

The Mythological Function of Female Adolescent Individuation Narratives as Exemplified  
by Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Saga and Suzanne Collins's Hunger Games Trilogy

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## Abstract

Beloved and bemoaned, Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga and Suzanne Collin's *Hunger Games* trilogy permeated and persist in our cultural conversations and imaginations. What about these particular narratives enthrall and outrage contemporary audiences transcending age, gender, class, and mores, and what does the pandemic reactivity to their teenaged heroines suggest about American society in this moment in time? Thorough analysis of the narrative structure, protagonists, and core conflicts found in the *Twilight* saga and the *Hunger Games* trilogy in the context of psychological, historical, and cultural studies scholarship—specifically in relationship to the work of comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell and psychologists C. G. Jung and John Weir Perry—reveals how each narrative functions mythologically. By evoking affect-images, archetypal representations of unconscious energies and information, each narrative leans against the taboos and longings of individual psyches while reflecting the condition and dilemmas of its generative social order's collective unconscious. From the onset of modernity, affect-images of adolescent girls in Western cultural productions have hosted our preconscious conflicts and disowned anxieties about shifting relational power dynamics—in particular, the changing roles of race, class, sex and gender in defining individual identity and the social order. By functioning mythologically, current heroic affect-images, such as *Twilight*'s Bella Swan and the *Hunger Games*'s Katniss Everdeen, reflect core anxieties about modernity's redefinition of the individual and the female, and illustrate the conflict between biological embodiment and modernity's release of the individual from pre-determined notions of identity and destiny.

## Author Biography

A graduate of Berklee College of Music's Music Production and Engineering program, Heidi A. Hendricks also studied music theory, English literature, anthropology, and political science at The Ohio State University and undertook pre-collegiate studio art studies at The Columbus College of Art and Design.

As an artist who fashions stories from words, sounds, images, and experience, and as an investigator intrigued by the intricacies of interconnectivity, Ms. Hendricks believes that stories feed the human imagination, fuel empathy, and create our possibilities. Storytelling interpenetrates and binds her many fascinations and aspirations (as well as her eclectic professional history) into a unified whole. In 2016, Ms. Hendricks looks forward to finalizing the production of a 'new world' music recording, co-hosting a podcast of conversations between artists from different disciplines about the typically unseen aspects of art-making, exploring fresh research opportunities, and writing the last word of her first novel for children.

## Dedication

For David (1947 - 2016),

who sang the songs of the universe.

For Joe (1904 - 1987),

who taught new ways of thinking about listening to them.

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*Das Ewig-Weibliche, / Zieht uns hinan*  
*“The eternal feminine / Draws us on.”*  
—Goethe, *Faust*

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

Given the number of narratives spanning media and genres competing for the easily distractible attention of twenty-first-century Americans, it seems remarkable that any one achieves, let alone sustains, pervasive cultural notoriety. Thus the commonalities shared by two of the most ubiquitous narratives to have emerged in the last decade seem all the more uncanny. Both the Twilight saga and the Hunger Games trilogy originated in series of novels by American Generation X authors Stephenie Meyer and Suzanne Collins. Both are first-person tales of teenaged female protagonists forced to navigate fantastic circumstances that threaten their physical and psychospiritual survival. Although published and marketed as works of young-adult fiction, both series became international bestsellers, captivating a crossover<sup>1</sup> audience of multigenerational readers and spawning rabid fan cultures of self-described obsessive devotees *before* being made into box-office record-breaking films. Whether beloved or bemoaned, revered or reviled, the Twilight saga and the Hunger Games trilogy narratives not only successfully permeated, but continue to persist in our cultural conversations and imagination. What about these particular narratives enthralled and outraged a contemporary audience transcending age, gender, class, and mores, and what, if anything, does the pandemic reactivity to these stories and their teenaged heroines suggest?

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<sup>1</sup> The term *crossover fiction* refers to books published for children, yet also widely read by adults.

This thesis demonstrates that culturally pervasive narratives have a more substantive, mysterious resonance with their audiences than critics often presume possible of popular genre fiction and film, a resonance more often associated with mythology and religion, born of the archetypal nature of the narrative's structure, prime mover, and core conflicts. By first building upon comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell's understanding of mythology as "the world's dreams," archetypal dramas that "deal with the great human problems" (*Power* 19) and psychologist Carl Gustav Jung's notion of archetypes as the "primordial figures of the unconscious" (*Integration* 23), I argue that genre fiction—like fairy tales, folklore, mythology, and indeed all popular story forms erected upon stereotypical plots, settings, themes, and characters—has inherent potential to *function mythologically*. Because the structure, characters, and conflicts of genre fiction are born of the very archetypes that give rise to myth, its clichés have the same potential to lean against the taboos and longings of individual psyches while reflecting the condition and dilemmas of its generative social order's collective unconscious. By conducting a thorough analysis of the structure, protagonists, and core conflicts of the Twilight saga and the Hunger Games trilogy in relationship to literary, psychological, and cultural studies scholarship, this thesis demonstrates not only how these genre-crossing works of young-adult fiction function mythologically, but also why and how widespread audience reactivity to them reflects and substantiates the cultural significance of their mythological function.

Both the Twilight and the Hunger Games novels speak archetypally by fusing variations of the universal hero's quest story with intimate, introspective narratives that convey palpable emotional realities. Structural similarities with and allusions to assorted

classic fairy-tale, religious, and mythological stories and figures serve to further cue and reinforce the mythological function of each saga. The core conflicts of *Twilight* and the *Hunger Games* narratives derive from time-honored storytelling clichés, born of the human life cycle. Both are at once tales of hero vs. monster, hero vs. social order, and hero vs. self, both are stories of romantic love and of war. Both tell of socially invisible, essentially orphaned female adolescents empowered, encumbered, and ever-changed by having been deemed the Chosen One.

In *Twilight*, Bella Swan undertakes an inverted *Hero's Journey*<sup>2</sup> that subverts the standard Western vampire narrative. Instead of answering what Campbell deemed the mythological hero's *Call to Adventure* by struggling to survive her encounter with a vampire—and thus metaphorically attaining adult womanhood by defeating the monster, as did her prototypical literary forbearers—Bella not only achieves her desire to marry and become a Cullen vampire, but is subsumed and sublimated into what Meyer's version of the creature represents: perfect love, eternal youth, unlimited wealth, flawless physicality, infallible self-control, unfailing parental and communal protection—in other words, utter and permanent relief from the anxieties of *being*.

In contrast, *Hunger Games* heroine Katniss Everdeen actively pursues her society's call to adventure to a seemingly ambivalent end. By attempting to protect and preserve values forged through childhood loss, Katniss discovers, disguises, and reconciles herself to her inner nature. As she plays a variety of externally assigned roles in compulsory, no-win games, Katniss adaptively retrofits her individuation to the confines of her circumstances,

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<sup>2</sup> i.e., a recurring mythological motif identified by Joseph Campbell, discussed at length throughout this thesis.

subverting and renegotiating her society's fixed rules and her sense of self with grave consequences. She survives only to lose all for which she fought, returning to a Wasteland illuminated and altered, but not wholly reformed by her actions. There, in the light and shadow of her experiences, Katniss risks cultivating a fragile, personal boon: faith in life and love, and hope for the uncertain future of her children.

The mythic function of each saga allows its heroine's journey to serve as nuanced metaphor that parallels an experience of contemporary female adolescent individuation. In turn, each saga evinces its unique expression of, response to, and resolution of the same anxieties and paradoxes perplexing the contemporary American cultural unconscious. Anxieties about humanity's relationship with Nature, about both our physical and psychospiritual beings, and about our society and culture surface within the texts, as do conflicting messages about consumerism, objectification, voyeurism, technology, and media. Contradictory modern dictums about individuality, gender roles, sexuality, race, aging, the body and mind, economic stratification, social progress, and the possibilities of a lifetime play out to very different ends within each fantasy world. Each heroine's character and adventure indirectly expresses latent concerns about over-burdened, under-parented, yet infantilized youth, and the future of a society comprised of individuals experiencing great difficulty in comprehending, teaching, and traversing rites of passage into psychological adulthood.

Both the *Twilight* and the *Hunger Games* novels integrate these issues with, and subordinate them to, their female adolescent individuation narratives, thus suggesting that this unconscious cultural content has a natural, sympathetic resonance with the issues

facing contemporary female adolescents, and issues concerning the changing perception and role of both females and the idea of the Feminine<sup>3</sup> in present society. In so doing, each saga also reveals the ways in which these anxieties and paradoxes have been projected on, and internalized by, our cultural perception of girls and women.

This thesis contends that each narrative's popular appeal derives from the pull of its psychic undertow: its mythologization and subsequent symbolic exploration of the complex contemporary issues entangled within female adolescent individuation and what each text illuminates, intentionally and/or unwittingly, about the cultural ambivalences, anxieties, and other issues contributing to a sense of fractured feminine identity in twenty-first-century America.

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<sup>3</sup> As used throughout this thesis, the capitalized terms *Feminine* and *Masculine* respectively reference the symbolic embodiment of one of two flows of opposite, yet complimentary archetypal life energies; as such, *neither* term serves as a literal synonym for either biological sex. That Western languages use gendered names to refer to these concepts suggest their archetypal nature (i.e., that the concepts are symbolic projections of fundamental biological aspects and processes of human bodies, typically unique to each sex.) This thesis contends that *all* human beings—regardless of gender or biological sex—contain, experience, and express both energetic flows. In the West, the Feminine has been traditionally associated with the flow of energy that moves from the internal (i.e., field of *being*) into the external (i.e., the field of *action*). This concept aligns closely with that of Yin in Eastern philosophy. Its Western opposite is referred to as the Masculine; its Eastern opposite is Yang.

## Chapter II

### Narrative and the Numinous: the Spiritual Problem of Modern Man and the Quest for Modern Mythology

Perception does not have the last word on reality. While the nineteenth-century's characteristic blind-faith in rational inquiry and empirical observation to reveal objective, tangible truths fueled many innovations and inventions, it also exposed their limitations as tools of discovery—for the scientific advances, technological developments, social revolutions, and world wars of the twentieth-century substantiated our niggling suspicions that just because something remains directly imperceptible does not mean it is not there. The translation of the Bohr model into the reality of the atomic bomb alone confirmed that intangibilities exist, invisible and unknown except by way of their interactions with observable phenomena—or, to paraphrase Shakespeare's more pithy summation of this crux of modern existential angst: that there remain more things in heaven and earth, body and mind than are yet dreamt of in our philosophies. The numinous abides, and human beings struggle now, as ever before, with the question of how to live in uncertainty.

How human beings engage with uncertainty—the ways we mitigate our awareness of the unknown, the amount of energy we expend attempting to make the unknown *known*, the strategies we use to reconcile the practical demands of *living* with our complex emotional experience of *being*—distinguishes our species from all others in nature. While many creatures invent tools and employ survival tactics, we alone (so far as we know today)

develop and implement them to further our awareness of *being aware* for purposes that extend beyond sustaining physical survival. Other animals cry warning when a predator's shadow falls in the woods, but only we pool our remembered knowledge of predators, of shadows, of the woods, of our failures, and of their eventual defeat into stories—stories we tell to share experiences, evoke feelings, build connections, and explore meanings; stories we tell, regardless of a predator's proximity, to ward off the ever-present shadow of the unknown.

As a species, we evolved to survive our awareness of uncertainty through narrative, the primal adaptive mechanism of the conscious mind. Through narrative we convert the chaos of being—its sensations, perceptions, mentalizations, interactions—into an ordered reflection of our existence in time and space, a communicable unit of consciousness we use to negotiate equilibrium between the known and the unknown. We connect, classify, and catalog, recount, remember, and rationalize our experiences through our narratives, seeking to place and to see ourselves in relationship to them via their symbolic representations. Whether offered from within a statement as contained and literal as “I see a snake” or a tale as complex and metaphoric as that of a naive, curious young woman who, egged on by a talking snake, eats the forbidden fruit of knowledge and ends up adrift in the realm of fear and desire, any narrative abstracts, structures, and communicates an experience of *being alive*, and we evolved as creatures whose survival depends upon the understanding of ourselves, of one another, and of reality that we cultivate and make meaning of through our narrative maps and mirrors.

The intricate role narrative plays in sustaining human life lends credence to American comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell's (1904-1987) theory that mythology

emerged coeval with humanity, born of “two fundamental realizations.” Our first realization, Campbell suggests, is that we, along with all other living things, will inevitably die. Our second realization informs us of our birth into a society—established well before we arrived, apt to endure long after we die—which “nourishes and protects” us in exchange for our willing subordination of our individual “order of life” to the requirements of its systematized collective “order of life.” Only through our participation in the life of this social “superorganism,” suggests Campbell, do we “come to know the life that transcends death.” (*Myths to Live By* 22). Campbell contends that in “every one of the [world’s] mythological systems” throughout and before history, these two awarenesses “have been combined symbolically and constitute the nuclear structuring force of the rites, and thereby, the society.” (23). At its most fundamental level, a mythology is the institutionalization of the narratives around which we found and organize our efforts to live in our awareness of, and thus transcend in the way possible to us, the ultimate unknown—mortality.

In his seminal 1949 work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell explores the role of mythology in creating and regulating this dynamic between the individual and society. He observes that the “life-form” of an individual—inherently limited by biological gender, age, and development—can only realize “a fraction and distortion of the total image of man;” thus each of us must reconcile ourselves to the truth that the “totality” of *human* potential cannot be lived by a single “separate member, but [only by] the body of the society as a whole.” Campbell contends that individuals derive language, ideas, “techniques of life,” and genetic materials from their society (330). In turn, the “tribal ceremonies of birth, initiation, marriage, burial, installation, and so forth,” rooted in the narrative material

underpinning the society, “serve to translate the individual’s life-crises and life-deeds into classic, impersonal forms” that “disclose” the individual to “himself, not as this personality or that,” but in terms of his relational role to others in his society; and by taking up a social persona, such “as the warrior, the bride, the widow, the priest, the chieftain,” the individual enacts “for the rest of the community the old lesson of the archetypal stages [of life],” thus allowing the “whole society” to become “visible to itself as an imperishable living unit.” (*Hero* 331). The society’s “[r]ites of initiation and installation,” according to Campbell, “teach the lesson of the essential oneness of the individual and the group,” while its seasonal rites and festivals “prepare the community to endure” by dedicating its efforts to “the work of nature’s season” in recognition of the fact that just as “the individual is an organ of the society, so is the tribe or city—so is humanity entire—only a phase of the mighty organism of the cosmos.” (331-332). Thus Campbell suggests that a mythological narrative not only supports a society by reinforcing the connections of its individuals to one another and to its whole, but that it also sustains both the individual and the society by reflecting our perceptions of—and thus helping us to see, place ourselves within, and make meaning of—our reality.

But what happens when life reminds us that our perceptions are not to be mistaken for reality? What happens when we encounter empirical evidence that contradicts our life-sustaining narratives, that invalidates their maps and shatters their mirrors? What happens when our experience of reality collides with our mythological bedrock in such a way that our narrative centre no longer holds?

One such collision precipitated the existential situation that Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) sketched as “the spiritual problem of modern man” in his eponymous 1928 essay. Interestingly, it is this same existential situation that Joseph Campbell, in closing *The Hero with A Thousand Faces* some forty-one years later, described as “the problem . . . of rendering the modern world spiritually significant—or rather (phrasing the same principle the other way round) . . . [the problem] of making it possible for men and women to come to full human maturity through the conditions of contemporary life” (334), and then re-characterized, in his 1985-86 interviews with Bill Moyers, as the problem of living a human life in “a demythologized world” (*Power* 10). Remarkably, this same “spiritual problem” persists, presenting many of the derivative and concordant problems with which we still struggle, individually and culturally, in 2015.

Written ten years after the first world war, revised several times over the next five years as the spectre of second approached, Jung’s essay “The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man” explores how and why the “catastrophic” events of the world war posed an “almost fatal shock” to the Western psyche, one which left both society and modern man—the uncommon individual truly cognizant of his or her ahistorical place inside the existential paradoxes of the present—in a state of “profound uncertainty.” (*Portable* 460).

Jung traces the origins of this early twentieth-century spiritual crisis from its medieval seeds, when the pursuit of experiential knowledge through scientific inquiry and global exploration first upended “the metaphysical certainties of our medieval brother” (464). The Western mind compensated for its lost mythological narrative, its “childhood” view of the world as “eternally fixed” with humanity safe and secure “at rest in

the centre of the universe” (464), by substituting the “ideals of material security, general welfare and humanitarianism” (465) in its void, thus beginning a transition in faith that accelerated with each passing century away from an order of life derived from an externalized absolute authority, as interpreted and supported by paternalistic social and religious institutions, towards another arising from experimental secular convictions and curiosities about the infallibility of Reason and the unexplored territory of the psyche. Government, philosophy, science, religion, and technology evolved throughout this renegotiation of narrative, yet instead of their ‘advances’ bringing forth the ideals of peace and brotherhood of man to which they theoretically aspired, we wrought their most “beneficent” and “catastrophic potentials” in the crucible of World War I (*Portable* 460). The paradox realized by the Great War, Jung contends, triggered a “revolution in our conscious outlook” that made itself visible “in our inner life by shattering our faith in ourselves and our own worth” (464).

Modern man’s subsequent loss of faith in Reason—“in the possibility of the rational organization of the world” (464) and “in the lasting effectiveness of social and political measures” (*Modern* 204)—coincided with an emerging awareness that “every step forward in material ‘progress’ steadily increases the threat of a still more stupendous catastrophe” (*Portable* 465). The latter exacerbated and expanded what Jung identified as a pervasive sense of psychological “enantiodromia (running towards the opposite)” affecting European society; he observed it first generally, as exemplified in the ways modern man had begun “turning his attention from outward material things to his own inner processes” (466). Jung understood this inward turn as a natural reaction to a conundrum

which asked the psyche to “dethrone” the “idolized values of our conscious world” without knowing what, if anything, could be relied upon take their place (*Portable* 472).

He describes the circumstances at the core of the problem in writing:

The upheaval of our world and the upheaval of our consciousness are one and the same. Everything has become relative and therefore doubtful. And while man, hesitant and questioning, contemplates the world that is distracted with treaties of peace and pacts of friendship, with democracy and dictatorship, capitalism and Bolshevism, his spirit yearns for an answer that will allay the turmoil of doubt and uncertainty (471).

Amid this volatile competition of social ideologies, Jung evidences the enantiodromic shift toward the internal mysteries of being in its general cultural manifestations: he recognizes it in the emergence of Expressionism, with its externalized representations of personal sensations and emotions, which he understands as art serving its function as the prophetic anticipator of “coming changes in the collective unconscious” (466); he sees it in the revival of interest in occultism, Theosophy, Kundalini-yoga, Gnosticism, and other “moral teachings that do not balk at the shadow side of life” (*Modern* 207), which he interprets as the transference of “psychic energy which can no longer be invested in obsolete religious forms” (*Portable* 467) into the “embryonic stages from which new and riper forms will emerge” (474) ; and he notes its presence, most significantly, not only the emergence of psychology from its philosophical origins into a scientific field of inquiry, but in the increasing fascination of the public with the “almost pathological manifestations from the hinterland of the psyche” (466), despite Freud’s attempts to characterize the unconscious as naught but a repository for “refuse and smut,” home to the “dirt and darkness and evil” lurking inside humanity (469).

Jung regards “the very fact” that psychology emerged as a science at this moment in history as “symptomatic of a profound convulsion of the collective psyche” (*Portable* 462-463). He suggests that the same “psychic facts” of humanity have always existed, but went unnoticed while the prevailing social narratives, ideals, and rituals provided the “external form[s]” (*Modern* 201) that gave “true expression to life” and “all the yearnings and hopes of the soul” (*Portable* 462, 461). But when life experience contradicted the narratives underlying society’s religious, political, and ideological foundations, so that their external forms “no longer embrace[d] life in all its fullness,” the individual became energetically disrupted, “divided against” and “at war with” himself on account of “the inner man”’s desire for “something that the visible man does not want” (463); and only within this situation of “distress,” writes Jung, “do we discover the psyche; or, more precisely, [do] we come upon something which thwarts our will, which is strange or even hostile to us, or which is incompatible with our conscious standpoint” (*Modern* 202).

With narratives razed, left bereft and bewildered, Jung thought it unsurprising that modern man “falls back on the reality of psychic life” (213) and disregards Freud’s warnings about the unsavory character of the unconscious in favor of treating all things “psychological” as though they were “precious as fragments of a manuscript salvaged from the ancient middens” (*Portable* 472). Modern man, writes Jung, “turns to the psyche with very great expectations,” “without any reference to any traditional creed,” desperate for “original experience and not assumptions,” “*knowledge*, instead of *faith*,” and the chance “to experience the psyche for itself” (468), seeking from it the “certainty which the world denies him” (473).

Thus Jung finds “the crux of the spiritual problem today” within “the fascination which the psyche holds for modern man.” Disinterested in interpreting this fascination as either indicative of man’s “decadence” or as “the promise of a far-reaching spiritual change in the Western world,” Jung believed that it signaled humanity’s arrival upon “the threshold of a new spiritual epoch” (*Portable* 476), one “rooted in the deeper social strata” and “more important because it touches on those irrational and—as history shows—incalculable psychic forces which transform the life of peoples and civilizations in ways that are unforeseen and unforeseeable.” (477). While Jung pities those who mistakenly think that because a phenomena is psychic, it can be contained and controlled (466), he also believes that the hope for the future of humanity lies within the psyche’s ability to create the “new spiritual forms and spiritual forces” with which to safeguard ourselves and our equilibrium *from ourselves*, or, as in the case of early twentieth-century Europe, with which we might “subdue the boundless lust for prey of Aryan man” (476).

Jung stresses that the individual he deems modern is “by no means the average man” (457). The “forces” expanding public fascination with the psyche, he suggests, remain “invisible” to most eyes, so much so that an “enlightened European” still preoccupied with the political narrative of idealistic world reform might consider Jung’s those of an over-cautious “man who predicts a thunderstorm when there isn’t a cloud in the sky” (477-478). Jung acknowledges his observations of this spiritual problem may appear to run contrary to the manifest “spirit of the times”: its “ideal of internationalism and supernationalism, embodied in the League of Nations;” its “exceptional valuation of the body,” as demonstrated by modern sport and dance; and its enablement of vicarious encounters with

repressed “excitements, passions, and fantasies” by way of the cinema and the detective novel (*Portable* 478). The zeitgeist, Jung suggests, had taken up a “rapid,” “Americanized” tempo as “aging Europe” raced “young America” in “perhaps a healthier or last desperate effort to escape the dark sway of natural law” (479). But after nodding to the possibility that the storm he senses rising will remain “below the horizon,” Jung reminds his reader that “when we speak of the spiritual problem of modern man, we are speaking of things that are barely visible,” if not only retrospectively identifiable, because “what is significant in psychic life always lies below the horizon of consciousness” (477-478).

Forty-one-years and a second, still more horrific world war later, in writing the epilogue to *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, his book on the universal commonalities of two mythological motifs he called the *Hero’s Journey* and the *Cosmogonic Cycle*, Joseph Campbell offered a parallel definition of the spiritual problem of modern man in terms more expansive and poetic, yet hauntingly reminiscent of Jung’s.

After probing the many ways in which mythological narratives have animated, activated, and sustained the lives of individuals and societies throughout the world and history, Campbell announces that mythology’s “long-inherited, timeless universe of symbols has collapsed” in the contemporary world, due to the extreme “transform[ation] in human life” brought about by “the democratic idea of the self-determining individual, the invention of the power driven machine, and the development of the scientific method of research.” (*Hero* 333).

Echoing Jung’s intimation of our having arrived upon a “new spiritual epoch,” Campbell characterizes the spirit and conundrum of his contemporary world in reflecting

upon Nietzsche's late-nineteenth century pronouncement via the "fateful, epoch-announcing words" of Zarathustra that "Dead are all the gods." He writes:

The dream-web of myth fell away; the mind opened to full waking consciousness; and modern man emerged from ancient ignorance, like a butterfly from its cocoon. . . . It is not only that there is no hiding place for the gods from the searching telescope and microscope; there is no such society any more as the gods once supported. The social unit is not a carrier of religious content, but an economic-political organization. Its ideals are not those of a hieratic pantomime, making visible on earth the forms of heaven, but of the secular state, in the hard and unremitting competition for material supremacy and resources. . . . The problem of mankind today, therefore, is precisely the opposite to that of men in the comparatively stable periods of those great co-ordinating mythologies which are now known as lies. Then all the meaning was in the group, in the great anonymous forms, none in the self-expressive individual; today no meaning is in the group—none in the world: all is in the individual. But there the meaning is absolutely unconscious. One does not know toward what one moves. One does not know by what one is propelled. The lines of communication between the conscious and the unconscious zones of the human psyche have all been cut, and we have been split in two. (*Hero* 334).

Campbell attributes "the real cause for the disintegration of all our inherited religious formulae" to the shifts in the "center of gravity" of our sense of the numinous—the "realm of mystery and danger"—precipitated by the advancement of human knowledge. Our primitive ancestors, writes Campbell, developed religious mythologies to help themselves come into accord with the unknowns of the natural world in relationship to their means of survival as hunter-gatherers or planter-harvesters; these mythologies offered opportunities for man's "unconscious identification with the alien creatures of other species in the wild" (336), thus allowing the animal kingdom and plant life to serve as "the tutors of humanity" (337), and for human beings to place and understand ourselves in the world by way of our psychological projections. When the advances of human knowledge demystified "the plant and animal worlds" by bringing both "under social control" via

domestication and agricultural practices, our mythological narratives and unconscious identifications shifted accordingly outward, to the mysteries of “the skies” and the our place in the order of the spheres. Campbell notes that in the mid-twentieth-century, human adaptation and scientific investigation rendered the symbols upholding “cosmic law” inanimate, demythologized by virtue of their having become “simply accepted” aspects of being understood “in mechanical terms” (*Hero* 336). Like Jung, Campbell traces the Western mind’s “prodigious transfer of the focal point of human wonder” (337) away from the external world through “the descent of the Occidental sciences (from seventeenth-century astronomy to nineteenth-century biology)” toward the unexplored territories within, as evidenced by the focus of scientific inquiry “on man himself (in twentieth-century anthropology and psychology)” (336). According to Campbell, the fact that “man himself is now the crucial mystery” leaves the Western world in need of a new ‘co-ordinating’ mythology to reconnect the individual’s sense of self to both an expanded concept of tangible reality and to the mysteries of being beyond immediate conscious perception (337).

Campbell thus reverberates and reframes Jung’s statement of the spiritual problem of modern man in terms of the function he believes mythology should serve: that of helping us to return from our self-created existential alienation into a sense of enlivened accord with our individual *selves* and our social and phenomenal *world*. According to Campbell, a new mythology would need to reflect the contemporary Western mind’s orientation toward the individual, a “modern hero-deed” narrative that does not attempt to resurrect deflated symbols, nationalistic and religious affiliations, or otherwise turn “back, or away, from what has been accomplished by the modern revolution” (334).

Campbell suggests instead that humanity must endure the process of excavating, animating, and interpreting new resonant forms from the unconscious. Despite the ability of human consciousness to “invent,” “predict,” influence, and “control” (335) the world around it, Campbell contends that redefining our relationship to the persistent mysteries of being beyond the influence of the modern world, and thus solving the “problem” of “rendering the world spiritually significant” (*Hero* 334), is a task that must be “worked out” unconsciously “through what is bound to be a very long and very frightening process, not only in the depths of every living psyche in the modern world, but also on those titanic battlefields into which the whole planet has lately been converted.” (335). Campbell’s “modern hero-deed” consists of “questing to bring light again the lost Atlantis of the coordinated soul” by restoring the lines of communication, and thus a sense of equilibrium, between the conscious and unconscious minds so as to allow “men and women to come to full maturity through the conditions of contemporary life.” (334).

Thirty-six years later, while conducting the interviews published as *The Power of Myth*, journalist Bill Moyers asked Campbell, “What happens when a society no longer embraces a powerful mythology?” Campbell replied, “What we’ve got on our hands. If you want to find out what it means to have a society without any rituals, read *The New York Times*” (*Power* 8). To Campbell, the stories of urban American youth committing acts of “destruction and violence,” joining “gangs” with “their own initiations and their own morality” reflected the struggle of adolescents search for a way into adulthood within a society not only without mythologically supported rites of initiation (9), but also so nascent, complex, and economically-oriented as to lack “the unstated mythology” of an ethos (10).

He empathically understood these uninitiated youth, operating by laws that “are not the laws of the city,” as both dangerous to and endangered by society, yet trying “the best they can” to live human lives within a “demythologized world” (*Power* 9-10). Campbell similarly interpreted the increase in hallucinogenic drug experimentation and interest in occult religions as the attempts of spiritually-bereft individuals to chemically, mechanically, or formally induce experiences of transcendence (16). He hypothesized that many students he encountered seemed “very much interested in mythology because myths bring them messages” (10) about how to cope with the general, recurring psychic problems of being human, rather those specific to inhabiting cultural personae, technologies, or politics (11).

The spiritual problem identified and illustrated by both Jung and Campbell arose from modernity’s collision with the mythological underpinnings of Western societies. While the phenomenon of a mythological narrative collapse causing subsequent socio-spiritual problems was not in itself new, the unique character of the situation addressed by Jung and Campbell jolted the early twentieth-century West in unprecedented ways that ultimately reverberated throughout the world.

In altering its picture of the universe, particularly with regards to its inclusion of material relativism, the Western conscious mind shattered the notion of absolutism core to its supporting mythologies, thus significantly impacting the relational dynamics between the individual and society. As Campbell observed, with our realization that the “divine interpretations of local laws” and “social orders” were “simply cooked up,” mere “functions of conditions of geography and history,” came the consequent awareness that “there is no god-given right, wrong, true, false, moral, immoral.” (“The Celebration” I.1.1). In turn, this

awareness sent the established “moral order” into “flux.” While liberating the modern individual “to live as a human being, not simply as a robot repeating [enforced past] patterns,” this cognizance simultaneously required “a much more sophisticated idea toward the social order”—one far more pliable and tolerant of heterogeneity—and necessitated a new relationship of individual to the “natural order” of living a finite biological life (“The Celebration” I.1.1).

Although our sense of phenomenal reality appeared to be becoming increasingly relativistic, Campbell pointed out that the physiology and biological developmental pattern of the human animal—its temporal and physical limitations, and the autonomic aspects of its being—remained much the same, and just as determinate as ever before. Thus our shifting picture of reality posited previously unknown demands upon the individual’s development of self.

Campbell affectionately refers to the human being as a “very strange animal”—one born into a “condition of dependency,” lasting for the first twenty years of life, whose development into total maturity is not autonomic, but a rather process of conscious, psychological self-determination that must be coordinated with the unconscious, physical development of the body. Campbell contends that past mythological rites of passage ushered Western individuals from their state of dependency into a “traditional notion of a mature adult” (i.e., a person “who accepts and represents the order of the society without question”), but that neither the modern society or individual continue to desire or require this traditional, “stuffed shirt” adult; instead, we have embraced the expectation that an “adult mind” is one that “accepts responsibility for its own actions, that judges . . . in terms of an ordered and considered value scale,” and lives its judgments “with courage and with loyalty.” (“The Celebration, I.1.1).

This reconceptualization of adulthood—in the same period that, according to Jung, an unprecedented number of individuals turned inward, searching for certainties within the psyche that could not be found within the external world; in the same moment that, according to Campbell, the lines of communication between the conscious and unconscious minds ruptured; at the same time matter, processes, relationships, and moralities once assumed objective and absolute became perceived as relative—demanded a shift in Western consciousness for which there was no cohesive supporting mythology, no socially institutionalized narrative, and no precedent. During his conversations with Campbell, Bill Moyers described this circumstance as “the curse of modern society,” wherein individuals experience themselves as living in a world “drained of spiritual values,” plagued by feelings of “impotence,” “ennui,” and alienation. In response, Campbell observed that Moyers’s description mirrored the observations of T.S.Eliot’s *The Waste Land*; he notes that a situation of “sociological stagnation of inauthentic lives and living” such as Eliot described “has settled upon us,” one that, outside of the circumstances of its wars, “evokes nothing of our spiritual life, our potentialities, or even our physical courage” (*Power* 161). Yet, unlike Moyers, Campbell did not regard this spiritual problem of modern man as a curse, but rather as a consummation devoutly to be wished, a hero’s call to adventure—one which he regarded as a natural stage in the lifecycle of each individual, every society, and all mythologies, necessary to their development and to the sustenance of their vitality. “Heresy,” Campbell once lectured, “is the *life* of a mythology, really, and orthodoxy is the death.” (“The Celebration” I.1.1).

Campbell believed that the “prime function” of any mythology is “to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counter action to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back” (*Hero* 11). Within his many books, interviews, and lectures, Campbell reiterates the four sub-functions of what he deemed a *living mythology*—one with images and narratives that resonate and work within the individuals and social orders they support—which together enable its prime function.

The first Campbell called the *mystical function*, through which a mythology reveals the mystery of the numinous: “that behind this phenomenology of the world” and “also within yourself” there lies “a transcendent mystery source” (“Psyche and Symbol” 1.1). By connecting consciousness to a sense of both the “awesome” and “terrifying” unknowns of being, mythology assists the human being in “reconciling himself to the foundations of his own existence,” foremost to the paradox that life sustains itself by killing and eating other life. Our awareness of our biological “preconditions,” says Campbell, emerges in tandem with our sense of life as “monstrous;” the human psyche thus uses its mythological narratives to reconcile consciousness to the irrational, irrefutable “foundations of being” that are beyond its power to “criticize,” “elucidate,” or “name” (“The Celebration” I.1.1).

The second service performed by mythology Campbell deemed its *cosmological function*: that of presenting “a total image of the universe as consciousness is aware of it.” In order to serve this function, Campbell contended that a mythology must transform “radically from time to time” in relationship to the image of the cosmos currently held by the conscious mind so as to reflect the “development of the mind and [its]knowledge.” (“The Celebration” I.1.1). According to Campbell, a “mythic statement” that fails to incorporate

and reflect the knowledge of “the modern scientific world” will fail to connect us to a spiritual experience of ourselves in the world (“Psyche and Symbol” 1.1).

Campbell considered the third function of mythology to be *sociological*: that of bracing and validating the social and moral order specific to a particular society. Moral orders, lectured Campbell, vary relative to the problems of survival posed by the environment and nature of the community (i.e., the challenges facing a nomadic, desert hunting community differ considerably from those confronting an industrialized agrarian society built near a deciduous forest). The nature of a society's survival challenges determine the “specific, limited type” of individual it requires; thus, the more slight the society’s “margin for existence,” the more “narrow,” “ruthless,” “dogmatic,” and “fierce” its process of integrating the individual into its order tends to be. Yet society cannot be blamed, says Campbell, for its sustainment depends upon *reducing* the individual—this “wonderfully rich being, full of possibilities”—into someone conditioned to respond to life “in the way that culture wants.” Thus, in dividing the individual “from his own nature,” the socialization process creates the psychospiritual dilemmas that the sociological function of myth—and its derivative rites, rituals, and rules—allow the society to navigate (“The Celebration” I.1.1).

The fourth function of mythology Campbell regarded as its *pedagogical* or *psychological function*: that of guiding “the individual harmoniously through the inevitable crises of the stages of life in his world today, in terms of its goods, its values, its dangers.” (“Psyche and Symbol” 1.1). The pedagogical myth aids the individual in working through both the challenges of biology and the psychospiritual dilemmas posed by socialization by aspiring to “center and integrate the individual in relation to himself,”

“in relation to his society, in relation to the universe as he is able to know it, and finally, in relation to that ultimate mystery” of the unnamable unknown (“The Celebration” I.1.1).

Thus in order for a mythology to retain its functional vitality, Campbell suggests that it must encompass all consciously held aspects of the life of the individual. Therefore, like any other living thing, a mythology must evolve, dying to an old form so as to be reborn into a new as it moves through time. Similarly, Jung understood psychic processes to “have a quantitative, energetic aspect” analogous and subject to the same natural laws as physical energy; he thus believed that “If anything of importance is devalued in our conscious life, there arises a compensation in the unconscious,” for “[n]o psychic value can disappear without being replaced by another of equivalent intensity.” (*Portable* 470). As expressed in “The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man,” Jung felt certain that when consciousness invalidated its mythological narratives, humanity would, as ever, find the raw materials—the seeds of innovations and ideas, the symbols that precede stories, the DNA of new narrative maps and mirrors—of the spiritual supports required to survive human uncertainty gestating within the unconscious.

Things fall apart, wrote William Butler Yeats in 1919 from inside this spiritual crisis of modernity. Narratives fracture, organizing structures fragment, and we lose our sense of meaning. Enantiodromia surfaces, an equal and opposite reaction to the mythological collapse in compensation for its loss, and we are left without a living mythology. Yet human mythologies throughout the world, throughout time tell us that things have a tendency to arise again from the rubble of their demise, and, as Campbell noted, it is often within art,

such as these poems by Eliot and Yeats attest, that we first glimpse a collapsed mythology's resurrected forms, reflecting our new reality back to us.

In 1967, Campbell suggested that the work of reconstituting a “mythology for today” was already underway and “being done well,” although “people aren’t always looking in the right place for it;” instead of a new mythology coming from within its traditional social structures of religion or politics, Campbell sensed it emerging in the individual contributions of “our great artists, our great poets, our great scientists” (“The Celebration” I.1.1), and towards the end of his life, as he discussed with Bill Moyers, Campbell even recognized it surfacing within popular media.

While in 2015 the rate of cultural change perpetuates the previous century's spiritual flux and we remain without a singular, unifying living mythology, we are flooded with narratives constructed from the fragments, scraps, and or<sup>4</sup>ts of fallen mythologies, amalgamated with raw images and symbols mined from contemporary imagination that *function mythologically*. Although such narratives do not serve as myths (i.e., as the foundations of our society or culture) they are born of the same unconscious material as any institutionalized mythology. As such their ‘genetic’ lineage enables their mythological function: their ability to lean against the taboos and longings of individuals while reflecting the condition and dilemmas of their generative social order’s collective psyche.

Both Campbell and Jung suggest that myths come of the same intangible stuff as dreams are made on, the symbolic projections of our uniquely human unconscious energies that Jung called *archetypes of the collective unconscious*. The presence of archetypal

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<sup>4</sup> Paraphrase of quote from Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (Woolf 394)

representations, and the way in which they illuminate the often unacknowledged issues and dramas of the day, mark a narrative with mythological function—as does the extreme reactivity of those who receive its story. Whether it provokes an audience's fascination or horror, a mythologically functioning narrative will touch a nerve. It may become an individual's fixation, or a pervasive point of discussion within a culture; it will transform into an affect-image, an object of projection and transference: a mirror which allows us to see something of ourselves we could not see before. By speaking in archetypal images such narratives tell us about things experienced by unconscious awareness that conscious awareness needs to, but does yet know: our innermost conflicts and passions, our existential anxieties and joys, and what we might do about them.

### Chapter III

#### Projections of the Unconscious: Archetypes, Affect-Images, and the Mythological Function of Art

“Mythological images,” said Joseph Campbell, “are the images by which the consciousness is put in touch with the unconscious.” (*Pathways* 87). But what such an image communicates, he reminds us, “is only an effort to bring the hearer to the edge of the abyss; it is a sign post, not the thing itself” (xxv). Whether mental or visual, a mythological image is a symbol, one Campbell called an “automatic button” that channels and releases archetypal energy (47), pointing “beyond the phenomenal field toward the transcendent,” so as to describe an aspect of “something indescribable” (xvii). Mythological symbols, “when alive and working,” says Campbell, act as “energy-evoking and -directing signs, ‘affect symbols,’ like art; and where they grab you will depend on where you live.” (*Mythic* 216).

Wherever we encounter spontaneous human emotion, we see human beings ‘grabbed where they live.’ The conscious mind encounters messages from the unconscious psyche spoken in its sole, native language through the mechanism of projection. Psychological projection identifies a representative—a symbol, an image—to carry a message that will communicate accurately only to a recipient specifically attuned to its receipt. But how do we become attuned to symbols? Why do some evoke emotions, while others go unnoticed? What are archetypes and affect-images? How do images, whether visual or mental, illuminate our issues or provoke our reactivity?

By first reviewing Carl Jung's general conceptualization of the structure and role of the unconscious mind in the human psyche, specifically with regards to his theories of the archetypes and the collective unconscious, and subsequently examining Jungian psychiatrist John Weir Perry's theory of emotion and object relations, we can formulate an understanding of how the mechanism of psychological projection operates and designates symbolic affect-images. Then, by investigating Joseph Campbell's ideas about the intersection of psychology, mythology, and art, we begin to see how the unconscious psyche gives rise to the mythologically charged images—*affect-symbols* and *motifs*—that artists (intentionally and unwittingly) excavate and employ in their creations. While not all artistic productions necessarily aspire to or serve the function of a mythology, or meet the criteria of what Campbell, referencing James Joyce, termed *proper art*, examining the origins of mythological imagery as described by Campbell also demonstrates how any narrative that incorporates archetypal affect-images can possess a *mythological function*, enabling it to evoke the spontaneous affective reactions and psychic fascination of its audience.

In endeavoring to excavate and illuminate the most intangible aspects of human nature, Carl Gustav Jung posited some of the twentieth-century's most influential, yet most frequently misconstrued ideas, perhaps no two of which have had more significance, nor been as mangled and maligned in passing through time than those of the *archetype* and the *collective unconscious*.

