

THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN CHILDREN'S  
HIGH AND WAINSCOTS FANTASY

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**THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN CHILDREN'S HIGH AND WAINSCOTS FANTASY**

by

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## **Abstract**

Like Wilkie-Stibbs, I draw upon the work of Lacan and Kristeva to connect children's fantasy to the feminine Imaginary. My focus is the sub-genres of high and wainscots fantasy. In the first analytical chapter, using a psychoanalytical and semiotic lens, I explore how the protagonist follows a quest to define identity in which the concept of true names is often an underlying motif. Using the critical themes of resistance, agency, and emancipation, I link the quest to the problematic post-modern view of truth and with the post-colonial concept of hybridity. In the second analytical chapter, I focus on fantasy fiction's depiction of the soul and the contrast between the natural order and immortality. Issues of concern are knowledge and power. In the third analytical chapter, I relate the fantasy quest motif to my own naming and to how I equate my views on the soul, the natural world, and mortality with those of a fantasy protagonist.

*Keywords:* children's high and wainscots fantasy, feminine Imaginary, true names, hybridity, post-modernism, semiotics

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Finally, I wish to dedicate this thesis to Kate, whose untimely death just two weeks before completion came as a complete shock to us all. As my teacher, she validated my ability and the type of work I wish to do. As a mentor, she told me not to doubt myself; that “it is the duty of heartfelt educators to look deeply at our own attachments and investments in education and the stories we tell for the sake of ethical relations with others”. As a friend, she reminded me when in doubt to walk the dogs.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Christine Wilkie-Stibbs (2002) proposed that children's fantasy literature is based in the feminine Imaginary: a primal locale of magic, memory, the maternal, and all that is not rationally explainable. The feminine Imaginary is not gender specific—it is feminine in the sense that it offers alternative signifying practices as a mode of literary engagement (p.2). Children's fantasy is written for the disempowered, the Other—the child—who is situated at the very margins of dominant subjectivity. In this thesis, like Wilkie-Stibbs, I draw upon the work of Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva to connect children's fantasy to the feminine Imaginary. However, my focus is on young adult fantasy fiction, specifically the sub-genres of high and wainscots fantasy. High fantasy exists in a supernatural world which is entirely distinct from our own and is complete with its own moral and philosophical concerns. A classic example of high fantasy is J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" series. Wainscots fantasy, a term coined by Clute & Grant (1999), was brought to the attention of academia and the general public by Le Lievre (2003) in her heavily cited article<sup>1</sup> on the works of J.K. Rowling. A wainscots world is one in which the fantasy world co-exists beside ours. The wainscots world relies upon secrecy in order to prevent detection from the mainstream world. I assert that the masterplot (Abbott, 2008) of fantasy fiction is the quest. In young adult fantasy, the quest is invariably a coming-of-age narrative about identity. I approach the coming-of-age quest story with a combination of psychoanalysis, semiotics, post-modernism, and post-colonialism. For post-modern and post-colonial theory, I rely primarily upon the work of Michel Foucault and Homi Bhabha, respectively.

In the first analytical chapter, I link the search for identity through naming with the problematic post-modern view of truth and with the post-colonial concept of hybridity by

reconceptualising truth as a fluid notion capable of multiplicity. Relying upon the critical themes of resistance, agency, and emancipation and viewed through a psychoanalytical and semiotic lens, I assert that one way in which children's fantasy fiction is inherently resistant is because it is intended for an audience (youth) that is already marginalised in terms of dominant subjectivity. This fantasy, although written in paternal language, represents the feminine because it exists in the realm of the feminine Imaginary, contains alternative signifying practices such as symbolism, and focuses on Kristeva's notion of the Subject—the space of repressed desire and loss. The protagonist follows a quest that involves negotiation of subjectivity in order to define identity. The concept of true names is often an underlying motif with magical implications. The steps of the quest are that the protagonist refuses to assimilate to the dominant social order by engaging in a resistant act. In this way, not only is the form of literature itself resistant but, more importantly, so is the content: the protagonist. Next s/he has an emancipatory experience. Although Bhabha may never have intended his theory of third space to be applied in this way, I link it to the fantasy protagonist's quest. The protagonist seeks a true name for magical knowledge, encounters fear of a true name, or strives to discover his/her name (origin, family history); all of which belie the implicit power of names. Finally, s/he learns that a name, just like truth, is not a singular linear object but more like the reflection of a crystal that offers a multitude of shapes and colours under varied light. Thus ultimately, like an emancipated member of a diaspora, the fantasy protagonist culminates his/her journey by taking on a complex hybrid identity that shifts the standard paradigmatic sense of truthful naming.

In the second analytical chapter, I focus on the fulfillment of the protagonist's identity. This comes about through fantasy fiction's depiction of the soul as a mortal object linked to the

human protagonist which must be protected at all costs to preserve nature's balance. Issues of concern are knowledge and power, as seen through a post-modern lens, and the contrast between the value of the natural world and the cost of immortality. The antagonist, in Freudian projection of his/her own fear of death onto the protagonist, is portrayed as a literary foil. The Foucauldian sense of knowledge and power directly implying one another is essential to my argument because the protagonist, in order to remain benevolent, is always challenged with an offer of great knowledge, power, or immortality. Because s/he can view her/himself in relation to the choices made by the antagonist, the protagonist chooses to maintain a mortal existence and to resist acquisition of any power or knowledge that will disrupt the equilibrium of the natural world. In the third analytical chapter, I relate the fantasy quest motif to my own coming-of-age identity journey. I look at personal issues surrounding my own naming, such as resistance to subjectification, agency, and hybridity—issues which were important to me due to the very particular conditions of my upbringing. My parents, both academics and first generation Indo-Canadians, divorced in the 1970s, at which point I was raised by my father. At the time, not only was it unusual for Indians to dissolve their marriages but it was unheard of for a father to retain sole custody. I 'raised myself up', feeling at times gloriously independent and at others incredibly oppressed. By equating my views on the soul, the natural world, and mortality to those of a fantasy protagonist, I can now recognise how reading high fantasy and delving deep into other worlds profoundly shaped not just my experience of childhood but also my identity.

My focus is on the fantasy sub-genres of high and wainscots fantasy. The marginality of the wainscots world in relation to the dominant world make wainscots fantasy particularly applicable to my themes of resistance, agency, and emancipation. Many other sub-genres of

fantasy exist and are increasingly written for children and young adults. In revisionist fantasy, authors “adopt the strategy of expressing in their fiction their own dissidence from the assumed values...[i]n order to go on making things new while yet complying with the dictates of the market” (Clute & Grant, 1999). However, the move to revisionist fantasy—such as the vampire novel—for a young audience is a fairly recent phenomena. Traditionally (in my childhood, for example) fantasy literature for children consisted of fairy tale, high fantasy, and to a lesser extent wainscots. Because I am concentrating on the novel form, fairy tale is not really applicable; however, I will occasionally refer to fairy tale for clarification of some theme or for contrast. Finally, I have chosen these two sub-genres because the moral framework of high fantasy and wainscots fantasy, unlike that of revisionist or gothic fantasy, most closely mirrors our own.

Although I refer to several works, the ones on which I concentrate are: Lloyd Alexander's “Chronicles of Prydain”, Ursula Le Guin's “Earthsea Trilogy”, J.K. Rowling's ‘Harry Potter’ series, and Philip Pullman's “His Dark Materials Trilogy”. Alexander and Le Guin create very convincingly complex versions of the high fantasy sub-genre, while Rowling and Pullman deftly tackle the vaguer wainscots worlds. I selected these four authors for a number of reasons. I wanted to have a good balance between high and wainscots fantasy and four seemed an ideal number. Alexander and Le Guin were particularly important to me in my own childhood. It was from Le Guin that I took the idea of truth in naming—a concept with which I have been tinkering for over two decades in university papers. Rowling only wrote her famed books in my adulthood but I freely admit that I am a huge fan and can outdo everyone I know in Harry Potter trivia. Pullman too, I only discovered as an adult. I suspect that had his protagonist Lyra existed during

my own childhood I would have taken great comfort in her kindred spirit. Lyra resides in an other world Oxford, a city which is very dear to my heart. Alexander's "Chronicles" are set in a fictional version of Wales, another landscape which is profoundly engraved into my mind—so much so, in fact, that when I first visited the town of Conwy in North Wales in 1990, I felt an eerie familiarity and discovered I had an uncanny sense of direction. I returned to Conwy five years later to be married. Should my wishes in death be honoured, my ashes will be scattered from atop Conwy Mountain overlooking the estuary and the Irish Sea.

The fact that the fantasy landscape is so indelibly etched into my sense of place and self is an issue I address in this thesis. It is curious that in English literature, the fantasy genre is most typically set in Britain. This is perhaps due to the fundamental importance of writers such as Tolkien and C.S. Lewis to the genre. Alexander, an American, admitted that his Prydain is Wales<sup>2</sup>. Also an American, Le Guin's Earthsea is entirely new but it is a world of island nations, not at all like her native California. Of course, both Rowling and Pullman are Britons. Of the four series, Harry Potter's world offers the most contemporary depiction of England with its traditional boarding school life, while Pullman creates multiple worlds and aside from a loving portrayal of Oxford, he draws extensively on the landscape of the far north.

Although I view the works I discuss through very specific critical lenses, it is my genuine hope that the magic within the stories continues to shine forth. As an author of wainscots fantasy myself (Young, 2009) I know how tremendously influential these sub-genres were and continue to be in terms of my views on aesthetics, morality, spirituality, and most essentially, my sense of self.



## **Chapter 2**

### **The Paradoxical Quest for a True Name**

In this first analytical chapter, I discuss the fantasy version of the coming-of-age novel and follow the quest plot through which the protagonist discovers identity. The concept of truth in naming is a frequent motif in these stories. I problematise the idea of truth by considering the post-modern stance influenced by Michel Foucault and Terry Eagleton's reaction to it. I also consider the development of identity from a psychoanalytic and semiotic lens based upon the writings of Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva. Ultimately, I discover that the fantasy protagonist concludes his/her quest for reflexivity with a multifaceted identity which I relate to Homi K. Bhabha's post-colonial theory of Third Space.

I look specifically at the fantasy sub-genres of high and wainscots fantasy which, because they belong to what Kristeva classified as the feminine Imaginary, are inherently resistant to dominant subjectivity. High fantasy is set in a magical world entirely divergent from the reader's reality. It is a locale replete with unique philosophical, moral, and political dilemmas. Because the high fantasy realm is distinct from ours, it is suitably distanced from us; therefore, we are comfortable enough to critically reflect upon it without threatening or compromising the security of our own reality. Although the wainscots world exists hidden beside a dominant reality the reader may recognise as his/her own, the intrinsic marginality of the wainscots makes it another highly suitable arena through which to explore issues of resistance, agency, and emancipation.

Abbott (2008, p. 47), discussing narrative, defines masterplot as a recurrent skeletal story with cultural value. Arguably, the most prevalent masterplot of fantasy fiction is the quest

which, particularly in young adult fiction, takes the form of an identity-driven coming-of-age story. On the journey the protagonist attempts to reconcile different worlds of experience and has emancipatory engagement. Due to their very capacity for resistance, agency, and empowerment, the high and wainscots fantasy sub-genres facilitate the negotiation of a third, translational space (Bhabha, 2009). Instead of having to choose between worlds, the fantasy protagonist comes of age by accepting that s/he is multifaceted. Referring not to literature but to the diaspora of marginalised peoples, Bhabha suggested (1994) that every person is a hybrid of unique factors and that to define identity in terms of otherness is an insufficient manner in which to deal with this complexity. To resolve the insufficiency, we must look to Lacan's notion of the fading subject. I was one such subject: reified and disassociated from my own name. According to Bhabha, when the signifier drains power from the subject it represents, one may with reflexivity rechannel that power back into the signified. In the third analytical chapter I will explore how by renaming myself, I sought to enact this very reflexive rechanneling. Throughout this paper, in my application of Bhabha's theory of Third Space—of complex, hybrid identities defying simple definition and, with reflexivity, resulting in a new type of identity—I find that the protagonist's quest in children's fantasy fiction, because it exists in the feminine Imaginary with implicitly resistant attributes of agency and emancipation, also culminates in a hybrid identity rather than one which is a mere assimilation of the dominant culture in which s/he exists. The Third Space is so important to our discussion because ultimately I, just like a fantasy protagonist, was able to accept my identity as the crystal I described earlier: not linear, not static, but prismatic and multidimensional.

My previous name was weighted down with meanings, none of which I felt were true to

me. Yet, Saussure (2011) asserted that names have no inherent meaning. Foucault (1984) proposed that there are no universal truths. In a post-modern framework, therefore, the very concept of truth is highly problematic. However, the notion of truth in naming is a predominant motif in the fantasy coming-of-age story. What is true can be defined as "being in accordance with reality; being genuine, real, or actual; being loyal or faithful; or being accurate or exact" (Pearsall, 2002, p. 1539). In children's fantasy literature, the name seems to hold an implicit power, relative to its accuracy as a symbol for that which it depicts—as if there were some sort of symbolic scale between perfectly representing a subject and less accurately doing so. Yet, Saussure denounced this possibility in defining the signifier as having been arbitrarily assigned meaning<sup>1</sup>. Foucault himself accepted the alliance between truth and power, although he believed it to be an entirely hegemonic construct (1995). He wrote that "truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power...[it] is produced only by multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power" (1984, p. 72-73). Therefore, truth cannot be viewed outside of the effects of power and in a post-modern framework, a concrete notion of truth is unfathomable. I accept that to purport that truth is an entirely static, unyielding concept would be counter-progressive. But then, if the coming-of-age model of children's fantasy we are considering is so inherently resistant, with its questing elements of agency and empowerment, how then do we explain the seemingly paradoxical search for truth in a signifier—in a name? I find my answer in a tempered version of truth presented by Eagleton. He suggested that some people, usually the dogmatic or authoritarian, believe in a higher kind of truth and that, to refute this, some post-modernists then feel they should reject truth altogether (Eagleton, 2003). Here, Eagleton is referring to the diametric opposition between proponents of the universal version of truth and those who

contend that power structures deny any possibility of truth. Instead, he found a notion of truth somewhat less oppositional. He asserted that “if a statement is true, then the opposite of it can’t be true at the same time, or true from some other point of view” (p. 105). Using Eagleton’s less argumentative idea, I intend to connect a notion of truth that is (hopefully) neither dogmatic nor rejectionist with naming through a reconciliation with identity multiplicity and hybridity. To explore, I must first decipher the semiotic construction of the assignment of names. Next, in order to highlight the qualities of the feminine Imaginary in the fantasy sub-genres, I will contrast the function of naming in the genre of fairy tale to that of high and wainscots fantasy. Then, we summarise the novels in consideration: the works of Lloyd Alexander (*The Chronicles of Prydain*), Ursula Le Guin (*The Earthsea Trilogy*), Philip Pullman (*His Dark Materials Trilogy*), and J.K. Rowling (The “Harry Potter” series) and provide examples of naming in each. Following which, we look at how the themes of resistance and emancipatory acts connect these works to the feminine Imaginary. Lastly, I see how the protagonists in young adult coming-of-age fantasy fiction resolve the aforementioned paradox of truthfulness in the quest for a name.

