA literature What does the body mean, how is it used to define identity, and what are the limits of the body in doing this? How is the body used and what does the body represent if the body is no longer simply just human?

In the Introduction, this thesis suggested that there is an emerging canon of YA literature, due to its prominence within YA literary criticism and wider society. It is proposed that the following works are canonical: *Twilight, The Hunger Games,*and *The Fault in Our Stars.* These texts have inspired multiple similar YA texts and ignited an interest in the following subgenres; supernatural, dystopian, and illness/death which has continued for over a decade and does not appear to be subsiding. Since the publication of *Twilight* in 2005, there has been a tsunami of supernatural YA fiction, including: *Vampire Academy* (2007), *City of Bones* (2007), *Fallen* (2009), *The Iron King* (2010), *Nameless: A Tale of Beauty and Madness* (2014), *The Girl at Midnight* (2015), *The Star-Touched Queen* (2016), *WinterSong*(2017) and *King of Scars* (2019). Many follow the *Twilight* pattern of supernatural romance (usually a love triangle) mixed with a crisis that threatens both the protagonist and their wider social group/community/country/civilisation. Similarly, the glut of dystopian YA literature that arose after the publication of *The Hunger Games* in 2008 (*The Maze Runner* 2009, *Divergent* 2011, *Wither* 2011, *Under the Never Sky* 2012, *Flawed* 2016) also feature a love triangle and crisis but reject the supernatural for cyborgs, futuristic beings and dystopian worlds. Following the success of *The Fault in Our Stars,* other YA novels featuring illness and death also appeared: *Side Effects May Vary* 2014, *Before I Die* 2014, and *Five Feet Apart* 2019. Whilst there are many supernatural, dystopian, and illness/death narratives in YA literature, however, the above three texts stand out as landmark works, not only within their subgenre but in the whole of YA literature. Their influence on all YA subgenres, publishing trends, and the general UK/USA population cannot be overestimated. Although the other texts explored within this thesis do have a wide following and have arguably impacted beyond their readership base (*Angus, Thongs and Full Frontal Snogging, How I live Now,* and *Mortal Engines,* have all been

adapted into film), they lack the critical recognition and social ubiquity that the above identified texts have achieved.

Finally, therefore, just as family, gender, sexuality, morality and humanity are choices, the body in YA literature is also a choice. The protagonists choose how is it used, what it means, what it feels, what it looks like, and even what species it is. YA literature often provides readers with the youthful body and possibilities they may themselves not have had. The characters are free to use their bodies as sexual entities, as political vessels, as living documentation of their choices and needs, which perhaps many of the readers fear to do or cannot do. These protagonists allow readers to experience or inhabit a body that is not their own, to connect with another being, and imagine themselves in a myriad of different situations and worlds that may be very different from their own. They sit with Hazel as Augustus dies, they feel her pain as she struggles to come to terms with his death, and though it is not their pain, it is a window into the physical and emotional being of another. These YA texts are not the didactic texts of previous YA literature, and yet they still teach, not through moralising or the punishing of a character, but through empathy with a character. They teach a wealth of human experience, of bodily existence, of how different bodies move through, interact with, and inhabit the world, and through these experiences, watching the protagonist grow and change, perhaps the reader's understanding, relationship to, and appreciation of, their own bodies is changed. Perhaps reading about these bodies, so varied yet accepted, will allow the reader to find peace with and compassion for their bodies that may, or may not be, accepted or cherished by society and societal norms. For in their supposed 'weaknesses' our YA characters find strength and turn their 'flaws' into power, for their use of the body teaches us that more than anything what matters is choice and that it is up to us how we define and perceive our body, and consequently our reality, identity, and purpose.

In the chosen texts we find within the revising and repurposing of the body, a willingness to shape all of society and reality. In its defence of the body as the medium through which experiences are felt, these works defiantly champion the physical in a world that is increasingly becoming more synthetic. The focus on the flesh and bones of a character rather than their digital footprint or social media

presence, suggests a desire to retain a connection to what makes a being human, namely the body and the connections that body has to other bodies. These texts remind us that the body is not a vessel to be ignored but something to be celebrated, adored, and above all enjoyed, especially in its most vibrant and youthful form.

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