Interestingly, while the current *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of the psychological *unconscious*<sup>5</sup> primarily reflects the Freudian psychic paradigm, Jung's distinct

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<sup>5</sup> i.e., "Designating mental or psychological processes of which a person is not aware but which influence emotions and behaviour, esp. (in Freudian theory) those resulting from repression" (*OED Online*, Def. A6).

alternative conception of the psyche<sup>6</sup> more broadly informs the working model of the unconscious employed throughout Western thought and psychotherapy today. Whereas Freud imagined a personal unconscious that served solely as a repository for aspects of self and experience suppressed by the moral indoctrination of the individual into his/her social environment—including actively repressed or forgotten “*complexes*” (*Portable* 60), “infantile tendencies” (70), and “painful thoughts and feelings” (52)—Jung’s more expansive conceptualization of the unconscious included any and “all psychic material that lies below the threshold of consciousness,” such as “subliminal sense-perceptions,” consciously devalued information,<sup>7</sup> and “the seeds of future conscious contents,” “material that has *not yet reached*” conscious awareness” (70-71). Additionally, while Freudian theory posits the ego as an expression of “the totality of the psyche” (*Archetypes* 276) and interprets the presence of the unconscious as “a pathological symptom” of a “divided personality,” Jung postulated that the ego serves only as the center of the conscious mind, the resident *I* aware of its own consciousness (283), and that the human psyche comprises the aggregate of an individual’s conscious and unconscious minds; he considered this psychic bifurcation a natural and “normal fact” observable “at any time and everywhere.” (*Man* 23).

Jung hypothesized that the unconscious mind exists in an active, coordinated, “compensatory relationship” with the conscious mind, “ceaselessly . . . grouping and regrouping its contents” as it passes its information into conscious awareness (*Portable* 71). He regarded the “harmonizing of conscious and unconscious data” to be an adaptive, “irrational life-

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<sup>6</sup> The Jungian conceptualization of the human psyche presented in this chapter serves as an introductory overview and should not be mistaken as representative of Jung’s model in total.

<sup>7</sup> i.e., Observations made by the conscious mind that “disappear below [its] threshold” (*Portable* 52).

process” (*Archetypes* 289) that, when functioning optimally, enables the two aspects of mind to collaborate autonomously, “without friction or disturbance,” leaving the conscious mind unaware of its unconscious counterpart’s activities (282). Only when “an individual or social group deviates too far” from the established norms Jung termed their “instinctual foundations” does the unconscious’s compensatory function activate in an “intelligent” attempt to restore the balance of the psyche (282-283). While Jung believed that extreme disequilibrium between the rational conscious and irrational unconscious underlies psychopathology, he also considered the psyche’s recalibration of minor imbalances a commonplace necessity within the modern world (*Man* 23).

Within Jung’s model, an individual’s unconscious contains not only the *personal unconscious*, but also the *collective unconscious*—the proposition Jung considered the most misunderstood of all his “empirical concepts” (*Portable* 59). In his 1919 lecture, “Instincts and the Unconscious,” Jung describes the collective unconscious as a “‘deeper’ stratum” of the individual unconscious, comprised of two aspects—the biologically inherited instincts common to all animal life (i.e., “impulses to carry out actions from necessity, without conscious motivation”) and the “*a priori*, inborn forms of ‘intuition,’ namely the archetypes”—that together structure an individual’s means of “perception and apprehension into specifically human patterns” (52).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Much confusion surrounding the concept of the archetypes appears to have arisen from Jung’s use of terms translated into English as *forms* and *shapes* to discuss both the *archetypes* and *archetypal representations*. While Jung references the use of *archetype* in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and in works by Philo Judaeus, Irenaeus, and Saint Augustine, he links his concept most closely to Plato’s Ideas and *Edios*, even stating that “‘Archetype’ is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic εἶδος.” (*Archetypes* 4). This link to Plato’s Theory of Ideas, reinforced by Jung’s occasional substitution (and subsequent translations) of the term *form* in lieu of *archetype*, perhaps deepened confusion about the archetype, as the definitions of *Edios* and *Platonic Form* remain clouded by debate and reinterpretation. While some twenty-first-century sources, such as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, now favor a translation of Plato’s Theory of Ideas that understands Platonic Form as a conceptualization dependent upon the observation of physical attributes, in which “forms cannot be ideas in the mind” (“Plato: Theory of Forms” *Britannica*), many earlier interpretations of Plato, especially those contemporary to Jung, understood Platonic Forms as metaphysical perceptions, non-material-yet-tangible notions, not generated via the senses. Jung appears to use *form* in the latter sense, rather than either the former or its more colloquial definition.

Jung stresses that neither the instincts, nor the archetypes are attributes or acquisitions unique to an individual, but rather, due to common human physiology, that they are “universal and of regular occurrence” in all human beings (*Portable* 52-53).

Much of what appears to have befuddled the conceptual transmission of Jung’s collective unconscious comes of the manifold ways Jung developmentally explored, rather than fixedly defined and codified, his conceptualization of the archetype. Jung’s most succinct and enduring explanation of *archetype* appears in tandem with his first use of the term in his 1919 lecture, “Instincts and the Unconscious,” where he described it as “*the instinct’s perception of itself*, or as the self-portrait of the instinct, in exactly the same way as consciousness is an inward perception of the objective life-process.” (56). While compactly summarized, the fact that Jung used *archetype* and the term *Urbild* (*primordial image*)<sup>9</sup> interchangeably throughout the lecture—a matter further complicated by their English translations in its subsequent publications—appears to have muddied, rather than clarified the concept Jung intended to convey. In a footnote to the version of “Instinct and the Unconscious” that appears in *The Collected Works*, editors Gerhard Adler and R.F.C. Hull contend that Jung’s synonymous use of the two terms “has given rise to some confusion and to the belief that Jung’s theory of hereditary elements involves the inheritance of representations (ideas or images), a view against which Jung repeatedly protests.” (qt. in *Portable* 53). Indeed, the most persistent misinterpretations of Jung’s archetype circulating today are those that mistake it for a genetically- or mystically-bequeathed image or symbol with fixed, definable, universal traits and meaning.

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<sup>9</sup> i.e., *Urbild* represents a concept coined by art and cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt (*Portable* 53).

A close reading of Jung's texts easily dispels such erred interpretations, but also reveals how his extensive efforts to clarify and deepen his conceptualization of the archetype inadvertently obfuscated his intended meaning. For example, in his essay, "On the Nature of the Psyche" (1947/1954), Jung stresses that an *archetype* is neither an image, an idea, nor a symbol, but, rather something that "is itself irrepresentable but has effects which make visualizations of it possible;" these visualizations Jung termed "the archetypal images and ideas" (*Basic* 84). Jung elaborates, cautioning that the "archetypal representations (images and ideas) mediated to us by the unconscious should not be confused with the archetype as such." Whereas he describes *archetypal representations* as "varied structures," inclusive of images, symbols, motifs, and mythologems,<sup>10</sup> projected from the unconscious so as to "point" consciousness "back to one 'irrepresentable' basic form [i.e., the archetype]," Jung characterizes the *archetype* as "a psychoid factor,"<sup>11</sup> itself incapable of reaching consciousness, with "certain formal elements" and "certain fundamental meanings" that "can be grasped only approximately" (83). Jung likens the challenge of conveying the essence of the archetype to that of describing the physics of matter, stating that while "the smallest particles are themselves irrepresentable," their observable "effects" allow us to "build up" a representative "model;" he asserts that "the archetypal image, the motif or mythologem is a construction of this kind" (84).

Although in "On the Nature of the Psyche," Jung takes exacting care to distinguish an *archetypal representation* from an *archetype*, much of his later work in translation simply

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<sup>10</sup> i.e., a mythological narrative, theme, or motif (*OED Online*).

<sup>11</sup> i.e., Perry contextually defines a *psychoid* as "an innate [unconscious] propensity" ("Emotion" 6).

employs the term *archetype* to reference *both* the unconscious, biodynamic energy which projects itself into conscious life (i.e., the *archetype* or “archetype as such”) and its resultant observable projection (i.e., the *archetypal representation*); furthermore, Jung’s texts appear to assume his readers grasp this fundamental distinction and entrusts them to contextually infer his intended meaning. Judging solely by the general reference dictionary definitions that persist in 2015, ‘common knowledge’ has failed to absorb or appreciate the distinction between Jung’s two very different conceptualizations of the single term *archetype*.<sup>12</sup> Such confusion surrounded use of the term *archetype* that in speaking of *archetypal representations* in his paper “Emotion and Object Relations” (1970), Dr. John Weir Perry chose to refer to them instead as *affect-images*.

While not a readily familiar figure to many in or outside of the field of psychology, psychiatrist and author John Weir Perry’s (1914-1998) obituary described him as a “radical thinker in the mental-health field,” an expert on brief-reactive psychosis who took an unconventional approach towards the treatment of schizophrenia (“John” *SFGate.com*).

The ideas twenty-one-year-old Perry read in Jung’s *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* resonated with his interest in finding a way to interrelate “psychology and religion in the context of a framework of evolutionary sciences,” and affirmed his intuitive instinct to pursue psychiatry studies at Harvard Medical School after receiving his undergraduate degree in literature and history (Perry qtd. in Cornwall 42). Unaware of his son’s decision,

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<sup>12</sup> For example, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the Jungian *archetype* as Jung defined *archetypal representation* (Def 2c, *OED Online*), while *Merriam-Webster’s* definition of *archetype* as “an inherited idea or mode of thought in the psychology of C. G. Jung that is derived from the experience of the race and is present in the unconscious of the individual” essentially misrepresents both of Jung’s usages of the term. Additionally *Merriam-Webster’s* definition mangles aspects of Jung’s concept with Freudian ideas about race memory with which Jung staunchly disagreed (Def 3, *Merriam-Webster.com*).

Perry's father, an Anglican Bishop, bemoaned the younger Perry's undecided career path to a colleague while traveling in Zürich; the colleague suggested the Bishop seek the advice of Dr. Jung, who synchronistically recommended that the Bishop's son consider a career in medicine and psychiatry. Perry became personally acquainted with Jung when Perry's family hosted the doctor during the Harvard Tercentenary in 1936. Though curious about Jung's methods and theories, Perry remained circumspect until his experiences with patients as a third-year medical student exposed him to Jung's ideas incarnate.<sup>13</sup> His experiences as a resident at McLean Hospital further confirmed Perry's belief that a "Jungian approach could help seriously disturbed patients" (qt. in Cornwall 47), leading him to undertake post-graduate studies at the Jung Institute in Zürich. Observing Jung's therapeutic framework<sup>14</sup> in action and then employing its techniques in treating a catatonic schizophrenic patient upon his return to McLean as a staff psychiatrist inspired Perry to specialize in "the treatment of acute psychosis, with an emphasis on discovering and exploring the psyche's self-healing capacities in the midst of crises." (50).

In 1950, Perry relocated to San Francisco, where he practiced for over thirty years, authored seven books, served as an assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of California at San Francisco, and lectured at the city's Jung Institute. Unlike the majority of his cohort, Perry approached the onset of acute psychosis in schizophrenia as a valuable

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<sup>13</sup> In describing the experience in an interview, Perry recalled, "there it all was, out in the open, concerns of death and rebirth, regression, religious preoccupations, and mythic ideation. I loved it and found these people fascinating." (qtd. in Cornwall 44).

<sup>14</sup> Cornwall summarizes that the "Jungian orientation . . . eschews polarization between doctor and patient." and thus starkly contrasted with what Perry characterized as the era's typical "psychiatric standpoint: 'I'm normal and the patient is crazy.' 'The patient needs me to get normal.'" (47). For further discussion of Jung's approach toward working with psychosis, please refer to Michael W. Cornwall's dissertation, pages 47-49.

opportunity for psychological growth. Rather than artificially disrupting psychosis, Perry believed that patients should be allowed to pass through its process of disintegration and reintegration of self within a protected environment, aided by doctors whose knowledge of mythological and symbolic imagery would enable them to engage in communication with patients' irrational experiences of reality so as to help guide them back to the phenomenal world. Based upon these practices and theories, Perry founded and directed Diabasis, a residential treatment center for young adults in acute psychosis offering combined artistic, body, and conversational therapies, about which he wrote in *The Far Side of Madness* (1974).

In introducing his paper, "Emotions and Object Relations" (1970), Perry explained that working on the "topic of schizophrenia" necessitated that he "contend with the psychology of affects at every point," as he believed issues of emotion lived "at the heart of the syndrome." His clinical experiences, combined with those of "formulating and teaching the psychology of complexes,"<sup>15</sup> allowed Perry to generate what he deemed "a theory of the action of emotions in every day life" ("Emotions" 1).

Perry first articulates that, in analytical psychology, emotions serve as "the very matrix of growth and development and the well-spring of meaning and involvement in life." Within Jung's model of the total psyche, Perry explains that *emotions* (as distinct from *feelings*<sup>16</sup>) are autonomous activities of the unconscious that impact "the ego without its

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<sup>15</sup> In introducing *The Basic Writings of C.G. Jung*, Dr. Violet de Laszo summarizes Jung's concept of the *complexes* as "the smallest energetic entities of the psychic dynamism." She observes "that in this context the complex loses its pathological connotation and is regarded as the normal basic constituent of psychic life," while also noting that complexes may become pathological through their "particular malfunctioning and relative distortion" (*Basic x*).

<sup>16</sup> Perry describes *feeling* as a "function of consciousness, and—to the degree to which it is differentiated—has the quality of choice and intentionality in its judgements of value" ("Emotions" 1).

bidding” and are “identical with the activation of the complexes.” According to Perry, Jung “visualized the dynamic nucleus of any complex” as containing as both the energy of the emotion, the *archetype* that serves as its “affective foundation,” as well as the *archetypal representation* “of the object that first evoked it;” Perry describes archetypes as did Jung, defining them as “psychoids about which little can be known” that “come into manifest activity in the form of both images and emotion, simultaneously,” such that the “image renders the meaning of the emotion; the emotion gives the image its dynamism.”<sup>18</sup>

Perry observes that any “emotional occurrence” involves the “dynamic interaction of two elements, that of a subject and an object, whether the object be external or internal to the subject” (“Emotions” 1). However, because emotion arises from the unconscious autonomously, the *subject* (during the activation of an emotion) is not the conscious ego “in its usual identity,” but rather what Jung termed the *affect-ego*, a complex (i.e., the interaction of an archetypal representation and the affect) to which the ego has yielded its energy and “regency.” Similarly, the *object* is not perceived “as it is in itself,” but instead becomes another complex, “the object seen through the veil of an illusion, coloured by the meaning the unconscious ascribes to it,” for which Perry originated the accompanying term *affect-object*. For example, if upon encountering a stranger (regardless of whether I encounter a stranger in the woods or a stranger in a dream), I am overwhelmed with fear, the emotion with which I, the conscious ego, align “is represented in an image and contained within a complex” (i.e. *affect-ego*) that exists in relationship to another complex “that is projected upon the object” (i.e. *affect-object*). Thus Perry considered that the

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<sup>18</sup> Perry references these summaries to Jung’s 1927/1931 essay, “Mind and Earth,” and Jung’s 1963 semi-autobiography *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections*.

“occurrence of any emotion” consists of “the interplay between two complexes” and that the “entire emotional life” of the human being “is structured in bipolar systems or pairs of these complexes” (“Emotions” 11). From this vantage, Perry declared that the developmental goal of “true object relations” should be “our efforts toward [conscious] insight into our emotions,” such that we become enabled to “render unto the object what is the object’s and unto the subject what is the subject’s.” (7).

The “difficulty about the term, object relation,” wrote Perry, is that it is “intended to describe the very thing it is not.” He elaborates upon his theory, explaining that:

The emotional life takes place in a world of non-objects, in a terrain filled with one’s own imagery springing from the emotional psyche. . . . Objects, as they actually are, emerge only with the growth of consciousness and differentiation of the ego, freeing it from the tangle of alignments with the various complexes that move across the affective stage. . . .

All this means that in terms of natural experience of the everyday kind, the unconscious is found ‘out there’ in the state of projection in the emotional life. . . . whatever is activated in the unconscious is encountered in projection . . . onto the object and onto the subject. Therefore our outer emotional world is a mirror image of the inner one, and we seek out the contents of the unconscious fully as much out around us as down inside (7).

Perry continues by describing two “different dimensions of reality” within the external world: one “attuned to the nature of the phenomenal world” that consists of “the clear-headed view of objects as they are in themselves,” and the other as “non-rational and attuned to the significance of things for the psychic life,” wherein the object is “seen imagefully and fraught with values that stir us and meanings that illumine our comprehension.” Perry characterizes the latter as “the poet’s impassioned world, in which the whole outer realm becomes a metaphor of the human experience,” (7) and it is from

within this realm that we produce what Perry termed the “affect-image.”<sup>19</sup> From this he concludes that “when we grow and develop our horizons of awareness by assimilating contents from the unconscious—from the emotional psyche—we are actually retrieving the greater part of them from the outer world of our emotional involvements” (“Emotions” 7), thus making it essential that we appropriately reconcile our affect-images with phenomenal reality and waking consciousness.

As Perry explains in terms of acute psychosis, relating to the external world exclusively in terms of self-referential affect-objects limits the perception of self to the perception of an affect-ego, thus relegating the “emotional possibilities” of life to “a few complexes.” In such a predicament, the archetypal energies which could be rendered meaningful life experiences remain “subjective fantasy preoccupations, overloading the energetic balance on the side of the unconscious.” While Perry observed that “a myth-process of renewal takes shape” in psychosis, he stresses that it must “find its way into personal life issues” if the individual is to reconnect to phenomenal reality as it is—for, as Perry writes, “the affect-images need to find their proper place in the ordinary complexes of ordinary emotional living” (11). Perry’s conceptualization of affect-images and their mythological import in individual development through acute psychosis proved so compelling to Joseph Campbell that he adopted Perry’s terminology and ideas to help illuminate his theories about the intersection of mythology, art, and personal maturation.

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<sup>19</sup> i.e., *archetypal representation*. Both the *affect-object* and *affect-ego* are types of *affect-images*. Perry explains that, due to the “cloud of befuddlement and murky connotations of Plato and Augustine” he experienced in using the term *archetype*, he preferred to use the term *affect-image* when referring to “the archetypal phenomena” he encountered in psychotherapy. Perry believed that the term *affect-image* had “the advantage of meaning exactly what it says and rendering its own definition.” (“Emotions” 9).

In 1968, Michael Murphy, director of the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, asked Campbell, then a professor at Sarah Lawrence College and well-established scholar of comparative mythology, religion, and literature, “to deliver a series of talks on schizophrenia.” The invitation puzzled Campbell, for he “knew nothing about schizophrenia,” but as Murphy enthused about the promise of a joint discussion on mythology and the mental illness between Campbell and John Weir Perry, M.D. (of whom Campbell had never heard), Campbell decided his experience “kissing the Blarney Stone” coupled with Murphy’s imagination might produce something interesting and accepted (*Myths to Live By* 201). Yet to Campbell’s “considerable amazement,” the collaboration required no blarney after all, for in reading Perry’s paper “Reconstitutive Process in the Psychopathology of the Self” (1962) Campbell learned “that the same symbolic figures” he had identified as “the universal, archetypal, psychologically-based symbolic themes and motifs of all traditional mythologies” in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* “arise spontaneously from the broken-off, tortured state of mind of modern individuals suffering from a complete schizophrenic breakdown: the condition of one who has lost touch with the life and thought of his community and is compulsively fantasizing out of his own completely cut-off base.” (202). Campbell’s introduction to Perry and his unique approach to engaging with individuals experiencing schizophrenic breaks inspired Campbell to reconsider what import the “mythic materials” he had developed in a “more or less academic, scholarly, personally enthusiastic way” might have to individuals struggling with the spiritual crises of modernity and how he might deliver his ideas about using mythology to aid personal development to the general public (203).

Even in formulating his earliest theories, Campbell recognized the human unconscious as the source of mythological images, based, in part, on his readings of pioneering psychologists Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, and Carl Jung, each of whom Campbell noted “realized the figures of dreams are really figures of personal mythologization.” (*Myths of Light* xvii). In 1928, as a graduate student in Germany, Campbell first discovered the works of Freud and Jung, which he credits with having “opened up” his understanding of mythology’s “psychological dimension” and allowing him insight into his own fascination with the subject. While writing *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell noted that the theories of Freud’s psychoanalysis and Jung’s analytical psychology “were equal in [his] thinking,” with “Freud serving in one context, Jung in another.” However, as years passed, Campbell found that while Jung’s ideas became increasingly “eloquent” and continued to offer him new insights into mythology, Freud’s did not; “Freud tells us what myths mean to neurotics,” said Campbell, contrasting the two, while “Jung gives us clues as to how to let the myth talk to us in its own terms, without putting a formula on it.” (*An Open Life* 121). While he adamantly did not identify as a “Jungian,” Campbell felt that Jung’s concepts offered him the “best clues” he had encountered about the interplay between psychology and mythology (123) without being “the final word” on a subject Campbell believed had no end (121); indeed, Campbell’s theories about the origins of mythic images relied heavily on his own interpretations of Jung’s model of the psyche, in particular, its archetypes and collective unconscious.

A favorite clarifying “pedagogical stunt” (*Power* 174) Campbell employed in lectures to explain the construct of the psyche and origins of mythological imagery involved

sketching a simple diagram (i.e., Figure 1<sup>20</sup>). Campbell first drew a circle, which he described, ala Plato, as representing “the soul, the psyche” within the “bounds of [personal] experience.” At the circle’s center, he placed a solid dot, labelled *self*. Through the circle, Campbell drew a horizontal line, separating its top third from its lower two-thirds; the line, he said, “represents the threshold of consciousness;” the upper portion of the circle he designated *the conscious* (i.e., “our mental, waking consciousness”) and the lower, *the unconscious* (i.e., “the wisdom consciousness of the body itself.”). Jung used the term *self*, Campbell says, to describe the “totality” of “consciousness,” residing in the unconscious yet encompassing its whole, as “enclosed in a specific human body . . . conditioned in all of its experience and action by the [nature of the] conditioning body in which it resides; male, female, young, old, healthy, or decrepit one way or another.” (“Psyche and Symbol” 1.1).

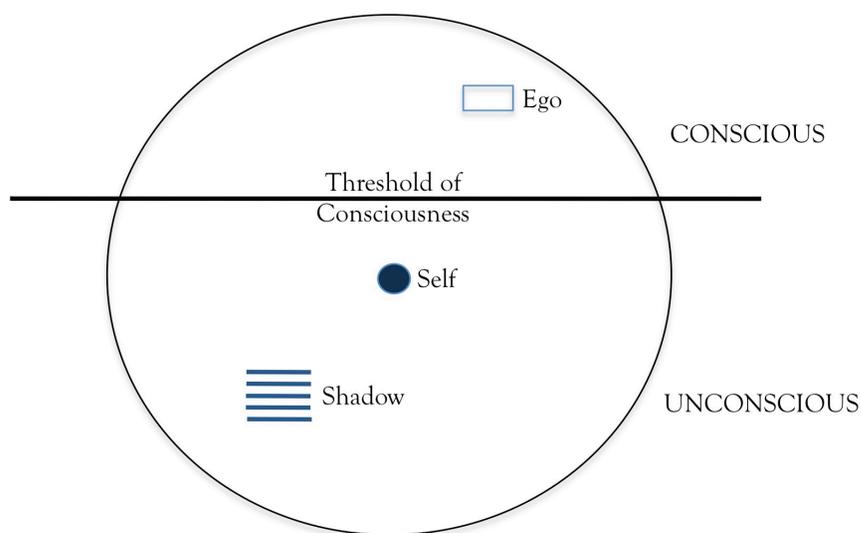


Figure 1: Reproduction of Joseph Campbell’s introductory diagram of the Jungian model of the psyche

<sup>20</sup> Figure 1 serves a partial, introductory summary of both Campbell’s diagram and Jung’s concept. It represents neither Campbell’s nor Jung’s conceptualization in total. This diagram is based upon Campbell’s rendering during the first episode of the television series, *Mythos*. (“Psyche and Symbol” 1.1).

Within *the conscious*, Campbell drew *the ego*, the center of consciousness, as a small rectangle, explaining that its shape illustrates that the ego's "mode of judgement is not in accord with that of the body, with that of nature."<sup>21</sup> He clarifies the diagram further in saying:

All conscious thinking is likewise out of accord with the order of the body. Myths come from down here [i.e., the unconscious], from where the energies come from, as dreams do; and it's the business of ego *not* to try to dictate to this circle, to try to say how square it should be, but to try to bring its impulse system into relationship to the conditions of the environment which ego has constructed. Culture is . . . the *result* of cooperation between the self, you might say, and the ego; and mythology is the language of the self speaking to the ego-system; and the ego-system has to learn how to read it. And for the most part, we in our world have forgotten ("Psyche and Symbol" 1.1).

Campbell then explains the two elements influencing the structure of *the unconscious* realm: that of our "basic human biology," which gives rise to *self* and the *general* or *collective unconscious* as functions of that biology; and that of our individual experiences of having lived in a particular body and specific world, which gives rise to the contents of the *personal unconscious* and its system of "order," the *shadow*,<sup>22</sup> as functions of personal experience. Dreams, Campbell suggests, are "primarily personally oriented," composed of symbolic imagery arising from the "*shadow* system" of individual experiences, which "rests on the deeper ground" of the general unconsciousness. Alternatively, Campbell observes that

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<sup>21</sup> Campbell likens it to the rectangular lecture room, calling both structures "built by consciousness," contrasting it with the shapes of nature that "have nothing to do with rectangles." ("Psyche and Symbol" 1.1)

<sup>22</sup> Campbell first defines the Jungian notion of the *shadow* simply as "the blind spot for ego; that about yourself of which your ego . . . has no knowledge whatsoever." He then correlates the Jungian *shadow* with the Freudian unconscious, which he defines as the "repressed experiences" and "repressed shocks" of early life, the nature of which vary from one individual to another. Campbell explains that the "order" of the repressed experiences and shocks that constitute the *personal unconscious* (i.e., that which sets up "the structuring attitude of the individual to life") is the *shadow* ("Psyche and Symbol" 1.1).

myths arise from “the energy” of the *general* or *collective unconscious*, which Jung termed the *archetypes of collective unconscious*.<sup>23</sup>

Campbell asserts that we gain conscious knowledge of the unconscious “by way of projection,” the attachment of this energy to representative objects—ideas, images, motifs (“Psyche and Symbol” 1.1). Citing scientific evidence that no significant “stereotyped innate releasing images” have been proven to exist “in the human psyche,” Campbell concludes that universally recognizable archetypal representations of a *mythological* nature emerge from the ground energies underlying human biology that give form to the human psyche and from “imprints” of a “constant set of experiences” shared by “almost all individuals.” Campbell specifically defines these “imprinted” experiences as arising from four key childhood relationships—our relationship to a mother-figure, to a father-figure, to the relationship between our parent-figures, and to the problems of our “own individual psychological transformations” (*Pathways* 48). Campbell thus proposes that the recurring “motifs of folk tale and myth” derive from the energetic “reservoirs of dream and vision” within the collective unconscious. In dreams, archetypal images “represent the total state of the individual dreaming psyche” and when “clarified of personal distortions and propounded by poets, prophets, and visionaries,” such images become *mythologically charged*: “phrases from image-language, expressive of metaphysical, psychological, and sociological truth” that symbolize “the spiritual norm of Man the Microcosom.” (*Gander* 23).

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<sup>23</sup> Campbell eloquently explains his understanding of the *general* or *collective unconscious* as “recognition of the fact that there is a common humanity built into our nervous system out of which our imagination works.” Campbell then clarifies, more bluntly: “You can recognize a human being where you see him. He must have the same kind of basic nervous system, therefore his imagination must work out of a comparable base. What’s so damn mystical about all that? That seems to me to be obvious. And that’s what the term ‘collective unconscious’ covers.” (*An Open Life* 122,123).

Campbell understood the function of the artist within modern societies as akin to that of the shaman within tribal cultures—namely that of harvesting archetypal images from personal insight and experience and rendering them into affect-images that enact the “mythologization of the environment of the world” (*Power* 107). Interestingly, Campbell differentiates religious and artistic experiences in much the same way that he distinguishes the roles of priests and shamans: whereas priests and other socially ordained clergy conduct the religious experience by presenting “a compound of inherited forms” for consideration “with the expectation . . . that one should interpret and experience them in a certain way,” the shaman, like the artist, “first has an experience, which he then seeks to interpret and communicate through effective forms” (*Mythic* 226) that are then given to the society so as to communicate an experience of being. Campbell disagreed with the Romantic German notion of “*das Volk dichtet*,” which proposed that “ideas and poetry of traditional cultures” emerged from within a folk culture, and instead believed that these cultural productions come from individuals “particularly gifted” with ears “open to the song of the universe,” whose experience takes them outside of and beyond those experiences sanctioned by their social order (*Power* 107). Just as shamans once interpreted the “divinity inherent in nature” and things unseen (Moyers qtd. in *Power* 122) so as to connect early societies to the transcendent mysteries of being, Campbell asserts that artists in modern societies function as interpreters of “the *contemporary* world as experienced in terms of relevance to our inner life.” (*An Open Life* 22). He explains that art “is not, like science, a logic of references but a release from reference and a rendition of immediate experience, a presentation of

forms, images, or ideas in such a way that they will communicate not primarily a thought or even a feeling but an impact.” (Campbell *Power* DVD).

From Campbell’s perspective, the uncertainty at the heart of any creative act, an event “unprepared for” yet guaranteed to “break the rules” of one’s order of life (*Mythic* 183) mirrors the ‘spiritual problem of modern man,’ and the contemporary artist who best addressed the issue of creating works of art with mythic function (and thus capable of rendering modern life spiritually meaningful) was James Joyce. Campbell describes the explanation Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus offers of “proper and improper” art in the last chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in writing:

Improper art is kinetic. Improper art moves you with either desire to possess the object or with loathing and fear to resist it and avoid it. Art that excites desire for the object [Joyce] calls ‘pornographic.’ All advertising is pornographic art. Art that excites loathing and criticism of the object he calls ‘didactic’ . . .

Proper art is static. It holds you in ecstatic arrest—arrest at what? Joyce brings up Aquinas at this point, who says that in the art moment the first experience is *integritas*, the beholding of one object set apart from all objects in the world. This is a thing, and within that thing what is important is the relation of part to part, and part to the whole, the rhythm, the rhythm of beauty . . . And when the rhythm is properly, fortunately achieved the result is radiance, rapture, beholding it. Why? Because the rhythm before you is the rhythm of nature. It is the rhythm of *your* nature. . . . Art is the rendition of the interface between your inner nature and the nature out there. (*Mythic* 186-187).

Aesthetic arrest, Campbell continues, the moment of “Aha!” in which you experience an “accord between you and the object,” comes of glimpsing the metaphysical reality of our inner nature, the oneness of our “divine will to live” and our “consciousness of life,” as expressed through an object, whether phenomenal or mental. Such an object, he reiterates, is what is meant by an archetypal representation of the unconscious (187).

After encountering the work of John Weir Perry, Campbell incorporated the term *affect-image* into his palette of descriptors to distinguish “the living mythological symbol” from that of a dead or clichéd form:

It is an image that hits one where it counts. It is not addressed first to the brain, to be there interpreted and appreciated. On the contrary, if that is where it has to be read, the symbol is already dead. An ‘affect image’ talks directly to the feeling system and immediately elicits a response, after which the brain may come along with its interesting comments. There is some kind of resonance within, responding to the image shown without, like the answer of a musical string to another equally tuned. And so it is when the vital symbols given any social group evoke in all of its members responses of this kind, a sort of magic that unites them as one spiritual organism, functioning through members who, though separate in space, are yet one in being and belief. (*Myths to Live By* 88).

In tracing the historical origins of world mythologies, Campbell likened the challenges of the spiritual situation of ancient Greece to that of the modern West, drawing parallels between the ways in which Greek scientific advances negated a historical interpretation of its mythology. Yet Campbell contends that, unlike the situation of the ‘spiritual crisis of modern man,’ the Greek mythologies remained alive and functioning within ancient Greece both due to the lack of a “priestly class dictating divinity” and due to the vitality of the Greek poetic tradition, born of their cultural understanding of art “not as a form of anonymous craftsmanship in the services of either luxury or religion, but as a vehicle of individual insight and experience” (*Mythic* 26); this understanding of art and symbol allowed for a societal appreciation of myth, and its religious rites and rituals, as metaphor.

Metaphor, as Campbell understood it, “points to two ends” by connecting the psychological and the metaphysical (*An Open Life* 21). Throughout his work, Campbell observes that the forces of twentieth-century modernity progressively desensitized the

response of Western individuals to their inherited mythological symbols—a situation enabled by many Western traditions having mistaken mythological symbols for literal historical events that, upon review of evidence, the educated, rational mind understands cannot have factually occurred. Disbelief in the veracity of the events attached to the symbol have resulted in the rejection of the symbol and death of its metaphor, and thus our loss of its living bridge to the unknown mystery to which it directed attention. As this hypostatization drained the symbols of their energy, Campbell observed that we not only lost their messages, but also “our vehicle for communication between our waking conscious and our deepest spiritual life” (*Pathways* 94). Campbell insisted “we need the symbols,” so much so that, when bereft of living, institutionalized mythological symbols, we *find* imagery to express our archetypal situation in the world around us (*Myths of Light* xvii - xix), and thus “reactivate” dead symbols by investing them with our unconscious projections (*Pathways* 94)—for, according to Campbell, “mythologies are not invented, they are found” (*Myths of Light* xix).

Despite our modern equation of the word *myth* with falsehood and our cultural rejection of the “world of symbology” (xvii), we still dream in sleep and fantasize in waking; we share pictures and tell stories; we experience emotion and find ourselves mysteriously riveted to and repelled by things and beings in ways we do not immediately understand—all of which suggests that the unconscious has never ceased sending us its messages, regardless of whether we receive them as intended. As Jung, Perry, and Campbell each understood, mythologically-charged symbols come to life when we project our affective archetypal unconscious energies into them; they die—and we endanger our sense of

psychological grounding in the phenomenal world—when and if we mistake their metaphors for literal realities. To be of use, a mythologically-charged image need not arise from within a institutionalized system of mythology, but we must understand how to engage with the projective language of psyche and symbol—how to consciously receive their affective impact, by neither allying with nor rejecting unconscious emotion, but apprehending and deciphering its message. According to Jung, maintaining this perpetual negotiation between the conscious and unconscious is key to psychospiritual wholeness:

Conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. If they must contend, let it at least be a fair fight with equal rights on both sides. Both are aspects of life. Consciousness should defend reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too—as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game of hammer and anvil: between them the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an individual. (*Archetypes* 288).

And the development of this new kind of individual—as a being whose very existence embodies and depends upon an embrace of dialectics, upon tolerance of the tension connecting any two points of opposition—has proven the core issue of Western modernity.

## Chapter IV

### The Monomyth and Adolescence: The Emergence (and Disappearance) of the Affect-Image of the Adolescent Girl and English Literature's Young-Adult Heroine

Departing the Known guarantees an arrival within the Unknown. Separation marks the beginning of any adventure. Initiation comes of navigating the Unknown, exploring and enduring its perils and pleasures until the novel terrain yields its secrets, its name, or perhaps even a coveted boon. Once traversed the Unknown returns us once more to the Known transformed, however slightly, from that which we departed—a reality expanded, altered by action, knowledge, time, and perspective.

This cyclical pattern of 'separation—initiation—return' describes the trajectory of every human life through its key transitions of conscious psychosocial development. Its life-mirroring capacity enables it to function as an archetypal vessel, one which, as Joseph Campbell observed, reappears throughout the world and its anthropological history as both "a magnification" of our traditional social "rites of passage" and as "the nuclear unit" of the recurrent mythological narrative Campbell deemed the *Hero's Journey* and termed the *monomyth* in deference to James Joyce (*Hero* 343, n36). In personifying, objectifying, and thus *symbolizing* the course of dynamic life energies, tales of the adventures of a hero—a person who departs "the old" in search of a "germinal idea" from which to root a new foundation for living (*Power* 167); the person who devotes "his or her life to something bigger than oneself" (151); the person whose example provides a "constellating image,"

a symbol which redirects our energetic “tendencies toward separation” into life-embracing “intention” (*Power* 1163) via a sense of interconnectivity—possess an uncanny power to speak to us about “the adventure of being alive” (206). As such, tales of a hero’s quest possess the capacity to serve as tales of human development, tales uniquely enabled to speak to, and sometimes aid, our passage through the thresholds of individual and social life changes.

Our maturation process from infancy to adulthood—with its twenty-some-year duration, its requisite coordination of conscious psychological self-determination with the unconscious physical development of the body, and its demand that we navigate ever-evolving, culturally-specific expectations about when, where, and how dependency ends and the dance of adult self-responsibility and social interdependence begins—positions the human animal as an oddity in nature. Campbell once likened the role of mythology in human development to that of the marsupial’s pouch, calling it the “second womb” of humanity, the one in which the born “little unformed human *animal*” gestates into a creature that may become, through a second, *volitional* birth, a mature “adult human *being*” (“Shift to Western Psychology.” II.1.5).

Curiously, the modern concept of adolescence—the first, and arguably, most challenging, conscious hurdle of human development, as well as the occasion for our second, volitional birth into adult maturity—also appears to have emerged through multiple births. In their 1969 article, “Adolescence in Historical Perspective,” historian John Demos and human development specialist Virginia Demos express an oft-repeated scholarly view that “adolescence did not exist before the last two decades of the nineteenth century.” (632)

While acknowledging that its modern conceptualization incorporates “older attitudes and modes of thinking,” they declare adolescence both “an invention” of modernity and “an American discovery” (Demos and Demos 632). Yet the *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the first appearance of the word *adolescence*, used in much the same manner it is today, within Guy de Chauliac’s late thirteenth-century French medical text, *Grande Chirurgie*, and traces its etymology to its classical Latin root, *adolēscētia*, a term that indicated “the period of life between childhood and young adulthood” (OED Online). While Demos and Demos perhaps correctly assert that adolescence only came into general “public consciousness” during the early twentieth-century on account of American psychologist G. Stanley Hall’s formalized studies and 1904 tome, *Adolescence: Its Psychology, and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*, this habitual citing of its “invention” and “discovery” reveal intriguing entangled assumptions and implications about adolescence and modernity nestled within our current narratives of human development.

Over two hundred years of anthropological and archeological research documents the existence of youth initiation rites and rituals throughout world history. While their specifics vary culturally and temporally, the common recurrence of these rites and rituals to facilitate the psychosocial transitions necessitated by puberty implies that even the earliest human cultures possessed an awareness of individual developmental patterns and marked specific points in their trajectory as socially significant. This not only suggests that the basal pattern of human development has remained much the same over time, but also that our recognition of and discourse about the social meaning and impacts of its stages (even if not consciously defined as such) likely long preceded the written word within our societies.

From this vantage, adolescence represents neither an *invention* nor a *discovery*, but rather a *dissection*: a segment of a lifetime isolated by natural and social sciences for diagnostic, analytical purposes. That we felt a need to parse human development into distinctly defined stages and then our claim observations of them as *inventions* or *discoveries* reflects the concerns, orientations, and perceptual limitations of the twentieth-century's narrative framework. Just as Jung noted that the field of psychology emerged at the moment Western thought required a new conceptual structure to expand and explore its expository narrative of existence, so too did the "discovery" and "invention" of adolescence credited to modern American social science surface when and where Western societies and their youth began struggling to cope with this period of human development, and for the same underlying reason: namely, that the structuring mythological narratives, rites, and rituals of Western societies no longer supported the social integration and interconnectivity of individuals because they ceased to holistically reflect the experiences and perceptions of reality being *lived* by their members.

In other words, the liminal moment in the human lifecycle between infantile dependency and adult independence is likely as old as human life itself, but it only became a subject of conscious interest, given a name, definition, and temporal boundaries, when its transitions began posing problems that the contemporary social narrative could no longer address or assimilate into its existing formulation. Modernity did not *invent* or *discover* adolescence, but, by attaching consciously unresolvable psychosocial tensions to this developmental stage, its revolutionary changes assigned adolescence a starring role within a powerful psychosocial complex.

This complex conscripted adolescence as its affect-object, making it the unwitting host of a breadth of unconscious emotional content with which society did not permit itself to identify. Adolescence thus entered into modernity's conscious discourse laden with the unconscious bipolar projections of societally-disowned affects, and the adolescent has since been stigmatized as both a threat to social stability in want of containment and heralded as the potential champion of a new world order, society's idealized, heroic Chosen One, capable of (or at least burdened with the responsibility for) resolving its turmoil. As Western societies stoked sparks of modernity throughout the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, the unconscious content of this complex began expressing itself via affect-images posited within a variety of artistic and intellectual productions. The image most frequently imbued with the taboos and anxieties ascribed to adolescence and recurrently called into service as their symbolic archetypal representative has been that of the girl on the cusp of womanhood.

Both before and even after the initial twentieth-century American social scientific encapsulation of adolescence privileged and valorized white middle-class Western male youth, affect-images of the girl (typically white and of dubious socioeconomic origins) navigating the trials of adolescence while embodying the psychic preoccupations of modernity have pervaded Western cultural productions, and, more specifically, English language (ergo, British and American) print and mass media. Examining her evolutionary incarnations in their historical context reveals how, in modernizing, Western societies have used affect-images of the adolescent girl to see, express, and work out the preconscious conflicts with which they struggle to come to terms. As these archetypal representations

appear coincident with significant moments of social upheaval, tracing the their transmutations over time also provides a substantive, contextualized overview of the disowned psychic by-products of Western modernity, in particular, telling snapshots of its fearful preoccupation with ever-shifting relational dynamics of power and its ambivalent confusion about the changing role of race, class, and gender in defining individual identity and one's place within the social hierarchy.

As the central figure within a variety of narrative forms, the affect-image of the adolescent girl has occupied each bipolarity of the social complex from whence she projectively hails. As her affect-image moves from the eighteenth-century into the twenty-first, she emerges first in literature as a vulnerable victim—a passive, absorptive protagonist to whom things happen as she comes-of-age in overtly didactic stories—before increasingly complex psychological portraiture within *bildungsroman*-esque narratives transforms her into an ever-more active participant in the construction of (and/or struggle to thwart predetermination of) her destiny. She vacillates between extremes of these incarnations before eventually transmutating into a monomythic heroine, a figure unknown to traditional mythology, yet currently pervasive in twenty-first-century young-adult fiction—the adolescent girl who endures superhuman trials not only to define herself and her destiny, but to secure the future and shape of the world in which she wants to live.