### Signifier and Signified

Structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (2011) first theorised that all languages function similarly because linguistic forms are universally both systematic and arbitrary. All languages comprise signifiers and signifieds whose meanings are defined in relation to one another. Saussure called this “*l’arbitre du signe*”. He suggested that semantic meaning is arbitrarily bestowed upon words and that words themselves have no inherent value. He represented this foundational theory as: *s S* wherein *s* = signifier and *S* = signified (my italics,

for emphasis). The subject being represented holds priority, as demonstrated by its capitalisation. Less authority is allocated to its symbolic representation.

Jacques Lacan (1970), taking up the discussion of the subject for the purpose of psychoanalysis, perceived the semiotic equation differently:  $S \neq s$ . He saw the object as leeching power from the subject it represents. By nature of the subject's entry into the Symbolic order, the signified diminishes; becomes a 'fading subject'. In Lacanian semiotics the arbitrary sign, the signifier, has been capitalised and holds more power than the signified itself. To understand this view of the signifier/signified relationship and why the signifier steals power from the signified, it is necessary to first consider Lacanian psychoanalytical theories. Lacan (1970, 1977) proposed that humans operate within three cognitive registers: the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. Because what is Real for the subject cannot be included in the Symbolic order, it is beyond language and is therefore, not relevant here. Aside from the cognitive registers, humans experience two developmental temporal moments: the Mirror Phase and the Oedipus Complex. As we will see later in greater detail, the Mirror Phase and the Oedipus Complex are relevant to our discussion because they represent the time of a child's development from the Imaginary to the Symbolic and periods of loss and repression. It is necessary to highlight certain semiotic and psychoanalytic concepts in order to understand why the fantasy protagonist searches for truth in naming and how s/he is an agent resistant to the subjective state. First, let us look to the Imaginary and the Symbolic.

### **The Imaginary and the Symbolic**

Lacan's Imaginary is the space of emotion, disorder, and irrationality. It is pre-Oedipal



and pre-Mirror Phase. This capitalised Imaginary differs from the general definition of the imagination being “the ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful” (Pearsall, 2002, p. 708) in that it is pre-subject. Entry to the Symbolic order occurs only after the child distinguished him/herself from mother and has repressed corporeal desire; therefore, the *a priori* Imaginary register exists before language. This temporal distinction is very relevant to the concept of feminine Imaginary I will be applying to children's fantasy fiction. The pre-language register of the Imaginary is associated with maternal relations, corporeality, and uncensored emotion.

Like the Imaginary, the Symbolic (again, always capitalised) register or order differs from the standard notion of the symbol as “a thing that represents or stands for something else” (Pearsall, 2002, p. 1450) and caution must be taken not to confuse the two meanings. The Lacanian Symbolic order refers to the subject's entry to language. The act of subjectification occurs when the child first gazes into the mirror and recognises him/herself as other. The *a posteriori* Symbolic is the location of rationality and Law—as related to language and the Name-of-the-Father. In the same way that prior to subjectification the child was associated the mother, upon entry to language the child, now a subject, becomes associated with the father. In contrast to the maternal, the paternal relation—referred to as Name-of-the-Father—pertains not to corporeality and uncensored emotion but language and control.

In this paper, the themes of resistance, agency, and emancipation are used in reference to the hegemony of paternal Law. For example, when Lyra flees the oppressive comforts of her mother's home in *The Golden Compass* (2005), she exerts agency. Not only does she resist the paternal authority of her Oxford home with its all-male scholars but she further rejects that of her mother. “She felt like a universal pet, and the second she voiced that thought to herself,

Pantalaimon stretched his goldfinch wings and chirruped loudly" (p.87). She resists Mrs. Coulter, her mother, who represents not maternal warmth but the chill of authority (Law). It so happens that Mrs. Coulter working on behalf of the Church Authority conducts heinous acts of torture in the name of Law and order. Although Mrs. Coulter uses her sexuality to advance her agenda, she is as far from a female nurturing figure as can be imagined.

Lyra had heard enough... 'Well?' she whispered, and he became a goldfinch on her shoulder.

'Are we going to run away?' he whispered back.

'Course. If we do it now with all these people about, she might not notice for a while' (p.96).

The act of choosing to leave empowers Lyra. She is no longer passive. Lyra becomes actively and consciously responsible for her own welfare. As she does so, she begins to not only recognise the repercussions of her choices but the manner in which her right to agency has been repressed.

### **The Mirror Phase and the Oedipus Complex**

Lacan asserted that in the Mirror Phase, the child sees its reflection and becomes aware of both selfness and separateness from Mother. Once the child has gazed upon itself and recognised itself as simultaneously subject and object, the child—torn from its delusion of maternal safety and corporeality—has no choice but to insert itself into the Symbolic order, which is language. Such action is a dialectical binary of desire and loss. The child desires oneness with Mother but recognises the loss of unity. Similarly Lyra as we saw above, at one time

captivated by Mrs. Coulter's beauty, desired oneness with her mother until she realised that self-preservation dictated she escape. Knowing there is no return, the child seeks to function in the new world as a speaking subject. As previously stated, the Mirror Phase is one of the temporal developments which, with the Oedipus Complex, leads to entry to the order of subjectivity. In turn, both result in an unavoidable alienation due to repressed desire and loss. The protagonist's alienation is often portrayed through his or her being an orphan, as is the case with all of the four series we are discussing.

Lacan, in his 'return to Freud' (1977) and in consideration of the Oedipus Complex—that the child aspires to be like Father, the master of the Symbolic order—proposed that the phallus is the defining characteristic of subjectivity. As such, the phallus naturally becomes the key signifier in the Symbolic order of language. As a paternal metaphor, the phallus serves a patriarchal function. Furthermore, language then develops as a system of symbols around the masculine, from which the feminine must inevitably be excluded. The feminine can only be defined in terms of what is not present in the dominant subjectivity. The feminine, having been marginalised, represents absence and lack. If logic and rationality belong to the masculine Symbolic, then excluded emotions, magic, dreams, memories, and sensations must comprise the feminine Imaginary. These are the very qualities attributed to high and wainscots fantasy and, more specifically, to all of the four series we are investigating here.

### **Alienation**

Far from a gentle process, coming to language requires the human subject to adopt the role of speaker from a position of devastating loss. After gazing upon itself, the child has lost

the safe illusion of oneness with Mother. The pain of this primordial loss leads to repression of the desire/loss binary, which in turn further buries memories of mother fulfillment and projects the subject into the Symbolic (Elliott, 2009). To re-establish itself, the child has no choice but to accept the Law of logical, structured language—an authority which demands rejection of the affective domain. This alienation is key to our fantasy protagonist. By resisting dominant subjectivity during the identity quest, the protagonist reclaims the repressed desire and loss. Moreover, because the protagonist accepts multiplicity as viable, and not merely the qualities that situate him/her in the hegemonic Symbolic register, a hybrid resolution to identity is facilitated.

Rowling's 'Harry Potter' series offers an example of this. Harry Potter is a young wizard raised in the non-magical 'Muggle' world, who was orphaned at one year of age when his parents were killed by the dark wizard, Lord Voldemort. Harry miraculously survived the attack on his life because his mother refused to surrender him. Her bodily sacrifice left a residual love and protection in Harry's very blood. His mother's death symbolises the desire/loss binary. Before entry to the subjective order, Harry lost the mother to whom as an infant he most closely associated; however, she left him the magical memory of love inside his body. Harry experienced alienation being brought up outside the magical world in a state of total neglect, emotional abuse, and malnourishment. His repression was such that only in nightmares did he sense the trauma he had suffered. He remembered nothing of his parents, the wizard world, or of love. Years later, after coming to learn about the wainscots magical world and his mother's sacrifice, Harry is able to defeat Voldemort because he possesses the one quality his opponent lacks: the ability to love. Throughout the series, Harry faces numerous challenges and

horrendous threats but he never relinquishes his simply kind and caring nature. It is this feminine sensitivity that leads to his success, not his masculine skill. It is his capacity to resist the temptations of public adoration, financial gain, and easy social acceptance that he uses to defeat evil. In the end, Harry accepts that all aspects of his life experience have made him the complex man he is: courageous wizard, moody Muggle, fierce friend, humourous companion, lucky competitor, begrudging celebrity, deprived orphan, and devoted father.

In the process of alienation, the child must sever identification with the mother in the register of the Imaginary, the corporeal, in order to appropriately assimilate to the Symbolic register of language. Father then asserts his place as signifier who controls the agency of symbols. Harry Potter's identification in the aforementioned example was literally severed because his mother was killed. Harry is raised in the dominant Muggle world, not the marginal wainscots, where no memory of his mother is preserved. The patriarchal assertion of power within and repression of what is without language is known as the Name-of-the-Father (*le nom-du-père*) or Law (capitalised; referred to in a French play on words as *le non-du-père*). By default, then, if language is a hegemonic masculine function, women and children are necessarily situated as Other. Lacan's suggestion that the subject fades due to the omnipotency of language is akin to Marshall McLuhan's iconic declaration that the medium itself is the message (1964). The message or subject is overshadowed by the implicit power of the means of communication...unless the subject proves resistant—like our fantasy protagonist.

### **The Gap/The Bar**

The gap is the space between '*moi*' and '*je*' in language. It is the location between the



experiential self and the other first recognised in the mirror's gaze. The gap represents the alienation between the conscious and unconscious. It is also referred to as the bar—which makes the concept easier to visualise when one views the equation  $S/s$ . It is quite literally a reference to the forward slash between signifier and signified. This gap between self and other epitomises the objectification of the fading subject (Lacan, 1977). Imagine a child who has been given the name of a historically or mythologically relevant figure. Whatever the child's potential or character, one automatically has preconceptions of the child's personality prior to meeting. It is an example of a name preceding a person. The name, whether Eve or Adolf, has become invested with powerful meaning itself in no arbitrary fashion, separate from the actual subject signified. The alienated, repressed subject upon receipt of a name is transformed into a representation of itself (Wilkie-Stibbs, 2002).

Lyra in Pullman's *The Golden Compass* (2005) has no idea who she really is. She has been told that she is the daughter of a fictional Count and Countess Belacqua, who died (like Harry Potter's parents) in her infancy. Lyra experiences the gap between who she feels she is and who she thinks she should be. Because she has no recollection of her aristocratic parents, she creates a representation of their orphaned daughter.

That was Lyra's world and her delight. She was a coarse and greedy little savage, for the most part. But she always had a dim sense that it wasn't her whole world; that part of her also belonged in the grandeur and ritual of Jordan College; and that somewhere in her life there was a connection with the high world of politics represented by Lord Asriel. All she did with that knowledge was to give herself airs and lord it over the other urchins. (p. 36)

Later she discovers she is actually the daughter of Lord Asriel, whom she had always believed to be her uncle. As Lyra Asriel, she feels exhilarated to be the daughter of so illustrious an explorer and scientist and alters her self-presentation to take on the enthusiasm of a far north expedition. Yet, she also learns that her mother is none other than the charismatic and cruel Mrs. Coulter who had abandoned Lyra to be raised by her Gyptian (Romani) nurse. Is she Lyra Belacqua, Lyra Asriel, Lyra Coulter or Lyra the Gyptian? And do any of those names actually mean anything? Lyra wonders where she can find truth in the gap between her sense of self and the subject she presents to the world when her identity has been corrupted by so many lies.

### **The Feminine Imaginary/The Semiotic**

Julia Kristeva, psychoanalyst and feminist critic, took up Freudian/Lacanian patriarchy of language and psychoanalysis, but distinguished herself in her theorisation of the feminine as infinitely greater than mere absence, lack, or negativity. In the Imaginary register, Kristeva affirmed the Semiotic. Kristeva's Semiotic (capitalised) refers not to the signifier/signified equation but to a different structure altogether: an archaic, pre-linguistic system existing in pre-Mirror relations with the Mother. In binary fashion, the patriarchy of language is polarised by the feminine Imaginary.

Kristeva stated (1977) that if 'I' only exists as a temporal moment of speech addressed to Mother, then 'I' am only present at the experience of communication. Because language is temporal linear, if there is no time without speech, then there is no time without Father. Kristeva asserted that Lacan's temporal gaze falls short in not broaching the space of transverbal representation, emotion, and sensation. In an earlier example, we saw the manner in which

Harry Potter was able to defeat Lord Voldemort by accessing the Semiotic—the pre-linguistic and the emotional, in his capacity to love—the quality that Voldemort dismissed because he associated it with femininity and weakness. Kristeva contrasted Symbolic Law and order with the tangible force of somatic desires and affects, resulting in a dynamic, rhythmic flow between the Imaginary and the Symbolic; a dialectic of space and time. Moving beyond the assertion of dominance of the Symbolic, Kristeva saw the interplay between the spatial Imaginary and the temporal Symbolic.

Obviously, literature is written in language and is, therefore, Symbolic. However, the literature we are considering here is fundamentally Imaginary because it is comprised of elements counter to Symbolic Law: there is a heavy focus on magic, memory, physicality, dreams, emotions, sensations and most importantly, it is written for children—all attributes connected to the feminine. Clearly, the feminine devices, implicit to the structure of these works, are much more than negativity and lack. As such, the stories themselves become agents of resistance against the dominant masculine order of language.

### **The Abject**

After situating the Semiotic in the Imaginary, Kristeva then looked to the bar between signifier and signified. Lacan suggested that the child compliantly displaces renounced maternal experiences into '*objet petit a*' (1970, 1977), the object cause of desire. The '*a*' refers to *autre*, as Lacan utilised otherness to separate desire from subjectivity. To Lacan, '*objet petit a*' was merely what was left behind when the subject enters the Symbolic order. This was the desire/loss binary that had been repressed. Kristeva accepted that the subject renounces desire to

gain entry to language but not in such a casual way as implied by Lacan. Instead, she proclaimed the child's severing of mother relations is a violent, forced repression of maternal corporeal pleasure.

Because it represents the desire and loss that occur upon entry to subjectification, the bar is frequently seen in young adult fantasy fiction as the back-story moment when the protagonist is orphaned. The loss of mother or of both parents becomes a driving force in the protagonist's journey of self-discovery. Such is the case in the four main works to be discussed here. Harry Potter's parents are murdered before *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997) begins. Lyra has been abandoned by her parents but believes they are dead prior to the start of *The Golden Compass* (Pullman, 2005). Taran only knows that he was raised by the enchanter Dallben from infancy and that his parents are dead at the commencement of *The Horned King* (Alexander, 1964). Young Duny (later to be called Sparrowhawk and Ged) lives alone with his gruff father because his mother dies prior to his first birthday and before the beginning of *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Le Guin, 1968). The place where the repressed desire and loss reside is the bar between signifier and signified. To recapitulate, the bar or the gap is the same place where the subject and object attempt to come to terms with one another. This is the locale of the fading subject and the same place where Pullman's protagonist Lyra struggled to attain a sense of self amongst all the possible representations available to her. Kristeva renamed the bar the Abject.