In attempting to apprehend and apperceive modernity, the socially sustaining mythological narratives of the West fell apart, leaving the Western psyche scrambling to put its broken pieces back together again. While lacking a unified, living mythology in 2015, narratives that function mythologically by amalgamating the symbols and motifs of fallen

mythologies with active affect-images flood contemporary Western culture. The monomyth similarly reemerged hybridized within other narrative forms, carrying the nascent affect-image of the adolescent, until both archetypal representations were primed to make their simultaneous mythic epic-narrative return in the late twentieth-century, announcing the modern adolescent as the new monomythic hero, singling out the modern adolescent girl as society's champion and, perhaps, its last hope.

The archetypal images and motifs swirling within the genome of the Western adolescent girl as an affect-image suggests her descent from our earliest known narratives. Within her twenty-first-century incarnations Bella Swan and Katniss Everdeen linger the chromosomal vestiges of the prominent Western religious and folkloric mythos: in them, strands of Pandora, Persephone, and Helen, the daughters of gods, blend with those of the triumvirate of major goddesses Athena, Artemis, and Aphrodite; threads of the Old Testament's Eve and Ruth wrap around wisps of the young girls at the heart of the Old Wives' tales, the girls with ever-changing names, who ventured through dark woods, courtships, and households, meeting with dangerous monsters, mothers, and men. Yet the pedigree of the twenty-first-century American embodiment of the adolescent female as cultural affect-image most decisively begins with three interwoven strands of literary productions institutionalized during the eighteenth-century: children's literature, the literary fairytale, and the novel—specifically, the novel centered upon the adolescent girl's social and personal transition into womanhood.

### Where She Begins: Once Upon a Time in the Eighteenth-Century

In writing on the origins of children's literature, Matthew O. Grenby notes that, although often referenced as the first English children's book, perhaps due to its exemplary realization of Rousseau's dictum to educate and entertain, John Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* (1744) was preceded by a host of secular and religious works intended to instruct and amuse children dating back to at least the fifteenth-century. Courtesy books such as William Caxton's *Book of Curtesye* (1477) and Francis Seager's *Schoole of Vertue, and Booke of Good Nourture for Chyldren, and Youth to Learn Theyr Dutie By* (1577) conveyed the expectations, manners and customs of adult nobility, while volumes such as John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1563) and John Bunyan's *A Book for Boys and Girls* (1686) addressed children with religious and moral lessons. Abridged retellings of epics and mythological adventures of antiquity, of medieval tales of courtly love, and even Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were available in physical formats designed for children's use. Grenby suggests that the cardinal status of Newbery's book comes of its moment in history, for it emerged in the same moment that children's literature, and literature in general, became a commercialized and professionalized commodity (4-6).

The development of the eighteenth-century British publishing industry owed much to the end of governmental pre-publication censorship in 1695 (which allowed for the evolution of the subject matter and status of the novel), the Act of 1710 (which created the first copyright protection laws in world history), and the rise of consumer culture. However, Grenby also observes that the growth of British publishing, and children's literature as a particular genre, were perhaps equally indebted to new ideas about education, which

effected a novel consideration of childhood as a developmental period and conceptualized education as an investment potentially leading to social advancement (Grenby 8-9). At the same time, discourse about parenthood emerged via popular “conduct books and medical treatises” (9), which designated a critical role for (and dictated specific responsibility to) mothers in managing the individualized education of their children. In turn, a powerful “ethos of maternal education” (12) arose out of an idealized a notion of motherhood that deemed unwavering domestic devotion a woman’s highest act of social propriety, religious piety, and political patriotism. This ethos materialized within assortment of educational tools and reference books created by women. Just as other home-crafted goods became commoditized during the eighteenth-century, so too did the instructive toys, games, moral tales, and early readers devised and authored by mother-educators, marking the inception of mass-produced and mass-distributed literature for children (10-14).

Thus the fact of, and the context that allowed for, the rise of eighteenth-century British publishing concurrently encouraged the complex acculturated intertwining of literature, woman, and child. English literature of the 1700s positioned women and children in parallel as both its subjects and its audience, prescribing each specific personal developmental capacities and tasks, as well as weighty responsibilities for the advancement of both the individual and society. In turn, while credited a certain agency as mothers and educators, women became ever more culturally defined by their service within these roles; indeed, their fictional and pedagogical representations within contemporary literature reinforced and canonized womanhood in such terms. Yet the rise of eighteenth-century British publishing and consumerism also created opportunities for women outside of the

socioeconomic elite, often first as mother-educators, to become professional authors and thus play a significant (if restricted, and thus sometimes subversive) role in shaping the cultural inheritance of women as subjects and creators of literature. Meanwhile, both literature about childhood and literature intended for children took shape within overtly expository and didactic works, often quietly fueled by increasingly controversial, sometimes contradictory eighteenth-century presumptions about morality, education, human liberty, industrialism, and the progressive processes of civilization; many works for children appear to have aspired to be used in the production of an ideal child, one capable of becoming, through civilized molding, an ideal citizen. As the seemingly endless European and American wars of the late eighteenth-century realized the fears and promises, horrors and opportunities of revolution, the subconscious portrait of the ideal Western citizen, and thus the ideal child, increasingly involved a paradox: one which required both overt submission *and* secret resistance to obeying patriarchal authority. Children's literature would come to embody and express this paradox most fully, if indirectly, after subsuming the literary fairy tale.

In her book *Off with Their Heads: Fairytales and the Culture of Childhood*, folklore and fairytale scholar Maria Tatar recognizes the "powerful role" children's literature has played "in constructing the ideal child as a docile child" since its commercial inception (xvi), as well as the way in which fairy tales, both before and after their consignment to children's literature, have served "as instruments of socialization and acculturation precisely because they capture and preserve disruptive moments of conflict and chart their resolution" (xxvii). In studying their printed legacy, Tatar notes how the "kinds of tales produced by the

merger between folklore and children's literature" (Tatar xxvi) not only "position children . . . as objects of unending religious, moral, and therapeutic instruction" (xxiv-xxv), but parallelize the roles, vices, and victimhood of both fairy-tale heroines and children (xxvii).

The fairy tale's complex intertwining of female and child seems to have been present from its first appearance in print. Seventeenth-century British clergyman and encyclopaedist John Swan made the first known, if rather quizzical reference to "Fayrie tales" in his 1635 *Speculum Mundi (or A Glass Representing the Face of the World)*, where he suggests they may (or may not) be stories told by the Lamiaë, the fanciful child-eating she-daemons born of European folklore and mythology that Keats later described as human-serpent hybrids ("fairy tale" Def. A.1, *OED* on-line). Modern scholarship generally attributes the origin of the term and, more importantly, the most prominent and perpetuating literary incarnation of the tales, to less fictional, yet equally fanciful feminine creatures also occasionally accused of devouring infants: the ladies of the seventeenth-century French aristocracy.

Fairy-tale scholar Jack Zipes emphatically clarifies that the stories found in the preeminent French literary fairy-tale collections of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries "were *not* told or written for children," but rather were born within the salons of French elite, where adults, particularly women, relished in demonstrating "their intelligence and education through different types of conversational games" that ultimately served "as models for literary genres" (*Fairy* 20). According to Zipes, frequenters of salons performed fairy tales for one another much in the manner of musical improvisations: within the course of a conversation, someone would allude to a folktale, riffing upon its motifs and eventually spinning it into a full story; tales and teller received praise for their

“naturalness and formlessness,” for sounding spontaneous while reconstructing, adorning, and altering the details of well-known narratives. Zipes hypothesizes that the fairy-tale game’s “social function of amusement” also served as a means of feminine “self-portrayal and representation of proper aristocratic manners,” thus allowing the women to represent “their interests and those of the aristocracy” (*Fairy* 21). As such, Zipes concludes that the original literary fairy tales “arose out of a need by aristocratic women to elaborate and conceive other alternatives in society than those prescribed for them by men” (23). Additionally, while the best-known and first-published literary versions of these salon tales express their authors distinctly “anticlassical” aesthetic, Zipes references Renata Baader’s observation that male-authored tales, such as those of Charles Perrault, tended to offer moralizing comportment lessons to women, while those written by women “put forward their demand for moral, intellectual, and psychological self-determination” through fantasy and wish-fulfillment (22). Zipes contends that this characteristic was subverted, if not lost altogether, when children’s literature co-opted the fairy tale during the eighteenth-century, slowly transforming it from a means of “refined discourse” through which aristocratic “women imagined [how] their lives might be improved” (23) into the sort of story that “emphasized the enforcement of a patriarchal code of *civilité* to the detriment of women” (24).

Most folklore and fairytale scholars recognize French author Charles Perrault’s *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (*Stories of the Past with Morals*), published in 1697 France and first faithfully translated into English in 1729, as the foundational and pivotal text of Western fairy-tale literature. Perrault published his written tales not for children, but with the aspiration of “demonstrating how French folklore could be adapted to the tastes of

French high culture and used as a new genre of art within the French civilizing process” (*Fairy* 17). Unlike those produced by most of his cohort, Perrault’s tales blurred and tamed the fairy tale’s more risqué elements, and closed with emphatic, pedantic Aesopian morals that justified the story’s punishment of its wicked and vindicated the suffering of its good; this perhaps accounts for their appeal to eighteenth-century British publishers, who sought to capitalize on the developing markets for children’s educational materials that offered both intellectual and moral instruction.

In suggesting that fairy tales became integral to English children’s literature before Perrault’s came to define the canon, Ruth Bottigheimer’s article “Misperceived Perceptions” attests that Perrault’s tales gained their English-language popularity slowly, but steadily after *Histoires* second publication in 1737 as a dual-language textbook (7).

Bottigheimer observes that *Histoires* textbook sales declined mid-century, owing perhaps to market saturation and the “strong anti-French sentiments” in Britain (9). Yet, at the same time, English publishers released an assortment of indigenous and translated fairy tales by other authors in magazines, chapbooks, and miscellany collections intended for an audience of children. She credits John Newbery’s 1767 inclusion of Perrault’s “Puss in Boots” within his children’s miscellany, *The Fairing*, as the publication that ultimately merged Perrault’s tales into the mainstream of English children’s literature and thus enabled the 1769 publication of *Histories or Tales of Past Times, Told by Mother Goose with Morals* as a book expressly for children (12-13).

As comportment guides and abridgments of adult secular texts comprised the earliest literature for children, it seems unsurprising that new narrative forms of spinning

tales intended to serve both agendas continued to be repurposed for eighteenth-century children. Yet while the British publication of Perrault's fairy tales led to the tales and their genre's consignment to children's literature, the same fate did not befall the most popular English novel of the 1700s when it was published in an edition shortened and bowdlerized for children in 1756, despite its striking resemblance to several of Perrault's yarns about down-trodden maidens in perilous courtships.

While perhaps not the first novel, nor the first to concern a young girl coming of age, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) was likely English literature's first best-selling work of popular fiction. Not only did Richardson release five editions of his novel less than year after its initial publication (*Regis Natural* 63), but a swell of unauthorized editions and newspaper serializations, unsanctioned sequels, staged interpretations, burlesque send-ups, and literary parodies, including Henry Fielding's notorious *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* (1741) and Eliza Haywood's scalding satire, *The Anti-Pamela: of Feigned Innocence Detected* (1741), absconded with and had their way with Richardson's heroine. The first novel published in America, *Pamela* became not only the subject of paintings, waxworks exhibits, playing cards, and the namesake of a number of racehorses, but, perhaps more importantly, the subject of mass opining and great, lingering social and literary controversy (Keymer and Sabor 2-3).

An epistolary novel Richardson reputedly began as a conduct book illuminating courtship dangers to girls entering service, but completed as work of fiction, *Pamela* dramatizes the plight of a fifteen-year-old chambermaid sexually pursued by the son of her employer. Mr. B tries to seduce Pamela repeatedly, before kidnapping, imprisoning, and

attempting to rape her. Her consistent resistance (which Mr. B interprets as Pamela's demonstrable virtue) apparently converts the scoundrel's unbridled lust into sincere admiration, and he asks her to wed. The long-suffering Pamela agrees, thanks her father for inoculating her with a virtuous character, and endures some hostile social debate over the legitimacy of her marriage before eventually becoming the ideal eighteenth-century wife/mother-educator, living happily (if submissively) ever after.

Literary scholars Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor observe that in its time *Pamela* became a "site of contestation . . . in which some of the most pressing anxieties, conflicts and stress-points" of eighteenth-century culture and ideologies became visible with "unusual clarity" (10), as demonstrated through the antagonistic divide between the novel's contemporary readers. The *Pamelists* admired Richardson's heroine for what they perceived as her moral fortitude, steadfast character, and hard-earned Perraultian fairy-tale marriage, while the *Antipamelist* faction viewed Pamela alternately as either a scheming sexual temptress or a witless, naive waif who, in her social-climbing, beguiled and netted a man far above her station.

Regardless of whether fairy tales influenced Richardson's conception of *Pamela* directly, the rise of this novel's notoriety, considered alongside the increasing popularity of the literary fairy tale in its late eighteenth-century formulation, suggest a cultural embrace of didactic, moralizing narratives which validated the existing social order and reinforced the dominance of Christian and aristocratic patriarchal values via allusions about their idealized submissive feminine counterpart. For example, both *Pamela* and Perrault's *Cinderella* portray social mobility as a reward for suffering and virtue, bestowed by an observant, empowered male figure, who first perceives the developing woman's physical

beauty and then her moral character, which each narrative proposes derives from her birth and associates with her physical beauty. Thus the moral implicit within each tale, made partially explicit by Perrault, states that a disenfranchised young woman has the inherent possibility of rising in the world (particularly if she was born to a virtuous mother and/or members of fallen aristocracy), provided her combined suffering, beauty, and comportment present an idealized vision that impresses the man in control of the system of order and its resources in such a way that, moved first by sexual attraction, then by affect, he offers her a share in his power. Each narrative casts those in direct power over the fate of their young female protagonists as socioeconomically-affluent aggressors (i.e. Cinderella's step-mother and step-sisters; Pamela's Mr. B and his sister), yet suggest that their protagonists must not only aspire to join their antagonizers in society, but also forgive their trespasses and subversively improve them through her inspired example of virtuous being. Furthermore, in portraying an aristocratic man's attraction to a pauperized young woman, these tales put forward the paradox that what makes a woman desirable (i.e., her sexual being and her conformity to social ideals) both makes her vulnerable to victimization by those in power *and* assigns her passive personal power over those made helpless by their admiration of and desire for her.

Both *Pamela* and *Cinderella*, along with Perrault's other young heroines, canonized these embedded moral instructions and ambivalences into what would become frequently repeated narrative tropes concerning adolescent girls coming-of-age. The particular success of *Pamela* tilled the cultural and commercial ground for the bountiful harvest of popular novels featuring young-adult heroines that appeared as the century turned. Predominately authored by women, these works solidified two new genres—the novel of manners and the

gothic romance—while overtly echoing and subtly reworking the issues and motifs delineated by *Pamela*.

Frances Burney's most popular works, *Cecelia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), *Evelina, or the History of the Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1788), *Camilla, a Picture of Youth* (1796), found their protagonists wading into slightly deeper and more tangled, if less dramatically fraught, ambivalences than *Pamela*. Conceived as fictional custom books imbedded with moral guidance, Burney's works came define the novel of manners and sentiment, yet also gently probed social conventions through both humorous and melodramatic travails of young women navigating a marriage-plot. Unlike the Richardson's exemplar of patriarchally-defined ideal womanhood, Burney's very human heroines each negotiate a different kind of social conundrum to secure a place for herself in the world: orphaned Cecilia must find a husband willing to take her surname in order to inherit her family fortune; disowned by her high-born, unmarried parents and raised outside of urban society by a minister, Evelina survives her innocence of social conventions, as Julia Shaffer observes, only by departing from the guidance of her male mentors and learning through personal experience and feminine counsel (61); and by committing many a social faux pas in striving to become the ideal woman upheld by custom books and sought as wife, the coming-of-age adventures of Camilla and her friends quietly critiqued and questioned social values and standards.

While Ann Radcliffe's unorthodox romances lacked the instructive qualities and moral conclusions of those written by Burney, her adolescent heroines struggle with similar concerns, albeit sensationalized, interiorized, and intensified by Radcliffe's evocative

descriptions of physical space, uncanny experience, and horrific psychodynamic circumstances. Julia, the youngest daughter of a corrupt nobleman, spends *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) fleeing her monstrous father and the Duke he wishes her to marry before discovering and rescuing her mother from underground imprisonment and eventually escaping via marriage to her chosen beloved. Young Adeline of Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) hides in dark forests, deserted abbeys, and under floorboards alongside her guardians, a pair of fleeing debtors, who collude with the patricidal, married Marquis intent upon 'marrying' the girl. Unlike Pamela, kidnapped Adeline successfully escapes out of her tower window into the carriage of her preferred suitor, whom she weds (after recovering her rightful inheritance and retrieving him from wrongful imprisonment.) Perhaps the most famous of Radcliffe's unfortunate lasses, the orphaned heroine of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) Emily St. Aubert loses a false fortune and suffers trials and terrors enhanced by solitude and imagination while held captive within the castle of a false suitor before she too finds true love and regains her family legacy.

Implausible plots aside, Radcliffe designed her tales to awaken emotions. By placing her adolescent heroines in perilous situations that evoked their fears and demanded their courage, Radcliffe's narratives rely on readers to empathize with her adolescent heroine's predicaments and identify with them through emotion in a way that had not yet appeared in novel-writing, but would become the quintessential characteristic of the gothic genre, a game-changing writing technique in the evolution of the novel, and an important factor in humanizing future affect-images of the adolescent girl in fiction. By dramatizing her heroine's sensory and emotional lives, and asking readers to share in their experiences,

Radcliffe breathed life into their interior psyches, and through heightened dream-like fantasy gave readers an increased sense of her characters' reality as people.

Like their sister affect-images in the works of Richardson, Perrault, and Burney, the young women in Radcliffe's novels suffer absent, negligent, and ineffectual patriarchs and guardians. However, Radcliffe's heroines escape from, rather than reform and join with their aristocratic aggressors. Although taken captive, Radcliffe's young women resourcefully rescue themselves, sometimes with the assistance of others, whom they will similarly rescue from unjust imprisonments by those in power. While Radcliffe portrays the perils of sexual allure, her young women escape the clutches of the false, predatory suitors and marry the man they independently chose for themselves, sharing with him their inherited good fortune, regardless of his own.

Thus the affect-image of the adolescent girl as portrayed by female authors contemporary to the French and American revolutions began to evolve in such a way that involved deeper questioning of social mores and greater preoccupation with themes and issues of personal freedom, independent expression, and human rights in interpersonal relationships. The adolescent heroines of Burney and Radcliffe, along with Maria Edgeworth's independent, self-starting *Belinda*, directly impacted two of the most influential, if anonymously published, female authors of the nineteenth-century. Interestingly, like their literary predecessors, both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë chose to make the concerns and experiences of adolescent female transformation into adulthood the primary concern of their fiction, and continued to complicate, expansively reshape, and impart manna into the affect-image of the adolescent girl.

Jane Austen's last published work, *Northanger Abbey* (1817), winks slyly at her literary predecessor's contributions by offering a playful parody of Radcliffe's novels—in which Austen defuses the supernatural sensationalism of Gothic devices by bringing them, along with the emotions they stir, into the realm of the ordinary, everyday world, which the novel defines as the true source of life's wonder—and by directly referencing Edgeworth's *Belinda* and Burney's *Camillia* and *Cecelia* as her characters discuss the suitability of reading as a pass-time and debate its impact upon the feminine imagination. All six of Austen's published works—*Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Northanger Abbey & Persuasion* (1817)<sup>24</sup>—center upon the experiences, both interior and exterior, of adolescent girls wrestling with the realities presented by their social circumstances and reconciling themselves to the same stark fact faced by their real-life contemporaries: that much of their adult lives would be determined by their good fortune (or lack thereof) in making a marriage-match.

During the century of their publication, Austen's works received generally favorable public reviews, appreciative of the strengths of Austen's written style, praising their moral content, and interpreting them as light fare fit for female readers, continuing the tradition of Bruney's marriage-plot novels while reworking their characteristic sentimentality by infusing it with Locke-ian sense and sensibility. However, as later critics would note, Austen's narratives did far more to alter the image of young women coming into adult society, if not visibly within the general nineteenth-century British populous, then at least within the imaginations and subsequent creations of other nineteenth-century authors.

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<sup>24</sup> The two texts were originally published together and released in December of 1817, although the first edition title pages date the publication as 1818. (Butler *Northanger Abbey* xii).

While inarguably similar in many of their aspects, Austen's heroines distinguish themselves from their literary forerunners in their commonness. Typically attractive, but not bellish beauties, endowed with strength and independence of character, yet without extraordinary talents, crosses to bear, or rebellious impulses, and each from middle-of-the-road, middle-class families, Austen permitted her adolescent female protagonists to fall curious and watch carefully before falling in love or having their love reciprocated; she allowed them moments of personal insight, to think of companionability and affection before marriage; she saw to it that her girls could flounder without requiring moral lectures (aside from those they self-administered), and even fail to meet society's ideal comportment standards, yet still prove worthy of being loved and respected for themselves by those whom they love. In short, Jane Austen portrayed her young characters first as ordinary individual persons in real world situations rather than exemplary social personae in extreme or surreal circumstances, and in doing so, was able to use her characters to express an early nineteenth-century adolescent girl's concerns about the inequities and conventions of her social order as well to reflect society's concerns and anxieties about her.

While many latter-day authors and critics, including Henry James, George Henry Lewes, W.H. Auden, and Virginia Woolf, expressed deep admiration for the techniques of Austen's writing and the subtle precision and wit of her novels' social criticism, Jane Austen's works apparently left Charlotte Brontë cold and wanting. In a letter to William Smith Williams, dated April 12, 1850, Brontë acknowledges that Austen "does her business of delineating the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well," noting rather scornfully that "she ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing

profound” before decreeing that Austen’s failings as both an author and woman came of her having concerned herself:

not half so much with the human heart as with the human eyes, mouth, hands and feet; what sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study, but what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of Life and the sentient target of Death—this Miss Austen ignores.” (Brontë, “Letter”).

Brontë’s concerns as author clearly colored her assessment of Austen, for no reader of *Jane Eyre* could doubt that a burning desire to make visible through words the throbbing reality of this “unseen seat of Life” at work within an adolescent girl, “poor, obscure, plain and little,” had driven its creation; and unlike Austen’s works, Brontë’s masterwork would ruffle and disturb many of her contemporary readers while making enormously complicated and influential revisions to the affect-image of the adolescent girl.

Her Mid-Nineteenth Century Transition:  
Victorianism, Romanticism, and the Coming of (the Gilded) Age Novel

Charlotte Brontë and her sisters, Emily and Anne, would each chronicle unforgettable Victorian female coming-of-age stories within novels published during 1847—*Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Agnes Grey* respectively. Yet, of the three, Charlotte’s novel alone saw its heroine transform victorious through her own self-made adventure into adulthood. Often called the first feminist novel, *Jane Eyre* harkens back to *Pamela* literally<sup>25</sup> and figuratively,<sup>26</sup> but, more importantly, thematically, for Brontë transfigures and

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<sup>25</sup> Within the novel, little Jane first hears fairy tales and bits of *Pamela* from her aunt’s servant, Bessie.

<sup>26</sup> Brontë reworks Richardson’s ‘gypsy fortune-teller,’ ‘female captive in the tower,’ and ‘dangerous dark suitor with a past as a cad, reformed by his attraction to a pure woman’ motifs.

repurposes the tropes *Pamela*, her fairy-tale sisters, and literary daughters helped engrave into the collective unconscious, such that visible remnants of Jane still live on within the most prominent affect-images of the adolescent girl in the twenty-first-century.

Orphaned Jane's fortunes change when her cruel aunt sends her away to school. After transforming from pupil into teacher, Jane becomes a governess at Thornfield Hall, where, through evenings of conversation, she and her ever-brooding employer, Edward Rochester, fall in love. As their wedding approaches, Jane learns that Rochester's mad first wife still lives and flees both her chosen home and beloved at the urging of an inner-voice. Jane wanders homeless and ailing until taken in and nursed by two sisters; she becomes the mistress of their minister brother's parish school and secures her new-found independence upon inheriting her paternal uncle's fortune. Zealous St. John hectors disinterested Jane to join him in marriage and mission, equating her refusal with a rejection of God. Guilt-stricken, Jane nearly concedes until she mysteriously hears Rochester's voice calling her name. She returns to Thornfield to discover both the hall and its mad mistress destroyed by a fire that left its master one-handed and blind. Unfettered and reunited, Rochester and Jane cobble his proposal of a marriage between two independent equals. Rochester regains his sight with the birth of their son and together they make their fairy-tale end.

The significance of Brontë's realization of Jane Eyre as a self-determined individual—one who meets and makes her way through life on her own terms no matter what or where life brings her, both despite and because of her inherited disadvantages and disempowerments—and Jane's impact as an adolescent female affect-image cannot be overstated. That *Jane Eyre's* publication sparked extreme reactivity from Brontë's

contemporary readers and reviewers, who alternately acclaimed or decried the novel for its departures from religious, moral, and social conventions, its immediacy of passion and intimacy of tone, and for Jane's brazen self-assertion and open defiance of authority, should come as no surprise—for, through the character of her heroine, Brontë symbolically disempowered, demolished, and then altogether replaced the socially-sanctioned power structure of mid-nineteenth-century England. And Brontë did so at a moment in history where a well-warranted fear of the possibility of such real-life anarchy and upheaval had the powerful within Western society brandishing whips whilst quaking in their boots.

As literary critic Stevie Davies chronicles, Brontë wrote *Jane Eyre* in a “manufacturing wool-town” in northern England during the same period. Chartist and other labor reform movements vociferously sought ‘universal’ suffrage and equal rights—for the working-man; at the same time English law hardly acknowledged the existence of married women, and English society excluded all women from access to the vote, university education, and entry into professions; and simultaneous to the eruption of revolutions in “Italy, France, Germany, and the Austrian Empire” that rattled the Christian and Imperialistic patriarchal foundations of European society (*Jane Eyre* xiv-xv).

In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë references epic works of culture-shaping import—ancient myth and the Bible, the works of Shakespeare, Bunyan, Milton, and Scott among others—works dramatizing the great conflicts between heart and mind, between the individual and society, between duty and desire. Brontë uses these allusions to actively stoke the emotional and philosophical concerns that she then employs fairy-tale motifs and Radcliffe's Gothic devices to rouse into living flame, all the while erecting perhaps the first-known female

*bildungsroman* novel upon the fertile ground of the now well-established adolescent girl coming-of-age marriage-plot.

Jane's story overturns the power dynamics illustrated by *Pamela* and her culturally reaffirming progeny by reworking their motifs. Jane achieves social mobility first and foremost by *choosing* to move. Although suffering, luck and/or providence, and family inheritance continue to play meaningful parts in her outcome, Jane's choices within her circumstances and the responsibility she takes in enacting them move her socially both upward and downward. Throughout the novel, Jane tends to find the key to good fortune in the same moment it finds her.

Like her predecessors, Brontë portrays the socially empowered figures within *Jane Eyre* as domineering aggressors, but renders them more humanly complex and far less sexually threatening. For example, Jane's aunt resents the little orphan because her husband preferred Jane to their own children, and St. John's worldly ambitions drive his desire to marry Jane, blinding him both to his own true love and the need to respect the being of others. Jane's earliest antagonizers aggress through withholding food, physical care, emotional concern, and just regard for a child's individual being, while those of her adolescence and adulthood emotionally taunt, judge, and condemn her person, or ask her to compromise her authentic self in the interest their agendas. Furthermore, Jane does not reform, nor attempt to reform, those her narrative characterizes as corrupt or domineering; she rejects Rochester's attempts to liken her to a bird or deem her his angel, and declares herself neither an animal nor a celestial, but a free *human* being with autonomous, independent will. She rejects her male transgressors' assertions of dominance, often with mixed feelings, but ultimately leaves them in favor of the preservation of her integrity of self.

While the interactions of Jane and Rochester were (by Victorian standards) highly sexually charged, Brontë portrays their sexual interest in one another as *mutual*, to the point of scandalizing some readers with her bold descriptions of Jane's gaze upon him. Unlike his prototypes, Rochester does not fall in uncontrollable lust with Jane's physical beauty or in love with an idealized sense of her embodied virtue; he describes himself as bewitched by her spirit, mind, and character as defined by her refusal to submit her own authority or surrender her life to a path that would separate her from her sense of self; it is not Jane's ability to fit the Glass Slipper of socially-idealized womanhood that inspires Rochester's lust and love, it is her striving and devotion to sustain her concept of self. Thus in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë directly associates virtue with a fundamentally non-patriarchal, unChristian, anti-Imperialist notion: that of upholding self-interest and earthly, personal happiness before relational duty, before upholding social or religious propriety, before satiating the personal hungers of others. Brontë's story thus defuses the dominant/submissive power dynamic by replacing it with ideas about a natural-born individual equality that exists as fact regardless of whether organized religion or the laws of man choose to sanction it.

Throughout the novel, Brontë reworks the idea of "mastery"—both in Jane's use of the term in reference to Rochester and his in reference to her mastery of him; in their mutual recognition of the other as an equal; and in Rochester's refusal to accept any social interpretation that deems Jane his inferior and in Jane's decree of the sacredness of their spiritual union—until the term becomes unrecognizable in its former sense. Brontë then reinforces this self-declared equality of man and woman by leveling their perceived social

status: Jane rises through a combination of independent effort and lucky inheritance, while Rochester falls in taking responsibility for his past sins, losing part of his inheritance and part of his physical body.

That Brontë physically and financially reduced Rochester in order to make him Jane's social equal elicited fearful and hostile readings of the novel which literalized this symbolic reduction of masculine power as a threatening call-to-arms for female empowerment; yet other critiques—such as an article printed in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* eight years after the novel's publication, which, as Stevie Davies observed, “linked the European revolutions and *Jane Eyre* as expressions of the forces of social anarchy” (qtd. in *Jane Eyre* xv)—seemed to intuitively grasp the far more radical proposition embedded within Brontë's novel: that individuals possess innate power to connect freely, as they choose, outside of hierarchical relationships, and that, having no innate power, social structures retain their authority only so long as individuals willingly abide to the terms of their governance. Such logic suggests that equality of personhood exists as fact regardless of the social privileging or undermining of gender, class, or race, and that true social equality neither privileges nor undermines any individual in relation to another.

Brontë's unrelenting commitment to rendering the reality of emotion in writing made Jane a wildly powerful affect-image. Jane's author-given capacity to passionately express two of the most powerful emotions—anger and love—perhaps account for the reactive fear and absolute ardor *Jane Eyre* aroused in much of her readership; for Jane's anger, Brontë relates to oppression, suppression, or repression of self, and Jane's love, Brontë associates with the impassioned living of earthly life. While threatening to staunchly

Victorian moralists and the social elite, Jane Eyre's empowered emotional liberty and success in changing her lot within a first-person, fairy-tale narrative structure perhaps account for her story's particular appeal to working-class American women confined to the grist and repetitive drudgery of industrial labor. According to Fred Lewis Pattee's *The Feminine Fifties* Brontë's masterwork "ran through the mill-girl community" of mid-nineteenth-century Lowell, Massachusetts, fueling imaginations and romantic hopes "like an epidemic" (qtd. in Seelye, *Jane Eyre's American Daughters* 19).

As the fledgling government of the United States of America ratified its constitution in 1788, questions arose about the appropriate entitlements, freedoms, and legal definition of adulthood. Printed evidence of early nineteenth-century social discourse suggests its citizenry simultaneously became preoccupied with the subjects of American childhood and motherhood. During the first third of the 1800s, a swell of American-authored instructional literature for youth appeared alongside new books and magazines offering advice to mothers on childrearing. Demos and Demos interpret the steady increase of these widely-read materials after 1825 as both a reflection of a "deepening interest" in childhood "as a distinct period of life" and as an assertion of national identity, which deemed British books on raising children unsuitable "to American conditions" (633). Much of this writing "reflected deep anxieties about the quality of American family life" and attributed a perceived rise in social "problems with authority" to the replacement of parental sovereignty with an increasingly "'child-centered' attitude." Titles such as *How to be a Man: A Book for Boys, Containing Useful Hints on the Formation of Character* (1850), *Papers for Thoughtful Girls with Illustrative Sketches of Some Girls' Lives* (1864), and *On the Threshold*

(1882) Americanized the didactic custom book guidance offered to nineteenth-century youth, warning them of the “dangers” lurking “both within and without” en route to maturity. Such books warned youth about the perils of naiveté, emotional volatility, and “aimlessness and indecision,” all without directly addressing issues related to either their physical or sexual pubescent development (Demos and Demos 633-634). As the century closed, writers increasingly forewarned of the “corrupting influences” of urbanity upon impressionable youth, specifically its socioeconomic and cultural diversity, and “its frenzied commercial spirit, and its dazzling entertainments,” which were deemed “sharply antagonistic to proper growth towards adulthood.” (635). American social science took up these concerns, parlaying them into the beginnings of their pioneering research into human development not long after the first publication of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* in 1859, and as the Gilded Age dawned, Clark University, founded in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1887, became a polestar for many of the field’s pioneering thinkers and researchers from around the world, including Clark’s first president, psychologist G. Stanley Hall, and the ‘father of American anthropology,’ Franz Boas.

After the publication of *Jane Eyre*, increasingly individualistic, subtle, and complex portraits of female adolescents emerged in British and American popular literature for children and adults—portraits that grew in their psychological complexity and shrunk, first in terms of their heroines’ autonomy, then in terms of her age and that of her intended audience. An ardent admirer of Charlotte Brontë, author of Gothic pulp fiction under the pen name A. M. Barnard, sentimental children’s poems under Flora Fairfield, and an unpublished fan fiction-esque reinvention of *Jane Eyre* titled *A Long Fatal Love Chase*, Louisa

May Alcott unwittingly defined an “all-American” girlhood for generations to come by penning an American adolescent domestic drama reminiscent of, yet separate from those of its British ancestress in a practical effort to sustain herself and her family through her writing income. Set against the backdrop of the American Civil War, *Little Women* (1868-69) became one of the first popular crossover novels by featuring the vividly individualized March girls, each coming into her own version of womanhood, at least one of whom, Jo, rivaled Jane Eyre in her proto-feminist desire to self-determine. Alcott’s unconventional beliefs and life perspective suffuse and complicate *Little Women’s* surface domesticity; her transcendentalist learning, active stance against slavery and racial discrimination, feminist belief in women-rights and education, and service as a Civil War army nurse pepper what has often been dismissed as a sentimental novel enshrining familial devotion and American work-ethic with the rumblings of social changes to come.

As self-reliant tom-boy Jo March became the hero of many young female readers during the Golden Age of children’s literature, male authors, such as Henry James and Thomas Hardy, were crafting novels for adults featuring stunning realist portraits that cast young-adult womanhood in a new light, and yet reestablished, with an odd sympathy, the relational status of adolescent girls as that of victims within a man’s world.

Supporter of Alcott, admirer of Austen, and brother to the American father of psychology, American expatriate Henry James centered both his novella *Daisy Miller* (1878) and novel *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) on the subject of adolescent American girls abroad negotiating what he characterized as a nebulous, psychospiritually dangerous liminal space between innocent new world feminine independence and entrenched old world mores,

between a girl's desire to enter and secure a recognizable place within society and her personal longing for an unnamable something more. Introduced as the subject of a young man's curiosity and analytical evaluations, Daisy's exploration of the world on her own terms ends prematurely in her death, whereas readers encounter *Portrait's* orphaned heiress Isabel Archer fumbling in her attempt to marry for love, ultimately losing her much cherished personal freedom in a loveless marriage to a fortune-hunter.

While *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874)<sup>27</sup> proved British author Thomas Hardy's first widely-read work, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented* (1891) became his most controversial by openly challenging and chastising Victorian social values and sexual mores. Tess again recalls *Pamela*, for she too was born to a fallen noble family, and, once in service, is relentlessly pursued by her employer and cousin, Alec D'Urberville. Raped and impregnated, Tess loses her child, then attempts to begin anew on a dairy farm, where she and apprentice farmer Angel Clare fall in love and wed. When Tess shares her past, Angel abandons his wife to a life of menial labor and desperate destitution. Alec resurfaces, claiming spiritual rebirth, yet entreating Tess to become his mistress. Convinced her husband will never return, Tess concedes. Inconsolably shamed when a repentant Angel comes back for her, Tess murders Alec, and escapes with her husband; the two share a few blissful days in hiding until the law hangs Tess for her crime.

Tess realizes the ever-looming *threat* of rape—so frequently used to create the tension and horror her late-eighteenth-century affect-image ancestresses escaped through their wit,

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<sup>27</sup> Incidentally, *Far from the Madding Crowd* features the adolescent female inspiration for Hunger Games heroine, Katniss Everdeen. While author Suzanne Collins traces Katniss's lineage more directly to Theseus and the historical figure of Spartacus, she links Katniss's name "to Bathsheba Everdene" and states that while the "two are very different, but both struggle with knowing their hearts" (Jordan).

virtue, obedience and/or well-positioned rescuers—along with all of its consequences: Innocence is lost. Birthright proves a cruel fiction; inheritance will not save Tess; rather, finding lost family ensures her doom and that of her child. Honesty and virtue result in rejection and destitution of a sort that hard work cannot alleviate. Intervening fairy godmothers, mythic gods, lucky encounters, and goodly working-class shepherds are nowhere to be found in Tess's world; the patriarch, the cousin, and the husband offered no home, no protection, and the Angel failed to deliver Christian compassion or forgiveness, human empathy or kindness until after it could do Tess little good. Life's mysterious promises still linger in the beauty of Nature, but in a typical Victorian misappropriation of Darwin, Hardy suggests that Nature's patterns, thanks to the dominance of mankind, define this world as hard, cruel, and competitive, a place where only the strongest (who in *Tess* are also the wicked) will survive. Hardy's novel implicates and castigates a society willing to hold a woman living in its world next to an idealized image and find her lacking, and yet he also suggests that woman, by Nature and society, is powerless to change or escape the fate assigned to her by man.

In these works, James and Hardy transform the pattern of 'fear and escape,' established by the eighteenth-century adolescent girl coming-of-age narratives, into one where a socialized presumption of safety replaces fear and ensures an innocent's initiation into misadventure and demise. Unlike Pamela—whose "virtuous" refusals are understood to have disempowered Mr. B's drive to force her sexually, thus transforming him from Beast into Prince (i.e., a formula wherein affect merged with conscious morality gives a woman psychic 'power' to protect herself bodily by reforming her aggressor, thus suggesting a

woman's innate power to influence comes of her role in the sexual dynamic)—Daisy, Isabella, and Tess project through a cracking Victorian lens: their spirits and minds fail to protect the fate of their bodies; their physical selves lack the power to assert their innermost psyches, regardless of their moral values. James proposes that psychic innocence—its inobservance of customs and pursuance of attractions while unaware of their innate nature and dangers; its pure curiosity, desire for esteem, and want of joy—leads Daisy to catch her physical death; and that, similarly, Isabella's desire to explore the physical world as an individual, her inability to metabolize the warnings of experience or to make sense of her bodily affects and sexual attractions, and her adolescent determination to achieve a personally-defined ideal of happiness destine her live out her days unhappily in an outward presentation of herself as society's vision of womanly duty and propriety. Hardy faithfully presents his "pure woman" as having little to no control of her adolescent body or womanly destiny; Tess expresses no sexual or physical power, no power in the physical world at all beyond her capacity to toil and endure, only sexual and physical vulnerability.

Whereas *Jane Eyre* represented power of mind joined with spirit, these three archetypal images delineate, quite acutely, aspects of the Victorian fear of the body, both its powers and its mortal susceptibility, and related anxieties about maintaining psychospiritual existence within an increasingly mechanized, despiritualized world. Each also projects, through its tragedies, the rising fear of social upheaval through female empowerment, which the Victorian psyche and these narratives understood as originating from the reproductive capacity of the female body. James's adolescent heroines additionally embody and express a distinctly early American preoccupation about self-assertion—about

establishing a recognizable personal and national identity, about finding one's place in the scheme of the world—and the feared consequences of what might happen to those citizens of the world who reject the guidance of their socially-established elders in their pursuit of freedom and happiness. That this swell of late Victorian anxiety about bodily powers and social discontent arose alongside the dissemination of Darwin's revolutionary scientific (and thus *mythological*) hypotheses partially accounts for the virtual disappearance of the adolescent girl from popular literature after the turn of the century. Rising social discomfort with her inherent biological and psychosocial liminality—uncertainty about what she might be in the process of *becoming*—appears to have necessitated that her future literary incarnations agree to either drink the potion that made her larger (and, typically, tragic) or eat the cake that made (and kept) her small.

Many have suggested that the period in English language publishing referred to as the Golden Age of children's literature began with a curious young girl taking a tumble down a rabbit hole in 1865. Coincident with the expansion of mass-production technologies that allowed for cheaper bookmaking, the implementation of the first compulsory free education laws in the United States and Great Britain, and the end of the American Civil War, many of the most famous titles in children's literature printed in the English language after *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and before World War I would feature younger adolescent heroines negotiating pre-pubescent concerns, too nascent for a marriage-plot and largely desexualized, yet echoing previous motifs and concerns associated with the adolescent girl.

Lewis Carroll's *Alice* turned the Victorian moralizing tendencies of children's literature on their ear by placing his young heroine upon a surreal adventure in a world where the rituals of British adult society—from reading “civilizing” books and reciting poetry, playing cards and croquette, taking high tea and offering obsequious deference to one's sovereigns and social ‘betters’—appear as unintelligible nonsense. Alice's encounters leave her increasingly uncertain of who she is until she wields her reason, declares everything absurd, and awakens from her very “curious dream.” Alice inspired L. Frank Baum's ambitions to craft an Americanized fairy tale for children in his *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), wherein a tornado sweeps Kansas native Dorothy Gale into her own peculiar phantasmagorical adventure which, according to many critical interpretations, allegorizes nineteenth-century American life and politics. After proving herself Oz's quick-witted problem-solver-in-chief, Dorothy, like Alice, is allowed the realization that she has, since the beginning of her journey, possessed the power to enact the magic to carry herself back home.

On the opposite, realist end of the Golden Age spectrum were a host of idealized, orphaned girls, much like pre-pubescent versions of Jane Eyre and Jo March sans their defiant edge: entrusted to a boarding school by her sea-captain father, Sara Crewe of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Little Princess* (1905) fares well until her father's death leaves her penniless and at the mercy of iniquitous headmistress Miss Minchin. Kindly Sara befriends an ill neighbor, who, upon discovering he had known her father, leaves the girl his fortune, rescuing Sara from her imprisonment at school. Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) sends orphaned Anne Shirley into a scenario more wholesome than those faced by her adolescent fairy-tale predecessors. Anne's

guardians are not wicked, but rather a pair of aging siblings, who meant to adopt a boy to help work their farm; her taunting suitor is merely a boy who teases Anne for having red hair. Intent upon becoming a teacher, Anne wins a university scholarship, but declines her opportunity to care for her aging foster mother and the family farm after her foster father dies. Even more optimistic than Anne is Eleanor H. Porter's *Pollyanna* (1913), an orphan sent to live with her wealthy spinster aunt in a curmudgeonly small Vermont town. Pollyanna's instructions in positive-thinking transform the town, who will, in turn, help her recover her can-do spirit and the use of her legs after an accident leaves her temporarily paralyzed.

Thus the images of adolescent girls in adult literature during the last twenty-five years of the century became less empowered, more fraught, and physically imperiled with the rise of industrialization and crises of national-identity. Similarly, those found in children's literature become younger, and, if representative of female empowerment, relegated to stories set in realms of fantasy, or, if disempowered through rank and birth, kept within the confines of stories that bolstered traditional notions, such as the virtue and rewards of suffering and upholding familial duty, while removing any suggestion of sexual dynamics from their plots. In a striking parallel, much the same pattern—wherein women en route to social empowerment would shrink back into previously socially prescribed roles, behaviors, and relational power dynamics, such that they would become commercially represented as *Girls*—became apparent in the splintering of the American women's rights movement that began in 1869.

As historian Jean V. Matthews's *The Rise of the New Woman* evinces, the social roles and opportunities available to women in the United States increased dramatically during

years following the American Civil War, reaching a new zenith with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in August of 1920. Yet during the same period, issues of political perception drove wedges between the suffragettes. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony parted ways with Lucy Stone, due to the collision of Stone's fear that including women's suffrage within the proposed Fifteenth Amendment might jeopardize securing the freedmen's right to vote with Cady Stanton and Anthony's shared opposition to enacting any new laws that privileged the rights of men over those of women. Cady Stanton and Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) while Lucy Stone and husband Henry Blackwell counter-established American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) in 1869 (6). Matthews notes that from its inception, the more conservative, cautiously politic AWSA avoided engaging issues "that might impugn its respectability," and, by the 1880s, both organizations had ceased to "examine marriage as an institution that confined women," as well as any other subject that "might be construed as an attack on religion, the churches, or sexual morality" (7). Joined by the founding of the American Association of the Advancement of Women (AAAW) in 1873, Matthews reports that women's organizations born out of the suffrage and abolitionist movements increasingly "disguised" their aims by using such "mildly progressive," non-threatening phrases as "the advancement of women" rather than engaging in frank discussions about women's rights (7), while also distancing themselves from the African American civil rights movement and African American women (27).

According to Matthews, of all the organizations attempting to rally a female cohort into organized action, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded in

1874, was most successful and far exceeded the suffrage organizations in terms of its social influence (19, 23). Charismatic WCTU leader Frances Willard championed an image of woman as guardian of the home, even employing the organizing motto of “Home Protector,” while offering “reassurance” to both members and the world at large that the aim of the WCTU was “Not Rights, but Duties” (qtd. in Matthews 20). Matthews attests that by 1896, the WCTU had expanded into thirty-nine national departments, and had extended its influence beyond issues of temperance to address topics related to compulsory education, prison reform, child labor, alcoholism research, and those embroiled within what historian David Pivar deemed the *Purity Crusade*: a movement that sought to implement its vision of a ‘pure society’ by such diverse means as eliminating prostitution, raising the legal age of consent, instituting public drinking fountains, and engaging in the cultural censorship of literature, artistic productions, media, and sporting events associated with gambling (Matthews 21).

Matthews attributes much of the WCTU’s success in furthering their mission as arising from the fact that its rallying image paired so easily with that of the Victorian *angel in the house* and thus posed no challenge to its narrative “separation of spheres” (23), which reaffirmed the gender roles and power dynamics between the sexes established before and during the eighteenth-century. The discordant voices in this tug-of-war between the desire to achieve “rights,” and thus access to the same freedoms and opportunities as men, with the desire to attain both self-validation and social approval by upholding culturally prescribed “duty” may have attenuated the volume of their argument. However, this conflict continued to generate an ambivalent static about civil rights within the

sociopolitical discourse for years to come—a static that would also introduce interference and distortion within cultural and interpersonal discourse.

Matthews writes that as the century drew to its close, “[w]omen of the expanding middle-class found themselves caught between new urban freedom, with its promise of privacy and even self-determination, and a more oppressive code of conduct governing the deportment of the ‘lady,’ which few dared to flout.” She describes these unwritten “codes of ladydom,” which dictated both “the behavior and treatment of women,” as the “means by which middle-class women ranked and judged each other and which governed and rendered stiff and uneasy the relations between the sexes.” According to Matthews, these codes took for granted that “all relations between men and women, particularly young ones, were potentially sexual in nature” and thus required management via “external and internalized prohibitions to protect the purity—and thus the marriageability—of young women” (10).

At this time, the term *New Woman* burbled into use, making its first described appearances within Sarah Grand’s article “The New Aspect of the Woman Question” (1894) and W.L. Sheldon’s treatise, *The New Woman* (1896). Matthews’s impressions of the New Woman “type” characterize her as “young, well educated, probably a college graduate, independent of spirit, highly competent, and physically strong and fearless” (13). Matthews neglects to mention the New Woman was also invariably portrayed as white.

While she would make some striking and controversial appearances in turn-of-the-century literature and drama (in Ibsen, James, and even Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, for example), the New Woman would be given a far more powerful emblematic representation when co-opted by commerce and presented via visual imaging of her as the *Gibson Girl* and the

*Kodak Girl* of the early twentieth-century. Often pictured with a horse or a bicycle, hiking alone in the woods or traveling abroad with female friends, and armed with a camera, commercial visualizations of the New Woman recalled the adolescent female affect-images of Jane Eyre and Jo March in their command, active mobility, and willingness to assert self in the world via first-person exploration and self-directed gaze, yet clearly established her as the member of a privileged socioeconomic class.

Matthews notes that by the beginning of the 1900s, women of the middle and upper classes with access to higher education increasingly rejected the mantle of ladydom, while the majority of women, most especially working class, immigrant, and African American women, would hold to it “as their main claim to consideration” (10). Thus the same women entitled to call themselves New Women came to reject the standard of definition commonly used by women of lower socioeconomic status to orient their sense of self-value, women who were, by nature of the New Woman’s picture, unable to wear her Silver Slippers. Similarly, many women who upheld the codes of ladydom criticized the New Woman for being improper, overly masculine, and sexually deviant, largely rejecting the new terms of equality and self-empowerment she represented, as well as the real women who resembled her in spirit, action, and image. Ironically, both of these images by which women evaluated themselves and other women expressed female assimilation of patriarchal constructs. While the New Woman certainly represented a feminist perspective, the image that defined her as a socially privileged, white, adolescent girl was the creation of the patriarchy of modern industrial commerce, a share in an elite power associated with white men in America. “Ladydom” upheld social patriarchy of the old world order, which

positioned woman as a submissive in its binary dynamic, yet also offered her a specific type of shadow power. Thus, perhaps belying and agitating these ambivalent oppositional positions was a disowned realization: that seeking true equality of the sexes would mean not only women gaining rights and access, but both men and women relinquishing their known roles, and thus the ‘privileges’ those roles allowed for within the social order. In many ways, as an actively invested submissive, a Lady had more lose than the New Woman, for a Lady’s personal power derived from her position within the relational dynamic with a man which proclaimed her his civilizer and moral superior. Within the existing social structure’s affect-complex, a Lady’s personal power, as well as her disempowerment and vulnerability, derived entirely from her sex, whereas—thanks to technology, education, and the economic power to attain them—the New Woman was free to explore the Man’s World—so long as she remained a Girl.

As woman, child, and the book became culturally intertwined during the eighteenth-century, the girl on the cusp of womanhood became both an object and subject of social preoccupation. Commercial production concretized versions of her narratives in new forms—children’s literature, the literary fairytale, the novel—allowing them to widely disseminate into the cultural consciousness. Stories emerged featuring coming-of-age adolescent girls as evermore adventurous explorers and as increasingly tragic victims, seeking places for themselves within the adult world as wives and mothers, as educators and writers, as human beings uncertain of what role, if any, they should, could, or might wish to play.

By the end of the nineteenth-century, affect-images of the adolescent girl in English literature had shape-shifted through numerous incarnations. Didactic mid-eighteenth-

century narratives, such as Richardson's *Pamela*, offered up idealized adolescent female submissives. Their tales validated the existing social order and reinforced the dominance of Christian and aristocratic patriarchal values, while simultaneously suggesting that the developing girl possessed a subversive power—as a desired sexual object, as a mother/educator, as a paragon of virtue—to temper and reform socially empowered, interpersonally predatory Beasts. By the mid-nineteenth-century, Romanticism's liberation of affect and championing of the individual coalesced in the powerful image of self-determination and personal independence posited by Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, a heroine whose journey reinterpreted the established literary tropes pertaining to the adolescent female. In narrating the experience of two individuals choosing to marry as mutually recognized equals, Brontë's female *bildungsroman* unconsciously threatened political and sexual revolution by exposing the fragility of inherited social roles, orders, and hierarchies, their dependence on the willingness of individuals to abide by their structures. Yet, in less than thirty-five years, affect-images of the adolescent girl transformed again. Portraiture of such brave, new, self-made girls gave way to those to expressing Victorian fears about embodiment and agency in an age of increased mechanization and despiritualization amid scientific advances, mythological collapses, and wide-spread confusion about evolving social roles shifting power socioeconomic class, race, and sex. During this period, images of adolescent girls portray female agency as innocent folly that ends badly for youth seeking a self-defined place in the adult world. The affect-images arising in this period divide sharply in terms of the heroine's reproductive capacity. While young girls, such as Alice and Dorothy, revel in fantastic adventures revealing the frustrating absurdity of navigating a

world of social contradictions, girls old enough to become married women and mothers during the course of their literary misadventures, such as Tess Durbeyfield and Isabel Archer, end as victims of their society's contradictory premises, of their own emotions, and, particularly, of their desire to individuate. Late nineteenth-century adult novels featuring the girl on the cusp of womanhood mark the sexually mature female body as the source of a female's, and thus civilized society's, vulnerability and downfall, suggesting to the anxious that the adult female, her body, and its reproductive capacity exist as objects in need of external regulation and protections. These bodily preoccupations arose in tandem with technologies that allowed for new freedom of movement, with the philosophical shift and psychic angst sparked by Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species*, and with the rise of the women's rights movement. Like the women's rights movement, the affect-image of the adolescent girl in literature splintered as the century closed, becoming compartmentalized as either an idealized pre-pubescent child or a stereotyped adult woman. Her adventures in between, adventures once boldly taken up by Miss Jane Eyre, receded again into unconsciousness, remaining, for a time, stories no longer told. Such freedom and liberties posed complications and were taken for dangerous things.

This repressive retreat from the complex issues embodied by the affect-image of the adolescent girl was a quintessentially human response to the extreme anxiety-inducing prospects *Jane Eyre*, Darwin, and women's liberation had proposed. Modernity enabled the human female to emerge as an *individual*, rather than an entity defined in only terms of biological capacity, relational social role, and economic value to the social system. However, having never seen anything of her kind, Western society did not know what to do with her,

or what her presence within its system meant in terms of its survival. As Joseph Campbell once observed, the traditional mythologies of the West offered no models of female individuation and no models of male engagement with an individuated female (*Goddesses* xiv). Thus modernity now called Western society to take up a developmental adventure, to relinquish and separate from its past Knowns and enter the Unknown, to live through the uncertainty of a present without models while constructing templates for future generations. As the emergence of the scientific narrative shattered previous mythological narratives of being, it fell to science, as the language of modern mythology, to construct the narrative of human development anew. While affect-images of adolescent female liminality receded from literature and the overly anxious popular conscious for a time, they would soon resurface—this time within the social scientific narrative of the twentieth-century.

## Chapter V

### The Monomyth and Adolescence: the Twentieth-Century Scientific Encapsulation of the Adolescent Girl in Crisis and the Return (and Rise) of the Young-Adult Heroine Affect-Image

Until only recently, Western monomythic narratives centered almost exclusively upon the developmental journeys of male heroes into what Joseph Campbell, writing in 1980, called “a field of action in the world that,” before modernity took root, “was formerly reserved for the male.” Traditional mythologies, Campbell contended, offer “no *female* models” of movement “into the field and jungle of the individual quest, achievement, and self-realization”—the field and jungle into which a legacy of human choices and compulsions, born of the socio-mythological upheavals of modernity, thrust both modern men and women (*Goddesses* xiii).

Through traditional mythologies, societies institutionalized both male and female social personae in relationship to the female’s biological capacity to gestate and birth children, assigning each sex a discreet role in what Campbell characterized as their “cooperative” function “in the shared ordeal of continuing and supporting life” (xiii). However, modern technological and intellectual inventions, along with what Campbell termed modernity’s philosophical “accent on the individual as a peculiar, special person” (263) collapsed the mythological basis of these socially-sanctioned personae, first freeing the male psyche, then the female, to emerge “progressively as differentiated personalities, leaving behind the old archetypal accent on the biological role.” (xiii).

This shift not only called women and men alike to undertake the personal developmental adventure of individuation—that which Carl Jung deemed “the psychological process that makes of a human being an ‘individual’—a unique, indivisible unit” (*Integration* 3)—but also demanded that, as individuals and as societies, we redefine and recalibrate the gendered relational patterns upon which our lives had been founded. Campbell observed that the increasing occurrence of female individuation within societies still upholding (and upheld by) the outdated “law of the masculine jungle” placed men and women into a “competitive relationship,” which threatened to disorient all from a sense of the unique nature of each sex and from aspects of personal identity. Reflecting on how the folkloric Chinese curse, “May you be born in an interesting time!”, applied to the American cultural circumstances of 1980, Campbell remarked:

This is a *very* interesting time: there are no models for *anything* that is going on. Everything is changing . . . . It is a period of free fall into the future, and each has to make his or her own way. The old models are not working; the new have not yet appeared. In fact, it is we who are even now shaping the new in shaping our interesting lives. And that is the whole sense (in mythological terms) of the present challenge: we are ‘ancestors’ of an age to come, the unwitting generators of its supporting myths, the mythic models that will inspire its lives. In a very real sense, therefore, this is a moment of creation. (*Goddesses* xiv).

Although without a mythological model of female individuation at the end of the twentieth-century, the development of the modern novel, literary fairy tale, and children’s literature over more than three-hundred-fifty years enabled powerful affect-images of adolescent girls navigating nascent monomythic narrative structures to flow into the popular collective consciousness in tandem with the most extreme cultural shifts of Western modernity. Yet as the twentieth-century began, this surge of mythically-charged,

archetypal images of female youth attaining new types of adult womanhood ebbed back into shadowy, subconscious waters. As if in response to late-nineteenth-century Victorian anxieties about the possible dangers and consequences of increased individual agency, embodied self-assertion, and the philosophical, scientific, and civil collapse of inherited social relational patterns, images of the liminal girl becoming the New Woman were quickly fragmented, compartmentalized, and subverted. The new century dawned on a preoccupied cultural consciousness, self-soothing its angst about uncertainty, competition, and power through analysis, metrics, and regulation devised via its scientific, political, and social reform narratives. This preoccupation with management prevented the cultural consciousness from realizing it already possessed an experiential model for navigating psychosocial circumstances which demand a revolutionary shift in an individual's role and relationship to authority and autonomy within the social order. However, the collective unconscious saw and seized upon it at once—thus accounting for the swell of turn-of-the-century social scientific interest in and new social anxiety about adolescence.

The natural parallel of the trials of youth—of its psychosocial developmental charges and consciously unresolvable tensions—with those facing modern Western societies primed adolescence to serve as the twentieth-century's preferred affect-object, its repository for not-yet-conscious and consciously disowned emotions aroused by ever-accelerating and exponentially-increasing social change. Furthermore, the organic correlation between a society in transition, desirous of safe, protected space in which to live and grow, and that society's fixation with defining and differentiating the psychosocial developmental potential of the female sex—the sex biologically embodied with the power to gestate and

birth new life—begins to explain why the affect-image of the adolescent girl changed milieus, yet remained the primary symbolic archetypal representative of the Western taboos and anxieties ascribed to adolescence.

While the adolescent girl temporarily disappeared from her popular literary incarnation as an increasingly empowered, complex heroine, her affect-image simultaneously reappeared within the twentieth-century American social scientific narrative, first as supporting player—a fragmented being, defined in ambivalent terms that both limited her individuated developmental potential to her biological capacities and elevated her as an icon of the human affects it assigned to the gendered descriptor *feminine*. As the century progressed, individuals and societies wrestled with both adolescence and the social scientific image of the adolescent girl, evolving both in such a way that reflected greater complexity, confusion, and an unmet need for new examples of human development that tended not only to issues of anxiety and order, but spoke to the human spirit. By the time the century gave way to the new millennium, affect-images of adolescent girls as fictional heroines had returned. Appearing as the central figure within popular monomythic fantasy narratives, these heroines struggle with metaphoric representations of the issues of the day tied to the changing perception and role of both females and the Feminine in present society—issues which began assuming their contemporary shapes within the so-called twentieth-century American “invention” and “discovery” of adolescence, first encapsulated by American psychologist G. Stanley Hall.

In 1904, G. Stanley Hall culminated his child-studies of the 1890s in a two-volume tome, *Adolescence: Its Psychology, and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*, now credited as the first scientific conceptualization of human adolescence as a developmental stage of life. Although the work gained rapid notoriety,<sup>28</sup> Hall's peers swiftly challenged and dismissed *Adolescence* due to its reliance on qualitative research reported by mothers, its dependence on recapitulation theory,<sup>29</sup> and its supposition of an organic racial hierarchy. Yet even in light of its repudiation, Hall's work deeply informed the shape of social and scientific discourse about adolescence, human development, and gender that persists in the twenty-first-century.

Inspired by the pre-Romantic Germanic aesthetic of *Sturm und Drang*, Hall hyperbolically defined adolescence as a harrowing period during which the developing individual weathers internal "storms and stresses" while wavering between extreme poles of emotion, behavior, and self-assessment. Despite deeming it a *developmental crisis*, Hall took a positive, progressive view of adolescence, conceptually parallelizing it to what he perceived as the bellicose, exploratory period of human social history following savagery and preceding civilization. As such, Hall called upon adult society to protect and tolerate these beings he deemed vulnerable, mercurial, and pre-civilized by affording them opportunities to discover and test their capacities without holding them to adult standards of social conduct, work capacity, or religious morality.

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<sup>28</sup> *Adolescence's* first edition sold over twenty-five thousand copies in the United States during its first two years in print, and its 1906 abridgment became a commonly used text-book (DeLuzio 95).

<sup>29</sup> i.e., The theory that individual development mirrors the physical and psychosocial stages of species development.

Elements of Hall's characterization of adolescence have endured in part as they narrated anxieties and issues of social and personal identity that arose with industrialization. Demos and Demos contend that urban populations built around turn-of-the-century industrial centers lacked the socioeconomic homogeneity and familial unity of agricultural communities, thus illuminating disparities between children and adults formerly obscured by shared economic purpose (636). Whereas pre-industrial cultures with similarly "sharp discontinuities" between child and adult roles generally managed the transition into adulthood through "elaborate initiation rites," Demos and Demos contend that American society's lack of such rites became increasingly problematic as urbanization intensified the "rate of social change," creating "a plurality of alternatives with regards to careers, moral codes, and life styles," and a "bewildering array" of new paths for youth to choose from in establishing an adult identity (637).

Many scholars of adolescent studies note that Hall's conceptualization of adolescence focused on and privileged "the civilized boy," whom he deems the white, middle-/upper-class, male child born of and unto the American/Anglo-European world. However, as historian Crista DeLuzio details in her book, *Female Adolescence in American Scientific Thought, 1830-1930* (2007), while Hall's primary research and discussions largely ignored girls, his work characterized adolescence as a "feminized stage of psychic development." DeLuzio contends that in its attempts to "reconcile" conflicting sociocultural "ideas about girls, femininity, and adolescence," Hall's work ultimately emblemized both girl and woman as perpetual exemplars of "certain qualities of adolescence" while dubbing the boy "the driving force behind the continued progressive

process of biological and cultural evolution” (DeLuzio 91-92). Thus rather than having been excluded from Hall’s scientific conception of modern adolescence, a stereotype of feminine adolescence—one built upon “traditional Victorian conceptions of the feminine” and used “to offer up an expansive version of American manhood” (116)—became its symbolic shadow driver, representative of a stage for boys to surpass on their way to becoming men, and a limitation for girls to accept as their manifest destiny in becoming women.

While Hall shared the pervasive (if scientifically unsubstantiated) Victorian hypothesis that female physiological development outpaced and involved more emotional volatility than that of the male, DeLuzio contends that Hall “dwelled more pointedly on the psychological struggles the civilized girl faced in assuming feminine gender identity and conforming to the biological mandates of growing up female in a changing world” (116). According to DeLuzio, Hall considered certain character attributes biologically-inherited, sex-specific traits, thus perpetuating the eighteenth-century’s trend of associating “the capacity for feeling and selflessness almost exclusively with woman and her feminine nature” (111). DeLuzio contends that Hall also equated “the broader emotional intensity and moodiness of adolescence with a feminine sensibility” (109), and credited girls with a “greater [innate] capacity for deep feeling” (110). According to Hall, their superior predisposition to express “sympathy, altruism, religiosity” as well as their “inclination to serve others” (110) enabled the female sex to be “by nature more humanistic . . . more sympathetic and appreciative” than the male. In considering these “the highest moral capacities to emerge during the adolescent stage,” Hall upheld the girl as “both the quintessential *and* perpetual adolescent” (112).

DeLuzio reports that Hall's theories also express and reframe the nineteenth-century medical establishment's preoccupation with the social management of female reproduction. Based upon information collected via his child-study, Hall proposed that girls formed "more ideals than boys," yet displayed an "inward anger" due to the "thwarting of purpose and expectation, limitations of freedom, a sense of injustice, [and] invasions or repression of the self" (116). Despite considering adolescence a period of organic gender fluidity, Hall believed girls to be more prone to "gender identity confusion" and disapproved of their tendency to "assimilate boys ways" during youth (118). Theorizing that maternal instinct precedes paternal, and that reproduction played a greater role in life of females than males (112), Hall interpreted his finding that girls more frequently reported choosing "male figures as their adult role models" as a sign of their "discontent" with their biologically-predetermined "lot" in the context of modernity (116).

For the boy, achieving Hall's notion biological destiny meant outgrowing both "the savage proclivities of his childhood" and "the feminine sensibilities of his adolescence" so as to "assume his rightful place as a dynamic leader of evolutionary progress" (113). As DeLuzio observes, "Hall and most twentieth-century psychologists" deemed undertaking what they characterized as "the supreme tasks of adolescent development—leaving home, choosing a vocation, fostering a unique individual identity, and, forging an autonomous self capable of preserving a social order and facilitating progressive social change" (114)—as the masculine developmental path. For the girl, however, Hall's notion of destiny entailed fulfilling her biological potential to become a mother. Hall contended that motherhood was every woman's "true goal" in writing:

Even if she does not realize it, her whole nature demands first of all children to love . . . And perhaps a little less, a man whom she hardily respects and trusts to strengthen and perhaps serve as protector in discharging this function . . . All right, healthful, and womanly women desire this, and if they attain true self-knowledge confess it to themselves, however loathe they may be to do so to others (qtd. in DeLuzio 119).

DeLuzio illuminates how Hall's conceptualization of the adolescent girl both expressed and tried to reconcile cultural ambivalences between Victorian behavioral expectations and emerging modern sensibilities and interests, noting that while Hall "expected the civilized girl to assume the guise of the true woman early on in her adolescence by acquiring and modeling such [Victorian] attributes as piety, selflessness, maternal feelings, and compassion," he also advocated the social indulgence of the adolescent girl's reputed "attraction to fashion," "capricious appetite," "longing for social intercourse and excitement," and "sentimental reveries and states of 'morbid sensitivity'" so as to allow her to "[develop] into the sort of woman required by the modern age" (128). In concluding her assessment of Hall's characterization of the adolescent girl, DeLuzio contends that:

by valorizing the girl's traditional feminine qualities, seeking to account for her seeming discontent, raising the specter of her sexuality, and sanctioning some new ways for her to express and assert the self, Hall's concept of adolescence also portended that the challenge of reconciling the experiences and expectations of adolescence and femininity would be a "problem" to be reckoned with—by his fellow psychologists, the culture at large, and girls (and boys) themselves—for some time to come (131-132).

In bringing adolescence into the American public consciousness, DeLuzio attests that Hall's work launched discourse spanning the mid-1910s through the 1920s that focused upon "the girl problem," a "common euphemism for female juvenile delinquency during the Progressive era." (133). She notes how, during this period, previous preoccupations with the social assimilation of "'deviant' immigrant and working-class girls"

who did not conform to Victorian ideals of femininity expanded to include the question of how to manage an observed “rapid diffusion of ‘ornery’ behaviors among female youths from across the social spectrum.” Such concerns prompted psychologists to identify standard developmental parameters and attributes that defined a “‘normal’ modern adolescent girl” (133).

DeLuzio portrays this wave of the social scientific interest in female adolescence as arising from two key sources. The first she observes as having arisen from the myriad cultural consequences generated by the continued modernization of the American industrial apparatus,<sup>30</sup> which divided society into those who “embraced the modern values and lifestyle fostered by the mass consumer economy” and others who “expressed ambivalence, anxiety, and outright opposition” to changes by taking positions of extreme “political conservatism, nativism, and antiradicalism” (146). Within this evolving, culturally conflicted environment, youth from diverse ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds were brought together through their experience of being co-educated by government mandate and co-courted as a new class of consumer by corporations. DeLuzio surmises that these shared experiences served to both “regularize and standardize the lives of the young to an unprecedented degree” while also simultaneously fostering “distinct and autonomous peer cultures through which the young rebelled against a range of social and cultural conformities.” (147). DeLuzio suggests social science’s renewed interest in female adolescence appeared in concert with rising anxieties about “white middle-class girls”

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<sup>30</sup> DeLuzio observes that the growth of mass-production not only increased commercial consumption by creating more affordable home appliances and automobiles, but also allowed large corporations greater control over the American business landscape, which standardized the types of work opportunities available to working- and middle-class employees. DeLuzio reports that, by the 1920s, urban U.S. residents outnumbered those in rural areas, train systems and automobiles allowed for the development of suburban neighborhoods, and new technologies enabled the proliferation of radio, the motion picture, and the mass-market press (146).

adopting “the manners and mores” of both “their middle-class brothers” and “their working-class, ethnic, and African-American female peers.” Much of the research born of these social anxieties sought to establish a “set of expectations for a normal psychology of female adolescence” that could be uniformly applied to “interpret and direct” the behavior of teenaged girls (DeLuzio 147). The second source of social scientific interest in female adolescent development, DeLuzio contends, arose alongside “the incursion of the ‘new woman’ into public and intellectual life and the emergence of modern feminism” with the achievement of women’s voting rights in 1920 (150-151). Specifically, DeLuzio suggests that female psychologists studying child development, such as Leta Stetter Hollingworth, Phyllis Blanchard, and Lorine Pruette, “drew on varying currents in feminist thought to name and normalize a category of modern female adolescence” while using “the girl problem” as a “venue” to debate the “meanings and merits of feminism” (152).

DeLuzio’s research contends that, in attempting to reconcile these societal ambivalences within a definition of a “normal female adolescent,” “American psychologists of the 1920s produced a complex and often contradictory figure” whom they placed “at the center of intellectual, social, and cultural problems concerning female subjectivity and sexuality.” She observes that this iteration of the adolescent girl “both embraced and tempered some of the more socially threatening behaviors of the delinquent and the flapper” by recognizing the girl as an individual riddled with debilitating contradictions (134). According to DeLuzio, the image of the adolescent girl as manifested by and projected upon the flapper and the delinquent was one of an “independent and selfless, sexually confident and sexually vulnerable” being, “a sympathetic figure, whose behaviors

were to be explained, tolerated, and duly adjusted rather than condemned or punished” (DeLuzio 134). DeLuzio contends that these social scientific portrayals deemed female adolescence the “site of struggle over the organization and regulation of power dynamics of sex/gender relations,” which became psychically concentrated and expressed within the wide-range of social reactions provoked by the flapper (171).

The visual image of the flapper—with her signature hairstyle, shortened knee-length skirts, liberal use of powder and lipstick, loose, corset-free posture, and her youth—and its association with smoking, drinking, and jazz, was presumed by many to signal her as a being defined by lax sexual mores and Dionysian frivolity. Whereas previous analyses “inextricably” bound female sexual desire “to romantic love, the desire to serve others, and the yearning for motherhood,” DeLuzio reports that a complex discourse among 1920s sexologists and psychologists linked female sexual desire to distinctly adolescent, rather than adult, impulses<sup>31</sup> (175). While this trend led some social reformers, such as feminist Margaret Sanger, to advocate for adolescent sex education, greater social protections for female youth, and the “right of adult women to make autonomous decisions regarding their sexuality,” DeLuzio observes that others conflated the adolescent girl and the adult woman, by adopting the flapper “as the emblem of female sexuality.” DeLuzio suggests that because popular depictions of the flapper as a young woman whose “sexual bravado barely disguis[ed] her essential ignorance, dependence, and vulnerability,” the flapper’s “daydreamy, giggling eagerness to please and to respond to male sexual desires” was not only culturally “embraced,” but also used as evidence that the female “sexual impulse”

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<sup>31</sup> DeLuzio notes that this assumption derived from the research of 1920s sexologists, which suggested adolescent females born after 1900, particularly those with college educations, had a greater tendency “than previous generations” to engage in premarital sexual exploration (170).

derived from “juvenile yearnings for independence and enjoyment” or “childish longings for emotional solicitude.” As such, DeLuzio concludes that psychological conception of “the normal adolescent girl” of the 1920s “set a standard for female sexuality that in many ways served to reinforce and create anew links between femininity and the powerlessness of immaturity.” (176).

Influenced by Hall, sex researcher and social reformer Havelock Ellis contended that the awakening of adolescent female sexual impulse was the root cause of a girl’s adolescent emotional turmoil, whereas for boys, adolescence represented the pinnacle of “self-doubt” (qtd. in DeLuzio 196). While Ellis’s explanation of “the nature and significance of sexual difference,” continued the social scientific narrative of “gendered bifurcation,” DeLuzio notes that the anthropological research Margaret Mead presented in her *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) changed its course by emphasizing “the social, rather than the biological, aspects of the adolescent stage of development.” Mead contended that American youth suffered “greater psychological maladjustment” than their pre-industrial adolescent Samoan counterparts, arising in large part from “the seemingly boundless life choices offered those coming of age in a highly complex society,” and ultimately called “for social scientists, teachers, and parents to find ways to reduce and manage such socially induced stress among adolescents, without sacrificing the benefits of individuality and freedom that constituted their birthright in modern America.” (197). DeLuzio argues that Mead’s “attention to the history of ideas about female adolescence” proved as important as her scientific proposition. She suggests that, through “analysis of primitive girlhood,” Mead refashioned accepted “notions of gender, race, age, and culture.” To this end, Mead

rejected the Victorian “associations of adolescence with somatic vulnerability and the attendant feminine qualities of dependence, emotionality, and altruism,” favoring instead what DeLuzio terms “the masculine attributes of autonomy, rationality, and individualism.” In this way, DeLuzio suggests that Mead’s “study of primitive adolescent girlhood ironically moved the concept of adolescence” away from its association with Hall’s notions of femininity and “closer to the ideals of white, western male culture” (198).

Psychological research throughout the 1920s increasingly uncoupled the girl from “an encompassing biological-determinism” by revealing “her capacity to negotiate the opportunities and problems arising out of freedom of choice and identity formation” (DeLuzio 156) and provided credible scientific evidence of the “comparable cognitive capacity of men and women” (193). However, modern American consumer culture surfaced barnacled to the adolescent girl and her reproductive potential. Early twentieth-century commercial marketing cemented its link to the girl through visual imagery, yet the Western commercial economy’s historical dependence on facilitating homemaking, and thus human reproduction, traces to the inception of industrialization. As the gender capable of *gestating* new life, traditional conceptualizations of the Western family presumed the human female its primary homemaker via the roles of wife and mother; as such, the modern manufacturing economy anointed her its primary driver. Thus, the adolescent girl’s potential social role, coupled with her post-World War I tendency to earn a ‘disposable’ income,<sup>32</sup> marked her as modernity’s target consumer.

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<sup>32</sup> Typically working as clerks or typists, many New Women of the era earned less than needed to self-support, but enough to allow for some social mobility as consumers.

Sales of consumer goods marketed to females related to mating, nest-building, and homemaking fueled much of the twentieth-century American economy. Mass-produced fashion and cosmetics—previously self-produced or afforded only by the economic elite, used to enhance and alter physical appearance ostensibly for the purpose of attracting and securing a mate—became big-business. Advertising for these goods introduced another complex paradox by both suggesting the existence of a uniform standard of beauty, attainable through product consumption and mimicry of the visual images of Hollywood and other popular media, and by signaling that these affordable products allowed for greater freedom of self-expression, independence, and individuality. Tellingly, while images of the flapper faltered during the Great Depression, sales of cosmetics and cinema tickets did not. During the 1920s and after World War II, the appearance of new kinds of factory-made appliances, machines, and chemical products—technologies developed to ease the household chores and nesting tasks of mothers and wives—permanently altered the shape of the American economy and thus the American family. Just as the development of highways and automobiles transformed the notion and physicality of homes and work, domestic technologies, from the washing machine to the disposable diaper, altered patterns of interpersonal relationships and posed questions about traditional gender roles within the domestic sphere.

From the onset of World War I, affect-images of the adolescent girl featured as literary protagonists receded into the background of popular cultural productions; instead, children's literature hyper-focused upon prepubescent children, families, childhood, and fantasy, while adult literature turned its attention to more overtly political concerns and

archetypal representations specifically attuned to adulthood, adult and familial relational dynamics, and war.

Her affect-image reappears briefly in supporting roles, in fractal, undeveloped facets of herself within novels and films of the 1920s and 1930s, in which the adolescent female pops up as the flapper party-girl, a little sister, a witty sidekick, a naive temptress, the girl-next-door, or the troubled daughter of a wealthy tycoon—almost always presented in relationship to either a male protagonist or his more adult female love interest. She turns up again in 1930s children’s literature, probing mysteries as Nancy Drew, perhaps the most famous heroine born of literary mass-production.<sup>33</sup> Motherless from age ten, ever protected by and endeavoring to aid her lawyer father, sixteen-year-old Nancy’s plucky independence and ability to do virtually anything and everything to perfection attracted a loyal readership of boys and girls. She ventures into view again in Book One of Margret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* (1936), where young Scarlett O’Hara, more haughty and hot-headed than her predecessors, moves through adolescence to become a shrewd survivor ala Thackeray’s Becky Sharp, calculating in her dependence upon and independence from men, quite aware of how to command her allure. She returns in her old fairy-tale and children’s book narratives, subtly re-imagined and tailored to contemporary tastes, throughout Disney’s most successful animated films, beginning with 1937’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* through its 1991’s retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*.

In the early 1940s, the adolescent girl’s social scientific affect-encapsulation crossed paths and purposes with eccentric psychologist and failed academic William Moulton

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<sup>33</sup> Although author Edward Stratemeyer conceived of Nancy Drew and plotted many of her adventures, an assortment of ghostwriters (including Mildred Benson and Harriet Adams, among others) ultimately wrote Nancy’s novels using the pen name Carolyn Keene (Dyer and Romalov).

Marston. Convinced of the visual and archetypal power of storytelling through comic books, Marston pitched D.C. Comics a pro-feminist story about a mystically empowered Greek-Amazonian princess, who leaves her utopian island of immortality to return a downed pilot to the United States, Man's World, where she remains to battle for justice and truth. Marston's conception of Wonder Woman was as named: *not* that of a girl, but of an *uberwoman*. As documented through the extensive research of American cultural historian Jill Lepore, Diana Prince's look would combine that of the sexually-charged Vargas Girl pin-up with portraits of well-known suffragists. Her costume, magic lasso of truth, bullet-stopping bracelets of self-restraint, and habit of breaking free of chains simultaneously expressed feminism and fetishism—and the shared preoccupation of each *ism* with the power dynamics of dominance and subservience, especially with regards to sexuality and gender; and *Wonder Woman's* initial story lines combined incidents from Marston's highly unconventional professional and personal life with the philosophical concerns expressed within Margaret Sanger's *Woman And The New Race* (1920). Marston's personal feminism quite clearly equated female power with sexuality and proclaimed the female the superior sex by virtue of his belief (shared by much of his contemporary society) that she, by nature, possessed a greater capacity for compassion and love. Woman, according to Marston, should be on top of the sociopolitical hierarchy.

Yet, with Marston's death in the 1950s, *Wonder Woman* lost her feminist mojo to Robert Kanigher, the disinterested staff writer D.C. Comics assigned the continuation of her story, who used Diana Prince to recall the incarnation of the adolescent girl en vogue after World War II—that of a moony, love-struck teenager pining for the fellow she hopes to

marry. Many of Wonder Woman's super-empowered male cohort, whose popularity had arisen alongside ideals of utopian progressivism and social reform, nationalism, and the eugenics movement, would find their powers reduced (or their stories discontinued altogether) after having their horrific shadow-side played out through World War II. Yet only the heroic super-powered female characters, few in number and most often positioned as sidekicks, would be regressed to girlhood. Interestingly, Kanigher's public reinvention of Wonder Woman in Issue #98 (May 1958) followed the earliest subsonic rumblings of the so-called *second wave* of feminism in America: the English translation of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* first appeared in 1952 and Betty Freidan began conducting the research for what would become her revolutionary 1963 tome *The Feminine Mystique* in 1957.

World War II elevated the profession of psychology, in part by having driven the relocation of many prominent European thinkers in the field to the United States, resulting in an increase of government funding for psychological research and a renaissance of research on childhood development. The developmental psychology narrative of the early 1950s reinforced, reframed, and continued to both problematize and elevate the importance of adolescence as a stage in individual development. DeLuzio describes how another surge of widely-expressed social worry about "juvenile misbehavior at home" and "adolescent participation in totalitarian movements abroad" during the Great Depression and World War II prompted a new wave of scientific investigation into adolescence and society (239).

Key works to emerge from this period, such as Erik Erikson's *Childhood and Society* (1950), cemented previously free-floating notions about the critical importance of adolescent development in individual determination within twentieth-century thought.

However, the work of 1950s developmental psychologists also continued the trend of what, throughout her book, DeLuzio deems “gendered bifurcation” by casting individuation primarily as a male goal and possibility, and engendering specific affects, personality attributes, and potentialities by assigning them to the notion of a natural-born masculinity and femininity.

The body of Erikson’s work describes a modern identity crisis, brought about the individual’s fear of having self subsumed by the socio-industrial forces of mechanized standardization. DeLuzio observes that while ascribing the navigation of this identity crisis to male development, Erikson upheld the Freudian characterization of female development as “different and deficient” in theorizing that its driver, the “biological imperative to mother,” limited a girl’s range of “identity options” and thus “precluded her from fully engaging in autonomous, active self or social creation” (242-243). DeLuzio reports similar privileging of male individual development in the works of Erikson’s contemporaries Arnold Gessell and Lawrence K. Frank, which “set gendered parameters” around what constituted the “normal” development of children of both sexes. She notes that the work of these child development specialists pinpointed “delayed puberty,” manifested in “boys who did not conform to masculine standards of physical prowess,” as a “distinctly male developmental problem” while expressing concern about “girls who entered puberty too early” or failed to meet their “modern” definition of feminine “physical and behavioral standards,” which included the expectation that girls be “physically appealing, sociable, popular, and exuberant” (240). According to DeLuzio, Arnold Gessell’s work in particular shifted the hyperbolic tenor of discourse concerning the rebelliousness and emotional

turmoil of adolescence into one of “meticulous accounting” of development in measurable stages by expressing his vision of adolescence in a way that “both heightened and alleviated the anxiety of parents and teenagers” about meeting such standards of normality (238). Additionally, she observes Gessell’s assertion that “individuality within democracy” could only be “preserved within the context of “obedience” to both natural laws and social rules and regulations” led to his advocacy for using the “Code of Conduct for American Servicemen While Prisoners of War” manual as “an ideal primer” for shaping “the 16-year-old boy” into the ideal American citizen (239). Thus, Gessell’s work continued and psychologically sanctified the cultural trend of militarizing the conceptualization of adult American masculinity that began at the turn of the century, most visibly with the inception of the Boy Scouts of America.

DeLuzio observes that Erikson’s body of work posited confusing, self-contradictory positions on female development that both sustained Freud’s theory of female penis envy and alternately “valorized the essential female strengths of nurturance, generosity, and empathy” by hypothesizing that girls’ possessed a unique “*productive inner body space*” which held “a reality [for the developing girl] superior to that of the missing organ.” According to Erikson, the “tyranny of the [female] inner space” is suspended during adolescence, allowing for the development of self until “attractiveness and experience” amass “what is to be admitted to the custody of the inner space for keeps” (qtd. in DeLuzio 244).

In citing the ways in which the intrinsic “complexities and ambivalences” in Erikson’s “thinking about gender . . . exposed him to a range of (mis)interpretation by both supporters and critics,” DeLuzio notes that Erikson’s ideas became a rallying point of

opposition for feminist activists, frustrated by the perpetuation of social inequities buoyed by social scientific narratives of biological determinism during the late 1960s and 1970 (DeLuzio 244), and deeply influenced the subsequent work of psychologist Carol Gilligan—work which dramatically altered the social conceptualization of the adolescent girl.