The Abject—this space of repression—is a violent and somatic feminine locale of desire, disgust, and dissent. The Semiotic suggests a feminine Imaginary while the Abject (the matriarchy of body, sensation, and of emotions) resists patriarchal repression with irrepressible

revulsion and longing. Similar to the way in which I have used capitalised Semiotic to distinguish Kristeva's feminine Imaginary from the linguistic semiotic, here I will capitalise Abject to separate Kristeva's use of the term from the dictionary usage, which is "extremely unpleasant or degrading" or "completely without pride or dignity" (Pearsall, 2002, p. 3). Kristeva's Abject is the subject's attempt to cling to pre-Mirror, pre-Oedipal mother/child relations. The Abject is a vessel filled with all that must be discarded--all that has been violated--in order to achieve a 'clean and proper body' and to gain access to normative subjectivity (Wilkie-Stibbs, 2002). Corporeal, it is replete with bodily functions, fluids, and taboos. The Semiotic dialectically engages language--as we have seen with the implicit resistance of our young adult fantasy fiction works with the devices of the feminine Imaginary such as magic and emotion--whereas the Abject (not to be satisfied with dynamic interplay) by threatening to seep or vomit forth from its confinement, actively opposes patriarchal Law.

### **Rhetorical Devices of Language**

Moving beyond the arbitrary nature of the sign, Althusser (1993) suggested that in metaphor and metonymy Lacan recognised two essential linguistic components of '*la chaîne signifiante*'. Metaphor is defined as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable; a thing regarded as symbolic of something else" (Pearsall, 2002, p. 895). The substitution of a signifier for another signifier results in signification that crosses the bar with limited resistance and general acceptance. Therefore, metaphor operates as a hegemonically complicit element of the Symbolic order of language and thereby, as a paternal one. In the example "Weak as woman's magic...[w]icked as woman's



magic” (Le Guin, 1968, *A Wizard of Earthsea*, p.15), woman's magic is considered like weakness and wickedness. Although neither weakness nor wickedness is in any way synonymous with woman nor her magic, the comparison is easily understood because of the word 'as'. This simple form of comparison is compliant with the dominant paternal register of language because it is so easily applied to language.

However, the resistance of Semiotic feminine agency can even infiltrate masculine language constructs. Metonymy comes from the Greek *metonymia*, which literally means change of name. It is a device wherein “a word or expression is used as a substitute for something with which it is closely associated” (Pearsall, p. 897). Metonymy instills a lack of being into the object and targets Subject desire aimed at the lack. It problematises the connection between signifier and signified and in so doing, subverts the Symbolic order of language from within itself. Benczes (2006) offers a delightful example in reference to a “Hogwarts headache” (p. 149) – a condition for which many children had been seen by the doctor after developing migraine headaches upon attempting to read the Rowling's lengthy *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003)<sup>2</sup>. ‘Hogwarts’ is used as a substitute for the title of Rowling's fifth book in the series. Anyone familiar with the increasing length of Harry Potter novels from the fourth book on will be able to make the connection. However, the metonymy feels tricky—as if one is being forced to engage in a more complex way than with a simple metaphor.

Metonymy might be visualised as making a cognitive leap from one side of the riverbank to the other. Imagination and courage are required to clear the gap from shore to shore. Moreover, one could not presume successful crossing. Metaphor, on the other hand, might be characterised as the same river with a bridge passing from bank to bank. The walk across would

be undoubtedly predictable.

Metonymy and metaphor can be viewed as paradigmatic examples of the Imaginary/Symbolic dialectic. Where metaphor adheres to the rules of the dominant structure by being masculine, orderly, clear, and foreseeable; metonymy resists by being feminine, disorderly, vague, and unpredictable. The value of viewing the metonymy/metaphor comparison as the feminine Imaginary/masculine Symbolic is to elucidate another way in which language can be subverted from within. Similarly, in this paper I show how young adult fantasy fiction is feminine and resistant to the dominant order of language by its use of Semiotic qualities and the Subject.

### **Relation to Children's Fantasy Literature**

The Name-of-the-Father dictates that women and children are marginalised in the Symbolic register. Clearly then, children's and young adult fantasy is intended for an audience already Other in terms of patriarchal language. Although obviously written in language, children's fantasy fiction operates significantly more at the register of the feminine Imaginary than the masculine Symbolic. Fantasy is "the faculty or activity of imagining improbable or impossible things" and "a genre of imaginative fiction involving magic and adventure" (Pearsall, 2002, p. 514). Also, it is often out of space/time due to circular or elliptical plot structures, and relies upon corporeal experience (i.e. pre-Oedipal Mother relations) as essential to narrative progression (Wilkie-Stibbs, 2002). Moreover, as Kristeva's Semiotic suggests, children's and young adult fantasy uses alternative signifying practices (such as symbolism) and the Subject components of physical modes of communication, primal elements (especially water) and

dream, memory, or magical realms.

At this point, it is important to remember the distinction between Symbolic order and symbolic. The Symbolic register refers specifically to the subject's entry to language. The lowercase symbolic refers to a sign representing something else. It is not necessarily linguistic. To say, for example, that the concept of water symbolises freedom does not mean that 'water' is exclusively part of the Symbolic register. The word 'water' may belong to the Symbolic but the concept of water is used symbolically. Ambivalently, symbolism neither precludes signification nor condones Law.

Children's fantasy literature is written for a marginal audience—the child, who is Other in terms of dominant subjectivity—in the dominant medium of language, but with resistant characteristics such as symbolism, somatic experiences, and other-worldly beings. The decidedly counter-empirical notion of magic is often key. As previously stated, Law dictates order and rationality. Hegemonic signifying practices, while not eliminated in children's literature, are certainly subverted. From this subversive space across the bar, the quest for a name is empowering to the alienated Other. Ged and his fellow young students struggled to grasp that elusive power buried within names in *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Le Guin, 1968):

Ged sighed sometimes, but he did not complain. He saw that in this dusty and fathomless matter of learning the true names of each place, thing, and being, the power he wanted lay like a jewel at the bottom of a dry well. For magic consists in this, the true naming of a thing. (p. 59)

What is my name? Who am I? What is my true identity? These are questions that might be asked in any fantasy genre coming-of-age story or by any marginal member of society seeking

emancipation. When he theorised the fading subject, Lacan recognised that the once-arbitrary signifier would take power for itself. Accordingly, the authority to impose names has long been a method to assert societal control.

Banerjee (2012) spoke about naming and resistance outside the colonial frame and the act of re-inscription in his discussion of India's Dalits. Approximately 25% of India's population belongs to the Untouchable caste<sup>3</sup>. The British initially named this group the 'Depressed Classes' but in 1937 changed the title to 'Scheduled Castes', which is still legally in use. Gandhi, who wished to ameliorate the situation of the Untouchables but not abolish the caste system, proposed the term *harijan* meaning children of god. The Untouchables were not fooled by the attempt at benign semantical engineering of their name (Hughes, 2010) and found Gandhi's good intention patronising. In the 1970s, a politicised group of Untouchables drawing inspiration from the American Black Panthers, named themselves 'Dalit Panthers'. The name *dalit*, meaning crushed, is now widely accepted although its use is banned in official documents (Banerjee, 2012). The government of India is clearly trying to repress the Dalits' agency and is attempting to reassert the Law of hegemonic Symbolic order by rejecting the self-naming. Foucault said that names signify ownership and authority (Stump, 1998); therefore, it is entirely unsurprising that the marginalised might seek empowerment by naming themselves.

Naming is important in children's fantasy not simply for the previously noted strength of the signifier over the signified but for the subversive power derived from naming within the specific conditions of fantasy literature. Children's coming-of-age fantasy allows for a renaissance of the Mirror Phase. The child reader's gaze is taken once more to the moment of insertion to the Symbolic. The protagonist's quest for identity—for what else does one ask

oneself when looking into the mirror if not 'who am I?'—is fuelled by a rekindling of the desire/loss binary and the hope of unifying severed relations with the Mother in the Imaginary.

Foucault (1984) stated that one must "get rid of the subject itself...to account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework" (p. 59). Moreover, "each society has had its régime of truth" (p.73). He meant that in order to understand the signifier, one must consider the social context of its construction. According to Foucault, both the subject and the notion of truth are products of historical context. The act of subjectification, of coming to language and of representing oneself to the world, is related to the systems of power in society. From a post-modern standpoint, the only way to perceive truth is as a system of ordered procedures which produce and sustain it. But, he added, truth is neither ideology (in discounting Marx's longing for knowledge without illusion) nor repression (in discounting Freud's longing for power without coercion) because neither is real. Truth is inextricably tied to power. As with the Dalits, the right to name oneself is an emancipatory act. Consider that the name 'Dalit' is used commonly, whereas the use of 'Scheduled Castes' is enforced only in legal documentation and 'Harijan' is not used in any context. Has the grassroots movement of the Dalits been more powerful or has the bureaucracy of the government? Which name is true depends on who has been more convincing that they possess the truer signifier; whose conception of the name has most influenced perception of it. Or as Eagleton would suggest, the true name is one which 'cannot be and not be the case at the same time'? (Aoudjit, 2006). I could not presume to answer the case about the Dalits. However, implicated in the same conundrum is the protagonist in children's fantasy who refuses to assimilate and seeks instead a new truth in naming. This I believe does result in a truth—a powerful, new, Third Space truth, as we will see later.

Much of the focus of the works of fantasy we will consider is on the naming of the protagonist. The power previously discussed in relation to naming is not to be confused with strength. Power resulting in truthful naming can be asserted in much gentler, more feminine ways. In this example from *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Le Guin, 1968), Ged challenges the authority of the Symbolic order. Instead of using force, he uses patience, calm, and courtesy to uncover a secret.

'I think you are the Master Doorkeeper,' said Ged.

'I am. Ged, you won entrance to Roke by saying your name. Now you may win your freedom of it by saying mine.' So said the old man smiling, and waited. Ged stood dumb.

'Master,' said Ged, 'I cannot take your name from you, not being strong enough, and I cannot trick your name from you, not being wise enough. So I am content to stay here, and learn or serve, whatever you will: unless by chance you will answer a question I have.'

'Ask it.'

'What is your name?' The Doorkeeper smiled, and said his name... (pp. 86-87)

Those who belong to the hegemonic regime do not need to pose questions of identity but seek to maintain control and to exclude others. For the maternal, who has been repressed in language, to suddenly have such a voice (Cixous & Conley, 1984) and such access to truth via fantasy literature is tremendously desirable. It is for this reason that during the quest the protagonist discovers some magical truth about his/her identity. As with metonymy, when the feminine Imaginary reflexively invests in a signifier, it is an emancipatory act. This is a

diasporic reappropriation of language's own symbols by the feminine. As a final act of agency, the protagonist either self-names, rejects or denounces a name, or reappropriates a name creating a unique Third Space identity in which s/he situates truth. This truth possesses the qualities of empowerment and agency. Ultimately, children's fantasy literature is feminine in its reference to the Semiotic; resistant in that it does not require linearity, rationality, or concrete reality; Abject in that it operates in the gap between representations of subjectivity (as such, it is the locale of the repressed desire and loss); and emancipatory in the search for truth and naming.

### **The Fairy Tale**

In the discussion of resistance against the hegemonic order of language, another genre distinction must be made between fantasy stories for young children which serve to perpetuate a patriarchal ideology and coming-of-age fantasies for young adults. While both may contain a theme of name discovery, they serve different purposes. The difference between paternal and maternal function is quite evident. Father's Law suggests children be clean, proper, and compliant to the rules of subjectivity. Mother's memory suggests instead an emotional, pleasurable, less concrete journey. Fairy tales, with their historically and culturally coded morality promoting fear of nature and as purveyors of the dominant ideology, often fall into the former category; whereas, fantasy coming-of-age novels, which worship the natural order, clearly do not. One of the main characteristics that distinguishes folk and fairy tale from other genres of fantasy according to Propp (2006) is that it relies upon a strictly uniform sequence of events. Wilkie-Stibbs (2002) maintained that the fantasy genres (such as high and wainscots fantasy, to which we have been referring) often operate in a non-linear temporal manner. This is



seen frequently in memory or dream sequences. For example, in *The Black Cauldron* (Alexander, 1965) Adaon has prophetic dreams and foresees his own death. 'Is that what troubles you? Very well, I shall tell you. I saw myself in a glade and though winter lay all around, it was warm and sunlit. Birds called and flowers sprang up from bare stones' (p. 88). Nikolajeva (2003) asserted that fairy tales originate in archaic thought and hegemonic gender roles, whereas fantasy literature is firmly anchored in the postmodern; especially concepts of uncertainty and intersubjectivity—the very concepts which we have come to associate with the feminine Imaginary.

“Rumpelstiltskin” is a traditional fairy tale collected by the Grimm Brothers (1992). In the story, a beautiful young woman being held captive is required to spin flax into gold by sunrise to spare her life. The imp Rumpelstiltskin materialises in her chamber and performs the alchemist task. Thrice he enacts the gold spinning on the condition that he take possession of the woman's first born child. Naturally, when the woman has a baby and Rumpelstiltskin calls upon the debt, she does not wish to part with her child. Rumpelstiltskin adds one final condition to the contract—that if she learns his true name by dawn, she may keep her child and the debt will be void. When the woman discovers his true name and speaks it, Rumpelstiltskin angrily acknowledges defeat.

Rumpelstiltskin's power resides in his concealed name. He makes a game of taunting others with his magical capabilities, knowing that his strength lies in his secrecy. For Rumpelstiltskin, the signifier is all powerful but in his vanity he seeks to hide it from language. The revelation of the name vanquishes the omnipotence of the signifier. The spell is broken.

The fairy tale of Rumpelstiltskin is a parable of masculine, normative order.

Rumpelstiltskin's naming is not a resistant act but a hegemonic one. In accordance with the Name-of-the-Father, he must be defeated as a lesson to those who attempt to disrupt the status quo. Rumpelstiltskin is a fantastical creature who possesses magic, who operates counter to the linear notion of time—as shown by his spinning the flax impossibly fast in the last moments before dawn—and he does not conceal his emotions. Such is not the behaviour of a rational Law-abiding subject. The arrogant (read: emotional), magical creature (read: unnatural other) must ultimately be repressed because his existence belongs in the Imaginary register, not in the Symbolic one. Magic is connected to the feminine mysterious and is not part of the socially acceptable 'natural' order. Although magic may be a common component in fairy tale, it is usually either overturned (as in the cases of Rumpelstiltskin or Johnny and the Witch Maiden, below) or used to defeat an even worse magical antagonist. Accordingly, Manning-Sanders (1965) said that the number of good witches was considerably less than the number of bad and the role of good witch was primarily to undo the work of the bad. Of course, witches are more obviously feminine than Rumpelstiltskin and are, therefore, even more conspicuous violators of the Symbolic. Manning-Sanders added quite succinctly that, "in the fairy tales about witches in general, you may be sure of one thing: however terrible the witches may seem—and whatever power they may have to lay spells on people and to work mischief—they are always defeated" (p. 8). The ultimate message is that the only path to success is one of honest hard labour; any other ideas must be discarded upon entering the subjective state.

An example of the virtuosity of labour is the Bohemian fairy tale "Johnny and the Witch-Maidens" collected by Manning-Sanders. Johnny is an orphaned young man seeking work. Johnny encounters an elderly goatherd whose eye sockets are empty because the witch-maidens

had stolen his eyes. Johnny tends to the blind old man and his goats. He is virtuous and hard-working. The old man rewards him with food and kindness. When thrice the increasingly beautiful witch-maidens attempt to ensnare Johnny, he keeps his wits and avoids seduction. He captures the witch-maidens and forces them to reveal the location of the old man's eyes. In the end, the elderly goatherd regains his sight, Johnny remains a valued companion, and the witch-maidens are never again seen. Johnny succeeded not only in vanquishing evil magic but in resisting the sexual temptation the witches presented. Because he literally overcame loss (of the eyes) and desire (for the maidens), he truly is a Law-abiding member of the Symbolic order.

Where fairy tale differs from the coming-of-age story is in the function of naming. The protagonist in Rumpelstiltskin does not undergo a quest for her own agency. Rather she seeks Rumpelstiltskin's name to disempower him and to restore order. She refutes the magical world by vanquishing it. She appears powerless against his magical advantage other than a generous dose of normative virtue: she is physically attractive. Neither particularly intelligent nor resourceful, she is exceptionally pretty. Rumpelstiltskin, on the other hand, has magical power and knowledge but is a hideous imp. Seemingly, in the realm of fairy tale, ignorance is forgivable; however, ugliness is not. Ugly witches are bound to be defeated, such as the witch in "Hansel and Gretel" but female protagonists are generally pretty like "Rapunzel", "Cinderella", or "Snow White" (Grimm et al., 1992). Such is a framework of parables of patriarchal ideology.

As with "Johnny and the Witch-Maidens", even beautiful magical creatures are ultimately defeated to reassert the hegemonic social order. Another example of a naming fairy tale<sup>4</sup> is the Welsh tale "Penelop" (Rhys, 1901). A young man is captivated by the beauty of a lady of the fair folk. He snatches her away and holds her captive in his home. Neither she nor

her family can penetrate locks upon his doors as iron is cursed to fairies. He attempts to woo her but, as she is a nothing but his prisoner, she refuses to wed. Because he is unrelenting, she finally proposes that if he can guess her name, she will consent to work as his servant but that she will never marry him. One day at the outskirts of the village, he overhears some members of the fair folk discussing how to free her from her abductor. He conceals himself and eventually overhears her sister mutter sadly to herself, 'O Penelop, O Penelop, why didst thou run away with a mortal?' The young man runs home and calls Penelop by her true name. She becomes his servant and later does consent to marry him on the condition that he never touches her with iron. Many years later, he calls to Penelop to help him with a horse and when he accidentally touches the iron bridle to her, she disappears on the spot and is never seen again. As with the other examples of fairy tale, the secrecy of Penelop's name proves her demise. In fairy tale, because magic belongs to the feminine Imaginary, it is unsustainable and disorderly; therefore, even when beautiful, it must eventually be overturned by the Symbolic order.

Although there are some superficial similarities between a certain type of fairy tale and the coming-of-age fantasy novel, they differ in four significant ways: genre, duration, plot, and opinions about magic. Regarding genre, the closest equivalent to the coming-of-age theme in fairy tale would be folk tales in which a young man goes out into the world to seek his fortune. "Johnny and the Witch-Maidens" is an example of one such tale. However, fairy tales were first written for adults and only during the 19<sup>th</sup> century considered children's literature, at the commencement of the notion of childhood (Tatar, 2003). The concept of identity development through psychological and moral growth in a literary genre really only becomes popular in particular type of novel, the *Bildungsroman*: "novels dealing with someone's formative years or

spiritual growth” (Pearsall, 2002, p. 132). Next, pertaining to duration, Propp (2006) detailed that the protagonist in folk tale follows a strictly uniform sequence of events involving certain tasks. The short length of fairy tale tasks cannot be considered as equivalent to the coming-of-age fantasy protagonist undertaking an arduous quest of identity in a novel. Thirdly, the functions of the task in fairy tale or the quest in coming-of-age novels are dissimilar. As we have seen, tasks in fairy tale are about undoing magic; whereas in high and wainscots fantasy any discoveries made along the journey contribute to self-discovery and ultimate hybridity of the protagonist. Finally, in both fairy tale and coming-of-age fantasy, magic and the supernatural are existing conditions of the world in which the protagonist lives. In either genre, even when the protagonist lacks certain knowledge, s/he always has the resourcefulness to connect with others who possess the requisite skills. However, the perception of magic and the supernatural differs in fantasy and fairy tale. In fantasy, both protagonist and antagonist equally embrace the fantastical or magical realm in which they operate. Yet, fairy tale protagonists seek to overthrow the magical. Fantasy fiction demonstrates acceptance of the matriarchal frame and fairy tale, the patriarchal. In coming-of-age fantasy, naming draws power from magic—that very ethereal, unrestrained, feminine element—that resists from within the Symbolic register of language. Now, let us turn to specific examples of naming as they occur in the four high and wainscots series.

### **The Chronicles of Prydain**

In *The Book of Three* (Alexander, 1964), the first of the five “Chronicles of Prydain” by Lloyd Alexander, we meet the orphan Taran, an adolescent who has lived his life thus far on the farm of Caer Dallben under the care of the great enchanter Dallben himself and the aged warrior

Coll. Taran longs to learn something of the world and to find a name for himself.

‘What is the use of studying much when I’m to see nothing at all?’ Taran retorted. ‘I think there is a destiny laid on me that I am not to know anything interesting, go anywhere interesting, or do anything interesting. I’m certainly not to *be* anything. I’m not anything even at Caer Dallben!’

‘Very well, said Coll, ‘if that is all that troubles you, I shall make you something. From this moment, you are Taran, Assistant Pig-Keeper. You shall help me take care of Hen Wen: see her trough is full, carry her water, and give her a good scrubbing every other day’ (p. 18).

A time of dark omens is falling upon the land of Prydain. There are rumours of “a man of evil for whom death is a black joy” (p. 15). He is called the Horned King, for no one knows his true name. When the oracular pig Hen Wen under his care flees Caer Dallben, Taran chases after her and narrowly escapes the Horned King. Deep in the forest, he encounters the legendary hero Lord Gwydion, who is also seeking Hen Wen.

‘So you are Taran of Caer Dallben,’ he said at last. His voice from the shadows was quiet but urgent. ‘How long have you been with Dallben? Who are your kinsmen?’...

‘I have always lived at Caer Dallben,’ he said. ‘I don’t think I have any kinsmen. I don’t know who my parents were. Dallben has never told me. I suppose,’ he added, turning his face away, ‘I don’t even know who *I* am’ (p. 30).

Taran discovers much about his own capacity as a hero and also that it is no small thing to be the carer for such a pig. Finally, Gwydion reveals the message Hen Wen had for him.

‘What I learned from her was more important than I suspected...she knew the one thing

that could destroy him...She knew the Horned King's secret name.'

'His name?' Taran cried in astonishment. 'I never realized a name could be so powerful.'

'Yes,' Gwydion answered. 'Once you have courage to look upon evil, seeing it for what it is and naming it by its true name, it is powerless against you, and you can destroy it' (p. 216).

Like Rumpelstiltskin and Penelop, the Horned King sought to conceal his name and thus protect the power of the signifier through an imbalance of knowledge. Yet, the difference, as we have previously seen, is in the perception of magic. The Horned King was defeated by an equally magical opponent: a prophetic pig. In living with an enchanter and relying upon Hen Wen's oracular powers, Taran, the unmagical Assistant Pig-Keeper, embraced the magical realm, he did not seek to destroy it. The arrogant secrecy of name concealment was broken by equivalently feminine knowledge--magic and a mystical pig--and balance was once more restored to the dialectical Imaginary and Symbolic.

### **The Earthsea Trilogy**

In *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Le Guin, 1968), the young mage Sparrowhawk follows an archetypal quest to conquer a shadow beast, the gebbeth, he has unwittingly unleashed from its dream state limbo world. The creature, borne of avarice and greed, is a foul, abject being. The unleashing of this monster creates tears in the fabric of the fantasy world that ripple all the way through to the third and final book. Sparrowhawk defeats the beast at the end of the first book when he discovers its true name is none other than his own, Ged.



It is Ged's self-naming that solves the riddle. "Aloud and clearly, breaking that old silence, Ged spoke the shadow's name, and in the same moment the shadow spoke without lips or tongue, saying the same word: 'Ged.' And the two voices were one voice." (pp. 198-9). He recognises the Abject within—that he is not a mere being of Law and order, but one also of disorder. He embraces the dichotomy of being; thus not defeating the feminine Imaginary (for this would not be possible in the realm of children's fantasy literature, which is in itself so dependant on the characteristics of magic, corporeality, and emotion) but holding it dear to himself.

In *The Farthest Shore* (Le Guin, 1972), the final apocalyptic book of the Earthsea Trilogy, true names are forgotten. Names become so devalued as to be devoid of meaning. The wizard Cob has returned from the dead. He visits wizards and others with gifts of knowledge during a trance like state. Many in Earthsea purchase Cob's promise of immortality for the price of their names and magical knowledge. As words become his property in the Land of the Dead, they cease to have meaning to the living. People all across Earthsea report forgetfulness and indifference. As a semantic black hole emerges in the Land of the Dead, draining significance from the living world, the inhabitants of Earthsea begin to live their lives aimlessly, forsaking the most basic elements of human survival for the drug-like deceit of a glorious after-life. It is as if the signifier is being sucked into oblivion, dragging with it the signified. The signifier in Lacan's fading subject implodes with the burden of dragging down the signified to the extent that neither exists. It is a loss of both self and other, subject and object. Ged, now the Archmage, undertakes the quest to seal the hole which is draining meaning from the living world.

As Ged, seeking ultimately to repair the rift, acknowledges the bar, the Semiotic, and the circular order of the feminine, he insists: "And there was no gap or void place among the boulders. The door was shut... 'By the word that will not be spoken until time's end I summoned thee. By the word that was spoken at the making of things I now release thee. Go free!'" (Le Guin, 1972, p.184). The price for him is very high but he is successful in renewing the dialectic balance to the world.

### **His Dark Materials Trilogy**

In *The Golden Compass* (Pullman, 2005), Lyra Belacqua, a young girl possessing the ability to read an enigmatic object of truth-telling, is renamed by her protector Iorek Byrnison, an armoured bear. Bears, in this alternate world, are undecivable by humans. After Lyra successfully tricks the usurper Iofur Rakinson, Iorek Byrnison is restored to his rightful throne as King of the Armoured Bears. 'You tricked Iofur Rakinson?...Belacqua? No. You are Lyra Silvertongue' (p. 384).

A climactic battle in the second novel *The Subtle Knife* (2005) over the power of the signifier is fought between the feminine and the masculine. The witch Lena Feldt, representing the Imaginary and mysterious knowledge, is tortured by Mrs. Coulter, who is acting on behalf of the Church authority. Lena Feldt is forced to reveal what the witches have prophesied about Lyra.

Lena Feldt gasped, 'She will be the mother—she will be life—mother—she will disobey—she will'

'Name her! You are saying everything but the most important thing! Name her! cried

Mrs. Coulter.

'Eve! Mother of all! Eve, again! Mother Eve!' stammered Lena Feldt, sobbing (p. 314).

Victory over the mysterious is a temporary advantage for the Symbolic order but Lyra, contributing to a great act of feminine resistance, repays the gift of a name in the final book *The Amber Spyglass* (2005). With her friend Will from our world, Lyra sets free the souls of the dead from their captivity. God Himself, the ultimate patriarchal authority, had betrayed humans by not providing a heaven but instead erecting a prison of immortal souls. Lyra and Will liberate a harpy whose duty to maintain the prison of the dead had been enacted by enforcing the Name-of-the-Father through the denial of emotion, memory, sensation, and longing. The harpy, previously unaware of her enslavement and of having not being deemed worthy of basic subjectivity, had never been given a name.

Lyra said, 'Lady, what's your name?' The harpy shook her wings wide...

'No-Name!' she cried (p. 292).

'And I thought, if you en't got a name, that can't be right, not for the future. So I thought I'd give you a name, like King lorek Byrnison game me my name Silvertongue.

I'm going to call you Gracious Wings. So that's your name now, and that's what you'll be for evermore: Gracious Wings' (p. 385).

Once emancipated, the harpy, who had always secretly valued Abject dreams and memories, exchanges the role of prison guard for that of nurturing guardian of the souls. Gracious Wings expects the souls in her custody (except for those of infants, who have not yet experienced life) to provide her with a true story of their life. For the payment of the precious dreams and memories, she guides them to the place where they will be set free. In this way, Gracious Wings

also becomes the historian of peoples' lives. The example with Gracious Wings pertains to memory and emotion. Another way in which Pullman continually revisits maternal corporeal pleasure throughout the trilogy, like a cyclical dream, is by emphasising the physical sensations of comfort and longing for one's daemon.

### **The Harry Potter series**

In the "Harry Potter" series by J.K. Rowling, there is much discussion of naming and name concealment. The character of evil Lord Voldemort (the nemesis of young wizard Harry Potter) is frequently cited as 'He Who Must Not Be Named'. It is the consensus of wizarding community that to speak Voldemort's name would be to replenish his power or invoke him. Those who refuse to utter his name succumb to the linear order of language. Those who actively choose to voice it, anarchically resist the dominant order, and in so doing, align themselves with the Semiotic.

Harry, who was not raised in the wizarding world, uses the name Lord Voldemort with ease. His is not a resistant act. Because Harry has had limited experience with magical society he can speak the name in ignorance of social convention. Conversely, Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, uses Voldemort's name very consciously. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997) Dumbledore states, "Call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself" (p. 216).

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Rowling, 1998), Tom Riddle explains how he changed his name to become Lord Voldemort. It is almost as if Riddle was aware of the

power of the signifier over the signified and the Lacanian idea that his subject was fading into an object—the name ‘Tom Riddle’—that he deemed unacceptable. So, Tom Riddle manipulates normative subjectivity to his advantage in his self-naming. Yet ironically, Riddle does so by acting on the Abject and out of affect. Disgusted by his parentage, he reacts emotionally. While his naming is an act of denial and resistance and although he defied the dominant Muggle (non-magical) world, he seeks not emancipation but to enslave and to overthrow.

‘You see?’ he whispered. ‘It was a name I was already using at Hogwarts, to my most intimate friends only, of course. You think I was going to use my filthy Muggle father’s name forever? I, in whose veins runs the blood of Salazar Slytherin himself, through my mother’s side? I, keep the name of a foul, common Muggle, who abandoned me even before I was born, just because he found out his wife was a witch? No, Harry. I fashioned myself a new name, a name I knew wizards everywhere would one day fear to speak, when I had become the greatest sorcerer in the world!’ (p. 231).

Even though he clings to the implicit masculine power of the fading subject, in rejecting the Muggle world, Voldemort embraces the feminine Imaginary by more closely aligning himself with the magical and the Abject. However, in typical villain style, he revolts against one authority to force his own upon others. His is not an emancipatory act. Moreover, because he is unreflexive, Voldemort will not achieve a hybrid identity, as will the protagonist. Hybridity, as I have previously mentioned and we will discuss further, requires reflexivity—what Bhabha calls “openness of the sign to translation” (2009, p. xiii) —in the acceptance of a multifaceted identity.