The seismic cultural ramifications triggered by the happenings of 1963, those of seemingly little significance and those of obvious immediate impact alike, continue to reverberate in ever lessening aftershocks in 2015. Events as varied in their social consequences as the publication of Freidan’s *The Feminine Mystique* and the paperback reissue of Erikson’s *Childhood in Society*, the election of Alabama governor George Wallace and the arrests of civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernathy, and Fred Shuttlesworth in Birmingham, the establishment of domestic CIA operations, the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, and the launch of international Beatlemania with the release of their first British LP and subsequent American singles, “I Want to Hold Your Hand” and “I Saw Her Standing There” all transpired in 1963, signs of their time expressing the highly charged contents of the cultural unconscious. Throughout the next two decades, the rise of American civil unrest due to the ever-more visible tensions between ingrained interpersonal prejudicial fears and the active social disenfranchisement of people of color and women, those upon whom these fears had been long been projected, fueled the burgeoning African-American Civil Rights movement and the second wave of feminism. ‘Equal and opposite’ reactions to these movements were visualized through violent reactions to protestors, the heinous acts of the Ku Klux Klan, and the shooting assassinations of pacifist male leaders. The first issue of feminist leader Gloria Steinem’s

Ms. magazine appeared in 1972, just three years before Wonder Woman regained her superpowers and, in all her innate affect-image complexity, reemerged as a television icon; just as a new wave of social scientists, predominantly female, much of their interest informed by their feminist orientation, began to reconsider the psychosocial narrative surrounding the development of girls into women.

In 1967, Carol Gilligan, then an established instructor of psychology and mother of three, returned to Harvard University as colleague of Erikson and teaching assistant to Lawrence Kohlberg. According to Gilligan, the stark contrast of her day-to-day life experience—engaging with the ethnically- and economically-diverse populations of both her graduate student housing and its surrounding neighborhood in Cambridge, Massachusetts—with what Gilligan describes as psychology’s portrait of “the world as a world of White men” inspired her to undertake research and propose theories during the 1970s challenging the constructs that had made the careers of the men who had influenced much of her thinking about psychology (qtd. in Ball “Profile”).

Gilligan’s 1982 book, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*, not only departed from (and generally discredited the universality of) Kohlberg’s gendered theories on moral development, it also entwined feminist discourse with social science to put forth a new conceptualization of female adolescence. Although preceded by research scrutinizing the validity of presumed gender differences, such as Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Nagy Jacklin’s *The Psychology of Sex Differences* (1974) and Deborah Waber’s studies (1976, 1977) of the impacts of puberty on cognition, Gilligan’s paradigm continued the narrative of gendered differences between the sexes, while

reframing it to suggest that female's voices had long gone unheard, not due to their inferiority, but due to their inherently "different voice" and cognitive style not registering on the psychological meters developed in relation to white, Western males. DeLuzio contends that Gilligan's belief that the tendency of boys to self-express and girls to self-sacrifice in attempting to maintain their relational bonds "when identity and intimacy converge in dilemmas of conflicting commitment" during adolescence "gave rise" to the idea that each gender confronted "distinctive developmental problems"—for boys, Gilligan characterized the heart of these challenges as "a problem of human connection" and for girls, "a problem of truth" (qtd. in DeLuzio 247-248).

As DeLuzio notes, Gilligan's efforts to qualify her belief that her assessments were not intended to generalize either sex have gone unacknowledged by many of her critics *and* supporters, perhaps because her text "played a pivotal role in launching the sensibility, intellectual standpoint, and politics of a cultural feminism that above all else valorized girls' and women's distinct and superior capacity for care, compassion, and connection" (248). In addition to this valorization linking Gilligan's theories to her early twentieth-century predecessor's notions of an innate feminine moral superiority, DeLuzio discerns that the work of Gilligan and the Harvard Project also reiterated previous gendered observations of the adolescent girl's struggle to attain equilibrium "between 'love and ambition'" and theorized that "an interdependent female self was a model for human development that had potential to remake the world" (249). Regardless of her intent, Gilligan's assertion that, because girls tend to orient to life relationally, adolescence introduces a feminine "crisis of self-esteem" (qtd. in Gonick 14) became so oft repeated that it came to define one of the

two most prominent threads of discourse about female adolescence to surface during following decade. The other seemingly arose alongside the valorized sense of gendered separatism many perceived within Gilligan's work.

The phrase *Girl Power*—used to characterize the thread of social discourse about “a ‘new girl’: assertive, dynamic, and unbound from the constraints of passive femininity” (Gonick 2)—is most often traced to two seemingly antithetical sources: the underground Riot Grrrl movement and the marketing campaign that propelled British pop act the Spice Girls to international stardom.

During the early 1990s, groups of collegiate, predominantly white, middle-class women seeking to carve out protected space for women, female artistic expression, gender fluidity, and feminist discourse within the punk rock subculture adopted the self-descriptor *Riot Grrrls* after the eponymous activist zine<sup>34</sup> founded by Kathleen Hanna and Alison Wolfe. Launched in Washington D.C. and the Olympia, Washington, an unofficial network of all-female punk bands, such as Hanna's Bikini Kill and Wolfe's Bratmobile, and fanzine creators defined the Riot Grrrl's do-it-yourself (DIY), anti-corporate, anger-charged feminist ethos while attempting to reclaim the word *girl* as a statement of female independence. Yet, as Gonick notes, once mainstream “American mainstream magazines such as *Seventeen* (1993), *Newsweek* (1993), *Rolling Stone* (1993; 1994), and *Time* (1998)” took interest in the Riot Grrrl movement, the movement's intended “liberatory social and political agendas” were “permutat[ed] and rearticulat[ed]” into dismissive “hegemonic discourses associating youth” with rebellion and ephemeral idealism; in example Gonick

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<sup>34</sup> i.e., shortened form of *fanzine*, a magazine, typically created independently by and for fans of a specific cultural subject (“zine” & “fanzine” *OED Online*).

quotes *Newsweek*'s take on the movement, which rather patronizingly suggested that the Riot Grrrls "catchy passion for 'revolution girl style'" might "evaporate when it hits the adult real world," its "competitive job market," and the pressures of starting "families" (qtd. in Gonick 8).

While Riot Grrrls scrawled, spoke, and sang of *grrrl power* as a means of revolutionizing culture, the Spice Girls made Girl Power their selling-point within the existing culture. Unlike the DIY punk rock grrrls who came together out of common politics, interests, and concerns, the Spice Girls were born of a 1993 newspaper ad placed by a father-and-son music management team seeking to craft a "choreographed, singing/dancing, all-female pop act" to compete with similar all-male groups dominating record sales at that time (Spice Girls website). Before attaining a record deal, the group parted ways with their original svengali, Heart Management, and signed with another, Simon Fuller,<sup>35</sup> alleged mastermind of their "Girl Power" marketing campaign, who brokered not only the group's lucrative music and film contracts, but also their unprecedented number of commercial endorsements of consumer goods ranging from "Polaroid to Impulse body spray" ("Simon" *BBC News.com*).

What, if anything, the Spice Girls' Girl Power slogan actually intended to convey remains a subject of debate. While in 1997, the BBC reported that the group defined "girl power" as having "a positive attitude to life, getting what you want and sticking by your friends" ("Girl" *BBC News.com*), Spice Girl Geri Halliwell also famously declared Margret

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<sup>35</sup> Fuller, best known as the creator of the international *Idol* franchise of reality-television singing competitions, self-describes his business as that of "creating fame and celebrity" ("Simon" *BBC News.com*).

Thatcher “the first Spice Girl, the pioneer of our ideology, girl power,” much to the chagrin of her bandmates (Jones). Gonick contends that, whereas mainstream media diminished the hyper-politicized “messages of the Riot Grrrls,” the Spice Girls’ cheeky, royal-bum-pinching,<sup>36</sup> commerce- and fashion-driven version of empowered femininity was “celebrated,” as evidenced by *The Village Voice*’s 1997 statement that the Spice Girls “have done the seemingly impossible: they have made feminism, with all its implied threat, cuddly, sexy, safe, and most importantly, sellable” (qtd. in Gonick 9). Yet neither Gonick, nor *The Village Voice* makes mention of the many ways in which the public reception of Spice Girls-flavored “Girl Power” echoed that of 1920s the flapper.

Rising alongside the complex, reputedly positive Girl Power discourse in the 1990s was an alternate narrativization of adolescent girlhood that many scholars now refer to as the Ophelia discourses. Although named for Mary Pipher’s internationally best-selling book, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (1994), the Ophelia discourses originate from Carol Gilligan’s characterization of female adolescence’s “crisis of self-esteem” and the 1991 American Association of University Women’s (AAUW’s) report *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*.<sup>37</sup> The AAUW’s report linked a “sharp drop in self-esteem suffered by pre-adolescent and adolescent American girls to what they learn in the classroom” (4), surmising that:

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<sup>36</sup> The media took note when Halliwell pinched Prince Charles’s posterior at the *Spice World* film premiere in 1997.

<sup>37</sup> The inner cover of the 1994 Executive Summary of *Shortchanging Girls, Short Changing America* credits Gilligan, along with psychology professor/author Nancy Goldberger and education professor Janie Victoria Ward, with having advised the construction of the AAUW survey (PDF).

Girls begin first grade with comparable skills and ambition to boys, but by the time girls finish high school, most have suffered a disproportionate loss of confidence in their academic abilities.

Popular culture helps deflate girls' self-esteem by marginalizing women and stereotyping their roles. Unintentionally, schools collude in the process by systematically cheating girls of classroom attention, by stressing competitive—rather than cooperative—learning, by presenting texts and lessons devoid of women as role models, and by reinforcing negative stereotypes about girls' abilities (4-5).

The AAWU report sparked a new wave of public preoccupation with the subject of adolescent girls, reflected by the 1994 publication of both journalist Peggy Orenstein's book *School Girls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap*,<sup>38</sup> which investigated and portrayed the personal experiences of adolescent girls as corroborative of the AAWU's report, and clinical psychologist Pipher's anecdotal observations of American culture's impact on the struggles of her adolescent female therapy patients in *Reviving Ophelia*.

Pipher's book claims that the "girl-poisoning" American media and culture "limits girls' development, truncates their wholeness, and leaves many [adolescent girls] traumatized" as they emerge into adulthood (*Reviving 12*). Echoing Hall's verbally hyperbolic conceptualization of a "storms and stresses" adolescence, Pipher's claims that "something dramatic happens to girls in early adolescence" (19), when the "chaos of adolescence" shatters a girl's "[w]holeness"—that which Pipher deems her *authentic self*<sup>39</sup>—"into mysterious contradictions" and expressions of "wild-energy" and lethargy, sensitivity and meanness, superficiality and idealism (20). She describes how the "trauma of adolescence" (25)

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<sup>38</sup> The title page of Orenstein's book states that it was authored in "association with" the AAWU.

<sup>39</sup> Pipher uses the term *authentic self* in the sense coined by psychologist Alice Miller (1922-2010) in her book *The Drama of the Gifted Child* (1979). Miller wrote extensively about psychological and emotional child abuse and the developmental consequences of narcissistic injury within early attachment. Pipher's use of the term in this sense reinforces her characterization of female adolescence as a traumatic experience.

renders girls mere “saplings in a hurricane” (*Reviving* 22), made “vulnerable” by what she deems “their developmental level,”<sup>40</sup> American culture’s emphasis on physical appearance, and the girl’s separation from strong parental figures and attachment to peers (23).

As Marnia Gonick notes, instead of examining “the social institutions and discourses that girls negotiate with in actively producing their identities,” Pipher’s book “represents girls as unwitting victims” of culture and their bodies (Gonick 12). Despite citing a litany of feminist thinkers in constructing her thesis, Pipher echoes Hall and assorted Victorian thinkers by casting the adolescent girl as subject to the mercy of her changing body and its reproductive capacities. Pipher even goes so far as to suggest that adult women may only regain their “preadolescent authenticity” in menopause, when “relieved” from the burden of being “beautiful objects” responsible for “caring for others” (*Reviving* 26). As Gonick observes, Pipher’s representation of female adolescence as emotional trauma and “chaos” resembles the Victorian notion of the ‘organic’ disease of hysteria, once commonly diagnosed in teenage girls and long associated with Shakespeare’s Ophelia, such that Pipher perpetuates “demeaning cultural stereotypes about girls and young women” (Gonick 12-13).

Despite (or perhaps *because*) of its biases, sensational language, and stereotyping, Pipher’s portrait of the ‘adolescent girl in crisis’ resonated with the mid-1990s American public such that *Reviving Ophelia* spent twenty-six weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Whether *Reviving Ophelia* accurately or holistically reflected a common contemporary American experience of adolescent girlhood remains a subject of academic, feminist, and

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<sup>40</sup> Pipher describes a girl’s “developmental level” as physiological puberty met with existential anxiety (*Reviving* 23).

psychological debate. However, Pipher's book was certainly among the first mainstream works of contemporary popular psychology to narrate, constellate, and project anxieties about an assortment of free-floating social phenomena into a problem attached to a clearly defined affect-image of an adolescent girl. For example, Pipher observes the how the unprecedented rate of divorce among Baby Boomer parents contributed to an American climate of familial instability and lack of parental nurturance, which she correlates with the increased incidence of adolescent girls exhibiting low self-esteem through self-destructive behaviors. Similarly, Pipher notes the increase of overtly sexual and violent themes in popular music, television, film, and commercial marketing, which she relates to increased incidence of female adolescent self-mutilation, body dysmorphia, and sexual activity at a younger age. Pipher also expresses an ambivalent nostalgia for the world of her late 1950s girlhood in describing her perceptions of both the safety and repressive restrictions of small-town life, active parental guidance, socially prescribed gender roles, and clearly defined sexual mores. Pipher compares and contrasts her experience, characterized in terms of its well-defined boundaries and protections, with the ambiguities, familial and social insecurities, and pressures of 1990s girlhood, ultimately expressing envy of the latter's freedom and options, while suggesting they underly the psychological vulnerability of her Ophelias.

As these cultural ambivalences crystalized within the competing affect-images of adolescent girls posited front-and-center by the *Girl Power* and *Reviving Ophelia* discourses in the late 1990s, an uncanny synchronicity surfaced via popular artistic media: the resurgence of monomythic narratives centered upon adolescent protagonists. Specifically, in 1997, three seemingly disparate productions appeared that would each deeply impact the contour

of popular storytelling in the next millennium: the twentieth-anniversary theatrical re-release of George Lucas's *Star Wars* trilogy, the British publication of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and the U.S. television debut of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

Although monomythic narrative structures never fully disappeared from popular culture, those most prominent within the Western collective consciousness of the early twentieth-century primarily existed either as retellings of traditional tales and classical myths, or as their fragments, knitted within popular works of genre fiction—science fiction, fantasy, adventure, and romance, even many detective novels—story forms generally presumed to be without overt pedagogical or intended mythological importance. Yet, amid the political and cultural upheavals of the late 1970s, a young filmmaker, ruminating about the transmission of cultural values, observed that “there was really no modern use of mythology” in storytelling.

After the commercial and critical success of his tale of teens entering the socially tumultuous post-high school world of 1962 in *American Graffiti* (1973), George Lucas decided to concentrate his future artistic efforts on offering his aspirational visions of “the way things should be,” rather than presenting the human world as it is. In imagining and setting his intentions for his next project, Lucas reports having noticed that:

there was a gap in modern fairy tales, mythology, storytelling, between parent and child. . . . The Western was possibly the last generically American fairy tale, telling us about our values. And once the Western disappeared, nothing has ever taken its place. In literature we were going off into science fiction, which is more intellectually intriguing than just taking the basic social values and translating them into a form that young people can relate to. Basic values aren't innate, they're passed down. . . . What really needs to be said, needs to be said over and over again. (qtd. in Larsen and Larsen *A Fire in the Mind* 541)

As he began writing his first draft of *Star Wars* (1977), these observations inspired Lucas to undertake “strenuous research on fairy tales, folklore, and mythology.” In reading Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Lucas reports having had the “very eerie” experience of realizing his first-draft script unconsciously followed classical motifs, such that he was inspired to read Campbell’s work more extensively and to consciously alter subsequent drafts of *Star Wars* so as to construct a “more consistent” monomyth—one representative of “the [unifying] ‘psychological concepts’ [identified by Campbell] threaded through world mythologies,” yet still relatable “to a twelve-year-old” (qtd. in Larsen and Larsen *A Fire in the Mind* 541).

That the mythos of *Star Wars* and its sequels proved phenomenally relatable to multigenerational audiences world-wide need hardly be restated; scholars, critics, audiences, and anyone who has ever owned an action figure acknowledge the ubiquity and influence of its legacy in film and popular culture. What remained less visible, yet quietly understood within certain circles of modern storytellers, is the legacy of Campbell’s conceptualization of the monomyth as transmitted through Lucas’s grand space opera. The popular success of *Star Wars* disseminated the essence of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* into collective consciousness metaphorically and literally, allowing Campbell’s first book of scholarship to become a text commonly used in teaching contemporary screenwriting.

While J.K. Rowling has not suggested that Campbell’s work influenced the monomythic architecture of Harry Potter’s tale, Rowling’s septet of novels (1997- 2007) provide ample evidence of her cognizance of mythology, honed as undergraduate Classics major at University of Exeter; they also bespeak her professional background as a grammar

school teacher and her personal interest in human rights and social reform. As within traditional myth and fairy tale, Rowling rendered Harry Potter's "fantastic world" living "shoulder-to-shoulder with the real world" (qtd. in "Living"). By using this time-honored trope, Rowling's novels re-established the popularity of this classical narrative trend, now rampant in twenty-first-century contemporary fiction. Yet as Pottermania spread, critics, such as Harold Bloom, who famously lambasted Rowling for "feeding a vast hunger for unreality," seemed confounded by the unprecedented popularity of a fantasy "school days" children's book among adult readers (Bloom). Such critics neglected to appreciate that, within Rowling's novel, magic and fantasy exist as they do in myth and fairy tale—as metaphors that, if hypostatized, prove irrelevant to the core narrative. By infusing the elements of an epic mythological quest with the *emotional* realism of an introspective narrative, Rowling's story of an eleven-year-old orphaned boy reclaiming his birthright, wrestling with an inherited destiny, discovering, testing, and choosing to accept the nature of humanity, and therefore, his *mortality*, serves as a psychospiritual quest emphasizing the role of choice in the realization of self—notably, during the trials of adolescence.

Pottermania spread slowly, yet steadily from the initial five-hundred copy print run of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1997. By 2009, *The Economist* offered analysis of "The Harry Potter Economy" and by 2011 *The Wall Street Journal* expounded on "How Harry Saved Reading" and perhaps the publishing industry, with each magazine discussing how a book acquired for a paltry £2,500 advance had jettisoned Bloomsbury's annual gross revenue from £14 million in 1997 to over £100 million by the mid-2000s, not only through its commercial franchise, but by reinvigorating public interest in reading, in the fantasy

genre, and in adolescence. The overwhelming international popularity of Rowling's novels also opened doors for the commercial and cultural embrace of crossover novels, books written for children and young adults marketed to appeal to adult readers. Furthermore, like the *Star Wars* trilogy before it, the Harry Potter series reanimated a classic mythological storytelling model focused upon a male adolescent hero, while positing a powerful female adolescent affect-image in the form of a sister-figure, whose strengths, skills, knowledge, and fortitude enable the hero to fulfill his quest. Just as Princess Leia's intergalactic mission ultimately launched Luke Skywalker's quest in the *Star War's* narrative, Harry Potter would not have discovered the inner keys to his quest nor defeated Lord Voldemort without Hermione Granger's intellectual assistance and unwavering emotional support. Moreover, the contemporary readership might not have been adequately primed to engage with the modern, mythological literary affect-images of independent, assertive adolescent heroines that followed Leia and Hermione, if not for their simultaneous cultural appearance alongside television's teen vampire-slayer extraordinaire, Buffy Summers.

While Hermione revitalized the affect-image of the adolescent girl as sidekick, the recurring twenty-first-century literary incarnation of the adolescent female affect-image as the central protagonist within monomythic narratives perhaps owes more to the heroine of television's critically and popularly acclaimed *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003). Series creator Joss Whedon consciously constructed his ironically-titled story about a "little blonde girl who goes into a dark alley" and—instead of getting killed or being saved—slays its monsters

by herself<sup>41</sup> not only as a feminist subversion of cultural stereotypes perpetuated by genre fiction, but also as a mythologization of modern adolescence.

Although his paternal lineage professionally positioned Whedon as a third-generation television writer,<sup>42</sup> Whedon credits the influence of his mother, Lee Stearns, a high-school history teacher, unpublished novelist, and “very strong woman,” with having shaped his understanding of the innate equality of the sexes and his desire to change the cultural perception of women through visual storytelling. A writer influenced in equal part by comic books and Shakespeare, Whedon’s experiences majoring in film and women’s studies at Wesleyan University convinced him of the capacities of fringe art and popular genre fiction to “carry subversive ideas into the mainstream” by functioning as “metaphors for a deeper level of human experience.” As Whedon explained to Emily Nussbaum of *New York Times*:

It's better to be a spy in the house of love, you know? . . . If I made 'Buffy the Lesbian Separatist,' a series of lectures on PBS on why there should be feminism, no one would be coming to the party, and it would be boring. The idea of changing culture is important to me, and it can only be done in a popular medium. . . . I don't want to create responsible shows with lawyers in them. I want to invade people's dreams. (qtd. in Nussbaum).

Originally imagined as *Rhonda the Immortal Waitress*, Whedon’s concept for Buffy emerged, in part, from his infatuation with the notion that the person whom society discounts might possess “a secret and the weight of wisdom.” Buffy also surfaced from Whedon’s self-realization that he possessed a wealth of unexpressed internal affect—fear, love, confusion, libido, “and deep-seated anger at the bullies of the world”—that assuming the “guise of a

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<sup>41</sup> As quoted in Joss Whedon’s DVD commentary on “Welcome to the Hellmouth” (Season 1, Episode 1).

<sup>42</sup> Whedon's grandfather, John, wrote for programs including *The Donna Reed Show*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *Leave it to Beaver*, and *Andy Griffith*, while his father, Tom, wrote for *Alice*, *Benson*, and *The Golden Girls* and served as a show-runner for PBS’s *The Electric Company*.

teenage girl” allowed him to “articulate pretty well” (Hibberd). Like Harry Potter, *Buffy*’s narrative was conceived of as a meta-arc that unfolded episodically; its popular success also arose gradually, growing steadily in syndication. When asked by Tasha Robinson of the *The Onion A.V. Club* whether he found fans’ extreme passion for *Buffy* surprising, Whedon replied:

No. I designed the show to create that strong reaction. I designed Buffy to be an icon, to be an emotional experience, to be loved in a way that other shows can't be loved. Because it's about adolescence, which is the most important thing people go through in their development, becoming an adult. And it mythologizes it in . . . such a romantic way—it basically says, "Everybody who made it through adolescence is a hero." And I think that's very personal, that people get something from that that's very real. And I don't think I could be more pompous. But I mean every word of it. I wanted her to be a cultural phenomenon. I wanted there to be dolls, Barbie with kung-fu grip. . . . I wanted people to internalize it, and make up fantasies where they were in the story, to take it home with them, for it to exist beyond the TV show. And we've done exactly that. (qtd. in Robinson).

Through *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Whedon offered a modern mythology of adolescence that spoke meaningfully of a female individuation process, while addressing something more. Though Whedon acknowledges no direct connection to Joseph Campbell’s work, *Buffy*’s monomythic storytelling offers insight into the human problem which Campbell deemed the task of *coordinating the soul*: of striving to accept and balance, rather than dichotomize and disown, life’s inherently dark and light nature—of integrating the conscious and unconscious aspects of self into our awareness in the interest of becoming *whole*.

Throughout *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, encountering the Vampire is portrayed as a metaphoric rite of passage in the individuation process. The *Buffy* vampires viewers come to know best are beings of arrested development, trapped within the unconscious realm at pivotal moments in their developmental individuation. *Buffy*’s Slayers are beings of burdened heroic development, actively struggling to reconcile their unconscious nature and

inherited identities with their conscious selves and sense of place in the world. The series title reflects the premise of its mythology: sixteen-year-old Buffy Summers ultimately distinguishes herself as “the greatest Slayer who has ever been”<sup>43</sup> through her determination to individuate. Refusing to be defined by her “Slayerhood” (“Choices”), Buffy repeatedly rejects the terms of the legacy she inherited, and, by the series end, has redefined what a Slayer can be. Though, according to the first season opening voice-over, “she alone” is called to battle “the forces of darkness,” it is Buffy’s increasingly complex encounters with vampires across the series that force her to perpetually question her understanding of her vocation, herself, and the world.

While certainly not the only works of popular fiction featuring well-defined, complex, empowered adolescent female characters to emerge amid the cultural negotiation of the ambivalences expressed by the Girl Power and Ophelia discourses, the uniting features underlying the *Star Wars*, Harry Potter, and Buffy narratives—their monomythic structures, their mythologization of an adolescent individuation in which choice begets self-realization, the way each embeds its fantasy world with human emotional realities, their creators’ investment in transmitting values and stimulating cultural change, the public’s impassioned responses to their offerings, the way each inspired notable popular fiction trends—bespeak a need within the contemporary Western social psyche for a means of accessing, mining, and communing with its unconscious awareness—particularly its unconscious emotions—so as to process, develop, and assimilate the notions destabilizing

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<sup>43</sup> As quoted in Joss Whedon’s DVD commentary on “Restless” (Season 4, Episode 22).

the old social order into a new conscious order of life—a psychosocial need traditionally attended to by narratives with mythological functions.

By constructing an affect-image homologous to those proffered by late nineteenth-century Victorian literature, twentieth-century social science put forth a series of ambivalent portraits of the adolescent girl. Her twentieth-century social scientific incarnations reflect perpetuating cultural biases in their assumptions and rising social anxieties in their attempts to re-encode a sense of naturally gendered social hierarchy into a social order once built upon, but now undermined by increasing evidence of the fallacy of such a supposition.

As G. Stanley Hall and many of his contemporaries described the adolescent girl, she was at once a developmentally-limited human being—driven to fulfill her biologically-predestined developmental goal of motherhood, incapable of maturing into the superior form of adulthood possible for the male, the designated champion of Western civilization—and a natural-born icon of humanistic morality and ideals, biologically endowed with superior emotional depth, intuition, and impulses towards religiosity, altruism, solicitude, and servility. By representing adolescence as a feminized stage of development that served jointly as the pinnacle of a girl's development and an obstacle for the “civilized” boy to overcome en route to manhood, Hall's adolescence reinforced free-floating Western cultural conceptions of the Feminine and the female as the natural subordinate of the Masculine and the male.

As the century progressed, Western societies struggled with the contradictions modernity injected into existing cultural narratives. Cultural shifts resulting from modern technological innovations, political changes, world wars, and a robust American

commercial manufacturing economy increasingly offered experiential evidence that invalidated long-held assumptions about biologically-determined psychological development and social personae. Confronting the need to recalibrate the social order in terms of new racial, sexual, and socioeconomic relational patterns increased social anxieties. The social sciences responded by seeking to establish measurable standards of “normal” human development, and, through scientific evidence, increasingly dispelled the notion of innate, biologically-based psychological traits. Modernity pushed and pulled its narrative, challenging each new developmental metric it proposed while sometimes clinging, desperately and romantically, to an idealized past.

The portrait of the adolescent girl posited by social science at the end of the twentieth-century contrasts with, yet appears strikingly similar to that of its beginning. The depictions put forth by Carol Gilligan and Mary Pipher represent the adolescent girl as a human being fully capable of achieving adult psychological individuation, yet endowed with an inherently ‘different voice’ than that of the male. Hypothesizing that the girl’s gendered-relational style might constitute a new, improved model of “interdependent” human development with “potential to remake the world” (DeLuzio 249), these representations also predispose the girl to a ‘traumatic’ experience of adolescence as ‘a crisis of self-esteem’ and conflict between ‘love and ambition.’ The character attributes these incarnations of the girl upheld as *feminine*—care, compassion, emotional intelligence, intuition, selflessness, domesticity—were, in tandem, both lauded as distinctive female differences *and* as denounced as stereotypes of female weaknesses, while those deemed *masculine*—vocational ambition and achievement, personal individuation, rationality and

intellectual curiosity, political orientation, physical prowess and aggression—were simultaneously decried as indicative of Western white, male privilege *and* considered symbolic expressions of the successful achievement of adulthood and social equality.

Throughout the twentieth-century, popular culture sympathetically responded to these pervasive, self-contradicting tensions by first returning compartmentalized images of the adolescent girl, most often in secondary, stereotyped roles, roles that (with a few notable exceptions) confirmed and expressed, rather than transgressed, the pervading culture of their era. Yet, as the effects of the cultural shifts spurred by the civil rights and second-wave feminist movements of late 1960s culminated in new social preoccupations with female adolescence in the 1990s, socially subversive male and female adolescent heroes, such as Harry Potter and Buffy Summers, synchronistically came of age within wildly popular monomythic fantasy narratives, delineating a narrative in-road for the return of the complex literary affect-image of the adolescent heroine. She emerged, embodying the issues tied to the changing perception and role of both females and the Feminine in present society, during the first decade of the new millennium.

## Chapter VI

### Bella Swan: Resolving the Unbearable Anxiety of Being

A vampire cannot cross a threshold without an invitation, or so Bram Stoker's Dr. Van Helsing led us believe in 1897. Yet thresholds pose no such limitations for Edward Cullen and the vampires of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008). Thresholds frame entries and exits; they separate one space from another, one Self from the Other. From what Joseph Campbell deemed childhood's "condition of dependency" (*Power* 152), we the living pass through the threshold of adolescence into autonomous adulthood. Life invites us in, making us an offer we physiologically cannot refuse. Psychological maturation, however, is a matter of volition, and while refusing the psyche's call to adventure has consequences no less severe, its invitation must be accepted before the journey can commence.

In many vampire tales, a young female protagonist encounters the Undead just as her invitation to cross the threshold of adulthood arrives. *Dracula* established the now classic motif: just as Mina Murray and Lucy Westenra become engaged, the Count descends upon London, wending his way into their lives (via their bedrooms), jeopardizing their safe passage into womanhood. Meeting the monster has long served as a metaphoric initiation rite, and surviving such a meeting heralds movement into independence, maturation, and a sense of adult self. As such, most Western vampire narratives portray surviving an encounter with a vampire as its desired outcome—which makes it all the more

curious that upon encountering a vampire in *Twilight*, a modern girl, such as seventeen-year-old heroine Isabella Swan, wishes not only to become one, but to be subsumed and sublimated into all the vampire represents.

In multiple interviews, first-time author Stephenie Meyer insisted that her disinterest in vampire stories accounted for *Twilight's* deviations from *Draculaesque* vampire lore. Meyer claimed to have limited her research into the Undead by saying, "Because I was creating my own world, I didn't want to find out just how many rules I was breaking" (Winfrey). Broken rules aside, Meyer's self-proclaimed "vampire book for people who don't like vampire books" (Margolis, "Love") had little trouble tapping a vein. Worldwide to date, over 150 million copies of the four-novels comprising the *Twilight* saga have been sold, while their film adaptations have garnered an estimated \$3.3 billion dollars (Khatchatourian). As of December 2010, the author's website offered links to at least 374 English-language *Twilight* fan-sites. The phrase "completely obsessed" recurred on home pages of sites such as "Twilight\_A Way of Life," "Edward-our-fantasy," and "Stephenie Says," each site name testifying to the zealous devotion of fans to the novels and their author.<sup>44</sup> Curiously, this reverence for all things *Twilight* extended to readers well beyond the saga's marketing target of tween and teenaged girls. Legions of adult women visited "CullenBoysAnonymous.com" to treat (or indulge in) their *Twilight* addictions and blogged at "TwiMamas: A Group of Moms Who Went from a Shopping Addiction to a *Twilight* Obsession" about their late nights with Meyer's novels and confused husbands.

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<sup>44</sup> As of October 2015, many of the sites listed, originally referenced in November of 2010, are no longer active. Additionally, Meyer's website no longer offers links to any fan pages.

What accounts for the mysterious mass enthrallment of such a vast, multi-generational female readership with the *Twilight* saga? Many critics puzzled over how Meyer's 498-page debut novel, routinely summed up in pithy phrases—such as author Elizabeth Hand's encapsulation in *The Washington Post*: “plain, clumsy, dull Bella becomes the Chosen One of Edward, the hottest—actually, coldest—guy in high school;” or the synopsis hedge fund manager Tom Barrack provides for “male Colonists”: “Stubborn teenage girl meets a handsome but moody vampire and against all odds they fall in love” (qtd. in Levin)—commanded more blog posts than Helen of Troy's face launched seafaring vessels. What about Meyer's brand of heroine and vampire inspired such devout fervor among fans over the last ten years?

Most seeking to explain *Twilight*'s glamour effect pointed past its vampires to its love story. English professor Elisabeth Gruner contends that *Twilight* owes its success to its implementation of the “classic romance-novel formula” identifiable in works “from *Jane Eyre* to Harlequin romances.” (Puente 1). In her article “What Girls Want,” writer Caitlin Flanagan concurs that the “erotic relationship between Bella and Edward is what makes this book . . . so riveting to its female readers” (116), contending that “Edward treats Bella not as Count Dracula treated the objects of his desire, but as Mr. Rochester treated *Jane Eyre*” (112). Men writing about *Twilight* draw similar conclusions, if expressed from a less Venusian vantage. CEO Barrack reports having risked his manhood to divest this “piece of chick lit, teeny-bopper heartthrob stuff” of its secrets after noticing that the women in his life “don't just read these books, they live them” (qtd. in Levin). A web-video entitled “Why *Twilight* is Popular,” created by cartoonist Matthew Inman (a.k.a. The Oatmeal), explains to

“dumbfounded” men that the *Twilight* obsession hinges upon a “basic formula that works on your desperate, discontent female friends the same way porn worked on you” (Inman). Both the cartoonist and hedge fund manager define *Twilight*’s equation for success using the same constants: **A**, a “generic” (Barrack)<sup>45</sup> narrator “that any female could slip into” (Inman), **plus B**, the author’s “surgical and illuminating development of Edward” (Barrack), who “represents everything that women have ever wanted multiplied by 10,000” (Inman), **equals C**, “the fascination and deep emotional reactions to . . . a foolish teenage trashy novel” (Barrack).

These analyses of *Twilight*’s thrall distill easily into a single, easily digestible explanation: that the novel’s teen-angst driven, star-crossed romance of soap-operatic proportions drives the attraction of younger readers, while its story of first-love, replete with its “perfect” romantic hero, plays upon the sentimental emotional memories and escapist fantasies of its older readers through a narrative which functions as Joycean pornography.<sup>46</sup> Yet for all of their sincerity (and/or irony), these discussions of the *Twilight* novels spotlight its romance while mentioning only casually, if at all, that the protagonist’s love interest has fangs. Moreover, for all their enthusiasms and criticisms, many commentators appear unaware of the fact that Stephenie Meyer *did not* consciously set out to write a young-adult story, let alone a novel. According to Meyer, *Twilight* began as a personal “fantasy” (Elgin), born of her desire to remember a vivid dream, “so different from what [her] everyday was at

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<sup>45</sup> All Barrack citations refer to his memo, as re-published within Bess Levin’s 2010 article, “Hedge Fund Manager Achieves “Personal Breakthrough” While Reading *Twilight*, Shares the Moment with Staff.”

<sup>46</sup> In his lecture, “The Way of Art,” transcribed within the posthumously published *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, Joseph Campbell contrasts James Joyce’s definitions of static and kinetic art. “Art that excites desire, Joyce calls pornographic. All advertising art is pornographic, since it is intended that the viewer should desire to possess in some manner the object represented.” (93).

the time" (Winfrey) that she felt compelled to write it down, intending no audience for her scribblings beyond her twenty-nine-year-old, married, mother-of-three self. In an interview offered to the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, Meyer describes having dreamt of "a young woman in the embrace of a very handsome young man" whom the author recognized as a vampire (Meyer 631). The dream's fascinating crux, Meyer told *The Wall Street Journal*, came as the young lover "was telling [the girl] that his problem was that he wanted to kill her because she smelled so tasty" (Trachtenberg).

Readers and perhaps even the saga's author may prefer to overlook the fact that the radiant Edward is a vampire, but the significance of Meyer's choice to fashion Bella's idealized love object, and ultimately Bella herself, into a creature most commonly recognized as a metaphor for death cannot be ignored when attempting to account for the intense audience reactivity this narrative generated throughout the industrialized world. While every aspect of the Twilight saga's love story—to paraphrase Meyer's shiny vampire—invites us in, acting indisputably as its surface lure, the Twilight saga's true allure comes of its psychic undertow. By employing a classic monomythic narrative structure that incorporates common fairy-tale devices, numerous fairy-tale, literary, and religious allusions, and invoking the vampire—archetypal predator of the psyche who shape-shifts through time and storytelling, reflecting the cultural terrors and taboos of its age—Meyer's narrative also functions mythologically, allowing Bella's adventure to serve as a nuanced metaphor of an adolescent girl's journey into adulthood.

As a narrative exploring the compulsive appeal of a dark dream man, a creature who wants nothing more than to consume the Feminine, to an adolescent girl poised upon

the threshold of adulthood, the *Twilight* saga points to the underlying psychic vulnerabilities of both the girl and the culture from which she arises. Reader identification with and reactivity to Bella Swan and her yearnings for at-one-ment with her vampire speaks to and of the collective cultural yearnings for and anxieties about things we dare not speak by name; things we begin to bring into the light by undertaking an analysis of how the *Twilight* saga's archetypal content and monomythic meta-structure—that which Campbell defined as its cycle of “separation—initiation—return”—activates the narrative's mythological function.

### Separation

*Twilight* (2005) opens with two ominous, overt mythological cues portending the separation phase of Bella Swan's *Hero's Journey* by way of death: the first resides within the novel's epigraph, taken from Genesis 2:17 (“*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*”), while the second introduces readers to Bella as she attempts to rationalize her ambivalent willingness to serve as a sacrificial victim on behalf of her mother for the second time.

The novel's preface launches amid its climax, presenting its heroine as the ensnared quarry of a “hunter,” a vampire who purports to hold her mother hostage. In realizing that her possession of forbidden knowledge brought her to this moment, Bella tells readers:

Surely it was a good way to die, in the place of someone else, someone I loved. Noble, even. Surely that should count for something.

I knew that if I'd never gone to Forks, I wouldn't be facing death now. But, terrified as I was, I couldn't bring myself to regret my decision. When life offers you a dream so far beyond any of your expectations, it's not reasonable to grieve when it comes to an end (1).

Both Bella's impending death and expectation-exceeding "dream" came of her first act of self-sacrifice: the *Twilight* saga narrative begins with Bella absolving her newly remarried mother of parental obligation by voluntarily moving to Forks, Washington to live with her father. Bella tells readers, "I exiled myself, an action I took with great horror" from Phoenix, a place she "loved" for its "sun," "blistering heat," and urban sprawl, to return to her "detested" small-town birthplace and its "gloomy, ever-present shade" so as to allow her mother the freedom to travel with her minor-league baseball-playing husband (*Twilight* 3-4, 48-49). Bella sets off for her "self-imposed exile . . . in purgatory" (79) dressed for virginal sacrifice, wearing "white eyelet lace" as a "farewell gesture" (3) to the sun, which Bella associates with parental nurturing and protection throughout the saga.

Thus for a novel its author claims to have written as "just a story. . . just for fun" (Blasingame et al, 40), *Twilight* begins with a curiously loaded juxtaposition of mythically charged images and ideas. Along with its emblematic cover, featuring a pair of snow white hands holding a bright red, unbiten apple, *Twilight's* epigraph and preface place the Judeo-Christian biblical concept of the Fall—which equates death with loss of innocence through the acquisition of a knowledge of life (i.e., the loss of holistic unity under infallible paternal protection with the gain of worldly experience), thereby suggesting that an experiential knowledge of life excludes one from Eden—alongside Bella's awareness that in acquiring knowledge of a secret aspect of life unseen and unexperienced by most people (which she gains through having sacrificed her access to maternal nurturing), she has forfeited her biological life. Yet, as the *Twilight* saga concludes, having learnt of this secret life within life secures Bella's immortal existence: an eternity on Earth as if it were Eden

resurrected. Just as the knowledge that endangers and ends Bella's life ultimately privileges her existence, the *Twilight* saga encompasses and perpetuates, while simultaneously attempting to subvert and transcend, aspects of the patriarchal, Christian, American myths of a personal manifest destiny in which one can 'have it all' by never growing up.

The separation phase of many coming-of-age narratives featuring an adolescent female protagonist open as does that of Bella Swan, with its heroine facing the consequences of being disconnected from her birthparents. Often emotionally and socioeconomically disadvantaged, heroines like Bella frequently struggle with a sense of otherness, alienation from peers, and/or the feeling of existing outside of social norms. In lacking a fully empowered adult protector, their *separation* tends to come by way of a crisis in which the adolescent girl possesses little power to self-advocate or self-protect; as such, the subject of *protection*—of others and of self—tends to color the nature of the adventure toward which such a heroine is drawn.

Bella's sacrifice on behalf of her mother creates the emotional crisis and circumstances from which her *Call to Adventure* arises. Yet while Bella's seemingly unselfish attitude convinces many readers of her self-reported precocious maturity, Meyer's narrative evidences Bella's stunted emotional development through its portrayal of Bella's disconnected relationship with her divorced parents, particularly her enmeshed relationship with her mother, Renée.

Bella's account of leaving Renée at the airport en route to Forks reveals a well-established role-reversal between mother and daughter:

I felt a spasm of panic as I stared into her wide, childlike eyes. How could I leave my loving, erratic, hare-brained mother to fend for herself? Of course she had Phil now, so the bills would probably get paid, there would be food in the refrigerator, gas in her car, and someone to call when she got lost, but still . . . (*Twilight* 4).