If fear augments a name’s power, then Rowling frequently enjoys subverting it. By poking fun at those who deny themselves agency through voice, she indicates her disdain for the

signifier that is dominant at the expense of the signified. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Rowling, 2003), Harry's odious, non-magical uncle says, "'You've got to be the only—the only—' Evidently, he couldn't bring himself to say the word 'wizard'. 'The only *you-know-what* for miles.'" (p. 37).

Even in jest, or perhaps especially so, resistance to naming complacency is an emancipatory act.

'I've just got one question, Dobby,' said Harry... 'You told me all this had nothing to do with He Who Must Not Be Named, remember? Well—'

'It was a clue, sir,' said Dobby, his eyes widening, as though this was obvious. 'Dobby was giving you a clue. The Dark Lord, before he changed his name, could be freely named, you see?' (1998, p. 249).

Monsters and mythical creatures also obey the Law of the Symbolic order. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Harry and his friend Ron venture into the Forbidden Forest to speak with the giant spider Aragog.

'The thing that lives in the castle,' said Aragog, 'is an ancient creature we spiders fear above all others...We do not speak of it!' said Aragog fiercely. 'We do not name it! I never even told Hagrid the name of that dread creature, though he asked me, many times.' (p. 206)

And finally, "The creature that was lurking somewhere in the castle, [Harry] thought, sounded like a sort of monster Voldemort—even other monsters didn't want to name it" (p. 208). Rowling proposes that fear is determined by social coding and she offers the Imaginary as courageous agent of liberation. Here, the Name-of-the-Father is truly an authority. To speak certain names,

is to disobey Law. It is not done. Dobby the elf alludes to a time when patriarchal Law was not so strict and how Lord Voldemort played upon the power of the signifier to increase his authority. The fact that even magical creatures such as the spider Aragog must comply to the dominant subjectivity serves to establish its relevance. That Rowling repeatedly returns to naming as a motif in her works based in the feminine Imaginary and that she has her most courageous protagonists (such as Dumbledore, Harry, and Hermione) resist by speaking unspeakable names is her way of subverting the norm.

### **The Quest for Identity and to Preserve One's Life**

Depending on the genre, the quest for identity in children's fantasy fiction may be either overt or covert. Generally a high fantasy series—a storyworld, completely alternate to our own and replete with its own moral and philosophical dilemmas (Alexander, 1989)—will have one specific volume devoted to the protagonist's coming-of-age, although the entire series will have as an undercurrent the development of the self. Whereas a wainscots fantasy series—a storyworld in which a secret society hides from the mainstream (Clune & Grant, 1999)—is often entirely devoted to the coming-of-age model. However, both high fantasy and wainscots fantasy will follow the quest masterplot. Sometimes the quest begins overtly as the search for a name. More frequently, however, it is the journey for continued survival. Whatever the reason for undertaking the quest, along the way the protagonist invariably develops both agency and reflexivity.

In Lloyd Alexander's fourth book of "The Chronicles of Prydain" *Taran Wanderer* (1967), the orphaned protagonist, now a young man, actively searches for his lineage. This



penultimate book in the series is only made possible because Taran has spent the previous three adventuring and acquiring knowledge. His three earlier experiences contribute fundamentally to his sense of self and to his desire to venture deeper into self-realisation. If a move toward hybridity requires resistance, agency, emancipation and culminates with reflexivity, then it is precisely due to the reflexivity gained in *Taran Wanderer* that Taran is able to conclude the final installment *The High King* (1968) in the Third Space.

"The Earthsea Trilogy", another genre high fantasy, conceals Sparrowhawk's quest for identity amidst various wizarding challenges, although the first book *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Le Guin, 1968) is most ostensibly about coming-of-age and naming. Young goatherd Sparrowhawk shows proclivity for magic. After he manages to save his mountain village from raiders with some basic spells, a wizard named Ogion takes him into care. Ogion gives Sparrowhawk his true name, Ged, and begins his magical apprenticeship. Later, at a wizarding school, in a fit of arrogance, Ged unleashes an evil shadow beast, whom he spends the rest of the novel tracking down. He is only able to conquer the shadow once he has come to terms with himself.

By the final book *The Farthest Shore* (1972), Sparrowhawk can only save the world from the black hole in the land of death because, through the progression of novels, he has become a fine wizard and a conscientious student of humanity. His final sacrifice and success reveal that he, too, has truly been on a journey of self-discovery.

In the wainscots "Harry Potter" books, young Harry defends himself the entire series from the onslaught of Lord Voldemort's attacks. Harry only takes on an offensive position in the seventh and final volume *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Rowling, 2007) because he accepts the prophesy that either he or Lord Voldemort must ultimately perish at the hands of the

other; Harry is equally certain that Voldemort will not cease his murderous attempts. Yet, it would be erroneous to describe the books as being entirely about the struggle between protagonist and antagonist. The entire series is a coming-of-age story set primarily in Hogwarts, a magical boarding school, in which Harry matures through adolescence, hones his wizardry, and learns a great deal about his place in both the wizarding and the Muggle worlds.

Similarly, in "His Dark Materials", Lyra's main plight is seeking to survive heinous attempts on her life by her mother Mrs. Coulter, her soul-slicing General Oblation Board (the gobblers), and Church fanatics. "His Dark Materials" is a wainscots in the sense that the multiple worlds in the story must necessarily remain hidden from one another; however, there is neither a really dominant nor a marginal world, excepting perhaps Lyra's, in which the bulk of the narrative occurs. On her journey, Lyra encounters many characters, offers great services, and develops through adolescence into a mature but tragic heroine. She is tragic in that she suffers a great deal and has to relinquish her love for Will at the end of the series for the greater good of all the multiple wainscots worlds. Because it is connected to love, desire, and loss, Lyra's final sacrifice epitomises the feminine Imaginary and the Abject. Her sacrifice was an act of resistance, which as we shall see, allows the fantasy protagonist to move towards reflexivity.

### **Resistance**

Foucault said, "The mechanisms of subjection cannot be studied outside mechanisms of exploitation and domination" (1982, p. 782). A consideration of critical theory is that agency, being an individual's capacity to act, can be constrained by others and environmental and structural factors (Dowding, 2008). Resistance, then, is the struggle against those constraints

with the goal of emancipation: being free of the power imposed by another. Here, we are linking resistance, agency, and empowerment with the marginal feminine Imaginary and the oppressor with the dominant Symbolic register. When characters perform resistant acts in children's fantasy, they develop agency. Their resistance follows specific steps. First, the protagonist rejects normal life. By doing so, s/he refutes the Law of the Symbolic order and is situated as an agent of the Imaginary. The next step is particular to wainscots stories. The protagonist must necessarily resist authority both within the marginal reality and without, in the dominant one. Because high fantasy operates in only one reality, this phase in the rejection of authority is implicit once quotidian existence has been denied. However, in wainscots fantasies, multiple acts of subversion are required to mirror the multi-dimensionality of the narratives. Lastly, the protagonist must be tempted to either assimilate back to the norm or to accept power when proffered. Often the temptation will be in the form of a magical object or an easy solution to whatever complex problem the story has put forth. By this point, the protagonist will have developed the courage to relinquish material objects for the sake of spiritual or emotional fulfillment in the completion of the quest and will successfully resist the temptation. The sacrifice or the relinquishing of a particular object is a reminder of the pre-Mirror, pre-Oedipal desire and loss found in the Abject. By crossing the gap, in remembering the pain and the importance of what has been lost, the protagonist is ready for reflexivity.

Taran, in *The Book of Three* (Alexander, 1964), leaves Caer Dallben to seek adventure. In every book of the "Chronicles of Prydain" he departs from the home he knows until he returns at last in *The High King* (1968) with a different perspective. He resists the temptation to hoard the prophetic, magical brooch, given to him by the dying, noble Adaon when he offers it to the

three witches of Morva in exchange for an dark object he searches in *The Black Cauldron* (1965).

'Like knowledge, truth, and love themselves, the clasp must be given willingly or its power is broken. And it is, indeed, filled with power...With such a clasp, a duckling could win much glory and honor. Who can tell? He might rival all the heroes of Prydain, even Gwydion Prince of Don...Once given up, it shall not come to you again. Will you exchange it for an evil cauldron you intend only to destroy?'

As he held the brooch, Taran recalled with bitter clarity the joys of sight and scent, of dewdrops on a spider web, his rescue of the companions from the rock fall, of Gurgi praising his wisdom, the admiring eyes of Eilonwy, and Adaon who had entrusted the brooch to him...

'Yes, he said heavily. 'This shall be my bargain.' (p. 161-2)

Taran could have had what Foucault (1995, p. 23) called 'a corpus of knowledge...entangled with the practice of power'. He held the brooch in his hand. Yet, Taran resisted and sacrificed the object in order to make the journey for reflexivity on his own terms. The act of crossing the gap, of re-experiencing desire and loss, was fundamental to his development of self.

In the same way, in *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Le Guin, 1968) Sparrowhawk rejects his life as a goatherd on the Isle of Gont to take up wizardry. Later, he leaves the comfort of Roke to track down the gebbeth shadow creature. He is tempted several times to stray from his task. He indulges for a brief time in a successful existence as a village wizard in an archipelago but cannot long procrastinate from his quest. More to fulfill his pride than to solve his dilemma, he

very nearly sets off in search of a dragon. Yet, Sparrowhawk does not succumb. His greatest temptation comes in the form of an offer of power from the Stone of Osskil, the Terrenon.

'It was made before Segoy raised the islands of the world from the Open Sea. It was made when the world itself was made, and will endure until the end of the world. Time is nothing to it. If you lay your hand upon it and ask a question of it, it will answer, according to the power that is in you. It has a voice, if you know how to listen...It might tell you,' Serret said in her soft voice, 'how you will defeat your enemy' (p. 130-1).

'...[H]e cannot use the thing, he cannot make it wholly serve his will. Nor can I, alone or with him. Neither he nor I has the skill and power. You have both...And he who can make the Terrenon answer what he asks and do what he wills, has power over his own destiny: strength to crush any enemy, mortal or of the other world: foresight, knowledge, wealth, dominion, and a wizardry at his command that could humble the Archmage himself! As much of that, as little of that as you choose, is yours for the asking.'(p. 133)

Sparrowhawk refrains and chooses instead the marginal path. Just like Taran, Sparrowhawk relinquishes an opportunity for great power and knowledge. He realises what could have been, what he had, and what he has lost. With this awareness of the Abject, he moves on.

In *The Golden Compass* (Pullman, 2005), Lyra flees her life in Oxford and then her brief experience of material comfort with Mrs. Coulter. She continually resists authority. She challenges the Authority (the Church) and its servant, Mrs. Coulter, by saving children from the General Oblation Board in *The Golden Compass*. Lyra again foils the Authority in *The Amber Spyglass* (2005), by releasing the captive dead from their prison. Because "His Dark Materials"

has certain attributes of a wainscots, Lyra also resists authorities in other realms. In our world, in *The Subtle Knife* (2005), Lyra teaches Will the anti-establishment skills of how to avoid the police, how to lose someone who is following you, and how to break and enter. In *The Golden Compass*, Lyra is very nearly corrupted by the seductive appeal of life with Mrs. Coulter and the luxury it affords. A moment of cruelty by Mrs. Coulter's monkey daemon towards Lyra's Pantalaimon (both of whom are hetero-gender to their humans, as with most daemons—the physical manifestations of human souls in animal form) reminds Lyra to not be lulled into complacency.

It wasn't so much her snappish tone as the words 'in your own home' that made Lyra resist stubbornly...[H]e took one of Pantalaimon's ears in his other paw and pulled as if he intended to tear it off. Not angrily, either, but with a cold curious force that was horrifying to see and even worse to feel.

Lyra sobbed in terror. 'Don't! Please! Stop hurting us!'

Mrs. Coulter looked up from her flowers. 'Do as I tell you, then,' she said. (p. 85-6)

Lyra flees from the clutches of Mrs. Coulter soon after this only to be captured again later as she attempts to rescue her friend Roger and other children upon whom experiments are being conducted. One could easily substitute the "troublesome thoughts and feelings" (p. 284) to which Mrs. Coulter refers with a discourse on the repression of the Abject. Mrs. Coulter attempts to convince Lyra that the acts of torture she is committing on children are for the greater good of society.

'Darling, no one would ever dream of performing an operation on a child without testing it first. And no one in a thousand years would take a child's daemon away altogether!

All that happens is a little cut, and then everything's peaceful. Forever! You see, your daemon's a wonderful friend and companion when you're young, but at the age we call puberty, the age you're coming to very soon, darling, daemons bring all sort of troublesome thoughts and feelings, and that's what lets Dust in. A quick little operation before that, and you're never troubled again.' (pp. 283-284)

The intercision surgery to which Mrs. Coulter refers could be equated to a lobotomy; the end result being that the subject no longer resists authority and becomes utterly compliant. Lyra, like us all, who has already once undergone the repression of desire and loss upon subjectification, has no wish to experience it a second time. Lyra could have accepted the security Mrs. Coulter offers, having promised to keep her safe. Yet, this hypocrisy does not sit well for Lyra. She cannot imagine being protected while other children, especially her dear friend Roger, are operated on. She values too greatly the Imaginary—speaking to her daemon Pantalaimon, her friendship with the witch Serafina Pekkala, her relationship with the King of Armoured Bears Iorek Byrnison—and so she resists Mrs. Coulter once again, escapes from the detention centre, and frees all the children.

Harry Potter happily rejects the non-magical Muggle world for the wizarding one. Once in the wainscots marginal world, he learns that is best not to assume that the government, called the Ministry of Magic, always has his best interests at heart. He surreptitiously manoeuvres around and succeeds in subverting the Ministry on more than one occasion. The greatest temptation he encounters is in the final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Rowling, 2007). Before the great wizard Albus Dumbledore dies, he leaves Harry the task of destroying

Lord Voldemort's multiple Horcruxes—objects into which Voldemort has placed a portion of his soul, vainly attempting to be immortal. During his investigation, Harry learns of three mythical magical objects called The Deathly Hallows, unrelated to Horcruxes.

'The Elder Wand,' he said, and he drew a straight vertical line upon the parchment. 'The Resurrection Stone,' he said, and he added a circle on top of the line. 'The Cloak of Invisibility,' he finished, enclosing both line and circle in a triangle, to make the symbol that so intrigued Hermione. 'Together,' he said, 'the Deathly Hallows' (p. 323).

'Those of us who understand these matters, however, recognise that the ancient story refers to three objects, or Hallows, which, if united, will make the possessor master of Death' (p. 333).

Like other protagonists, Harry is very nearly derailed from his quest by the thrill of possessing the three spectacularly powerful Hallows but ultimately, he stays true to his cause. 'No,' said Harry... 'Dumbledore didn't want me to have [them]... He wanted me to get the Horcruxes... I'm supposed to get the Horcruxes...' (p. 404). Just as with Taran and Sparrowhawk, knowledge and power are tantalisingly close to Harry. In fact, at the end of the novel the reader learns that at one point Harry was the true owner of all three Deathly Hallows. Harry very explicitly relinquishes two of the Hallows. He intentionally drops the Resurrection Stone in the Forbidden Forest, where he knows not even he will be able to find it again, should he be tempted. Then, after briefly possessing the Elder Wand, Harry uses it for one modest spell to repair a broken wand before discarding it so that no other wizard will encounter the lull of its power. The capacity to refuse such temptation shows great reflexivity. Having demonstrated agency with resistant acts, Harry's journey to the Third Space is nearly complete. All that is still required is



an emancipatory engagement which will enable him to reflexively reconcile his varied experiences with hybridity.

### **Emancipatory Experiences**

Keeping knowledge a rare commodity has always been a strategy of those who seek to maintain societal dominance; a technique no different in the fantasy world. Having already demonstrated resistance, the protagonist, once granted access to secret knowledge, is positioned to emancipate him/herself and disrupt the entire hegemonic structure. So then, a teacher, intrinsically complicit with the dominant regime, is perfectly placed to destabilise the system by providing such internal knowledge.

In children's fantasy literature, the supporting role of the teacher character—who is almost always a wizard—is to awaken the pupil's unrecognised power. Mentor wizards have the requisite qualities to nourish, fortify, and nurture their prodigy's magical giftedness, in so doing facilitate a subversion from within the dominant order, much like the device of metonymy confounds the Symbolic from within the confines of language.

Moreover, to conclude a truly liberating apprenticeship, the student must necessarily disobey the teacher while the mentor wizard covertly facilitates his/her own bettering at the hands of the pupil. Paradoxically, to heighten the emancipation, the teacher must orchestrate this event so the pupil never senses having been manipulated (Appelbaum, 2009). In order for the protagonist to be emancipated, complete the quest, and achieve a reflexive sense of self (which we will see results in hybridity), the s/he must either defeat a mentor or commit a betrayal.

In *The Black Cauldron* (Alexander, 1965), Taran travels with a group of companions, among them a righteous, insightful man called Adaon. Adaon, although the leader of the troop, insists that Taran choose their path.

Adaon, who had been listening silently near the fire, shook his head. 'No,' he said quietly, 'this choice cannot be mine...'

'But why?' cried Taran. '...Of all of us, you know best what to do.'

Adaon turned his gray eyes toward the fire. 'Perhaps you will understand one day. For now, choose your path Taran of Caer Dallben,' he said. 'Wherever it may lead, I promise you my help.' (p. 83)

Unbeknownst to Taran, Adaon foresees his death in the route Taran sets forth but does not speak of it until he is gravely wounded.

'You knew, then!' cried Taran. 'You knew there would be peril for you. Why did you not speak of it before? I would never have sought the Marshes. We could have turned back.'

Adaon smiled. 'It is true. Indeed that is why I dared not speak...But had I chosen to return, I would ever wonder whether my choice was made through wisdom or following the wishes of my own heart.' (p. 100)

When Adaon lets Taran to make his choice freely, Taran unintentionally brings about Adaon's death. Although Taran loses a knowledgeable friend, he gains an inner strength. He accepts that both courage and sacrifice are necessarily part of an emancipatory journey.

Sparrowhawk rejects Ogion—the master 'who had healed him with a touch, and who had no anger: he loved him, and had not known it until now' (Le Guin, 1968, p. 35)—to travel to the

school at Roke, in *A Wizard of Earthsea*. It is a hastily-made but consequential decision. Ogion allows his pupil to seek his own way, though he knows that Sparrowhawk will face great suffering before acquiring the knowledge he so desperately seeks.

Lyra betrays her friend Roger, whom she has taken great pains to free from the General Oblation Board, by unwittingly providing him as a human sacrifice to her father, in *The Golden Compass* (Pullman, 2005).

She had just realised what she had done. She had struggled all this way to bring something to Lord Asriel, thinking she knew what he wanted; and it wasn't the alethiometer at all. What he wanted was a child. *She had brought him Roger...Oh, the bitter anguish!* She had thought she was *saving* Roger, and all the time she'd been diligently working to betray him... (p. 308)

Lyra's suffering at her role in Roger's death facilitates her sacrifice and courageous action in the third book, when she frees the souls of the dead.

On Dumbledore's orders in *The Order of the Phoenix* (Rowling, 2003), Harry takes private lessons with Professor Severus Snape, whom he neither likes nor trusts. Snape, unknown to Harry until the very end of the series, had always been his secret protector since he arrived at Hogwarts school at the age of eleven. Professor Snape attempts to teach Harry Occlumency: the art of shielding one's mind from invasion by others; specifically from Lord Voldemort.

Although Professor Snape is a talented Occlumens, perhaps the best in the wizarding world, Harry does not enjoy the tutorials and is a poor student. Yet, at a pivotal point in the story, when Harry lacks confidence, he manages to not only protect himself from Snape's Occlumency attack but to penetrate memories in Snape's own mind. "Snape staggered—his wand flew upwards,

away from Harry—and suddenly Harry's mind was teeming with memories that were not his..." (p. 521).

'I don't remember telling you to use a Shield Charm...but there is no doubt that it was effective.'

...Harry did not speak; he felt that to say anything might be dangerous. He was sure he had just broken in Snape's memories, that he had just seen scenes from Snape's childhood. (p. 522)

Given Snape's particular giftedness in this area of magic, it is unlikely that a student of average abilities would have been able to overcome him. It would seem that Severus Snape's defeat at Occlumency is an example of the mentor wizard contriving his own defeat so that his pupil may reap the emancipatory benefit. As we have seen, emancipation comes from being liberated from the oppression of the hegemonic Symbolic order. Harry now gains confidence in his magical abilities, he develops a sense of self, that allows him to confront and defeat Lord Voldemort, and resolve his own identity. Having reflexively experienced agency, resistance, and emancipation, Harry's journey to the Third Space is complete.

### **Third Space/Hybridity**

When post-colonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha (2009) mentioned the openness of the signifier, he meant the potential for change that occurs when the arbitrary sign encounters agency. Harry's sense of self was opened in this way when Professor Snape contrived his own defeat for the benefit of Harry's confidence. We have seen this as feminine resistance in children's fantasy. Taran, Sparrowhawk, and Harry all resisted the temptation of great power

and knowledge. Lyra confronted the many possibilities of who she might be and rejected safety and complicity. Emancipatory acts do not deny the power of the signifier but instead question it and shift it. Bhabha asserts that operating in the gap between signifier and signified—the same elusive locale we have been discussing as the Abject, the binary of desire and loss—such acts simultaneously drain power from the signifier and exert a counter pressure that spark it back to life, resulting a novel truth and altering both the subject and the object.

Critical pedagogue, Paolo Freire, (2009) asserted that to name the world is to change it—this is the true word. If naming is changing, and changing is acting with reflexion then like Bhabha's theory of Third Space, naming brought about by acts of agency and awareness (the likes of which we have been discussing, such as acts of resistance based in the feminine Imaginary directed against the dominant Symbolic) results in a new version of the signifier: a unique truth. So true names do exist! It seems, though, that they are not some precise, quintessential, non-divisible element but the result of newness, of change; not of denial of power, but of shifting; not of blindness but of awareness. True names exist in the Third Space, which is “a challenge to the limits of the self” (Bhabha, 2009, p. xii). The Third Space reasserts the enigmatic into the signifier—reinserts the feminine into Law. It is like taking at one time both the mirror's gaze and it's reflection—allowing for the alienation and repression (which have been formative) but including them, including the Abject, including all. That is hybridity—not choice between one or the other, but a true melding resulting in a new, unique truth. Because fantasy coming-of-age stories are so inherently resistant, the identity with which the protagonist concludes at the termination of the quest must invariably be a hybrid one.

Taran concludes the “Chronicles of Prydain in *The High King* (Alexander, 1968) refusing

the gift of eternal life for mortality. He sees himself not as a hero or even as an assistant pig keeper but as a man, in all the wondrous complexities of humanity. He accepts the multiplicity of layers to life, like the witches' threads in their loom.

'I have seen this on your loom,' Taran said, more than a little distrustful. 'Why do you offer it to me? ...'

'It is yours by right, my robin, answered Orddu. 'It does come from our loom, if you insist on strictest detail, but it was really you who wove it.'

Taran looked more closely at the fabric and saw it crowded with images of men and women, of warriors and battles, of birds and animals. 'These,' he murmured in wonder, 'these are of my own life' (pp. 286-7).

'I yearned to be a hero without knowing, in truth, what a hero was. Now, perhaps, I understand it a little better. A grower of turnips or a shaper of clay, a Commot farmer or a king—every man is a hero if he strives more for others than for himself alone. Once,' he added, 'you told me that the seeking counts more than the finding. So, too, must the striving count more than the gain. Once I hoped for a glorious destiny,' Taran went on, smiling at his own memory. 'That dream has vanished with my childhood; and though a pleasant dream it was fit only for a child.' (p. 292)

In the end, he does not choose one way of being over another but embraces every experience he has had and from them, creates his self.

Ged (Sparrowhawk) departs either out to sea or up the mountains of Gont at the end of *The Farthest Shore* (Le Guin, 1972). No one really knows the truth of where he goes, for he seeks only solitude. He has been a goatherd, a proud boy wizard, a sailor, a champion of Roke

and of all Earthsea, the Archmage, and the mentor of the King of All. "Some offered to seek [Ged] for him, but the King forbade them, saying, 'He rules a greater kingdom than I do'" (p. 197). At the culmination of all his beings, Ged chooses to simply exist in his third space of both newness and sameness and in recognition of all components of his varied identity at once.

Lyra's existence is a resolution of her unique experiences as brat, Gyptian (like Gypsy), Northerner, witch, lover, Lady, and scholar. Like Taran, she reflexively comes to value the multiplicity and diversity of her experiences as being both fundamental to her hybridity and essential for the future.

'But then we wouldn't have been able to build it. No one could if they put themselves first. We have to be all those difficult things like cheerful and kind and curious and patient, and we've got to study and think and work hard, all of us, in all our different worlds, and then we'll build...' (*The Amber Spyglass*, Pullman, 2005, p. 518)

Like Ged, Harry Potter chooses a life of simplicity (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Rowling, 2007). He has been 'The Boy Who Lived', the TriWizard Champion, 'The Chosen One', and Rowling leaves him just a father. The orphan finding happiness in parenthood is, in itself, sufficiently hybrid. We do not know if he ever completes his education or feels it necessary to undertake his dream career as Auror: tracker of Dark Wizards. He has, after all, already defeated the greatest dark wizard of all time by the age of seventeen. Harry never sought fame and celebrity but it did tend to seek him. It seems fitting that he attempts to live, if not the life of a recluse, then that of a rather ordinary wizard/Muggle. How ordinary it can be is questionable, given his complex identity.

### Conclusion

*Goes to visit his mummy  
She feeds him well  
his concerns, he forgets them  
And remembers being small  
Playing under the table and dreaming.  
-Dave Matthews, "Ants Marching"<sup>5</sup>*

*Don't listen to a word I say  
The screams all sound the same  
Though the truth may vary, this  
ship will carry  
our bodies safe to shore.  
-Of Monsters and Men, "Little Talks"<sup>6</sup>*

Children's fantasy fiction, especially coming-of-age literature, functions around the quest masterplot. The quest may involve various tasks but at its core is the search for identity. Often, the notion of identity is interwoven with the theme of the true name. Both antagonists and protagonists aspire to the acquisition, exposure, or protection of the true name. During the quest, the protagonist will develop agency through acts of resistance and will be emancipated. Lastly, the protagonist will reconcile the various experiences and in a final subversive act, rather than assimilating to the dominant order, s/he will negotiate a third space identity.

Given that the female and the child are situated at the margins of Symbolic Law, it is no great surprise that children's literature contains so many of Kristeva's Semiotic or Abject elements; most notably is the perpetual presence of the feminine mysterious in the form of magic.

Filled with magical beings of all sorts, Alexander's "Chronicles of Prydain" contains symbols of the Abject: witches who are both repulsive hags and desirable maidens. Characters have prophetic dreams and there is even an oracular pig.



Le Guin's "Earthsea Trilogy" contains a protagonist who travels predominantly by sea—water being, of all the primal elements, the most quintessentially feminine. (Freud himself (1971) agreed that the image of a vessel or ship was universally female). When Sparrowhawk is not at sea, he often transforms into a bird and travels by air. Sparrowhawk overcome by emotion in a moment of pride and arrogance casts a spell that unleashes a horrible beast into the world. The beast is none other than his own shadow self—his deepest longings, regrets, and prideful emotions that are too forceful to remain buried. As proof of the power of repressed desire and revulsion, Sparrowhawk is stricken by his own Abject shadow.

Even more overtly, in Pullman's "His Dark Materials", many marginal characters reside and travel almost exclusively by air (the witches and Lee Scoresby in his balloon) or in the water (the Gyptian society). Antagonists operate on the solid ground. The concept of the soul is prevalent in the series and is personified through the characters of daemon animals. Natural phenomenon such as the Aurora Borealis play key roles in progressing the narrative.

Finally, in Rowling's "Harry Potter" series, Harry's greatest innate ability is that he can fly exceptionally well. He shares a psychic link with Lord Voldemort and suffers greatly from premonition dreams and painful memories.

Perhaps the quest for truthful names is so prevalent in children's literature because it takes one to a place of desire and lack: the feminine. The reader, after having once upon a mirror's gaze been alienated and marginalised, can revert to all that is evocative: corporeality, emotions (even Abject ones), dreams, and magic. Through the feminine Imaginary, temporal linearity, hegemonic ideology, and the Symbolic order can be subverted.

Yet, if as Saussure proposed, names are arbitrary and if Foucault was right to denounce

truth as universally absolute, then why does the genre continually revisit the concept of the true name? To consider truth as what is accurate or exact is fundamentally opposed to the post-modern view that truth is context-driven. Being patriarchal, it seems to me that the Name-of-the-Father might prefer the precise notion of truth in denial of context; whereas the Semiotic would undoubtedly align more closely with the less deterministic, dare I say feminine, post-modern sense. If we consider the fluidity of the protagonist's identities at the conclusion of the stories, then suddenly it becomes clear. Post-modernism brought a complete paradigmatic shift in the consideration of truth as some sort of precision. Yet, like Eagleton (2003) suggested, we need not discard the idea of truth altogether. Hybridity is always the result of identity quests in high and wainscots fantasy. The third space is a location of multiplicity not singularity. Why then should truth not be a quintessence but a complexity? In children's fantasy literature, the function of truth in a name is not standardisation and specificity, not adherence and accuracy but opposition and originality, defiance and diversity. This is why we embark upon the seemingly paradoxical quest for the true name, time and time again in children's coming-of-age fantasy.