Although Renée suggests that, should Bella wish, she could return to Phoenix and the role of mother, Bella observes “the sacrifice in her eyes behind the promise” and attempts to assuage her mother’s guilt by offering Renée a well-practiced, if unconvincing lie about wanting to move (*Twilight* 4). Renée, who deems her daughter “her open book” (50), accepts Bella’s self-sacrifice on her behalf without question.

Evidence of Renée’s self-centered preoccupations litter *Twilight*, portraying the inverted dynamics of their mother-daughter relationship. Renée’s first message to her ‘exiled’ daughter asks after Bella’s flight and the weather before segueing into a plea for help in locating a sweater (33). When Bella replies more slowly than expected, her mother’s e-mails become nagging, demanding of attention (e.g., 33, 146). The home video recording James uses to lure Bella features Renée exclaiming, “Bella! You scared me. Don’t you ever do that to me again!,” an expression clearly more concerned with her own fear than that of her young child, who had only narrowly avoided falling off an ocean pier (443). Similarly, the first words the self-absorbed mother offers her hospitalized daughter as she awakens after two comatose days are, “Bella, I was so upset!” Finding nothing unusual in her mother’s response, Bella tells readers, “I comforted her” (465).

In the saga’s second book, *New Moon*, Bella’s father, Charlie, acknowledges Bella’s role as her mother’s emotional care-taker (397), yet expresses no recognition that he perpetuates a relational pattern of parental neglect and role reversal with his daughter. While the panorama of school pictures lining his mantle suggest his pride in the daughter he saw only during summers (*Twilight* 11), Charlie rarely engages with her personally and Bella expects no parental care from her father. For example, upon arriving to his home,

Charlie simply leaves Bella alone for the remainder of the evening to suture; Bella cries herself to sleep, yet expresses “relief” that Charlie left her alone to suffer (*Twilight* 10-12). Similarly, after Bella cooks their first shared, mostly silent dinner, Charlie retreats into evening television as she cleans the kitchen and does her homework; Bella declares their awkward mutual interpersonal avoidance a family “tradition in the making” (37).

Bella’s preoccupation with providing maternal nurturing extends into her relationship with Charlie. Upon discovering his empty cupboards and limited cooking repertoire, Bella assumes responsibility for household’s grocery and cooking chores, as she had in her mother’s home (33). First uncertain of whether her father will “mind” (33) if she provisions the kitchen, Bella swiftly transitions into dutifully preparing Charlie’s meals, apologizing for dinner delays, and leaving him sandwiches when she steps out (149). Though Charlie reminds Bella of his self-sufficiency (149), he does not discourage her doting, and eventually assumes she will prepare his meals (295). Given that Bella understands her father’s house—its décor unchanged since Renée left years before—as a monument to the broken marriage Charlie had “never gotten over” (12), the ease with which Bella slips into the role of his hausfrau disquiets. Rather than questioning his daughter’s sole assumption of household duties, her general social isolation, or her other erratic behaviors as *Twilight* progresses, Charlie simply, obtusely remarks, “You sure are easy to live with, Bella,” and continually abdicates parental responsibility in favor of taking weekend fishing trips alone (251). That Bella later intentionally reiterates her mother’s last words to her father on leaving their marriage to stun and disempower Charlie (393) testifies to the ways in which, for both daughter and father, Bella’s identity is confused with that of her mother.

The reader's first glimpse of both Bella and her identity confusion come of her initial physical self-description, which she embeds within a description of Renée: "My mom looks like me, except with short hair and laugh lines" (*Twilight* 4), a statement implying that Bella has long hair and smiles less frequently than her mother. Similarly, Bella describes Renée to Edward by saying, "[s]he looks a lot like me, but she's prettier," before continuing the comparison to find herself lacking, not only in appearance, but also in terms of social temperament and courage (105). Instances of language conflating their identities further portray Bella as a girl who understands herself predominately as an extension of her mother. On leaving Phoenix, Bella tells readers, "I got on the plane and she was gone" (5), when it was Bella, not Renée, who departed. Likewise, at the end of the novel, when Bella tells her mother she would rather stay in Washington than move to Florida, Renée superimposes her own feelings upon her daughter's, stating as fact, "Bella, honey, you hate Forks," rather than inquiring about Bella's apparent change of heart (467).

Throughout the novels, Bella's unselfconscious references to Renée and Charlie render a self-portrait of a modern child of divorce, an intensely parentified<sup>47</sup> girl struggling with attachment anxiety as she approaches adulthood. Bella's juxtaposition of her self-descriptions with those of her mother not only illuminate their role reversal, but also indicate the inadequate separation of their identities, a common byproduct of a parentified

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<sup>47</sup> Parentification, a term coined in 1973 by psychologists Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and Geraldine Spark, describes a dysfunctional family dynamic in which child and parent reverse roles to the detriment of the child's developmental needs (Castro et al, 205). Consequently, a parentified child tends to lose "touch with her "true self"" by becoming "other-oriented and over-conforming" (206) for the purpose of connecting to her parents, having learned that "[d]eference and subjugation of self to the other" (West and Keller, 426) is the price of attachment. Inherently unable to fulfill adult needs, many parentified children grow up burdened with feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and low self-worth (Castro et al, 207). As parentified children emerge into adulthood, they continue to play "the self-sacrificing role of nurturer and caretaker," sometimes to masochistic extremes, while exhibiting marked tendencies towards passivity and co-dependency in their relationships (207).

relational dynamic. Bella's habit of internally referencing her parents by their first names also signals their lack of parental authority, as evidenced in Bella's concern about setting "a bad precedent" (*Twilight* 80) when she pretends to ask Charlie's permission to drive to Seattle alone, and, in her amusement with Renée's attempt to "sound like a parental authority" (468).

Like many parentified children, Bella understands herself as mature and independent for her age, a self-assessment confirmed by her relationships with her parents. While she arguably possesses a certain type of maturity, Bella's ever-present avoidance, anxiety, passivity, and active efforts to deceive her parents about her authentic thoughts, feelings, and involvements evidence her emotional underdevelopment, as do her prideful boasts about her ability to compartmentalize, repress, and deny, rather than assimilate, things she deems "painful, unnecessary" from her memory (6). Bella disturbingly deems her mother her "best friend" while simultaneously characterizing their relationship as "never in harmony," "never on exactly the same page" (10-11) and speaking of Renée as someone "irresponsible and slightly eccentric" (105) and "very young for her age" (106). She extends this disharmony with her mother into her social conceptualization of herself. Strangely for a seventeen-year-old girl, Bella never indicates having left any relationships with friends in Phoenix; she tells readers that she never dated (153), nor found a social "niche," and, in remarking on her inability to "relate with people [her] own age," Bella wonders if she lacks the capacity to "relate well to people, period" (10).

Bella's most detailed self-description defines what she individually *is not* relative to what she believes she socially *ought* to be, thus allowing readers to infer that, in addition to dark hair and eyes, Bella possesses a devalued, hypercritical sense of self:

. . . physically, I'd never fit in anywhere. I *should* be tan, sporty, blond – a volleyball player, a cheerleader, perhaps – all the things that go with living in the valley of the sun. Instead I was ivory-skinned, without even the excuse of blue eyes or red hair . . . I'd always been slender, but soft somehow, obviously not an athlete; I didn't have the necessary hand-eye coordination to play sports without humiliating myself – and harming both myself and anyone else who stood too close (*Twilight* 10).

As the passage continues, Bella demonstrates that experiencing her feelings challenges her even more than accepting her body. Looking into a mirror, Bella projects her disowned feelings about her self-sacrifice onto her reflection in commenting that, perhaps due to the lack of light in Forks, she “already looked sallow, unhealthy,” despite only having left Phoenix earlier the same day (10).

Throughout *Twilight*, Bella's feelings about the sun and light parallel her desire for nurturance, for mothering, for something to feed her sense of self. In leaving the Phoenix sun, Bella moved away from the center of her universe in recognition of her mother's desire to orbit around her new husband—a transfer of attachment that leaves Bella despondent and her sense of self ungrounded. While many children have difficulty adjusting to a parent's remarriage, Bella's acute despair signals the depth of her unacknowledged, internalized sense of maternal abandonment, which she continues to project onto her physical body. She believes her skin is only pretty “depending on the light,” and in Forks, she mourns her light deprivation (10). Bella identifies with Charlie, also abandoned by, yet still living with Renée's ghost, who lingers in the empty, “bright yellow” cabinets Renée once painted “to bring some sunshine” (11) into their lives, the same cabinets Bella worries her father might “mind” if she fills (33). Bella relates to her father's loneliness, solitude, and discomfort with emotional expression, and as a gesture of solidarity, offers herself as

Charlie's handmaiden, while simultaneously distancing herself from him by lying about the secret life she develops revolving around an alternative light source—a creature of the night whose skin she describes glistening in sunlight in the manner of that modern Western symbol of wealth, indestructibility, and ever-lasting devotion: the diamond (*Twilight* 260).

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell, wrote that the *Call to Adventure* motif that launches the hero's journey comes of a "herald," an event or a being that sends "ripples upon the surface of life" and draws an unknowing individual "into relationship with forces that are not rightly understood." Regardless of whether the call portends an adventure "small or great," personal or societal, Campbell contends that it always entails "a mystery of transfiguration—a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth" (42-43).

Upon arriving in Forks, many possible heralds appear before Bella, but rather than taking up a call affirming the natural trajectory of her human life, Bella chooses a hero's adventure that maps to the mythological narrative motif Campbell called *The Refusal of Suitors*, wherein the heroine rejects the developmental opportunities presented by her natural life and society so as to wait for an idealized manifestation of the powers that will sustain her attachment to her "present system of ideals, virtues, goals, and advantages" (*Hero* 49).

Campbell suggests that refusing the life-affirming call converts the *Hero's Journey* into its negative form, an adventure wherein the hero progressively "loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved" while creating "new problems for himself and [awaiting] the gradual approach of his disintegration" (49); thus, in essence, the *Hero's Journey* inverted becomes a stasis anticipating death. Bella Swan's inverted journey

begins as she rejects the heralds to life surrounding her in favor of accepting the call of the alluring heralds of her human death: a family of vampires, and in particular, the permanently teenaged Edward Cullen.

The Cullen vampires prove no exception to Campbell's description of the herald as the manifestation of opposing energies that inspire contradictory reactions from the hero (*Hero* 44-48) when Bella first encounters them amid a mixture of mundane events, romantic tropes, and mythical numbers. Seated among "seven curious strangers" at lunch on her first day of her new school, Bella fixates on an isolated group of five pale individuals sitting at across the room, neither "talking," "eating," nor "gawking" at her in the manner of other students (*Twilight* 18). Bella observes that while they did not "look anything alike," the five strangers "were all exactly alike" (18) in possessing such "devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful" faces that she feels unable to "look away" (19). In contrast, Bella notices that the Cullens all *look away*—"away from each other, away from the other students, away from anything in particular" (19)—seemingly disinterested in the life surrounding them. Looking at them, she feels "pity" that the beautiful five appear to be unaccepted "outsiders" combined with "relief" in discovering she is not the sole "newcomer" to Forks High (22). Bella perceives Edward's first glance of her as exuding "evident curiosity" and "unmet expectation" (22), but sees his second as a "hostile, furious," "antagonistic stare" (23) from "black eyes full of revulsion" (24), such that Bella reports feeling a "thrill of genuine fear" upon seeing Edward's "absurdly handsome" face regarding her with "piercing, hate-filled eyes" (27).

While herald Edward later marks their first encounter as the moment Bella's mortal "number was up" (175), he embodies opposing energies by struggling to avoid his

lust for her blood while appointing himself the hyper-vigilant watchman of her mortal life. In an initial effort to avoid Bella, Edward disappears from school. In his absence, Bella eases into her new routine, becoming “more comfortable than [she] ever expected to feel” in Forks within her first week (*Twilight* 37-39). Much to Bella’s surprise, girls actively befriend her and boys eagerly pursue her. Yet she begins to make new friends warily, often concealing her true thoughts and feelings from others (e.g., 40, 110-111). However, when Edward reappears with “ochre” eyes (46), a “friendly, open” face, and politely introduces himself to a puzzled Bella, she receives his bid for conversation with an honesty she does not offer others attempting to befriend her, and shares, rather than masks, her true thoughts (47). Similarly, Edward observes and responds to her unspoken authentic feelings, and, unlike most people in Bella’s world, who appear not to notice all that she conceals, he speaks to his suspicions about the depth of her suffering over having chosen to live unhappily for her mother’s sake (49).

From this point, Edward and Bella’s behaviors toward each other vacillate in ever more polar extremes—the next morning, Edward miraculously saves her life from an oncoming car, while the day after, he refuses to acknowledge Bella’s existence (70); in parallel, as Bella’s fascination with Edward and the Cullens increases, they cease even glancing in her direction (69)—until Bella refuses the advances of her three human suitors. Her acquaintances Mike, Eric, and Tyler each break protocol to ask Bella to an upcoming “girl’s choice” dance (73-78). Bella’s refusal to partake in her peer group’s social ritual with any of her human admirers prompts Edward to amend his previous rejection of Bella’s friendship (74) with an invitation to join him in a road trip to Seattle,

an invitation which he couples with the contradictory caveat that she “really *should* stay away from [him]” (*Twilight* 84).

As Bella struggles to decode the enigma Edward poses, help appears in the form of a fifteen-year-old boy, Jacob Black, son of Quileute elder, Billy—a close friend of Bella’s father. Campbell described the *Supernatural Aid* motif that arises during the separation stage of a monomyth as the hero’s first encounter with “a protective figure” (*Hero* 57), who provides the guidance, knowledge, and/or talismans necessary to launch and eventually fulfill the hero’s quest (57-60). While a departure from the traditional wise old man or fairy godmother incarnations of supernatural guidance, Jacob’s knowledge of the Cullens and Quileute tribal legends—knowledge bequeathed patriarchally, wheedled from him through Bella’s insincere flirting, and shared by him in the innocent belief that the legends were naught but scary stories about werewolves defending humans from vampires—proves the key Bella requires to make her first threshold crossing.

The mythic threshold, wrote Campbell, separates “the limits of the hero’s present sphere, or life horizon” from the “darkness, the unknown, and danger” that lies on its other side (*Hero* 64). Guarded by embodiments of “pairs of opposites” (73) that announce the dual nature of the mysterious territory they protect, adventure commences only after the hero enacts the motif of *Crossing the First Threshold*, transgressing a socially sacrosanct boundary by “provoking” and then escaping the “destructive aspect” of its threshold guardians’ “power” (67).

Jacob’s story of the “*cold ones*” (*Twilight* 124) ushers Bella into a common mythic device, a harbinger dream—one in which wolf Jacob and vampire Edward vie for her allegiance—that propels her into a fairy-tale trope: the dark forest that lies just beyond her father’s house.

Never straying from the forest path, Bella, who disdains the trees, mosses, and ferns of Forks, calling them “too green—an alien planet” (8), ventures into the woods to contemplate her mystical dream, Jacob’s stories, and her subsequent internet research. Sitting upon a fallen tree, Bella engages in an internal dialectic, weighing her rational knowledge of the world against the contradictory perceptual evidence of her experiences—a scene that conjoins fairy-tale imagery with that of the ‘retreating hermit seeking spiritual guidance’ motif common to numerous religions and mystical practices throughout the world. As she sits, Bella weaves a thread of conscious modern scientific thought, the twenty-first-century language of mythology, into this fabric of well-worn symbols by considering that while her reason and knowledge make her vampire hypothesis sound “silly and morbid” (137), the empirical evidence she perceives suggests that Edward is “not human,” but rather “something more” (138). Yet in deciding how to proceed if Edward proves to be vampire, Bella relies solely on the emotional content of her dream, the content of her unconscious interior as represented by the dark forest motif; despite his fangs, Bella feared only for the vampire’s safety when the werewolf lunged, which she interprets to mean that her attachment to Edward already goes “too deep” for her to change course (139). In taking her emotions as fact and her dream as destiny, Bella answers the herald’s call to adventure.

Bella’s dream positioned Jacob against Edward, casting them as threshold guardians representing opposing energies; as the saga continues, Meyer increasingly portrays Jacob and the Quileute werewolves as the warm-blooded embodiment of wild life and Edward and the Cullen vampires as the stone-cold, hyper-civilized mentalization of death. In choosing her course of action, Bella crossed the first threshold of her adventure into what

Campbell termed the *Belly of the Whale*, the “sphere of rebirth” (*Hero* 74), the “World Womb” in which the hero learns her threshold crossing was “a form of self-annihilation” that sparks the gestation and resurrection of self in another form through the trials of initiation (77). However, rather than passing between and beyond the two guardians, Bella aligns with one of two opposing forces and crosses the threshold out of balance, thus sealing the inversion of her *Hero’s Journey*.

Leaving the forest, surprised to see “how far [she] had come,” Bella feels uncertainty about whether the path she follows leads out of the forest or deeper into its “confines.” Eventually, she returns to her father’s house, feeling “more serene,” reassured by how “ridiculously” and “[d]angerously easy” living with this decision feels to her (*Twilight* 140). Yet as Bella ventures into the belly of her particular whale, the consequences of her decision will prove ever less easy and even more dangerous than the resolute young woman suspects.

### Initiation

Inside the “dream landscape” of the *Belly of the Whale*, initiation into adventure comes not only of the hero managing to survive the series of tests presented by *The Road of Trials* motif, but also through the hero’s encounters with core life energies via mythic patterns which Campbell termed *Meeting with the Goddess*, *Woman as Temptress*, and *Atonement with the Father*. These motifs frequently coincide and repeat, escalating in intensity until the hero reaches the *Apotheosis* phase of the journey (*Hero* 81) and achieves its *Ultimate Boon*, some “symbol of life energy” (163) held in custody by the gods and goddesses encountered throughout the hero’s journey (155).

Upon crossing the first threshold of her inverted quest, Bella becomes its damsel in distress. Her journey's initiation finds Bella in near-constant danger, the prey of lusty hunters and the victim of her insufficient self-development and child-like emotional obstinacy. Yet her persistent occupation of these states cements Bella's relationship with Edward, for she only declares herself "unconditionally and irrevocably in love" (*Twilight* 195) with him after he rescues and protects her in the manner of an ideal parent.

During her journey's initiation, the *Twilight* saga casts Bella as the object of predators in three instances, each riddled with archetypal allusions. The first occurs just after Bella's forest meditation, casting her in yet another fairy-tale role: though Bella refuses to attend the school dance, she dutifully helps two girlfriends choose their dresses ala Cinderella and her step-sisters, all the while feeling detached from the ritual and wondering why Edward missed school (154). Bella wanders unknown streets of a tourist town alone, "wrestling with despair" (156) and paying so little attention to her surroundings that she unconsciously allows four menacing men to "herd" her into a blind alley (160). When her shining no-armored, pale white knight miraculously arrives to save Bella from imminent harm for the second time, Edward orders her into his "shiny Volvo"(77)—an automotive steed renowned for its expense, engine longevity, and impeccable safety reputation—and into her seat belt, much like a child (162).

After the two declare themselves romantically, Bella becomes the prey of two vampires who hunt her across three novels, one seeking malicious sport, the other passionate revenge. Shortly after Edward inducts Bella into his family's secret lore, a trio of roaming vampires encounter Bella as she watches the Cullens play baseball in deep inside the forest.

This symbolically-charged scenario—where within the quintessential fairy-tale locale for dangerous encounters, a mortal looks on as elite immortals partake of the “American pastime” (*Twilight* 347); where a human girl, protected by her civilized, consciously-abstinent predators, meets with her guardians’ feral, instinct-driven counterparts upon their natural hunting-ground—communicates a complicated mixture of cues reflecting Western, specifically American, anxieties about how a sense of safety and superiority derived from playing games with strictly defined rules succumbs to realizations of vulnerability when and where others do not abide by, or even acknowledge, those rules; it also suggests that danger awaits those who long to play with the elite without having access to ‘the privileges that come with membership.’ Again this scene, which introduces Bella to hunters James and Victoria, ends with Bella’s vampire protectors strapping her into a Jeep’s “off-roading harness” like a child and fleeing the scene (360, 381).

As previously discussed, *Twilight* both begins and climaxes with Bella’s capture by James, who plans to ravish and make a vampire of her to provoke Edward into a game of cat and mouse. By suggesting Bella’s sole appeal to him came of her having been “in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and indisputably running with the wrong crowd,” James reaffirms Bella’s belief that, in being “simply human,” her life lacks intrinsic value (447). Enacting a classic patriarchal romantic rescue, Edward saves Bella from transformation while his vampire father doctors her mortal wounds and his vampire brothers destroy James. Following days of unconscious recovery, Bella questions why Edward prevented her vampiric change, and the two argue over her desire to be his “equal”—which she defines as sharing his capacity to be “Superman” rather than being “Lois Lane”—and Bella’s wish to evade her fear

of what she perceives as the ugliness of aging and change, that which Edward understands as the beauty of life (*Twilight* 473-476). Their “impasse” on these issues—as expressed via Bella’s reference to wanting to become the Americanized male image of the Nietzschean *Übermensch* so as to defend her infantile ego’s desires and attachments from the existential realities of life development, and as re-articulated by Edward’s parental determination that she live a full mortal life—remains the primary source of contention between the lovers within *New Moon* (2006) and *Eclipse* (2007).

As the two swoon and quarrel, separate and reunite, James’s bereaved mate Victoria hunts Bella to avenge her lover’s death. First through an agent and then alone, the vampire tracks the seemingly abandoned Bella only to discover, that in Edward’s absence, werewolf Jacob’s supernatural prowess protects the girl’s life from disaster. When Edward returns, both the undead elite and the embodied powers of the wild forest guard Bella’s life, prompting a frustrated Victoria to hunt them all by raising an army of vampires. The latter half of *Eclipse* sees a dual stand-off: Bella’s love for both Edward and Jacob pits the two natural-born enemies in competition to secure her devotion, yet they, along with their clans, unite to defend Bella’s life from Victoria and her forces.

Here and in the prior instances while hunted, defenseless Bella is kept hidden, guarded, fed, warm and alive entirely through the efforts of her supernatural guardians. Unable to outrun, outwit, or out-manuever either her human or vampire hunters throughout the initiation phase of her heroic adventure, Bella believes the only way she can aid the battle and her loved ones is by making a third sacrificial offering of her life, modeled after that of the “third wife” in Quileute legend, which suggests the existence of

an inherent, mortal, *feminine* power to end an immortal masculine conflict (*Eclipse* 256-258). However, when Bella draws her own blood in battle, her gesture receives a “familiar, exasperated sigh” (550) from a mid-attack Edward. Once victorious, her guardian explains (yet again) the naïveté and futility of her blood offerings and the battle tactic of feigning (559), thus demystifying and deflating Bella’s spiritual notion of empowered feminine self-sacrifice, and reinforcing her sense of innate helplessness in being a mortal female.

The *Road of Trials* motif within Bella’s inverted *Hero’s Journey* positions her as a hunted victim. Rather than appearing as a series of tests revealing her skills or acumen, Bella’s trials confirm her sense of vulnerability, ordinariness, and her inability to act as a heroic savior; by remaining in a state of infantile dependency, she survived only through supernatural intervention. As such, her *Road of Trials* only served to strengthen her resistance to life and her resolve to become a vampire.

Bella’s relationship with Edward supplies her inverted journey’s *Meeting with the Goddess*, and, to a large extent, its *Atonement with the Father* motifs, while Jacob serves in the capacity as Bella’s *Woman as Temptress*.<sup>48</sup> According to Campbell, the *Meeting with the Goddess* motif occurs in heroic initiation after “all the barriers and ogres have been overcome,” allowing for the resolution of “the crisis at nadir” through hero’s “mystical marriage” (*Hero* 91) with the holistic embodiment of the Universal Mother energy, “the life of everything that lives” (94) and “the death of everything that dies” (95). As such, only the gentle-hearted hero (99), capable of supporting and enduring “the full revelation” of

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<sup>48</sup> Although Campbell titled these motifs in gendered terms that presume a heterosexual male hero, his body of work does not define heroism as the province of gender. Substituting neuter interpretations of the natural life energies Campbell describes in gendered terms reveals these motifs to be intrinsically applicable to heroes of any gender or sexual orientation.

“sublimity” (*Hero* 97), realizes the “boon of love” and becomes the “consort of an immortal” (99). The *Woman as Temptress* motif often involves the hero in a romantic dalliance with a paramour who becomes wickedly dangerous, a cast-aside innocent, or sometimes both; the encounter challenges the hero’s resolve to maintain the quest despite the pull life’s physical and material pleasures and his desire for comfort amid the fear of the unknown. In this portion of the journey, the hero must learn to embrace, accept, and release the totality of “the images of life” without either proclaiming evil or defiling virtue, without dichotomizing or disowning any aspect of life (104). Similarly, the *Atonement with the Father* motif sees the hero overcoming the impulse to make either gods or monsters of the activating forces of life by his “abandonment of that self-generated double monster—the dragon thought to be god (superego) and the dragon thought to be sin (repressed id)” (107-110). Whereas the hero’s congress with Universal Mother involves the gestation of an all-encompassing love of life’s many faces, Campbell describes coming to “at-one-ment” (110) with the Father as the hero’s open-soul embrace of the competitive striving of life in the world (124).

In *New Moon*, Edward strategically abandons Bella in the hope of protecting her mortal path. But rather than forgetting him and returning to her mortal life, Bella actively endangers it. Enlisting the unwitting assistance of Jacob, Bella recklessly rides motorcycles and dives from cliffs so as to hear her subconscious manifestation of Edward’s voice, its angry love, paternally admonishing her behavior (e.g. 186, 193). Yet even while consciously devoted to self-destruction, Bella finds unexpected moments of happiness in the warmth of the surrogate “sun” Jacob provides (144), somewhat dividing her affection and loyalties.

Imperfect, temperamental, unpredictable, emotionally guileless Jacob presents supernatural safety within the bounds of mortality; with him Bella sees a human future she desires, one Edward encourages her to live, but one she decides she can live without in deference to becoming the consort of a deity (*Eclipse* 600). Whereas Edward notes that most humans experience an uncanny lack of ease in associating with vampires, from the outset of her journey, Bella is instinctively attracted them, an attraction which the saga suggests is indicative of her destiny to become one of them. Despite Edward's efforts to dissuade her, Bella remains attached to her idealized desire to exchange her humanity for the empowerment vampiric existence represents to her: endless and perfect love, eternal youth, unlimited wealth, flawless physicality, infallible self-control, unfailing parental and communal protection—in other words, heavenly stasis; the utter and permanent relief from the anxieties of *being*.

Unlike the Cullens, Jacob and his people cannot offer Bella an elite life or a death that is not Death. While also supernaturally-endowed outsiders to mainstream society, the Quileutes remain socially-disenfranchised mortals, whose supernatural power only manifests as a reactionary defense to the fact of their co-existence with vampires (*New Moon* 309). While the wealthy Cullens live in self-chosen, luxurious, super-modern isolation, the Quileutes maintain modest lives on their tribal lands, within the bounds and socioeconomic limitations of a government reservation. Jacob possesses exceptional practical and mechanical skills, but immortality and wealth have afforded the Cullen vampires the time and resources to not only develop these same skills (e.g., Rosalie serves as her family's auto-mechanic), but also to hone aesthetic and artistic talents, and pursue

extensive higher education in sciences and humanities. Whereas each of the Cullen vampires possess innate individual super-capacities that they willingly use on behalf of their chosen family (e.g., Edward's ability to read minds or Alice's power to see future events), the Quileute werewolves have a singular, communal capacity that involuntarily binds them to one another within a hierarchical chain of command, depriving each of mental privacy and holding them collectively responsible for the preservation of all human life. Provided an overcast sky, the Cullens have the means and freedom to travel the world at will, while duty and relative poverty binds the Quileutes called as guardians to their birthplace. In other words, possessing werewolf power makes Quileutes pack members *supernatural*, but not socially-superior *superhumans* in the manner of the Cullen vampires; in comparison, humans are simply creatures made vulnerable by forces of life they cannot hope to match in battle or in beauty, made fragile by their ephemeral temporality, and, in Bella's estimation, rendered lesser beings for their lack of mastery over their natures.

Bella rejects the course of mortal lifetime with Jacob in favor of opening herself to the possible terror and rewards of "at-one-ment" with what she may become as a vampire. Yet, rather than reconciling her dualistic images of the sorrows and joys of life, and truly accepting, with equanimity, her human vices and virtues, Bella satisfies her desire to become capable of dominating and defending against the forces she finds threatening, to and in herself and as manifested by others, by reluctantly agreeing to marry her beloved Edward in exchange for sexual intercourse and immortality (*Eclipse* 448, 453-455).

Twenty-first-century Bella, maternally-indoctrinated with reservations about the institution of marriage, devalues its social ritual for fear of what she has seen of its

impermanence. While she rejects every other desire arising from her human body, Bella eagerly anticipates exploring her human sexuality with Edward. For turn-of-the-twentieth-century Edward, the meaning of marriage and significance of its sexual consummation hails from the vestiges of his human life, from the different import the marriage ritual and sex act holds to a boy born in 1901 than it does to a girl born in 1988. Thus nostalgia, as dramatized by Edward's investment in the ritual consummation of marriage, incentivizes marriage for Bella, who is surprised to find, in enacting its rite, that marrying Edward actually communicates something to her after all.

Only after enacting the rite of marriage permits Bella to satisfy her sexual desire does she find value in her human life, and feel she might like remain mortal a bit longer (*Breaking Dawn* 103-105). But, as with any fairy tale or mythic story, the moment the heroine decides to stay put without completing her chosen quest marks the moment the Fates intervene to drag her onward. Bella achieves her journey's *Apotheosis* and receives its *Ultimate Boon* simultaneously: giving birth to the half-human, half vampire child conceived on her honeymoon ends Bella's mortal life and thus demands her transition into immortality.

The stage of the journey Campbell called its *Apotheosis* occurs with the hero's death, either literal or figurative, which frees the hero from her struggles within the realm of opposites and unbinds her from the limitations of her human form (*Hero* 127-142). While the *Apotheosis* of Bella's tale unites the archetypal forces of death and birth, neither her daughter Renesmee's birth, nor Bella's death and rebirth occur within either purely natural or supernatural circumstances; each natural process instead transpires through the supernatural intervention of vampire and werewolf, aided by a bit of human scientific

ingenuity. Renesmee's placenta detaches; fighting to breathe, she crushes Bella's ribs and spine. Bella's human body gestated, but cannot release the baby into life; Edward incises Bella's womb with a scalpel to birth their daughter. Bella declares her child's beauty as her own heart stops beating; Jacob uses CPR techniques to sustain Bella's blood and breath until Edward, fearing his bite will not spread his venom quickly enough to secure her undeath, injects his transfiguring venom into Bella's heart with a syringe. He supplements this artificial insemination with multiple bites along her circumferential extremities and injections of high-dose morphine in the hope of easing the pain of Bella's transformation (*Breaking Dawn* 348-374). In this scene, science mingles with fantasy to triumph over death, allowing for the delivery of the magical elixir of immortality and the retrieval of Bella's supernatural boon. Yet it also portrays birth as a terror from which the human female body cannot recover, for which it proves a vessel too frail to transport a life sired by a superior patriarch, a man empowered by science and fantasy-fortune to both birth his child and save its mother from death.

The achievement Meyer portrays as heroic in Bella's *Apotheosis* does not speak to her attainment of an energetic balance that allows her live beyond fear and desire, such as Campbell suggests is typical of the hero's reward at this stage in the journey (*Hero* 127-142), but rather to Bella's mental domination of her physical pain and death in becoming an immortal. The morphine had no effect but to disable Bella's ability to express what remains of her human experience of pain; to the world she appears as Sleeping Beauty, while enduring days of unceasing, fiery torment and transforming into an object of fixed perfection through her indiscernible, indescribable internal suffering.

She tells readers that, due to paralysis, she cannot beg for the death she desires and that her only relief comes of her belief that, in keeping her pain silent, she does not cause the pain of others (*Breaking Dawn* 374-381). Throughout the series Bella takes great pride in her ability to conceal her thoughts and repress her feelings, and her vampiric change proves the ultimate test of her masochistic skills; this trial repeats a core motif faced by numerous fairy-tale heroines and Christian martyrs, which suggests that the reward of a privileged existence await those who willingly and silently endure extreme physical and emotional suffering.

Insufficient to contain her desires, the eighteen-year-old human body Bella felt she could not coordinate or control well enough to move through life, that she disdained for its frailty and asymmetrical imperfections, that she begrudgingly fed, and whose blood she feared and resented for its ability to suggest her true thoughts and feelings through her blush; the body she only began to accept in discovering its capacity for pleasurable sensation and its ability to gestate life, has been transformed through her will and her wishes into a vampiric body of a woman she does not recognize, save for a tiny, familiar flaw in the proportion of her top and bottom lips (403-405).

As within many fairy tales and myths, Bella's magically deified body appears to have been granted as her reward for having loved and suffered. However, rather than coming from a fairy godmother or protecting goddess, her transformation is a gift bestowed by her guardian patriarch. No longer human, Bella's vampire body acts as a receiver for a rarified sensory experience of reality: she feels with intensity, observes new dimensions of details, perceives with extreme clarity, and sings when she speaks. Her vampire body moves with precision and grace with her slightest intention; it hungers to attack and kill in the face of

danger; it possesses strength enough to inadvertently crush the natural world and the superhuman restraint to assure that she does not. While the Cullens warned Bella that newborn vampires struggle with their uncontrollable bloodlust, vampire Bella awakens able to fully mentally self-regulate her physical desires. Bella's new body will not age, fall ill, nor bear another life; hers is now entirely a life of the mind encased within an impenetrable stone fortress receptive to extreme sensation—in Freudian terms, Bella now lives as her super-ego incarnate whilst indulging in all the pleasures craved by the id. Balance will ever be, for Bella, the disequilibrium of mind *over* matter (*Twilight* Chapter 14) because science (laced with magic) made it so—the human fantasy of immortality come true in ultramodern terms. Bella has become her personal definition of the “perfect” woman: an eternal child, the bride of a god, the mother of a Campbellian *Ultimate Boon* superhuman child—an inhumanly beautiful, graceful, powerful bastion of self-control, enabled to protect and preserve all she loves.

### Return

Campbell suggests that the act returning from the realm of the gods, back across the initial threshold while carrying the adventure's boon often poses more far difficulties to the hero than answering the call to adventure did at its start. He observes that heroes resolve the final challenges of their journey in one of three ways: in the *Refusal of the Return* motif, the hero keeps the boon a private affair, and remains outside or further retreats from the world (*Hero* 169); in the motif Campbell called *The Magic Flight*, the hero either returns to the world with the aid of boon guardians, who delight in sharing their treasure with

humanity, or (as is common in comic folk tales) the hero absconds with the boon, pursued by angry, hoodwinked deities (173); and in the *Rescue from Without* motif, the World intervenes to retrieve its hero from the realm of adventure (178). Regardless of how the hero returns, in coming back to the world, the hero must endure some variation of the *Crossing of the Return Threshold* motif by “[knitting] together two worlds” (196)—that of “the soul-satisfying vision of fulfillment” with that of “the passing joys and sorrows, banalities and noisy obscenities of life” (189)—for both himself and for the uninitiated. The returned, self-integrated hero then tends to enjoy a variation of *Master of Two Worlds* and *Freedom to Live* motifs by becoming “the champion of things becoming” and thus free to live (209).

The finale of Bella’s journey in *Breaking Dawn* employs each of the three of the heroic return motifs Campbell described. In one sense, by having become a vampire, Bella refused the possibility of making a heroic return to her world. She has chosen to live as one of the gods encountered upon her journey. They granted her transformation, and her daughter-boon becomes the treasure of their familial pantheon. However, the New World Cullen coven’s tendency to stretch and reinterpret the tenets of their species catches the attention of the Old Gods—the Volturi, an ancient Italian patriarchal triumvirate, who dictate and enforce vampire law. Bella’s return, via a variation of the *Magic Flight* motif littered with political overtones and religious symbology, commences when the Volturi mistake Renesmee for an immortal child, a creation they forbid.

Under the protection of the Cullen coven and Jacob’s werewolves, Bella introduces Renesmee to citizens of the world, ranging from her human grandfather Charlie to an assortment of vampires, who, with awe and reverence, experience the child’s dual nature

and strange talent for sharing her thoughts visually through touch. Bella crosses the return threshold to share her boon with other vampires only for the strategic purpose of gathering an assembly willing to bear witness to Renesmee's true nature before a Volturi inquisition, and perhaps come to Renesmee's aid, should the inquisition call for her destruction. Thus through the efforts of Bella and her new family, vampires and werewolves unite in defense of the child, the assembly enacting a world-unifying version of the *Rescue from Without* motif.

The *Crossing of the Return Threshold* motif of Bella's journey concludes with her success in having protected her family, friends, and allies with her vampirically-enhanced talent, her ability to expand her personal mental shield to include the minds of others, thus keeping all she guards safe from the Volturi retinue's mental attacks. As Bella's narrative inverted the *Hero's Journey*, instead of facing this crisis as Campbell suggests the life-affirming call-heeding hero would (i.e., by avoiding "human failure" without relying upon "superhuman success" (*Hero* 178)), Bella intercedes with the miraculous power she longed to obtain and exercise, that of protecting herself and loved ones by shielding all from outside influence, and so achieves her Disney-esque fairy-tale ending by emerging victorious from a bloodless, deathless war. With Jacob's assistance and Charlie's embrace of psychological denial, Bella circumvents the vampire rule of secrecy and incorporates her father into her immortal life. Bella reconciles with Jacob, who "imprinted" upon Renesmee, and thus transferred his romantic love for Bella into becoming Renesmee's sworn guardian, life-time devotee, and, perhaps, intended betrothed. Meyer's saga ends as Bella and Edward return to their cottage in the woods, put their daughter to bed, and Bella

fulfills Edward's deepest wish: she invites him past her mental shield into her thoughts, feelings, and memories.

*Breaking Dawn's* epigraph offers the true key to decoding the riddle of the Twilight saga's vast popularity with its multigenerational, mostly female audience in quoting Edna St. Vincent Millay: "*Childhood is not from birth to a certain age and at a certain age / The child is grown, and puts away childish things. / Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies.*" Like many of the salon fairy tales devised by the ladies of the seventeenth-century French aristocracy, the Twilight saga serves as a wish-fulfillment narrative that imagines ways of being and resolutions to socially pervasive existential tensions alternative to those commonly embraced by Meyer's culture. Subsequently, like any such fairy-tale-esque narrative, the Twilight saga reflects the unconscious and/or disowned thoughts and feelings of those affectively engaged with its content. Both through and beyond its idealized love story, Meyer's fantasy describes not only a "kingdom where nobody dies," but celebrates a kingdom where nobody, if Chosen, need ever individuate into adulthood or accept life's inherent uncertainty—a kingdom of eternal childhood where those Chosen need never be fully *human*. As writer Lev Grossman observed, many fans of Meyer's saga "want to climb inside" this fairy-tale kingdom "and live there." ("The Next J.K. Rowling?").

In researching her own answer to the riddle of Twilight's popularity with women, Tanya Erzen, author of *Fanpire: The Twilight Saga and the Women Who Love It* (2012), immersed herself in the "cultural phenomenon" of Twilight fandom—visiting websites and

discussion forums, attending the conventions, film screenings, signings, Cullenist services,<sup>49</sup> and pilgrimages to the town of Forks, Washington—born out of Meyer’s novels.<sup>50</sup> Erzen surmises that while the Twilight saga’s love story appeals, its overarching narrative “also taps into deeper, more pervasive notions about marriage, family, girlhood, sexuality, and celebrity” (xv). She writes:

In Twilight’s funhouse mirror the fears, insecurities, and longings of many girls and women are confronted and upended. Your biological family is dysfunctional, abusive, or disconnected, but in Twilight you are embraced by a chosen, nonbiological, and obscenely wealthy family. Your marriage may be disappointing or abusive, but marriage in Twilight is a supernatural heterosexual model of eternal passion and monogamy. You may be overwhelmed by the American mantra of empowered girlhood that says *you* are responsible for creating your best life, but Bella marries at eighteen, foregoes college, and forsakes her friends because it’s her choice to do so. . . . You may feel anonymous and insignificant, but Twilight promises you can become extraordinary. Enchantment lurks around the corner, beckoning in the form of a shimmering, supernatural world where you are desirable and powerful, living vicariously through the character of Bella (xv-xvi).

The girls and women Erzen interviewed identified with Bella’s ordinariness, seeing her not as an “alpha girl” or a “glamazon” (7) but as someone imperfect, “like every teenage girl” (10). Many upheld that Bella’s self-sacrificing and silent-suffering tendencies, along with her “stubbornness” and demonstrated “initiative in her relentless campaign to convince Edward to make her immortal,” qualify her as a praiseworthy “role-model” (Erzen 13). Yet Erzen contends that the same interviewees felt “Bella’s worst crime is her metamorphosis from klutz to

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<sup>49</sup> Erzen reports the existence of “a forum on *Twifans*” that hosts weekly on-line meetings for Cullenists. As one “Cullenite” describes, “Cullenism is a mass group of people . . . who have come together to appreciate the vales and ideals represented by the Twilight series. We are not a religion (or a cult, lol!) But we will be comparing Twilight with religion.” (qtd. in Erzen 61).

<sup>50</sup> In addition to conducting extensive individual interviews with fans in-person and on-line, Erzen received approximately 600 responses to her online survey from fans residing in the United States. Ninety-eight percent of Erzen’s respondents identified as female, eighty-five-percent identified as white, and eighty-percent self-described as non-denominational or Catholic Christians (xiv).

glitzy and glamorous vampire.” As one fan told Erzen, “I liked the shy, kind of scared, kind of nervous, clumsy [person]. . . . But there wasn’t a Bella after she changed into a vampire.” Human Bella, says the young fan, “was the Bella we fell in love with” (qtd. in Erzen 14).

Change and choice challenge the fanpire. According to Erzen, many interviewees and survey respondents “admitted to being weary of making decisions,” and “long for lives with guarantees, not ones that feel unsettled and precarious” (12). According to Erzen, adolescent fanpires, bewildered by the “confusing and contradictory” array of “options” reputedly available to all young modern American women, feel “intense” pressure “to make the right choices and build a successful life” (11). As such, Bella’s proclaimed emotional certainty and permanent solutions (as well as her paternalistic, controlling, devoted paramour) deeply appealed to the girls Erzen interviewed (18-19), so much so that some felt a sense of “betrayal” in realizing the unlikelihood of their chances of living the emotional reality Bella experiences in the novels (14).