In the following chapter, we continue with the theme of identity in young adult children's fantasy but focus on another aspect: the soul. We consider the soul through the elements of knowledge and power, the natural and unnatural, mortality and immortality, and compare the perspectives of the protagonist and antagonist. Using the antagonist character as a literary foil, we see how the protagonist, with suitable mentoring, is able to make appropriate choices resulting in preservation of not only the natural order but his/her mortal soul.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **The Natural and Unnatural**

As we have seen, children's fantasy fiction, especially the coming-of-age story, is particularly concerned with identity. The two fundamental components of self-actualisation in children's literature are the notions of the name and the soul. In the last chapter, we focussed upon the name as the outward representation of the self. We looked at children's fantasy belonging to the feminine Imaginary and, therefore, being intrinsically resistant towards the dominant register of language—the Symbolic. Moreover, we saw how despite assertions that truth is either finite and absolute or entirely impossible, the protagonist in children's fantasy successfully negotiates truth in naming. This truth is a new, unique complexity that I related to Homi K. Bhabha's theory of Third Space. In this chapter, we look to the soul as the self's inward manifestation away from language. We will consider the significance of the soul through its connection with knowledge and power, and by contrasting the natural and unnatural in the children's fantasy sub-genres of high fantasy and wainscots fantasy. I return to Foucault for post-modern theories about knowledge, power, and the delivery of justice, rely upon Cain and Sandman's definitions and depictions of the soul and immortality, respectively, and look at the literary term 'foil' in relation to Freud's concept of projection. I have chosen to continue with the works of Lloyd Alexander ("The Chronicles of Prydain"), Ursula Le Guin ("The Earthsea Trilogy"), Philip Pullman ("His Dark Materials Trilogy"), and J.K. Rowling (The "Harry Potter" series). As in the last chapter I utilised fairy tale to highlight some key ideas about the feminine Imaginary, here I will introduce an example of Russian folk tale to elucidate a point about the integrity of soul and fantasy views on immortality. I have chosen to continue with the same

fantasy sub-genres because the moral perspective in these stories, despite the supernatural environment, more closely resembles our daily existence than any other sub-genres of fantasy.

To review, the sub-genres on which we will concentrate are high and wainscots fantasy. High fantasy offers a unique supernatural world, completely autonomous from ours. Wainscots fantasy follows a supernatural society, hidden from but co-existing beside our world. These categorisations are key because we will exclude supernatural fiction, gothic horror, and revisionist versions such as the contemporary vampire story. The supernatural worlds in which such sub-genres operate signal not merely an otherness from our own world but also a distinct sense of wrongness. Therefore, we are unconcerned with characters who experience an exotic existentialism or a perversely glamorous immortality (Clute & Grant, 1999)—versions of reality outside our standard, moral sense of the natural world. Moreover, until the recent phenomenon of the aforementioned revisionist fantasy, the sub-genres most frequently written for children and young adults, have been high and wainscots fantasy. To be honest, the books I read as a child were primarily high fantasy and so that sub-genre and the wainscots, which is similar, are personally significant to me. The fundamental distinction between those other sub-genres and the ones on which we focus is that despite existing in a supernatural world, the high and wainscots fantasy protagonists' views of mortality and the natural world mirror our own. It is the responsibility of the foil character, the antagonist, to act counter to natural order; thereby making available the role of benevolence for the protagonist. In fact, the antagonist strengthens this opposition relationship by projecting his or her fears—especially of mortality—onto our protagonist. In our world, as in the realm of fantasy, protagonists value the natural world, believe in the preservation of the mortal soul, and follow the golden rule of treating others as

they wish to be treated—regardless of their opinions of an afterlife.

Abbott (2008, p. 47) defines masterplot as a recurrent skeletal story with cultural value. The masterplot of children's coming-of-age fantasy is the quest. It is through the quest that the protagonist will become reflexive and develop a sense of identity. In occidental children's literature, whether following a Christian narrative or not, the protagonist's sense of the inviolability of the soul is fundamental to the notion of self and to an inherent ethos of the natural world. When the protagonist encounters characters during the quest who attempt to violate the integrity of the soul, the protagonist's abhorrence for acts counter to the equilibrium of the natural order is solidified; thus perpetuating an ethic of mortality. For example, Lyra in *The Subtle Knife* (Pullman, 2005) overhears her mother Mrs. Coulter explaining the result of the intercision procedure she has invented wherein humans are separated from their daemons (their souls, which take the form of animals in Lyra's wainescots). The result is a spiritless person lacking in all the qualities we associate with humanity.

'But tell me about your curious bodyguards, Marisa. I've never seen soldiers like that.

Who are they?'

'Men, that's all. But...they've undergone intercision. They have no daemons, so they have no fear and no imagination and no free will, and they'll fight till they're torn apart.'

(p. 199)

By intentionally violating souls, Mrs. Coulter operates counter to the natural order. Her character is established as an immoral antagonist unlikely to be redeemed and she is situated as a foil to Lyra. According to Auger (2010), a foil is "a character whose qualities emphasise another's (usually the protagonist) by providing sharp contrast" (p. 114). As we are considering

integrity of the soul and how it relates to essential humanity and morality in our world and that of the high/wainscots fantasy, it is important that Mrs. Coulter be particularly malevolent in order to establish Lyra's benevolence. Moreover, as an upwardly mobile agent of the Church whose every action is precise and intentional, Mrs. Coulter expels thoughts and feelings she finds wholly unacceptable<sup>1</sup> by projecting them onto Lyra, such as irrationality, sympathy, and lack of control. We will discuss this notion of projection in greater detail later.

Mortality is the requisite state of existence in high and wainscots fantasy for the good human. Immortality is the result of an abuse of magical power. Therefore, even while the supernatural may be legitimately used in fantasy to obtain knowledge and power, a certain essential boundary between the natural and the unnatural worlds must not be breached. For magical power to be benevolent, it must respect the balance of basic humanity and with it, mortality. In a bid to possess extreme power, to overthrow the natural order, or to simply defeat the protagonist, it is the antagonist who seeks to conquer death. In high and wainscots fantasy, human characters seeking immortality are deemed aberrant and are associated with the unnatural and the unethical. As such, immortality can only be achieved by an act of defiling the soul. The destruction of the soul is such a frequent theme in fantasy literature that we will see later how it occurs in all four series we are discussing and how, even in other sub-genres such as folktale, antagonists are willing to desecrate their souls for eternal life. Furthermore, we will also see later why even when high and wainscots fantasy stories follow a Christian paradigm, there is rarely a mention of heaven. Immortality, even when offered as a reward to the fantasy protagonist, must be refused as an act of humility and virtuosity.

### The Soul

There are three common conceptions of the soul (Cain, 2009). The first is that the soul is the fundamental source of life found in a thing but is separable from the body. This definition allows for the soul to extend spatially beyond the physical object to which it belongs. It is from this first principle that one may accept the existence of ghosts. This belief is comforting to people who fear death as it offers extension of the soul, sometimes through religious belief, after mortal bodily existence. Later, we will see an example where Harry Potter turns to a ghost for comfort after the death of a loved one.

The second concept of the soul is that of a spiritual substance. This is a non-physical entity which is responsible for a thing's being alive and perhaps an existence after death; albeit apart from the body. The second principle is the basis of substance dualism known as Cartesian dualism after Descartes and also taken up by Plato. The concept implies that the soul is human consciousness and therefore, because only humans are equipped with such consciousness, only humans may possess a soul. In this is an entirely non-physical conception of the soul the body and soul are completely distinct. An existence after death in this conception could not be ghostly, as spirits maintain bodily form and concerns. Referring to this idea, Bloom (2004) wrote: "There is something that many find disturbing, even revolting, about the notion of a soulless body, a purely physical creature that acts as though it were a person" (p. xiii). Throughout the "His Dark Materials" trilogy, Pullman manipulates this idea by giving a physicality to the soul in the form of the animal daemon, albeit inseparable from the human to whom it is connected. The result of severing the animal daemon from its human body we saw earlier in Mrs. Coulter's description of the intercision surgery.

The third notion is that the soul is a composite of matter and form (after Aristotle) and that the soul is the basis of all psychological operations of a conscious being. All living things may possess a soul, even plants, because the soul is within the very substance of a being's form (Cain, 2009). This is the material concept—that it is from our purely physical brain that consciousness arises (Bloom, 2004). The idea purports that the soul is a sort of life force, like *chi*, which is fundamental and implicit to the being. This notion is utilised commonly in fantasy literature as an intangible quality that represents a person's magical capability. For example, in *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Le Guin, 1968), the young boy Duny (before he becomes known as the wizard Sparrowhawk and prior to his being given his true name, Ged) promises his aunt, a village witch, that he will not reveal the secrets of true magical names. Yet, in so doing, Duny demonstrates a certain innate capacity.

The witch said to him, 'You will not ever tell that word to the other children, if I teach it to you.'

'I promise.'

She smiled at his ready ignorance. 'Well and good. But I will bind your promise. Your tongue will be stilled until I choose to unbind it, and even then, though you can speak, you will not be able to speak the word I teach you where another person can hear it. We must keep the secrets of our craft...Speak!' she said to test the spell.

The boy could not speak, but he laughed. Then his aunt was a little afraid of his strength, for this was as strong a spell as she knew how to weave: she had tried not only to gain control of his speech and silence, but to bind him at the same time to her service in the craft of sorcery. Yet even as the spell bound him, he had laughed. (pp. 14-15)



In this paper, when I refer to the various views of the soul, I will utilise Cain's descriptions and his numbering as first, second, and third. These definitions will prove useful in our discussion of the soul in children's fantasy.

### **Immortality**

The two major depictions of immortality are the mundane and the transmundane (Sandman, 2009). In mundane immortality, humans may continue to exist forever without dying in the human world. In transmundane immortality humans may continue to exist forever in the earthly (human) or the transcendental world. Transmundane immortality can be divided into three sub-categories: personal, transpersonal, and impersonal. A personal immortal bears the same or a similar form as before death. A transpersonal immortal becomes another being after death with no connection to the person prior to death. An impersonal immortal takes on different form after death albeit connected to the person before death. Although the fantasy children's literature with which we are concerned moves through all three depictions of the soul, albeit concentrating predominantly on the first and second conceptions which deem the soul as spatially separable from the body, the high and wainscots fantasy views of immortality are more restricted to the mundane and the transmundane personal versions.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Rowling, 2003), the orphaned teenage wizard, Harry, had only recently developed a relationship with his godfather Sirius Black, when Black was murdered in front of him. Upon returning to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry consults a ghost friend of his about the first principle of the soul and mundane immortality. Unfortunately, the ghost is unable to provide the philosophical clarity Harry

desires. Nearly Headless Nick's vagueness on the subject serves to perpetuate the ethical inferiority of the ghostly state for human wizards. Nick does, however, offer the standard value judgement on ghosts—that while being immortal in ghostly form may be cowardly, it is in no way malevolent.

‘You died, but I’m talking to you...you can walk around Hogwarts and everything, can’t you?’

‘Yes,’ said Nearly Headless Nick quietly, ‘I walk and talk, yes.’

‘So, you came back, didn’t you?’ said Harry urgently. ‘People can come back, right? As ghosts. They don’t have to disappear completely. *Well?*’ he added impatiently, when Nick continued to say nothing.

Nearly Headless Nick hesitated, then said, ‘Not everyone can come back as a ghost.’

‘What do you mean?’ said Harry quickly.

‘Only...only wizards.’

‘Oh,’ said Harry, and he almost laughed with relief. ‘Well, that’s OK then, the person I’m asking about is a wizard. So he can come back, right?’

Nick turned away from the window and looked mournfully at Harry. ‘He won’t come back.’

‘Who?’

‘Sirius Black,’ said Nick.

‘But you did!’ said Harry angrily. ‘You came back—you’re dead and you didn’t disappear--’

‘Wizards can leave an imprint of themselves upon the earth, to walk palely where their

living selves once trod,' said Nick miserably. 'But very few wizards choose that path.'

'Why not?' said Harry. 'Anyway—it doesn't matter—Sirius won't care if it's unusual, he'll come back, I know he will!'

'He will not come back,' repeated Nick. 'He will have...gone on...I was afraid of death,' said Nick softly. 'I chose to remain behind. I sometimes wonder whether I oughtn't to have...well, that is neither here nor there...in fact, *I* am neither here nor there...' He gave a small sad chuckle. 'I know nothing of the secrets of death, Harry, for I chose my feeble imitation of life instead.' (pp. 758-9)

So determined to exist again via transmundane personal immortality is Harry Potter's nemesis Lord Voldemort, that he spends the first two books of the series seeking a host body. Voldemort, previously known as Tom Riddle, clutches desperately at his selfness: his unique power, knowledge, and lineage. He is even willing to sacrifice bodily independence for a parasitic existence if it means preserving some form of his soul. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997), Voldemort uses the back of a Hogwarts' professor's head as his host.

Where there should have been a back to Quirrell's head, there was a face, the most terrible face Harry had ever seen. It was chalk-white with glaring red eyes and slits for nostrils, like a snake...

'See what I have become?' the face said. 'Mere shadow and vapour...I have form only when I can share another's body.' (pp. 212-3)

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Rowling, 1998) Voldemort reappears from his teenage diary. When first-year student Ginny Weasley finds the diary and begins to confide

in it, Riddle's ghostly figure grows more solid, parasitically feeding on Ginny's vitality. 'Are you a ghost?' Harry said uncertainly. 'A memory,' said Riddle quietly. 'Preserved in a diary for fifty years (p. 227).

'If I say it myself, Harry, I've always been able to charm the people I needed. So Ginny poured out her soul to me, and her soul happened to be exactly what I wanted. I grew stronger and stronger on a diet of her deepest fears, her darkest secrets. I grew powerful...enough to start feeding Miss Weasley a few of *my* secrets, to start pouring a little of *my* soul back into *her*...' (p. 228)

"But the longer Riddle stood there, the more life was dwindling out of Ginny...and in the meantime, Harry noticed suddenly, Riddle's outline was becoming clearer, more solid" (p. 233). Ginny's waning life is presented as the fading of her physical shape. Here, Rowling is utilising the third conception of the soul. As Ginny's life—a composite of form and matter—is depleted she ceases to exist and Riddle gains strength. Of course, Riddle/Voldemort is the foil to Harry Potter and so his choices inevitably indicate to Harry precisely the manner in which not to behave. Being amoral, Riddle has no compunctions about stealing Ginny's life force if it means that his physical body can be rejuvenated.

Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy utilises multiple notions of the soul. Much of the series' focus is on the second conceptualisation of the soul as spatially separable from the body due to the body's physicality; whereas the soul is spirit. As we saw earlier, the daemon manifestation of soul is clearly external to the body and in possession of an essentially spiritual sort of conscience, albeit depicted in its own physical form. Another theme throughout is that of Dust. Dust is akin to the third notion of the soul: it is the material form of a being's

consciousness.

'Dust,' he said to his daemon. He had never seen it with the naked eye, but then he had never seen so much Dust together...Its billions of particles were like the stars of every galaxy in the sky, and every one of them was a little fragment of conscious thought. It was a melancholy light to see by. (2005, *The Amber Spyglass*, pp. 400-401)

### Power

The desire for immortality in children's fiction is based on fear and power. Simply, the fear is of death—of ceasing to exist. The power stems from an arrogant sense of one's entitlement to exist post-mortem. Paradoxically, the villain seeks power over death thereby concretising fear of the very thing s/he seeks to conquer.

Feldstein (1997, p. 83) explains that "the subject disavows desires before recognizing them in other people whom he or she detests." Dundes (1976) wrote that "projection refers to the tendency to attribute to another person or to the environment what is actually within oneself" and that "the ascription of feelings and qualities of one's own to a source in the external world is accomplished without the individual's being consciously aware of the fact" (p. 1505). From these foundations of projection, the subject seeks to diminish the authority of the other and to augment his/her own authority through derision. Foucault (1995) asserted that power and knowledge directly imply one another. Therefore, in order for the subject to gain authority (power) s/he must necessarily utilise or attain a specific field of knowledge. Fantasy antagonists seem to have taken Foucault's suggestion to heart that "there may be a *knowledge* of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the

ability to conquer them..." (p. 26). Referring to the "new tactics of power" and "the practice of power to punish" (p. 23) he added, citing Mably<sup>2</sup>, he noted that "[p]unishment...should strike the soul rather than the body" (p. 16). In acts of classic projection, the antagonists use their superior supernatural knowledge to obtain power and to conquer (by fixating upon it) their great fear of death.