Adult female fans of the saga, Erzen suggests, “see their younger, optimistic, and risk-taking selves mirrored back to them in the books,” returning them to past feelings and a time “when they could envision themselves outside of the label of mother and wife” (40), thus allowing them to reconnect to lost parts of self and bond with other fan-women via this shared “nascent vein of repression and release” (41). Yet Erzen also contradictorily contends that the series appeals to women because it “valorizes the choices of traditional marriage and motherhood, the same choices so many fans have already made” (Erzen 48)—choices about which many of these adult fans also reputedly feel disillusioned, such that Erzen observes them “seizing something invigorating and emotionally cathartic from

Twilight that is absent from the rest of their lives” (41). Erzen notes how “[m]any women fixate on Bella’s [abandonment] trauma in *New Moon*,” relaying one fan-mother’s confession of wanting to scream out at night during times of emotional difficulty, as Bella does, but refraining so as not to scare her children (41-42).

Female fan responses to the Twilight saga express deep personal ambivalences about their options and choices, reflecting social paradoxes concerning coming-of-age expectations for adolescent girls. Many fans who criticize Bella’s passivity and lack of worldly ambition also express longing for Bella’s attainments and emotional attachments. Even while categorizing their relationship as co-dependent and much of Edward’s behavior as stalking, many fans covet Bella and Edward’s romance and consider him an ideally ‘old-fashioned’, protective partner. They pair Bella’s self-sacrificing attitude and material disinterest with their desire for and envy of the devotion, glamor, wealth, and possessions Bella’s humility and repressed humanity appear to afford her. Many defend Bella’s right to ‘choose’ her life and love while wholeheartedly wanting to believe in an inevitable destiny replete with one true ‘soul mate.’ These same girls and women harken from a culture that proudly touts the message that they can do and be ‘anything’ they choose, along with reminders that they can’t have it all and that their girlhood choices may make or break their chances of adult success and happiness. They live in a society that often proclaims to have achieved equal rights for all, but has yet to recognize women and men as persons of equal stature within their national constitution.

Just as the salon fairy tales served as outlets for the education, imagination, and perhaps social frustration of Parisian female aristocrats, Meyer’s novel began of an educated, Mormon, Phoenix housewife’s longing to indulge in a fantasy, to keep hold of

a personal dream in waking—a dream of two passionate, star-crossed young lovers, so different from her everyday life of “making breakfast for hungry children, [and] dressing and changing the diapers of said children” (Winfrey, Meyer “The Story Behind *Twilight*”). Meyer insists she, like so many of her fans, “was in love with” the “fantastically beautiful, sparkly” dream vampire, whom she named for Brontë’s Mr. Rochester and Austen’s Mr. Ferrars, “from day one.” In explaining the origins of *Twilight*’s sequel, *New Moon*, Meyer first blogs a reminder that she wrote the original “story for [her] personal enjoyment, letting it grow as it would and lead where it would” without intending to “write a novel or begin a career as an author.” Returning to her dream-world after the publication of *Twilight*, Meyer proceeded intuitively, allowing the characters to tell her their story and soon found herself tearfully begging Edward not leave Bella. However, Meyer blogged that the situation presented her with “an interesting question” faced by a swath of literary heroines, mostly adolescent, throughout the ages:

What if true love left you? Not some ordinary high school romance, not some random jock boyfriend, not anyone at all replaceable. True love. The real deal. Your other half, your true soul's match. What happens if he leaves?

The answer is different for everyone. Juliet had her version, Marianne Dashwood had hers, Isolde and Catherine Earnshaw and Scarlett O'Hara and Anne Shirley all had their ways of coping. (“The Story . . . *New Moon*”)

Meyer describes writing “to see what [Bella] would do,” feeling her heroine’s pain, crying her tears, and finding herself surprised by Bella’s “grit and dogged determination.” At this point, Meyer interrupts her blog with a fascinating aside, intended to address criticism of *New Moon* that deemed her grieving Bella “a wuss” and claimed that Meyer’s “stories are misogynistic—[since] the damsel in distress must be rescued by a strong hero.” In “emphatically reject[ing]” the latter charge, Meyer provides unselfconscious, bold-faced

insight into a crucial, taboo aspect of the Twilight saga's fantasy appeal to both its author and many of its readers. "I am all about girl power—look at Alice and Jane if you doubt that," Meyer wrote. "I am not anti-female, **I am anti-human**" ("The Story . . . *New Moon*").

As Erzen reported, many fans love human Bella and want an Edward of their own, yet experience discomfort with Bella's vampiric transition. However, they also unwittingly identify with Bella's staunchly *anti-human* stance, her disdain of her body, her imperfections, her vulnerabilities. Fanpire ambivalence about Bella's transformation reveals their envy and their fear of the implications of Bella's choices and changes. Becoming a vampire pulls Bella out of the ordinary, uncertain *us* and makes her one of an elite, empowered *them*. Like readers, Bella initially desires and envies Edward for what she perceives as his flawlessness; in the first novel alone, she most often apprehends Edward using the non-specific terms as *perfect*<sup>51</sup> and *beautiful*.<sup>52</sup> Bella expresses her covetous admiration of vampire physicality through references to visual media—advertising, fashion, and film—and representations of transcendent beings, gods and angels,<sup>53</sup> images with which she compares and contrasts her self-image, always finding her human self lacking. Throughout the saga, she envies vampires their stone *stillness*, and Bella's wishful coveting begets her attainments.

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<sup>51</sup> e.g., *Twilight* 19, 74, 79, 81, 162, 168, 210, 241, 256, 261, 277, 282, 481.

<sup>52</sup> e.g., *Twilight* 20, 22, 50, 61, 79, 81, 204, 281, 292, 459.

<sup>53</sup> Bella's physical descriptions of the Cullens emphasize their symmetry and clarity: "all their features were straight . . . angular" (*Twilight* 18); Rosalie has the figure of "a swimsuit model in *Sports Illustrated*," while "pixielike" (18) Alice has a manner of walking that "belongs on a runway" (19) and father Carlisle is "handsomer than any movie star" (61). According to Bella, the Cullens' faces are of a sort found only "on the airbrushed pages of a fashion magazine" or in paintings of angels (19). She describes the vampires, coming indoors after playing in the snow, as having "looked more like a scene from a movie" than did any of her human classmates (41), noting that Edward appeared to have "just finished shooting a commercial for hair gel" (43). These descriptions notably do not describe anything; they rely on the reader's consumption of media and imagination.

In Meyer's kingdom of childhood, Bella's stubborn, infantile refusal to live and change marks her as special, affords her the eternal love and protection of an ideal parent-lover who watches her sleep and cradles her in the very "rocking chair" from her "baby days" that still lingers in her teenage bedroom (*Twilight* 9, 312-314). In our world, more often than not, refusing to accept the reality of life's temporality and transience begets ambivalence, anxiety, and a feeling of being stuck.

"A fairy tale," Joseph Campbell told Bill Moyers, "is a child's myth," a story meant only to be sturdy enough to temporarily support the challenges specific to childhood growth. "Very often," he observes,

they're about a little girl who doesn't want to grow up to be a woman. . . . So she goes to sleep until the prince comes through all the barriers and gives her a reason to think it might be nice on the other side after all. Many of the Grimm tales represent the little girl who is stuck. All of these dragon-slayings and threshold crossings have to do with getting past being stuck (*Power* 168).

A mythologically functioning narrative points past itself, drawing our attention to things we cannot yet fully comprehend or name, but long to see. *Twilight's* emotional content—its overwhelming sense of the adolescent longing to *become* and fear of *being*—resonates more deeply than might be expected of a mere 'love story' because its archetypal content reflects pervasively disowned twenty-first century American anxieties about liminality and uncertainty, anxieties socially projected upon adolescent girls.

Like Bella, readers of all ages and genders struggle with the same timelessly human existential anxieties of being: What does it mean to *become*? How do I choose? How do I know if I am safe? How do I make peace with living in a physical body, with its permeability, with aging, with my own impermanence? How do I reconcile myself to living,

when life necessarily feeds on life, when I know that life ends and that the time and manner of its ending are uncertain? How do I live in the natural world, when I've had so little direct experience of it, when my nature makes me vulnerable to its nature?

But rather than becoming an adult by acquiescing to life's uncertainty, Bella resolves her anxiety by ceasing to be human at age eighteen. Like Bella, our individual and social fear of coming-of-age is such that we appear to be stuck in a developmental fugue state, standing on adulthood's threshold after a prolonged adolescence, afraid to ring its doorbell. By dissociating human body from mind, Meyer rendered a uniquely seductive modern psychic predator, a vampire that not only expresses all the danger intrinsic to an archetypal shadow predator, but also serves as an archetypal *puer aeternus*, the eternal child so concerned with preserving life that he denies the life of the body in favor of those of spirit and mind. Like *puella aeternus* Bella, America wants "the good parts" of growing up—an idealized version of a body, marriage, sexuality, family, community, wealth—without any counterweights attached, without the experience of gestation, without the active effort of cultivation, without the inevitable reality of death. Yet the metaphor of the mythological *Refusal of Suitors* motif has always whispered that life changes, with or without our resistance or participation. It tells us that our only guaranteed destiny is death.

Becoming a Meyer vampire resolves the anxiety of being in the idealized Disneyfied style with which many Americans seem most comfortable, offering candy to placate the starving child within, the one who craved an example of a mature human being in order to know how to aspire to become one, but instead became lost in a fantasy of perfection. The eternal, infallible security Edward represents appeals to youth's lingering innocent infantile

desire to be the sole center of another's focus and attention, the center of their universe, to be the sun itself. It makes sense that we have invited a 'vegetarian' vampire such as Edward into a society that craves initiation into adulthood but cannot find its door. We want to grow up, but without growing up. We do not want the story to end.

## Chapter VII

### Katniss Everdeen: The Girl Who Lived (Despite Never Having Been Meant to Be)

Katniss Everdeen is the “girl who should never have existed,” says her creator, author Suzanne Collins. “She is the thing that should never have been created, that the Capitol never intended to happen.” During a 2010 interview with Ray Margolis entitled “The Last Battle,” Collins detailed the allegorical parallels between the heroine of her Hunger Games trilogy (2008, 2009, 2010) and the creature namesake of both its final volume and Katniss’s alter ego, the mockingjay. Seventy-five years before Katniss’s story begins, during the Dark Days rebellion within Panem, the country’s extremist totalitarian Capitol “genetically designed” a small black talking bird as a weapon of espionage. The Capitol sent their jabberjays to record the rebels’ conversations, and after cottoning on, the rebels repurposed the Capitol’s weapon by feeding the birds false information. The Capitol then cast off their defunct avian spies, abandoning them to die in the wild. Yet the jabberjays survived to mate with female mockingbirds and hatch the mockingjay, a black-and-white songbird with a gift for mimicking human melodies that thrives throughout Panem; a new species arisen from life’s propensity to sustain its own trajectory of evolution regardless of the intentions of human design. As a child of Panem’s coal-mining District Twelve, Collins says Katniss, like the mockingjay, was dismissed from birth as a creature unworthy of the Capitol’s attention or concern. Considered the “joke” of Panem’s Districts, too “small and poor” to ever pose a threat, the Capitol kept security “lax” in

Twelve, leaving just enough unregulated space for the sort of girl willing to crawl under government fences to feed her family to develop an unusual “degree of independent thinking” and evolve into an entirely “new creature” of the sort never intended to exist.

Yet exist Katniss Everdeen does, at least within the American public’s imagination, and to such an extent that in April of 2011 *The Atlantic* declared her “the most important female character in recent pop culture history” (Lewit). The popularity of the Hunger Games trilogy ignited so rapidly that by August 2012 media sources as diverse as *Forbes Magazine* and *Jezebel* clamored to relay how Katniss had propelled Amazon.com’s sales of Collins’s three novels past those of the seven comprising J.K Rowling’s Harry Potter series in just four years, making them Amazon.com’s all-time best-selling novels (Gaudiosi, Barry). Katniss also magnetized a sizable fan-base, one so frequently described as *rabid* and *obsessed* that Vulture.com ranked Hunger Games fans as number seven in its list of “The Twenty-Five Most Devoted Fan Bases;” and Katniss’s film avatar, actress Jennifer Lawrence’s description of being mobbed by “hundreds of teenagers, some wearing Katniss outfits, screaming and crying hysterically,” reminded psychologist Margaret Skinner of “how girls behaved at Beatles concerts when [she] was a teenager.” (Skinner and McCord 113).

According to Collins’s 2013 interview with *Time Magazine*, Katniss, like Athena, “arrived almost fully formed” within her creator’s “head,” appearing as “an archer,” “the sole support of her family,” and “a very admirable” yet “deeply flawed character” defiantly “insisting on telling the story” via a first-person present narrative despite Collins’s conscious intent to write the novels she had planned in third-person past tense (Grossman, “I’m more like”). While her protagonist may have determined the trilogy’s voice, Collins

reveals her extreme authorial precision in defining Katniss's complex character, noting that she is both the girl who, on page one, announces having tried to drown a kitten and, within two chapters, will have volunteered to risk death to spare her younger sister. Collins describes having intentionally written Katniss as a troubled, parentified<sup>54</sup> child with "hard won" survival skills, someone simultaneously "very mature" and "extremely immature for her age," formed by having "had great responsibility thrust on [her] at too early an age" (qtd. in Grossman, "I'm More Like"), and, who, throughout the series, exhibits "classic post-traumatic-stress disorder symptoms," such "nightmares," "flashbacks," and "practicing avoidance" of environmental "triggers" (qtd. in Grossman, "Katniss is"). Collins suggests that only a character as "deeply flawed" as Katniss could survive the Hunger Games storyline, empathically adding that Katniss "deep down has a good heart, but you know that she's capable of making the choices that nobody should have to make;" "her moral compass shifts," observes Collins. "It isn't always pointing north. It isn't always pointing to the right and moral choice." (qtd. in Grossman, "I'm More Like").

Given Collins's carefully premeditated rendering of her heroine's psychological ambivalences, issues, and complexities, easily evidenced throughout the pages of her trilogy, how is it that Katniss Everdeen was deemed "the new tween It Girl" by *Entertainment Weekly* book reviewer Nicole Sperling? Considering Katniss's moral ambiguities, how does *The Nation*'s writer Katha Pollit interpret "moral centeredness" as "key" to Katniss's character (10), and why does she read Collins's post-apocalyptic survivalist forced into an arena of children killing children as "an independent spirit" who "is not about her looks, her

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<sup>54</sup> Please refer to Note 45 in Chapter VI for a full definition of the psychological term *parentification*.

clothes, her weight, her popularity, gossip, drama or boys” (Pollit 10)? Why, given the extraordinary extremity of the circumstances and traumas Katniss endures, does *New York Times* book reviewer Katie Roiphe rather flippantly describe Katniss in *Mockingjay* as “bossy, moody, bratty, demanding, prickly,” “a great character without being exactly likable,” who “treats the world with an explosive aggression that is a little out of the ordinary, to say the least”—and how is it that she reads Collins’s trilogy as “the perfect teenage story with its exquisitely refined rage against the cruel and arbitrary power of the adult world”? Not that Roiphe was alone in having read the Hunger Games trilogy as an allegory for the experience of adolescence. But when asked for her thoughts on this popular construal of her trilogy by *New York Times* staff writer Susan Dominus in 2011, Collins replied, “I don’t write about adolescence . . . I write about war. For adolescents.”

Collins recalls her heroine’s story first surfacing as she drowsily channel surfed between a reality television show competition and news coverage of young soldiers fighting in Iraq until the two programs became blurred for her “in a very unsettling way” (qtd. in Margolis, “A Killer Story”). A children’s television writer turned novelist, Collins developed this spark by channeling her concerns about our society’s consumption of media into a trilogy of novels intended for teenagers aligned with her “larger goal” as a writer to craft “a war-appropriate story for every age of kid”—a goal inspired by her late father’s efforts to “make sure that all of his children had an understanding about war, about its cost, its consequences” (qtd. in Grossman, “Writing ‘War-Appropriate’”).

Air Force veteran Michael Collins suffered life-long post-traumatic nightmares after returning from Vietnam, yet spent his career in service as a military historian and professor of political science. Collins's father held positions with NATO and the Pentagon, taught and lectured at West Point Academy, the Air Command Staff, and the Air War College (Blasingame, Henthorne), and, in addition to providing her with "forty years" of tutoring on the subject of war (qtd. in Grossman "Writing 'War-Appropriate'"), also read his youngest daughter "the part about Spartacus" from Pultarch's *Parallel Lives* to give her a "historical context" for her love of Greek and Roman mythology, another source of inspiration for Collins's Hunger Games trilogy (qtd. in Grossman "I Was Destined").

As an eight year old, Collins says she developed a particular fascination with the Greek myth of Theseus of Athens.<sup>55</sup> The cruel ruthlessness of the message behind the Cretan decree ("mess with us and we'll do something worse than kill you—we'll kill your children") struck Collins deeply, along with how "apparently powerless" Athenian parents were to stop the sacrifice of their children (qtd. in Margolis, "A Killer Story"). While Collins acknowledges the myth provides the "set-up for where *The Hunger Games* begins" by positioning Katniss as its "futuristic Theseus," Collins has also said that "the historical figure of Spartacus"—the Thracian slave turned Roman gladiator, who broke out of his school and led a rebellion inciting the Third Servile War—actually "becomes more of a model for the arc of the three books, [and] for Katniss" (qtd. in Margolis, "A Killer Story").

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<sup>55</sup> In this Greek myth, King Minos of Crete demanded that the vanquished Athenians routinely send seven boys and seven girls as tribute to feed his shame, the monstrous Minotaur, until Prince Theseus voluntarily entered the labyrinth and slew the beast.

Sometimes the thing we intend to create is not the only consequence realized in the execution of a design. As Collins trilogy observes, nature has a way of cutting its own course. What one mind births, others may repurpose in attempting to satiate their particular needs and hungers. Undoubtedly Collins wrote a sophisticated, intricate story probing the dynamics of war, culture, and power, one that very consciously incorporates historical, mythical, and fairy-tale allusions and symbolism while making extensive allegorical correlates to the real sociopolitical world of our past and present. However, by using mythological and fairy-tale scaffolding, stage-sets, characters, motifs, and props to construct her narrative, by relying heartily on symbolic affect and the tangible emotional and psychological intimacy generated by Katniss's sixteen-year-old first-person voice, Collins also, apparently unintentionally, created an exceedingly powerful shadow narrative that functions mythologically to explore an adolescent girl's individuation into adulthood.

The vast and extreme popular response to the Hunger Games narrative and the proliferation of disparate character readings, reactions to, and identifications with Katniss Everdeen offer testimony of the psychospiritual anxieties, confusions, and hungers of the audiences engaging with Collins's trilogy. By undertaking an analysis of how the Hunger Games trilogy's monomythic structure of 'separation—initiation—return' and other archetypal content enacts its mythological function, and by exploring the psychomythological content this function activates, we begin to understand what, how, and why Collins's unintended shadow narrative of adolescence communicates to and with audiences around the world.

## Separation

The Hunger Games trilogy begins amid a heroic separation five years underway, with a swirl of archetypal images and opposing energies that anticipate the *Call to Adventure* motif still to come. Reaching out for her sister's warmth, sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen awakens to a cold bed on a day that reminds her of the shape of her losses. Arising, Katniss imagines nightmares about the reaping<sup>56</sup> have driven Prim into their mother's bed seeking comfort. For Katniss, comfort comes of wearing her dead father's jacket (e.g., *THG* 28, *Catching* 6) and inhabiting his place as family protector and provider by leaving home to hunt the forbidden woods using weapons her father fashioned.

The coal mine explosion that left nothing of her father's body to bury (*THG* 5) rendered Katniss's mother "blank and unreachable," a waking body absent of mind and spirit, a "woman who sat by . . . while her children turned to skin and bones" (8). Waylaying grief and anger, an eleven-year-old Katniss rallied skills, weapons, knowledge, and gifts inherited from her father to ensure the family's survival and, above all, protect her sister, Primrose, who remains the only person in the world Katniss feels certain she loves (10). In endeavoring not only to sustain Prim's life, but also to protect its innocence—her childhood sense of security, her purity of self, her free expression of feeling, her instinctive compassion and empathy, her wish to connect to and heal the suffering of all living things—Katniss sacrificed access to these qualities within herself so as to empower her access to their opposite. Ruthlessly disconnecting from her own emotions afforded Katniss a store of energy to redirect into the disciplined, calculated administration of death, exacted to

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<sup>56</sup> i.e., the lottery selection of child tributes forced to participate in Panem's annual Hunger Games.

safeguard the survival of all she values. Having invested her sister's person with her disowned aspects of self, Katniss's love of Prim has become transpersonal; thus, in protecting Prim, Katniss also attempts to protect and preserve her own innocence, left fragmented by the explosion that deprived her of both parents.

As such, Katniss's *Call to Adventure* comes of the very herald she has tried desperately to evade: the incalculability of chance in adulthood's brutal reaping of childhood innocence. Despite Katniss's efforts to hunt, scavenge, and self-sacrifice to keep the odds in her sister's favor, Prim's single lottery entry marks her as a tribute for the Hunger Games, a grotesque social ritual designed by Panem's Capitol to reinforce government dominance and citizen subjugation through its consumption of the citizenry's young.<sup>57</sup> By volunteering to take Prim's place in the Games, Katniss accepts the herald's call on instinct, without calculation, without question—thus contradicting her carefully constructed defensive external persona and revealing her most protected aspects of self: her innocence and love.

By threatening the sole thing Katniss holds dear, this herald also announces the shape of Katniss's adventure, that of the classic mythological motif in which the hero must endeavor to retrieve something lost or taken, a quest that ultimately yields growth through individuation (Campbell *Hero* 41-43). Katniss does not undertake her journey for its illusory promise of socioeconomic rewards or in order to stage the rebellion her participation eventually incites. She accepts the call to adventure as a self divided, identifying as her father's daughter solely to ensure the survival of her mother's daughter, whom she takes to be

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<sup>57</sup> After first demanding all district children between the ages of twelve and eighteen to enter the Hunger Games lottery at least once, more often for access to food, the Capitol requires Panem's citizens to witness the live-broadcast of the twenty-four tributes fighting one another and the Games arena until only one remains alive.

Prim. Yet surviving this adventure will demand that Katniss abandon her attachment to this dichotomized separation and recover her lost aspects of self. While five years of deprivation and self-sacrifice fashioned a divided Katniss into the consummate survivor, surviving this adventure will require that she learn to *live* wholly, in full knowledge of the world.

The supernatural—in the traditional phantasmagoric or divine sense—has little place within the Hunger Games trilogy beyond the Capitol’s horrific genetically engineered mutations.<sup>58</sup> However master illusionists, psychic guidance, chance occurrences, and totemic, life-giving tokens abound throughout Katniss’s journey, providing her with the *Supernatural Aid* necessary to undertake, survive, and endure her quest. The three primary protectors of her adventure appear as she prepares to cross its first threshold, each announcing his mythological function by arousing pairs of opposing energies in the heroine, a mythological motif echoing the affective and archetypal experiences of our “original separation” from the maternal womb at birth (Campbell *Hero* 44).

Within moments of volunteering as tribute, the primary guardian of Katniss’s adventure, keeper of its Ariadne’s thread, appears in the guise of a drunkard buffoon. Her assigned mentor, Hunger Games survivor Haymitch Abernathy, stumbles onto the ceremonial platform and accosts the cameras, declaring Katniss’s “spunk” and superiority before tumbling headfirst into the crowd (*THG* 24). Uncertain of whether he was “addressing the audience” or “taunting the Capitol,” Haymitch’s act evokes Katniss’s simultaneous disgust and gratitude (25). Though horrified that he will steward any potentially life-saving resources she might receive while inside the arena, Katniss also

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<sup>58</sup> *Mutation* is Collins’s term for genetically-engineered creatures created as weapons by Panem’s Capitol.

recognizes that Haymitch's antics distracted the cameras from capturing her emotional break. Viewing past Games taught Katniss that her society aids not those pitied, but those admired for their "refusal to give in" to pain and injury (*THG* 179); thus Haymitch's performance allowed Katniss to safeguard the televised image she projects to the Capitol's gift-granting populous. As the trilogy unfolds, Haymitch proves a chameleon well camouflaged by his public persona, someone far more complex, cunning, contriving, cracked, and compartmentalized than he first appears.

Chance presents Katniss with a second protector in the unlikely form of co-tribute Peeta Mellark, whose past kindness to a starving eleven-year-old Katniss once returned her will to live. This memory, juxtaposed with Peeta's present potential to serve as either her victim or her murderer, arouses Katniss's contradictory feelings of gratitude for and hatred of holding a debt that cannot be repaid (32). Like Haymitch, Peeta skillfully manages his public persona, extending this talent to squire and shield Katniss throughout the trilogy. Yet because Peeta's ability to connect with others derives from his integrity, his earnest compassion, and guileless yearnings, his strength also serves as his Achilles's heel, repeatedly moving Katniss to come to his defense and, eventually, to reciprocate his love.

Katniss's third guardian, Cinna, serves her tale's fairy-godmother by presiding over her public image, disguising, revealing, and protecting her throughout her journey through the magic of his transformational fashion designs. Katniss expects her Games stylist to appear as a Beast: someone so physically "dyed, stenciled, and surgically altered" as to appear "grotesque," someone personally "flamboyant" who views her "as a piece of meat" (63-64). Instead Cinna's subtle accentuations of his natural appearance attract

Katniss (*THG* 63), who finds herself completely disarmed by his empathic understanding of how “despicable” the Capitol, its Games, and its culture “must seem” to her (65).

The motif of *Crossing the First Threshold* unfolds incrementally within *The Hunger Games*—beginning with Katniss’s train journey to the Capitol, concluding as she enters the *Belly of the Whale* first embodied by the Hunger Games arena—as it introduces the people and forces now protecting and threatening Katniss’s life. While the efficient, yet empty-headed Effie Trinket keeps Katniss on the Capitol’s timetable, and the chaotic, yet cunning Haymitch offers limited practical advice on how to mask her abilities in the training room, neither of Katniss’s Capitol-appointed guardians proves capable of preparing her to meet the Games audience, whose affections and assistance she must secure to survive the arena’s tests and trials. As in a fairy tale, only Cinna—the liminal guardian who requested to be assigned to Katniss (64), and who both works for and against the Capitol—proves able to assist her in this threshold crossing. Using fashion to translate Katniss’s least visible and most authentic aspects—her anger, her love, her vulnerability, her innocence—into a visual language the Capitol audience comprehends, Cinna offers her protection by rendering her image not only beautiful, but unforgettable (70).

Whereas past stylists dressed tributes from District Twelve in costumes representing coal or its mining labors, Cinna and his partner convert Katniss and Peeta into emblems of the energy released when pressurized hunks of decayed life meet with oxygen—fire. The two cross the threshold of their adventure, transformed via Cinna’s alchemy and “a perfect touch of rebellion” (79) into a united pair, standing hand-in-hand, alive and enflamed rather than as oppositional competitors or raw commodities, controlled and awaiting use

by the Capitol. Here, Cinna nudges the emerging heroine into a subtle, socially transgressive provocation as she crosses the threshold of her adventure, one inspiring the audience's love, rather than awakening what Campbell deemed the "destructive aspect" of the threshold guardians' power (*Hero* 67).

Katniss unwittingly continues this transgressive threshold crossing by allowing anger to guide her actions during her training evaluation: incensed by the Gamemaker's preoccupation with their feast during her required skill demonstration, Katniss shoots an arrow into the apple lodged within the mouth of their roasted pig. By employing two mythologically charged objects associated with social transgression—the apple, biblical emblem of forbidden knowledge, and an arrow, the chosen weapon of the goddess Artemis, huntress, avenger of maidens, and guardian of children, and the trickster folkhero Robin Hood, famed for stealing from the rich to give to the poor—this scene reveals Katniss as a Promethean hero—a hero who threatens to destabilize the social order by bringing the fire of the Gods to all of humanity. As in this instance, Katniss finds the fire she needs to bring to her people by accessing her repressed emotions and aspects of self; and in so doing, her actions will set mighty forces against her. Here, the Gamemakers respond by granting Katniss the highest possible training score, ensuring her place as the primary target of her co-competitors in the arena (*THG* 107).

Cinna continues transfiguring Katniss into "the girl who was on fire" (67) through the visual persona he crafts for her pre-Game television interview. While Katniss feels as if she is "no one at all" (118) after Effie despairs her inability to appear "smiling" and "banal" (115) and a flummoxed Haymitch abandons his attempts to strategically mold her

into camera-ready personality (*THG* 117), Cinna's design transforms Katniss into a "creature" from "another world," "engulfed in tongues of fire," "radiant as the sun" (120-121). He further frees Katniss by offering her classic fairy god-mothering advice: he suggests that she simply answer the interview questions "as honestly as possible," "horrible" thoughts and all, as if talking to a trusted friend (121-123). Bedazzled by wearing Cinna's creation, Katniss becomes, for a brief, public moment, a "silly girl spinning in a sparkling dress" (136)—a far cry from the huntress she knows or the "sullen and hostile" "dead slug" Haymitch accuses her of being (116, 117). While Peeta's public confession of having a yen for Katniss fashions her into "an object of love" (136), Cinna's designs permit Katniss to enter the *Belly of the Whale* as an idol.

### Initiation

The majority of the trilogy explores the intensely conflicted initiation period of Katniss's *Hero's Journey*, specifically those of its *Road of Trials* motif. Campbell marked the *Road of Trials* as "a favorite phase of a mythological adventure," wherein the hero endures a series of "tests and ordeals" while receiving covert aid in the form of "advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper" encountered during the hero's separation (*Hero* 81). The tasks of initiation posed by the *Road of Trials* motif reiterate variations of the questions posed by the first threshold crossing: will the hero commit to slaying the dragon posed by her "infantile situation" (84)? Will the hero "put aside his pride, his virtue, his beauty, and life, and bow or submit to the absolutely intolerable" so as to birth the realization that she and her "opposite are not differing species, but one flesh" (89)? Katniss's *Road of Trials* runs

long, dark, and harrowing, and surviving the Hunger Games arena proves but the first, and perhaps the simplest, of her many tests and trials.

Those of the initial Hunger Games arena pose their challenges to Katniss in pairs of overtly opposing forces indigenous to myth. Dehydrated, Katniss searches for natural water source; once found, the Gamemakers attack with engineered balls of fire (*THG* 175). Alone, washing her wounds, Katniss hears a pack of hunting Careers approach. Years spent scaling trees to escape predatory animals allow her to rise above those left heavy on the ground from years of training to kill human prey. Their swords and knives cannot reach her in the safety of the trees, where tiny defenseless Rue, a single delicate wildflower much like Primrose, also hides. Rue reveals a dangerous Capitol mutation, a nest of bioengineered tracker jacker wasps, whose lethal venom leaves stung victims unable to distinguish reality from illusion. Under the cover of Panem's national anthem, Katniss uses the knife another tribute hurled at her head to saw the branch holding the wasp's nest, covertly redeploying three Capitol weapons to mount an archetypal trickster's defense.

In this first arena, as in Katniss's home district, Nature nurtures and protects those who help sustain Katniss's life: here the plants and animals whose lives Katniss takes to nourish her own abound; Rue nestles in treetops gathering eggs and nuts, while Thresh hides in tall grasses no one else dares to enter, and a mortally injured Peeta waits, camouflaged beneath detritus, leaves, and mud. The tributes who rely primarily on a knowledge of Nature survive while concealed, but die when ensnared (e.g., Rue) or actively hunted (e.g., Thresh). In parallel, the tributes who live by manufactured means and enacting social dictates—those trained from birth to win the Games, those who hoard the

Capitol's provisions, those unwilling to sacrifice comfort for safety, those who self-sustain by stealing, those either too ignorant of or too arrogant in their assumptions about Nature—do not survive. Katniss alone manages to triumph in this journey, affording not only her survival, but Peeta's by living in accord with Nature—respecting its elements and physics, the needs of her body, and the limitations of her knowledge—while also using human weapons of matter and mind, and even Panem's creations—its provisions, its medicines, its weapons, even the rules and structure of the Hunger Games—to fight in and against its Games. Moreover, both Katniss and Peeta survive without succumbing to the Game's expectation that players compete by hunting human beings: Katniss attacks arena opponents only in defense of her life and the lives of Rue and Peeta; she kills Cato out of pity when he begs for death. Mercy paired with the need to maintain subterfuge motivates Peeta's only conscious kill, and he intended no harm in unwittingly picking the poisoned berries that end Foxface's life.

Sustaining life in the first arena thus proves a task of balance, which Katniss achieves by resisting the pull of opposite forces—she uses water to balance fire and fire to sustain life, each as required by the circumstances; while safer alone, Katniss finds value and hope in joining alliances, and ultimately refuses a victory that requires the sacrifice another's life to save her own; she reacts as prey, taking precautions, respecting her vulnerability to becoming a victim, yet Katniss hunts as a predator, accepting responsibility for becoming the attacker. She shifts between these roles fluidly, as necessary within a specific situation, never aligning herself permanently with either extreme. She moves within nature, without forgetting that, inside the arena, external nature is *unnatural*,

manufactured and manipulated by the Gamemakers, while discovering that even within their Game, her inner nature cannot be compromised without her consent.

In the manner of the Greek gods (if they had relied on silver parachutes), the audience watching Katniss struggle send gifts to aid her moments of greatest despair. However, most of the mythological *Supernatural Aid* Katniss receives during the earliest phase of her initiation arises from within as she encounters and reintegrates lost aspects of self by recovering disowned aspects of her mother and father, reawakening memories, longings, and emotions repressed to survive their loss.

In leaving home for the Games, listing “all the things” her mother and Prim “must remember to do” for themselves in her absence (*THG* 34) returns Katniss to “all of the anger, all of the fear” she felt in response to her mother’s dissociative “abandonment” when her father died (35); thus taking Prim’s place in the Games reinforces Katniss’s sense of her father’s absence and of her mother as an impotent protector of children.<sup>59</sup> Yet facing death also allows Katniss to convert this long-held anger and fear into empathy for her mother’s vulnerabilities, which, in turn, enables her to discover her mother’s capacity for healing and nurturing alive within herself.

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<sup>59</sup> Mythologically, the ritual disempowerment of maternal protection serves as a recurring motif within the adolescent initiation rites of tribal hunting cultures (e.g, Australian aborigines). Such rituals mirror the reality that a mother cannot prevent her children from growing past her guard into social adulthood without rejecting the tenets of their culture; in other words, at the appropriate developmental stage in the life of her child, society requires the mother to abandon her maternal orientation toward her child-as-infant in order to appropriately mother her child into adulthood (see Campbell *Power* 101-104).

Yet the common mythological motif of a mother’s abandonment of her infant (i.e., a child still naturally and appropriately dependent on its mother) also expresses a complicated archetypal dynamic found throughout the Hunger Games trilogy and encapsulated by myth of Cronus; it suggests that while direct maternal intercession cannot protect the uninitiated child from an infanticidal patriarch, a mother’s subterfuge, abandonment, and nurturance from afar may sustain the life and enable the development of the only kind of progeny able to dethrone a corrupt patriarch/social order. In other words, this motif suggests that the way to raise a child able to ‘save the world’ is to see that the child develops outside of socially systematized and sanctioned tenants.

Departing for the Games allows Katniss to recast her past hatred of her mother's "weakness" and "neglect," and of her own "need" of her mother in a new light. By coupling her past feelings with the new pain arising from the knowledge that she may "die without [their relationship] ever being set right" (*THG* 53), Katniss begins to grant her mother the forgiveness she has taught herself to believe is not in her nature (8). Previously too angry to tolerate her mother's tender gestures, Katniss seeks reassurance in touching "the silky braids [her] mother so carefully arranged" (63), the hairstyle Cinna makes key to her visual presentation (*THG* 64, *Catching* 38), regretting that she had not tried to "hold onto a piece of her [mother], of home" as she enters the arena (*THG* 63). This forgiving wish and regret free Katniss to evoke her mother as a protective, guiding presence during the Games by recalling her mother's strengths and competencies as a healer. Ever fearful of seeing wounds, Katniss finds the courage to attend to her burn injuries upon remembering her mother's explanation that the presence of pain signals the potential to heal (179). Upon seeing Peeta's leg injury, Katniss describes resisting her childhood desire to flee, leaving her mother to "attend" the dying, a task Katniss feels she has neither "the skill or the courage to face;" instead, Katniss channels memories of her mother's "calm demeanor" and healing techniques to care for Peeta (256). Wounded and dreaming, Katniss does not fear letting her mother know how she craves and misses her care, and instead accepts the sense of security her mother's caresses bring (290). Katniss seeks her mother again in crisis, recalling how to tie a tourniquet, sacrificing her last arrow and opportunity to 'win' the Games to instead tend to Peeta's wound (338). Accessing memories of her mother's skill and care awakens Katniss to her latent compassion and her capacity to heal; and in applying the

physical healing skills learnt from her mother, Katniss begins to heal emotionally.

Permitting her inner-mother to guide and care for her in a way she had come to fear and reject (*THG* 15) reawakens Katniss's sense of respect for maternal power, as expressed through her acknowledgement that destroying things is easier than creating them (211), and killing things, much easier than healing them (258).

Preparing for the arena, Katniss's latent memories of her father also resurface, revitalizing other aspects of her character and inner life stagnant since his death. In addition to connecting her to trustworthy allies, these memories help Katniss reorient away from the Games and her preoccupations with death and survival, back toward life and authentic *living*. Though Katniss references her father frequently before the Games—all he taught her of hunting and foraging in the woods, and how she survived the aftermath of his death—a different dimension him emerges in her memory after the Mayor's daughter gives her a district token, a gold pin featuring a mockingjay in flight. Pining the token to her dress, Katniss recalls her father as a gifted singer, "particularly fond" of exchanging songs with mockingjays in the woods (43); she confides that wearing the token feels "like having a piece of my father with me, protecting me" (44).

The mockingjay's evocation of her father as singer and protector connects Katniss to allies, whose friendship allows her access her repressed thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Rue decides to trust Katniss based upon her token, for she too loves trading songs with the mockingjays. Katniss wonders at Rue's valuation of music as the thing she likes best, for Katniss deems it useless (211), yet in honoring Rue's dying request for a song, Katniss's remembers the music she and her father once made, realizing for the first time

that she stopped singing when her father died (*THG* 234). Singing opens Katniss to the experience of her repressed “fury against the cruelty, the injustice” inflicted by the Capitol (236), allowing her to empathically understand what had previously felt incomprehensible about Gale’s rages (14) and Peeta’s wish to die as himself (141). Instinctively compelled to “shame” the Capitol for Rue’s death, Katniss conscripts the television audience to bear witness to the existence of “a part of every tribute” that the Capitol “can’t own” by covering Rue in flowers (236-237). Katniss’s compassion for Rue, both living and dead, along with her strategic recruitment of the audience as allies, begins to change the Game; Rue’s district reciprocates Katniss’s gesture by sending her their bread and making the first show of support for another district’s tribute in the history of Games (239). Accessing and enacting feelings and ideas previously deemed “pointless” (e.g., 14, 142) moves Katniss into impulsive, yet authentic expressions of self that connect to the humanity of others in a system and Game designed to dehumanize and perpetuate separation.

Ghosts of her father’s songs wedded to the birds reappear again as Katniss tries to bolster her on-screen romance with Peeta. As Peeta recollects their first day of school, Katniss feels “surprisingly moved” to learn how her father’s songs shaped many lives: Peeta’s father had wanted to marry Katniss’s mother, who instead “ran off” with Katniss’s father; the baker claimed she fell in love with the miner upon hearing him sing such that “even the birds stop[ped] to listen”—just as Peeta claims to have been “a goner” on first hearing Katniss sing, silencing the birds at age five (300). Katniss then reconsiders whether her “reluctance to sing” and “dismissal of music might not really be because” she believed it “a waste of time,” but rather that music reminded her “too much” her father’s absence (301).

In excavating her authentic values from her grief, Katniss begins to engage with the question of ‘real and unreal,’ so prominent throughout Collins’s trilogy. In this instance, the presence of her father and the birds give Peeta’s story a “ring of truth” such that Katniss questions her assumption that Peeta only feigns his romantic feelings for her (301).

Her “father’s voice comes back” again, further enabling Katniss to separate appearances from reality when Peeta mistakenly picks the berries her gatherer-father once warned her were “nightlock,” guaranteed death by poison (318). This remembrance saves their lives again indirectly when the Gamemakers revoke the rule-change permitting Katniss and Peeta to survive as a team. Katniss turns the cruel trick in their favor by using the berries to threaten their lives before the audience, for without a Hunger Games victor, the Capitol’s message of absolute government control would die. Impulsively seizing control, Katniss reveals her authentic self’s resemblance to her father’s beloved mockingjay, an intrinsically harmless creature, purely driven by its instinct to live, fly free, and sing.

Within Campbell’s monomythic initiation, the *Meeting with the Goddess* and *Atonement with the Father* motifs represent the hero’s, and thus the individual’s, reconciliation with the dyad of archetypal energies primary to life, first embodied by the figures of the mother and the father: the force which *activates* and the force which *acts upon* (*This Business* 65). Katniss’s recovery of her sense of Mother as healer and nurturer introduces the *Meeting with the Goddess* motif within her journey’s initiation phase, yet she will not fully resolve the tensions and challenges of the motif, nor truly awaken to life’s activating energy, until making her adventure’s return. Similarly, in having adopted her father’s persona within her family, Katniss entered the *Atonement with the Father* motif long

before her *Hero's Journey* began, but her true initiation into its lessons occurs only after Katniss begins moving through and acting upon 'the world of the Father'—her society and its Hunger Games arena. The motif resolves alongside that of her journey's tragic *Apotheosis*, for coming to 'at-one-ment' with the Father demands that Katniss embrace both the destructive and generative aspects of Father-energy by undertaking actions that will invalidate her adopted personae.

In mythological terms, Katniss's tale began in a world where the good father has died and the dragon-father rampages the mother's land, starving and eating her children, rendering the world unbalanced and unprotected, a wasteland of fear and despair as lifeless as Katniss's widowed mother's "dead eyes" (*THG* 28). The dragon-father, the destructive aspect of paternal energy as embodied by the snake-like President Snow (e.g., *THG* 364, *Catching* 19), thrives in the wasteland world he claims through domination, terror, and separation, dealing in secrets, hoarding his power with poisons. The departed good father, to whom Katniss was born, passionately loved his wife and compassionately attended his children. Working underground, living off the land, and singing songs with creatures of the sky, Katniss's father existed in accord with all aspects of his world, a hunter-gatherer who knew how to find food and avoid poison, who neither abided by, nor broke all of the rules of man or Nature. The mining accident that killed him represents a personal-scale reiteration of the global natural disasters that Collins suggests brought about the discord of Panem's social world (*THG* 18), an imbalance between Nature and human industry that provoked Nature to assert its limits when human aims pushed too far—just as Katniss asserts her authentic inner-nature in self-defense when forced to play the Capitol's Games.

In the first Hunger Games arena, Katniss recovered vital dimensions of her internalized parents. By remembering her father as singer and incorporating her mother as healer, Katniss thawed frozen attributes of her inner-nature and reconnected to the creative, life-affirming aspects of being. Accessing her innate empathy and compassion enabled Katniss to react authentically, to win the Games on terms that expand and solidify her sense of self and irrevocably alter the Games. Yet Katniss also survives her first Hunger Games as a trickster-hero, by figuratively drawing the dragon-father's blood without having tasted it or slain him. Campbell explains that to "taste the dragon's blood" as did Siegfried, is to "hear the song of nature," to accept and incorporate both the dark, destructive aspects of being into self, so as bring one's life back into balance with the sustaining and regenerative "powers of nature . . . from which our minds remove us." (*Power* 181). Thus having heard her father's song, but not yet *Nature's* song, Katniss's journey did not end with the Games; rather, it had only just begun. Once realigned with positive, protective images of her mother and father, more arduous tests and trials confront Katniss as she encounters negative manifestations of destructive parental energies in the form of her society's political leaders—that of the dragon-father President Snow and then that of the automaton-mother and leader of the rebellion, President Coin.

Upon winning the Games, opposing forces rush in, attempting to redefine or protect Katniss's image, increasingly disorienting her from her sense of self. When retrieved from the arena, Katniss glimpses her reflection, seeing herself as someone "Rabid. Feral. Mad." before surrendering to drugged unconsciousness (*THG* 348). When she awakens, Capitol doctors have restored her lost hearing and strength and perfected her skin by

removing both her arena and hunting scars (*THG* 351). Disoriented by her transformation, Katniss learns with relief that Haymitch prevented the Gamemakers from surgically enhancing her figure, thus preserving a vestige her personal experience of self (354). Fairy-godmother Cinna employs fashion magic to cloak the vital authentic-self Katniss expressed in the arena, now endangered by her win. By protectively altering her appearance into that of “a girl. A young one. Fourteen at most. Innocent. Harmless,” Cinna reduces Katniss’s consuming flame into mere “candlelight” (355). While her audience celebrates the joint survival of ‘the star-crossed lovers from District Twelve,’ the Capitol leadership understood Katniss’s win as act of civil defiance, and Haymitch warns Katniss that portraying herself as “love-crazed schoolgirl” (*Catching* 21) is her only hope of protecting the lives of her team and family (*THG* 357). Keeping to this role divides Katniss into sharply contrasting public and private personae, leaving her without space to express or make sense of her confusion about her true feelings, motivations, and experiences within the arena.

Deprived of privacy by the constant need to perform her on-screen role in public (*Catching* 25), Katniss returns to District Twelve unable to re-engage with real life, her best friend Gale, or with her ally Peeta, both of whom have declared their romantic feelings. Re-experiencing the traumatic events of the arena, fearful of constant surveillance, and avoiding the ambivalences she cannot reconcile, Katniss retreats deeper into the woods, seeking self, solace, and her father by visiting the lake where he taught her to swim, a place she has not shared with another living soul, a place that she notes has remained the same, even while she has become “unrecognizable” (34). This instance marks the first of three

journeys Katniss makes through the woods, as if in a fairy tale, to her father's lake in trying to make sense of her place in the world after the Games.

Katniss's second visit follows a common fairy-tale trope, her failure to succeed in an impossible task. After returning from her first visit to the lake, President Snow visits Katniss, demanding that she stave off a rebellion by convincing the world of her love, or he will kill Gale and both their families. Guide Haymitch offers no magical solution beyond suggesting that she pretend to live "happily ever after" with Peeta (*Catching* 44). Yet during her Victory Tour, Katniss sees "sparks" of rebellion ignited in Panem's districts, such that even her engagement to Peeta cannot quell. Having failed and fearing for the lives of her loved ones on learning of an uprising, Katniss leaves a trail for Gale leading to her father's lake sanctuary, hoping to retreat into the past by convincing Gale to run away, as he had suggested before Katniss entered the Games (93-101). But the past proves a place of no return; Gale embraces the prospect of rebellion and will not run, leaving Katniss muddled, unable to hear her authentic self, and concluding that perhaps she should align with Gale and incite the rebellion she was accused of having sparked.

Returning to her father's lake for the third time, "to say good-bye to the place, to my father and the happy times" she believes "will probably never return" (134), Katniss discovers two travel-weary women searching for District Thirteen based upon two images of the mockingjay.<sup>60</sup> While uncertain of what she thinks about the women's dream of escaping the Capitol, the presence of the mockingjay on her father's hallowed ground

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<sup>60</sup> One appears upon a cracker replica of Katniss's district token, now the symbol of rebellion, and the other, a recurrence of the bird taking flight within the identical portion of the frame in all the video footage shown of District Thirteen, causing many to wonder what the Capitol might be hiding of the present by recycling an image of the past.

assures Katniss of two truths: the first, that Snow's threat was a deceptive "ploy" to keep Katniss in his games and prevent her from "doing anything else inflammatory in the districts" by using her celebrity wedding to distract citizens of the Capitol with more entertainment (*Catching* 150); and the second, that while her "berries" provided the "spark," Katniss never had the ability to "control the fire" now burning in her image (149).

Before Katniss can consider this information, President Snow again conscripts her to play his Games by reaping tributes for the third Quarter Quell Hunger Games from the pool of past victors, guaranteeing Katniss's return to the arena as the only living female tribute from District Twelve. Desperation moves Katniss to act by making the only authentic gesture she can devise, a drunken pact with Haymitch to keep Peeta alive, one that allows her to sustain her fundamental persona, adopted to survive her father's death, that of the protectress of those she deems good and innocent.

Re-entering the arena represents a second threshold crossing, Katniss's movement deeper into what Campbell called the "lesson" emphasized by *Belly of the Whale* motif, "that the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation" enabling the resurrection of self in another form (*Hero* 77). With the destructive aspects of the threshold guardians in pursuit, Cinna changes visual strategies to protect his charge, converting both the "girl on fire" and Peeta from living flames into "glowing embers" topped with blackened victory crowns (*Catching* 206). In contrast to her fresh-faced, recognizable appearance in entering the first games, Cinna now shields Katniss by shadowing, obscuring, and exaggerating her features so that she appears as "some unearthly being" that "might make her home in [a] volcano," someone "as deadly as fire itself," thus freeing Katniss to act "as if the entire

audience is beneath [her] notice” (*Catching* 207). Katniss delights in expressing how “unforgiving” she genuinely feels toward the Capitol (212), for fashion has allowed her authentic emotional release and protected personal expression from within a disguise.

Wishing to further degrade and humiliate Katniss by forcing her to play the part of girl-in-love to her death, President Snow demands that, during her pre-Game interview, Katniss wear the wedding gown chosen by popular audience vote. Cinna engages in his own “act of rebellion” by transfiguring Katniss without her knowledge (253). Costumed in the wedding dress, Katniss spins on-stage as Cinna requested; its pearls combust, changing the dress from one made of white satin into another covered with tiny coal-colored feathers, metamorphosing Katniss into a mockingjay (252). Cinna’s fashion protest once again renders Katniss an idol, but leaves her frightened for his safety, while Peeta’s protective narrative transformation of Katniss into his pregnant wife positions her as an every-woman, fully and vulnerably human, and leaves her feeling “empowered” by having publicly named her deepest fears (258).

Yet re-entering the arena’s sea of surreal opposites instantly sets Katniss’s sense of empowerment, camaraderie, self, and reality adrift. Launched upward into the Games as she witnesses Peacekeepers brutally beat Cinna to the ground, the ‘girl on fire’ emerges surrounded by undrinkable water. Convinced her only power to protect Peeta comes of rigidly upholding her plan to sacrifice her life, Katniss plays out these Games attacked more often by the Capitol’s engineered distortions of nature—toxic fogs, ‘muttated’ monkeys, and jabberjays screaming in the voices of her loved ones—than by her opponents. She surrenders her judgement, trusting Haymitch’s instructions to accept allies without recognizing a

different, political game is afoot, running contrary to her personal agenda. Mortally injured and believing herself betrayed, recalling Haymitch's missive to "remember who the enemy is" (*Catching* 260, 378) allows Katniss to see the Ariadne's thread within the labyrinth, the true intentions of her fallen ally Beetee's plan with the wire: to destroy the force field boundary separating the arena from "real world" (376). Uncertain of what outcome her action may bring, Katniss enacts the plan and fells the arena, paralyzing herself.

Instead of seeing her reflected self when pulled from the arena a second time, Katniss aptly sees only the Head Gamemaker, Plutarch Heavensbee, closing her eyelids, "sentencing [her] to the vulnerability of darkness" (381). Awakening, she learns her identity as an idol made her an important, unwitting pawn within yet another game: for years, a covert operation plotted a political coup; the district uprising and Quarter Quell inspired Heavensbee's faction to launch a full-scale rebellion by rescuing the victors, most especially Katniss, from the arena. Fearing that the "revolution" sparked by Katniss's survival of the first Games could thrive only if its mockingjay lived, their arena allies protected Peeta's life to preserve Katniss, and while the rebels rescued Katniss, they left Peeta to the Capitol (385-386). In retaliation, President Snow bombed District Twelve; those who survived followed Gale through the woods to the safety of Katniss's father's lake (*Mockingjay* 7) and now live as refugees in District Thirteen, the seat of the rebellion led by its President Coin. By following rules of engagement that required her to align with one side of an opposite, to define allies and enemies, Katniss played a false game, losing the thing she intended to protect. She destroyed the illusory walls of the arena, only to find that arena always extended beyond them, and that she remains bound to unchosen roles within the games of others.

Katniss's third threshold crossing pulls her further into self-annihilation in preparation for rebirth when the rebels ask her to become the "embodiment of the revolution" by officially playing the role of the Mockingjay, a creature Heavensbee and his production team intend to puppet through the "horribly familiar" prospect of make-overs, costuming, contrived speeches, and orchestrated television appearances via short propaganda films (*Mockingjay* 10-11). As she sifts through the rubble of her childhood home, retrieving her family's protective totems—her parent's wedding photos and plant guide book, her sister's mangled tom-cat, her hunting game bag, and her father's hunting jacket—and finding a threat from President Snow in the form of a single, unnaturally noxious white rose (13-14), Katniss internally debates the existential questions attached to the proposition without arriving upon an answer. Now officially classified as "mentally disoriented" (19), Katniss waivers until seeing a televised interview with Peeta, unharmed, defending her innocence, and calling for a cease-fire.

Fixated on saving Peeta and destroying President Snow, Katniss accepts the Mockingjay role on conditions Prim helps her understand she has the power to determine (34). While President Coin concedes and publicly agrees to Katniss's terms, Coin adds a previously undiscussed *quid pro quo* addendum that permits Katniss no "deviance from her mission" without punishment and immediate revocation of their agreement (58). This confirms what Katniss has suspected about the rebel leader since finding her Capitol prep team abused and imprisoned for stealing bread: that Coin is but "another power player" (59), asserting "who's really in control here and what happens if she's not obeyed" (50), and "the first" among them "to publicly brand [Katniss] as a threat" (59).

The opposite polarity of the dragon-father, President Coin serves as the automaton-mother and ultimate destructor within Katniss's tale. On first impression, District Thirteen and its leader strike Katniss as "militaristic, overly programmed" (*Mockingjay* 29), "even more controlling than the Capitol" (36). Assigned underground living quarters and professions, all citizen soldiers of Thirteen spend their lives abiding by assigned schedules tattooed daily upon their forearms (18) and having their calorie intake regulated by their government (35). While Katniss respects Thirteen's determination to survive after the Capitol razed their cities during the Dark Days rebellion, she questions their strategic abandonment of their allies to negotiate the district's independence via threats of nuclear attack upon the Capitol (17). She is further discomfited to learn that the survivors of District Twelve were welcomed primarily as "new breeding stock," since the population of Thirteen was reduced and left sterile by a "pox epidemic" (8). Katniss notes that, as leader, Coin conforms to the district's scheduling protocol (42), wastes no words (57), and watches, more than she speaks (10). In fixating on the perfect uniformity of Coin's "gray hair . . . without a flaw, a wisp, even a split end" (10), Katniss ponders her distrust of the unnatural, programmatic, and calculated aspects of her character, an observation echoed when she notes that Coin only ever smiles once, in speaking of their shared desire to kill President Snow (42).

The term *apotheosis*, in its most literal sense, refers to a being's deification (Def 2 & 3, *OED Online*). In delineating the monomyth, Campbell expanded upon this definition, using *Apotheosis* to describe a motif in which the hero dies to worldly struggles within the realm of opposites to live again, as and among the gods, beyond fear and desire; thus having seen the emptiness in form and form in emptiness, the hero is prepared for an

enlightened rebirth into the world to offer compassion to all who live (*Hero* 127-142). Yet in discussing the monomyth in terms the development of self, Campbell simplifies his definition of *Apotheosis* as the moment within the journey “where you realize what you are seeking,” and come to know “the full scope of yourself” (*Pathways* 118).

At first glance, Katniss’s transformation into the Mockingjay seemingly represents her journey’s *Apotheosis*; to some extent, Katniss momentarily believes this herself. However, though entering the war as the Mockingjay evokes Katniss’s authentic expressions of self, in each instance Katniss identifies self with the Mockingjay’s power as idol (e.g., *Mockingjay* 91) or attempts to use that power to suggest that people take sides (e.g., 217), opposing energies arise declaring the folly of her actions. For example, immediately after Katniss identifies with her power as idol, a bomb falls upon a civilian medical camp, killing all in whom her Mockingjay presence inspired hope (91). Similarly, when Mockingjay Katniss asks a man training a gun at her head (whom she has just convinced of their human unity) to join her in rebellion, another onlooker shoots her (214-217).

As such, instead of serving as her *Apotheosis*, Katniss’s adoption of the Mockingjay persona marks the final challenge of her *Atonement with the Father* motif, the height of her efforts to dichotomize her world into opposing forces and identify self with a side, rather than what Campbell deems the hero’s necessary “abandonment of that self-generated double monster—the dragon thought to be god (superego) and the dragon thought to be sin (repressed id)” (*Hero* 107-110). Because Katniss consented to play role of Mockingjay in an attempt to preserve Peeta (whose purity and goodness, like Prim’s innocence, she has idealized) and to exact vengeance by slaying the dragon-father Snow (whom her fears have

identified as the root cause of her world's sin), Katniss's journey requires that she play out this extreme alignment of energies to its disastrous end—an end which forces her to abandon the superego gods of all her adopted personae, from that of the Mockingjay to that of fatherly protector, and to accept the folly of her quest to slay the dragon-father.

The actual *Apotheosis* of Katniss's journey comes of the deathblow to her remaining childhood innocence. Arriving upon the threshold of President Snow's mansion, intent upon his death, Katniss discovers it protected by a "human shield," hundreds of children surrounding the building, penned inside a fence (*Mockingjay* 345). A Capitol-marked hovercraft releases silver parachutes that the children recognize as gifts., yet the parachutes explode in their hands. Rebel medics rush to aid the children and Katniss arrives just as a second round of explosions immolates her sister, the born-healer who became a child-soldier-medic on account of the adventure Katniss undertook to preserve her life as an innocent.

Set aflame alongside Prim, Katniss transforms again through opposing forces "into something new," becoming "a creature as unquenchable as the sun," "flying frantically to escape something inescapable," consuming herself "but to no end" (348). Katniss hallucinates her beloved dead as flying birds whom she longs to reach, while those she hates appear as scaly water-creatures pulling her down into their depths until Katniss finds herself trapped in stasis, simultaneously alive and dead (348-349). Her transformation continues as she regains consciousness inside the President's mansion; the war has ended and President Coin grants Katniss's request to execute Snow. Again classified as "mentally disoriented," Katniss wanders, hiding throughout the mansion until one day, as in a folktale, she emerges from her usual spot and turns "left instead of right" (353). Katniss stumbles into Snow's

greenhouse nursery turned prison cell, where the ailing dragon-father awaited, “hoping” she would find him (*Mockingjay* 355). Like the snake in Eden, Snow offers knowledge that awakens Katniss to the true nature of good and evil: that President Coin and Pultarch engineered, executed, and broadcast the bombing that killed the children and Prim so as to outrage any citizens still loyal to Snow’s government and secure Katniss’s allegiance to the rebellion. Despite wanting to believe that the dragon-father lies, Katniss’s instincts and rational evaluation of the facts (particularly her knowledge that Gale and Beete designed bombing scenarios identical to that of the parachutes) suggest the opposite, and President Coin’s proposal that one last Hunger Games be played, using the children of the Capitol’s leadership as tributes, confirms the cruel truth of Snow’s words. In reconciling the reality that truth came not only from the life-generating and protecting personal father, but also from the destructive, death-wielding, social patriarch, Katniss finally comes to atonement with the dual faces of the Father and her social order; in perceiving that the Hunger Games and the war games for which she blamed President Snow were *institutionalized* human behaviors expressed equally by both the government of the dragon-father and the rebellion of the automaton-mother, Katniss realizes her folly in having mistaken the Mockingjay’s power for her own personal power; and with Prim’s death by way of the fire Katniss started, yet had no power to control, Katniss loses her remaining illusions about anyone’s capacity to protect innocence from what Jung deemed the “battleground” of “inexorable opposites” that is the nature of life (*Man* 85).

Katniss uses this knowledge to culminate her *Apotheosis*, effectively killing her idolized social persona by performing one last act as Mockingjay akin to an intervention by

the maiden goddess, bow huntress, and protector of children Artemis. With Haymitch's support, Katniss staves off any suspicions about her allegiance by pretending to agree with Coin's plan to hold a final Hunger Games; then, using the pretense of President Snow's execution, Katniss publicly murders President Coin, thus ending the Games and, mythologically, preventing Medea from picking up where Cronus left off.

### Return

Twenty-first-century readers, inundated with images equating heroism with triumph and happy endings might feel tempted dismiss Katniss's return from her adventure as far from heroic. Born of an absolute loss, she gifts her adventure's apparent boon to the world through death. Yet the tragedies that sow the ending of Collins's trilogy fortify its mythic function, both solidifying Katniss's heroic status and metaphorically completing her psychological individuation into adulthood. Once returned to her true mortal status, released from both being an idol and from idolatry, Katniss ultimately cultivates another boon, one more personal, commonplace, and sacred: a faith in life and trust in love that sustains hope in the face of an uncertain future, such that she becomes willing to bring her children into the world.

Katniss did not anticipate surviving her assassination of President Coin, yet love preserves her life, for Peeta prevents her immediate suicide and Gale refuses to acquiesce to her call for an arrow. Arrested, Katniss awaits trial alone, confined once more in the Capitol room she occupied before entering the Games. Attendants remove Katniss's Mockingjay suit and replace it with an anonymous paper robe and, after failing to bleed to

death, Katniss attempts what she has resisted since her father's death, namely "giving up" with the intent of starving to death (*Mockingjay* 375). Yet in surrendering to her circumstances, Katniss rediscovers the pure sound of her own voice—first literally, as she spontaneously sings "[a]ll the songs [her] father taught [her] before he died" over the weeks of her incarceration (376), and then psychologically, as she renounces her "allegiance" to the monstrous aspect of humanity that "brainwashed" her into serving as its instrument of destruction, the aspect that willingly "sacrifices its children's lives to settle its differences," resolving to die before permitting herself to be used again as an idol (377).

Within Katniss's heroic adventure, the *Magical Flight* motif appeared as the dragon-father hunted her and the automaton-mother attempted to enforce her allegiance, long before her journey came to the point of its true return. By her narrative's end, Katniss's gods have died by her hand, alongside her monsters; none remain to give chase. And yet, just as Katniss rejects her world—enacting the monomythic *Refusal of the Return* motif—her world reappears in the form of Haymitch enacting the *Rescue from Without* motif by informing Katniss that her trial has ended and that he has come to take her home (377).

This tension between Katniss's *Refusal of the Return* and her *Rescue from Without* continues when she arrives to the empty house in District Twelve's Victor's Village, the home won through her adventures, rather than her childhood home that her adventures collapsed. Although she resists engaging with the world outside, the world returns to Katniss in the form of three guardians with whom she had exchanged life-affirming energies in the past: Greasy Sae, who once fed their district's people with Katniss's wild game, makes sure Katniss remains fed bodily; Peeta reappears, tending to her spirit by

planting evening primroses in her sister's memory; and a wounded Buttercup, the ragged cat whom Katniss spared from drowning as a kitten when Prim begged for his life, finds his way back to Katniss, still seeking Prim, comfort, and home. Tending to her cat doppelgänger's grief and injuries, including the Aesopian thorn in his paw, enables Katniss to begin attending to her own (386).

Destiny, wrote Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, awaits "only the hero who has plunged in to touch it, and has come up again—with a ring." (*Hero* 196). Yet only the hero who understands that the ring retrieved is not in itself destiny survives the assimilation of experience required by the *Crossing of the Return Threshold* motif to become free of both worldly, idealistic illusions and the fear of mortality, such that her story plays out the *Freedom to Live* motif (209).

Katniss acquiesces to the terms of her return to the world by following the advice of Dr. Aurelius—surely the namesake of the famed Roman Emperor and Stoic advocate for the attainment of psychic equilibrium amid life's transient tests and trials—who suggests that Katniss simply go through the motions of living in the hope of one day re-experiencing life with meaning (*Mockingjay* 387). Katniss overcomes her fear of looking at wounds to ask after the fates of Gale and Madge before letting go of the living and the dead she has loved, just as she looks on and accepts the repurposing of her childhood meadow into a mass grave (385). Using fire, Katniss destroys the rose once left as a threatening reminder of President Snow's institutionalized power, acknowledging both the relief and pain of knowing that her own elemental power still "beats roses" of all kinds (383). This cremation of hate and love frees Katniss to grieve Prim's death with and finally forgive her mother,

even in the face of her mother's ultimate abandonment (386). Katniss allows herself to *remember*, rather than repress; to connect with Peeta and Haymitch through recording both their joyous and traumatic memories of the dead inside an illustrated book (*Mockingjay* 387).

And through this knitting of past and present worlds, this experience of life ongoing in the conscious reality of death, Katniss finally awakens to romantic love with her third kiss of true desire.<sup>61</sup> The *Meeting with the Goddess* motif culminates as Katniss, having finally understood her inner nature and true needs, realizes her romantic love for Peeta, the person who provides the life-affirming counterbalance to her own life-denying energetic tendencies. She needed not the partner who used his anger and ingenuity to ensnare, destroy human life, but the one moved to action by his compassion; not the soldier who used fire as a weapon, but the baker and the artist who harnessed fire to nourish and create; not the person who saw an *us* and a *them*, but the one who saw only *us*. Returned to the world, no longer an idol and no longer prone to idolatry, Katniss ends her tale by telling readers of her adventure's true boon: her daughter and son, the children she once believed she could never bring into life's uncertainty or violence, the children born her love and acceptance of life's totality.

Human creations—whether novels, children, genetically engineered birds, or political systems—come into being with lives independent of their creator's intentions, beyond their creator's control. While Suzanne Collins consciously crafted a war narrative with adolescent characters, the Hunger Games trilogy's shadow narrative, propagated by

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<sup>61</sup> Collins carefully characterizes the nature of Katniss's many kisses throughout the novels, distinguishing those she shares with Gale to ease pain and those shared with Peeta while playing the girl-in-love within the arena from the 'magic number' of authentic kisses Katniss experiences with Peeta. Collins describes the latter as awakening Katniss's "hunger" for more, and uses the third kiss to imply the consummation of their mutual love. (*THG* 298, *Catching* 352, *Mockingjay* 388).

her war narrative's mythological function, speaks of adolescent development.

Mythologically, the trilogy's shadow narrative traces a young woman's social initiation, the arc of how her innocent, dichotomous understanding of life gives way to her first-hand experiences of life's complex, mysterious interconnected unity. When examined as the narrative of adolescence for which many readers and critics have mistaken it, Collins's war story metaphorically expresses a commonly felt experience of twenty-first-century adolescence: its powerlessness and entrapment; the turmoil of its paradoxical social binds and lose/lose scenarios; the frustration and confusion surrounding its required social competition, superficiality and subterfuge, performance and persona; its natural, yet potentially terrifying uncertainty; its anxieties about the future in facing the unresolved tensions of the present. This "profoundly anxious" experience of adolescence is now so frequently reported by young women born between 1995 and 2002 that British economist Noreena Hertz has dubbed them "Generation Katniss"<sup>62</sup> (Paquette, on-line).

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<sup>62</sup> In early 2015, Hertz conducted twenty-five in-person interviews and over 1,000 on-line surveys with teenage girls in the United States and England to develop a sense of this generation. She suggests that, overall, "for Generation K the world is less oyster, more Hobbesian nightmare." Hertz proposes that the magnitude of the recent Western recession and current geo-political dangers have profoundly shaped the concerns of young women. For example, Hertz's survey found that seventy-five percent worry about terrorism, sixty-six percent about climate change; eighty-six percent of teenage girls feel anxious about future employment prospects and seventy-seven percent about the possibility of incurring debt. Hertz also found Generation K far more wary than previous generations, with "only four percent of Generation K girls" reporting that they "trust big corporations to do the right thing (as opposed to 60 percent of adults)" and only "one in ten" reporting that they "trust the government to do the right thing—half the percentage of older millennials." This "distrust of traditional institutions," writes Hertz, extends into "traditional social mores and norms." She reports that thirty percent of her respondents reported ambivalence about marriage, while thirty-five percent remain uncertain or reject the prospect of becoming parents. While Hertz reports that this generation seems "career-minded," with ninety percent deeming success in a "high-paying career or profession" as important, they also continue to perceive parenting as a gendered and primarily maternal responsibility. Hertz notes that Generation Katniss also reported concerns about "economic inequities and racial and social inequality," as well as the belief that "men are able to do anything but women still can't." (Hertz *New York Times.com*).

The prevalence of both critical and fan readings that peculiarly deem Katniss “a normal sixteen year-old girl”<sup>63</sup>—when Collins’s texts so clearly render her heroine a deeply traumatized survivor of early parental deprivation, prolonged physical and economic hardship, slavery, conscripted soldiery, and war—reflect the discomfort of the cultural unconscious in encountering our self-inflicted wounds, our injustice, and our ambivalence about the paradoxical social binds we project onto adolescents, particularly adolescent girls. Those who dismiss evidence of Katniss’s psychic wounding as merely “bratty” and “sullen” teen behavior, as well as those who oversimplify and inappropriately idealize her heroism and morality by divorcing their notions of Katniss from the contrary evidence provided by Collins’s text, indirectly express anxiety about Katniss’s psychic, moral, and emotional ambiguities—in essence, her *humanity* and what living in her world has asked of it. Disquieted by aspects of her character not easily categorized, contained, or controlled, these reader assessments split<sup>64</sup> Katniss from the attributes that disrupt their attempts to slot her into a comforting schema of defined human possibilities. The covert anxieties projected onto Katniss and these attempts to cast her multihued plumage as either black or white reflect collective unconscious existential anxieties about modern liminality and ambiguity, about the psychospiritual aspects of being we cannot fully measure, assess, describe, or illustrate rationally or scientifically.

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<sup>63</sup> This particular iteration comes from Katniss’s on-screen avatar, Jennifer Lawrence (qtd. in Wloszczyna).

<sup>64</sup> In object-relations psychology, the term *splitting* describes an anxiety diffusing ego-defense mechanism “defined as the division or polarization of beliefs, actions, objects, or persons into good and bad by focusing selectively on their positive or negative attributes” (Burton *Psychology Today*, on-line).

Readers who identify with Katniss and her conflicts may also split her character, yet likely feel relieved to see their discord, worries, and frustrations symbolically reflected and resolved in such a way that suggests even a disenfranchised adolescent girl, if willing to brave authenticity, possesses the potential to influence and alter the circumstances she inherits. Perhaps these readers long to be specially singled out for a public chance to test their mettle. Perhaps they wish for a sanctioned outlet for their repressed rage against and fear of the social machine. Perhaps they too crave the spiritual reassurance of a “dandelion in the spring” and its promise of “rebirth instead of destruction” (*Mockingjay* 388). Curiously, to date, naught has been published reflecting the in-depth perspective of the Katniss fans who dress in her image and mob her film avatar.

Often single, simple sentence posts to the Hunger Games discussion groups on websites, such as Goodreads.com, express admiration for and envy of Katniss’s “fight,” her strength, her skills, and her choice of love interests. One thirteen-year-old confesses to having bought a Katniss Barbie amid outrage and celebration that Mattel created such a doll,<sup>65</sup> while another teen reader first writes that the trilogy character that she would most like to be is Katniss, before altering her choice to Prim, so that she could have an older sister to teach her fighting and survival skills.<sup>66</sup> Many readers express a fundamental social paradox about the perception of modern Western females by stating that while they like the fact that Katniss “kicks ass,” they find her character “unlikable.” In other words, while there

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<sup>65</sup> For details, see Goodreads.com group *Hunger Games trilogy discussion*, under the topic of *Hunger Games-Related Fun*, subtopic *Katniss Barbie!*, Respondent “Kggelen”, Message 37, posted 16 November 2012.

<sup>66</sup> For details, see Goodreads.com group *Hunger Games trilogy discussion*, under the topic of *Catching Fire*, subtopic *The Hunger Games Books> If you could be any character, who would you be?*, Respondent “JumpStreet,” Messages 1, 42, 56, posted 12 February 2012.

is now social approval for female *behavior* that emulates the active, militarized, physically aggressive, emotionally repressed, and mentally independent manner the early twentieth-century canonized as ideal Western white adult male behavior, the female who actually behaves in such a manner is socially received with ambivalence—with approval for her actions and disdain for her person. This ambivalence perhaps partially accounts for why the girls dressing up as Katniss may not be speaking up about their identification with Katniss. *Looking* like Katniss is to visually imagine oneself as someone who stands against the prevailing social order, to create an image and pantomime that appeals to the professed values of “Generation Katniss.” But to *align* with Katniss’s complexity and ambiguity, to *behave* as Katniss, is to risk seeing and portraying oneself as someone socially unlikable, a perception “Generation Like”<sup>67</sup> obsessively avoids.

This paradox expresses another long-standing issue of modern Western social anxiety played out within the Hunger Games trilogy: that of how modernity’s voyeurism, its objectification and commodification of human beings, contributes to our increasing conflation of *appearing* with *being*; how it fertilizes growing confusion about (and distortion of) what is *real* and *unreal*. While much has been written about the problems inherent in the “objectifying male gaze,” much has yet to be honestly acknowledged and owned by our society about the complex reality of the objectifying *human* gaze, which belongs equally to the socially empowered and disenfranchised, regardless of sex, gender, or ethnicity. By functioning mythologically and by crafting female and male Tributes, each identically subjected to public objectification and commodification, Collins’s narrative offers a

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<sup>67</sup> *Generation Like* refers to a 2014 PBS Frontline documentary exploring the same generation Hertz deems “Generation Katniss” in terms of their self-perception and relationship with social media and marketing.

meditation on how this innately human psychological capacity—one of our primary tools for engaging with reality—has the potential to alter us into social predators and prey when unrecognized, when left untrained and unconscious, when used by the savvy to control, split, and distort perceptions of reality to conform to idealistic notions of being.

Whether read as a narrative of war or one of adolescence, Collins's trilogy makes its primary concern the spiritual struggle of being human in a fundamentally inhumane situation created by human beings—a primary psychic preoccupation of modernity, wrought by the evolution of industrialization, technology, and warfare. While the politics of gender remain nearly invisible within Collins's intended narrative, gender, like the nearly imperceptible “chink in the armor” of the second arena's force field, proves a powerful locus of energy and preoccupation within the Hunger Games trilogy's shadow narrative. Most obviously, Katniss's gender stands out to contemporary readers because she begins her tale as a girl expressing the human skills and empowered individualistic behavior that traditional Western thought has long stereotyped as *masculine*<sup>68</sup> and now upholds an ideal of female empowerment with strings attached. However, as her tale unfolds, Katniss discovers that her true personal power derives not from these skills and behaviors, but from counterbalancing them with the character attributes she long disowned to cultivate them—her compassion, empathy, complexity, receptivity, reticence, reflectiveness—attributes traditional Western thought has devalued and often stereotyped as *feminine*. Regaining access to both her Feminine and Masculine energetic flows allows Katniss to act from her

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<sup>68</sup> Collins also skillfully portrays Peeta as boy empowered with emotional, interpersonal, relational (and kitchen) skills traditional Western thought has long labelled *feminine*. Revealingly, many fans of the series have lambasted Peeta's character on-line, suggesting his compassion and lack of killer instinct make him a 'weak' human being.

integral core, to express her individuating self externally, which, within the world of Collins's narrative, transforms Katniss not only into an object of admiration and fear by those who observe her authentic actions, but into someone beloved by those who truly understand her actions as expressions of her humanity.

Katniss does not survive her adventure in the manner of a traditional female fairy-tale heroine. She does not survive because she is pretty, kind, or beloved. She does not survive only on account of her skills, intelligence, and ingenuity, nor entirely through external intervention; she rescues and is rescued. She endures suffering, but does not end her tale morally righteous or perfected. She survives because she observes, thinks, questions, and learns. Even while suffering and uncertain, Katniss makes choices, takes actions, and faces the reality of changes she did not choose and consequences she never intended; she accepts pain and loss, and only in surrendering to the limitations of her *humanity* does she find her voice.

Like any Trickster figure,<sup>69</sup> Katniss embodies ambiguity and paradox. Her public assertion of her existence acts as monkey-wrench heaved into Panem's social machinery, revealing that even a totalitarian regime is but a human schema, a system of intellectual order superimposed on nature, and thus a breakable illusion. Just as her character and manner of survival were born of, contradict, and ultimately disrupt her social order within the Hunger Games trilogy, the course of Katniss's adventure and fact of her literary existence injects entropy into the schema socially sanctioned for modern Western females by revealing its illusion: that neither the female nor the male who rejects and self-segregates from the *human* traits traditional Western thought has long stereotyped as *feminine* can truly

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<sup>69</sup> Joseph Campbell contends that "from the point of view of the masters of decorum," the trickster represents "the chaos principle, the principle of disorder" (*The Masks* 274), thus inviting the possibility of change into otherwise closed and stagnated systems.

be free to live. Just as Katniss's early survival strategy was born of her mother's abandonment after her father's death, our modern notion of 'empowerment' too often involves dissociation from sorely needed human attributes traditionally associated with the Feminine and mothering: creativity, patience, gestation, birth, release, death, the unconscious and its emotions, intuitions, and instincts. Mythologically, after recovering these traits within herself, Katniss consecrates them externally, first by falling in love with Peeta, and then, by *choosing* to become a mother—an act expressing her open-eyed, mindful faith in the uncertain process that is life, an action that consciously reclaims motherhood as a profoundly heroic, volitional endeavor.

## Chapter VIII

### Conclusion

Western modernity's narrative of reality collapsed those that upheld the world of our past, leaving us in a psychosocial spiritual crisis without the support of a functioning mythology. Yet the collapse left the present rich with rubble from which we have, intentionally and unintentionally, shaped narratives with the capacity to function mythologically—to connect the conscious with the unconscious so as to provide new circuits through which the unknown may become known.

Spontaneous emotional reactivity marks the spot beneath which archetypal messages lie in wait. The unconscious communicates only through intermediaries—symbols—narratives and images charged with its projected affective energies. *Affect-images* frighten, haunt, enchant, amaze, fascinate, repel, endear; they unite perceptible reality with existent invisible intangibilities, and speak of all for which we have no words. The unconscious communicates with us endlessly, opportunistically, through affect and image, regardless of whether we listen or understand.

The affective reactivity demonstrated by the international popular response to both the Twilight saga and the Hunger Games trilogy narratives derives from the powerful psychic undertow of their mythological functions. Each series married a monomythic narrative structure to an emotionally intimate first-person narrative voice, telling its tale by alluding to an assortment of classic fairy-tale, religious, and mythological characters and

devices, and deriving its dramatic arc from its adolescent female protagonist's encounters with symbolic representations of the challenges of human development. The archetypal content of the Twilight saga and the Hunger Games trilogy activates their mythological function, allowing each narrative to address the taboos and longings of individual psyches while reflecting the condition and dilemmas of their generative social order's collective unconscious, and thus illuminate the snarl of contemporary cultural issues, ambivalences, and anxieties entangled with the subjects of female adolescent individuation, Feminine identity, and the social renegotiation of sexual personae in the twenty-first-century. Were their embedded affective material any less preoccupying or important to contemporary psyches, these stories might not have resonated so deeply with millions of readers around the globe.

Continued critical regard of works of fiction through the paradigm of the past, which presupposed the existence of a hierarchical order that justified ranking cultural productions as either 'high' or 'low' offerings, misses an opportunity to hear and assimilate the crucial messages offered by the interaction of popular works of genre fiction with the population for whom they elicit such intense emotional reactivity. "Art," as Joseph Campbell wrote, "is the rendition of the interface between your inner nature and the nature out there." (*Mythic* 187). Art reveals. Art does not rank or discriminate.

Why, in moments of extreme social upheaval during the last three-and-a-half centuries, have affect-images of adolescent females cutting unique paths to grandmother's house captivated public imagination? Why, through our symbolic fantasies and, in some cases, our expressed ideals, do we in the twenty-first-century call upon teenaged girls to

save the world? Perhaps we call upon her affect-image examples whenever we enter an age that requires the patience, tenacity, and strength to *gestate* through, rather than to *act out*, our fear of uncertainty; when circumstances demand that we tolerate the embodied anxiety of *becoming* without knowing what, on the other side, we will *be*. Perhaps more than ever, both women and men now require an image to help them access to their disowned Feminine energies so as to counter-balance those of the socially hyper-idolatorized Masculine. Perhaps we need to witness a heroic girl choosing to become her own version of an individuated woman to know how to enable boys and girls alike to reclaim the aspects of their humanity previously denigrated as *feminine*. As Joseph Campbell remarked in noting that mythological images of individuated females did not yet exist in 1986, “There is something that the world hasn’t really recognized yet in the female, something that we are waiting now to see.” (*Goddesses* 263-264). Nascent images of this something appear to be gestating, trying on old costumes and narrative tropes while searching for new shapes, forms, and story lines, within the popular genre fiction of contemporary American culture.

Campbell observed that the forces of twentieth-century modernity “released” the human female from being bound “simply to biological, social tasks,” providing her the opportunity “to develop individually, personally, as men have been released for centuries,” contending that it was this “release of personality” (“not the muscles or anything of the kind”) from its “nature roles” that had formerly placed men in the socially “dominant position” (263). Current images of the adolescent girl, as represented by Bella Swan and Katniss Everdeen, reflect core anxieties about modernity’s redefinition of the individual

and the female, illustrating the conflict between biological embodiment and modernity's release of each sex from the notion of a biologically pre-determined psychological identity. While these anxieties have been projected into past and current gender issues pinned to female development, their root reflects our primal human fears about the body and the limitations of life imposed by our mortality. Whereas Bella Sawn expresses an infantile desperation for the life of the mind to dominate, supersede, and extend beyond the life of the body (i.e., to adopt the traditional protective stance associated with Masculine energy towards the traditional Feminine), Katniss Everdeen comes to adult terms with mind/body duality, reconciling her fear of embodiment and accepting her mortality, as well as the reality that to idealize or subordinate either aspect of a pair of opposites is to enact a systemic totalitarian repression of the natural order of life. In restoring the equilibrium of her personal Masculine and Feminine energies, Katniss learns the human lesson that we cannot truly control the outcome of our adventure, but only chose a path and do our best to see the games we create for what they are.

While modernity unharnessed the individual personality from biological definition, we remain embodied beings, born into physical, biological realities and energetic patterns with which we develop a internal psychic relationship and an external social relationship. The reproductive capacity of the biologically female human body conditions its occupant to a cyclical experience of physical change that distinguishes her experience of life from that a being who lives within the body of a biologically human male or that of a biologically human hermaphrodite. While neither gender identity nor sexual orientation are necessarily binary, or valid foundations for modern social organization, the reality remains

that human life is an embodied affair, and that two discreet types of bodies, with distinct bio-energetic capacities, are required for human reproduction. We cannot escape the fact that our experience of embodied existence and its requirements impacts our development and sense of personal identity, and thus must also be a consideration of social organization. As Campbell wrote, as human beings, we “are in this thing together and have to work it out together, not with passion (which is always archetypal) but with *compassion*, in patient fostering of each other’s growth.” (*Goddess* xiv). The negotiation of such a future social order demands the development of a new kind of individual—a being whose very existence embodies and depends upon an embrace of dialectics, upon tolerance of the tension connecting any two points of opposition. These issues of embodiment, change, tolerance, and individuation lie just below the surface of *Twilight*’s romance narrative and the narrative of war found in the *Hunger Games*.

To be of use, a mythologically-charged image need not arise from within a institutionalized system of mythology, but we must understand how to engage with the projective language of psyche and symbol—how to consciously receive their affective impacts without either allying with or rejecting unconscious emotion, but by instead apprehending and deciphering its message. For the thing to which we react is not necessarily the thing that appears before us, but that to which it points beyond the range of our sight.

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