In high and wainscots fantasy, the soul is a precious attribute representing not only identity but mortality and the natural world. Therefore, in committing acts against the soul and nature while striving for power and to conquer (fear of) death, the antagonist is clearly established as foil by upholding an ethic counter to that of the protagonist. At the end of *The Farthest Shore* (Le Guin, 1972), Ged finally encounters the wizard Cob responsible for the devastation in Earthsea. Cob's obsession with power has dulled his sense of reason. He believes he has mastered bodily knowledge but has, in fact, lost it.

'What is life, Cob?'

'Power.'

'What is love?'

'Power,' the blind man repeated heavily, hunching up his shoulders.

'What is light?'

'Darkness!'

'What is your name?'

'I have none.'

'All in this land bear their true name...Where is your name? Where is the truth of you?

Did you leave it in Paln where you died? You have forgotten much, O Lord of the Two

Lands. You have forgotten light, and love, and your own name.'

'I have your name now, and power over you...'

'My name is no use to you,' Ged said. 'You have no power over me at all. I am a living man; my body lies on the beach of Selidor, under the sun, on the turning earth. And when that body dies, I will be here: but only in name, in name alone, in shadow...Here is nothing, dust and shadows. There...is the earth and sunlight, the leaves of trees, the eagle's flight...All who ever died, live; they are reborn and have no end, nor will there ever be an end. All, save you. For you would not have death...Death is the price we pay for our life and for all life...You cannot see the light of day; you cannot see the dark. You sold the green earth and the sun and stars to save yourself. But you have no self. All that which you sold, that is yourself. You have given everything for nothing. And so now you seek to draw the world to you, all that light and life you lost, to fill up your nothingness. But it cannot be filled. Not all the songs of earth, not all the stars of heaven, could fill your emptiness.' (p. 180)

It is uncoincidental that the wizard Cob who sought immortality is blind. His obsession with power betrays his true fear: death. The fixation led to great devastation in the fantasy world but ultimately no satisfaction for him. By seeking to conquer death with his exceptional magical knowledge, Cob becomes fixated upon it and projects this fear through his blind sockets. He becomes a purveyor of death. It is the protagonist, the wizard Ged, who helps Cob 'see' that at the end of death there is no more life, only infinite death.

Foucault (1995), discussing judicial systems, said that penal authorities historically relied upon torture for punishment until the modern concept of the soul was generally accepted.

Referring to the new framework transitioning from power over death to power of life, he asserted (1984):

The 'right' to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs, and, beyond all the oppressions or 'alienations', the 'right' to rediscover what one is and all that one can be, this 'right'...was the political response to all these new procedures of power which did not derive, either, from the traditional right of sovereignty. (p. 267)

At this point, punishment shifted from the public (bodily torture)<sup>2</sup> to the private (methods to normalise the soul). Because punishment no longer addressed the body, instead it laid a claim upon the soul. The new form of penalty was responsible to "rehabilitate the criminal as a social individual" (p. 238). "Imprisonment, with purpose of transforming the soul and conduct, made its entry into the system of civil laws" (p. 123). This was also a shift from the horror of corporeal punishment to shame and fear for the soul. In consideration of the preservation of the soul, let us now look at its relation to the ethic of nature and how corrupting the natural order is a characteristic of the amoral antagonist who serves as foil to the protagonist.

### **The Natural Order**

In the fantasy world, magic is readily available. In order to prevent totalitarian power, knowledge is tempered by an ethical framework. Time and time again, wizards learn from their mentors about maintaining the equilibrium of the natural world. Those who seek immortality corrupt the natural order.

'As for the Stone, it has been destroyed.'

'Destroyed?' said Harry blankly. 'But your friend—Nicolas Flamel--'...



'Well, Nicolas and I have had a little chat and agreed it's all for the best.'

'But that means he and his wife will die, won't they?'

'They have enough Elixir stored to set their affairs in order and then, yes, they will die.'

Dumbledore smiled at the look of amazement on Harry's face.

'To one as young as you, I'm sure it seems incredible, but to Nicolas and Perenelle, it really is like going to bed after a very, *very* long day. After all, to the well-organised mind, death is but the next great adventure. You know, the Stone was really not such a wonderful thing. As much money and life as you could want! The two things most human beings would choose above all—the trouble is, humans do have a knack of choosing precisely those things which are worst for them.' (Rowling, 1997, p. 215)

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Headmaster Albus Dumbledore schools Harry on the ethics of choice and how to manage one's magical knowledge. Harry, who has experienced much death and loss at his young age, is surprised to learn that anyone might choose to renounce immortality. Throughout the entire series, Harry is tempted with opportunities for great power and eternal life. Because his indoctrination, by Dumbledore and others, to the benevolent ethic of the natural order has been successful, it is a sign of his virtue that despite his profound sadness, he always chooses mortality. It is the protagonist's duty to humbly reject immortality when it is offered, whether the story incorporates an element of heaven or not, because s/he must first and foremost adhere to the rules of natural order. As we saw earlier with Tom Riddle's diary, Harry has been taught that the path to immortality originates with a corruption of magical power and is driven by fear and not by respect for the natural world.

In *The Farthest Shore* (Le Guin, 1972), Ged the Archmage is taunted by the wizard Cob,

whom he once slay. Ged demonstrates his acceptance of the natural order by not rising to the argument.

'I who alone among all mages found the Way of Immortality, which no other ever found!'

'Maybe we did not seek it,' said Ged.

'You sought it. All of you. You sought it and could not find it, and so made wise words about acceptance and balance and the equilibrium of life and death. But they were words--lies to cover your failure--to cover your fear of death! What man would not live forever, if he could?'... 'Let all stupid nature go its stupid course, but I am a man, better than nature, above nature. I will not go that way, I will not cease to be myself!' (p. 178)

### **Christianity, Heaven, and the Soul**

Much of Occidental children's fantasy literature follows the Christian tradition. The Christian concept of heaven offers transmundane personal immortality--the human being, having lived a good life, is rewarded by living forever in heaven. Perhaps it is because children's fantasy situates the intentional search for immortality as outside nature that even in Christian works, there is rarely a mention of heaven. Even in C.S. Lewis' renowned "Chronicles of Narnia", there is no explicit reference to heaven. That the children will be redeemed in Narnia after their earthly lives, obviously implies heaven. Yet, I believe that the conspicuous absence of the word 'heaven' is intentional. Whether overtly Christian--like the Narnia tales--or not, the morality espoused in children's fantasy demands that humans accept their mortal responsibility, maintain the integrity of their souls, and act within the confines of nature--even if that nature is

supernatural. What is important is the adherence to an earthly ethic of goodness.

For example, although the "Harry Potter" series is very clearly a Christian parable (Farmer, 2001) again, there is no overt discussion of heaven. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Rowling, 2007), Harry sacrifices himself to die only to be returned to life. His sacrifice is an act of love which disempowers his enemy, Lord Voldemort.

Through his quest, Harry learns to live a good, generous life. He suffers many personal losses and even sacrifices his own life, as did his mother before him, for the benefit of many. He maintains the integrity of his soul (unlike Voldemort), follows a modest path, and does not seek to be like a god. Although he legitimately possesses all the Deathly Hallows—the three magical objects that grant their owner mastery over death—Harry chooses neither great power nor knowledge when he destroys the Elder Wand, also known as the Wand of Destiny. He relinquishes the Resurrection Stone, which grants the power to cast the dead back to life. Yet Harry retains the humble Cloak of Invisibility, which in the *mise en abyme* 'The Tale of the Three Brothers' was used by the third brother to hide from the persecution of Death until his life came to its natural end.

The *mise en abyme* is a literary device which refers to a secondary narrative inset one or more levels down in the primary fictional world (McHale, 2007). In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Rowling, 2007), Hermione is bequeathed Albus Dumbledore's copy of "Tales of Beedle the Bard"—a book of children's stories. Rowling creates the *mise en abyme* by travelling several levels down into the wainscots. Beedle the Bard was a supposed collector of fairy tales, perhaps akin to Charles Perrault or a Grimm brother. When Harry and his friends are considering the meaning of the Deathly Hallows, an acquaintance points them to the 'Tale of the

Three Brothers' in Beedle the Bard. The tale is of three brothers who cheat death by using their magical powers to build a bridge over a raging river. Cunning Death appears to the brothers and offers them each a gift he fully expects to bring about their early demise. The first brother asks for a wand of great power and thus, the Elder Wand is born. The second brother requests the power to return the dead to life and receives the Resurrection Stone. The third asks only for the ability to live his life unhindered until his rightful death and is gifted the Cloak of Invisibility. The first brother immediately uses his powerful wand to kill an enemy. Boasting of invincibility leads another wizard to kill the first brother in his sleep and to steal the Elder Wand. The second brother resurrects his dead betrothed. The ghostly woman is weak and sad in the state of half life and so the second brother commits suicide to be with her. And so, the first two brothers are taken by Death. The third brother lives his natural life and relinquishes the Cloak of Invisibility to his son when he is willing to accept Death and accompany him as an equal. Because Harry Potter is the descendant of the third brother, his father had left him the Cloak of Invisibility. It is only in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007) that Harry finally learns the Cloak's true significance. This late acquisition of information is essential because Harry, in possession of all three Hallows, requires his years of mentoring to facilitate the ethical choices that will preserve his soul and demonstrate his virtuosity. By keeping only the Cloak of Invisibility and not the other Hallows, Harry also adheres to the Christian ethos of courage, prudence, temperance and justice.

Harry often sees the ghost of his parents. He resurrects his parents, Sirius Black, and Remus Lupin, who had all sacrificed their lives for the greater good, to garner enough courage to face his death.

'You'll stay with me?'

'Until the very end,' said James.

'They won't be able to see you?' asked Harry.

'We are part of you,' said Sirius. 'Invisible to anyone else.' Harry looked at his mother.

'Stay close to me,' he said quietly (p. 561).

Harry then intentionally drops the Resurrection Stone in the Forbidden Forest. From where might one assume his benevolent spirits originate, if not from heaven? If there were truly nothing at the end of life, then they would have no souls left with which to visit Harry in his moments of need. Whether Harry believes in heaven or not is irrelevant. His only concern in pursuing his quest is in not defiling the natural world.

Although Philip Pullman is an avowed atheist, "His Dark Materials" do not entirely denounce the Christian heaven. Ironically, this may be precisely his intention. Perhaps he refers to heaven specifically to subvert the unwritten rule that heaven is not typically discussed in children's fantasy. At many points, Pullman attempts to debunk Christianity by asserting that God ('the Authority') was actually a fraud and that the Church was a conspiratorial agent. However, the character of Lord Asriel builds a bridge to Cloud Mountain (heaven) to destroy the Authority in the hopes of realising his own democratic Republic of Heaven. This does not speak directly to atheism but to a sense of afterlife perhaps more akin to Gnosticism (Evans, 2012) and Cartesian duality than Catholicism. Even though he has called Lewis' "Narnia" "propaganda in the service of a life-hating ideology" (Pullman, 1998), Pullman himself admitted that "'His Dark Materials" was more a critique against tyrannical and theological societies than organized religion" (Vineyard, 2007).

In fact, it is Lord Asriel's daughter, the protagonist Lyra who sails to the land of the dead to free the souls imprisoned in the false heaven. She releases the dead and they dissolve in true atheistic style.

'When you go out of here, all the particles that make you up will loosen and float apart, just like your daemons did. If you've seen people dying, you know what that looks like. But your daemons en't just *nothing* now, they're part of everything. All the atoms that were them, they've gone into the air and the wind and the trees and the earth and all the living things. They'll never vanish. They're just part of everything. And that's exactly what'll happen to you, I swear to you, I promise on my honour. You'll drift apart, it's true, but you'll be out in the open, part of everything alive again.' (2005, *The Amber Spyglass*, p. 319)

Even when the protagonist unintentionally stumbles upon immortality or is offered it—as with Harry Potter, when he comes to possess the Deathly Hallows—s/he has been schooled well enough in high and wainscots fantasy morality by a wizard mentor to know to refuse it. In the final book of "The Chronicles of Prydain", *The High King* (Alexander, 1968), the protagonist is offered everlasting life in a glorious land. 'All men born must die, save those who dwell in the Summer Country. It is a land without strife or suffering, where even death is unknown' (p. 280). Taran refuses the gift and instead chooses a mortal life. 'There are those more deserving of your gift than I, yet never may it be offered them. My life is bound to them' (p. 290).

Therefore, children's fantasy generally either avoids discussion of heaven altogether or allows the protagonist one final opportunity to humbly reject it, thereby identifying him/herself as even more virtuous and worthy. Because the protagonist spends much of his/her journey

negotiating power and knowledge; the natural and the unnatural; life and death, what matters instead of any consideration of an afterlife is that the protagonist validates the acceptance of mortality as the moral choice.

### **The Unnatural**

Mirroring the balance between life and death, the equilibrium of knowledge and power in children's fantasy literature requires the character of a foil to aid the protagonist with his/her choices. Were it not for the antagonist consistently making the wrong choice, the protagonist might never know which was the right one. In high and wainscots fantasy, the wrong choice is using knowledge and power to counter nature.

I am utilising the following scale to represent the four ways in which crimes of the soul against nature can manifest: i) seeking immortality; ii) forcing familiarity or intimacy with another's soul; iii) amputating or in some way separating the soul from the body; iv) the extreme of soul mutilation.

Unnatural acts are taboo, even when human sensations or souls are not targeted. The supernatural world offers a myriad of fantastical creatures whose natural right to exist is deemed just as valuable as that of humans. Worse still is when fantastical creatures are forfeited for the first crime of seeking immortality. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997), Harry heads into the Forbidden Forest to look into the spate of unicorn slayings. He encounters a centaur, who explains the significance of killing a unicorn.

'Harry Potter, do you know what unicorn blood is used for?'

'No,' said Harry, startled by the odd question.

'That is because it is a monstrous thing, to slay a unicorn,' said Firenze. 'Only one who has nothing to lose, and everything to gain, would commit such a crime. The blood of a unicorn will keep you alive, even if you are an inch from death, but at a terrible price. You have slain something pure and defenceless to save yourself and you will have but a half life, a cursed life, from the moment the blood touches your lips.' (p. 188)

Ged discovers in *The Farthest Shore* (Le Guin, 1972) that an immortal wizard is wreaking havoc in Earthsea by draining meaning from the living world into the land of the dead. Along the way, Ged hears many accounts of Cob, the wizard he seeks, and of his terrible deeds. 'He said that this man has been among them, having no fear of them, for though killed he returns from death in his body, alive. Therefore they fear him as a creature outside nature' (p. 153).

He said, 'The sense has gone out of things. There is a hole in the world and the sea is running out of it. The light is running out. We will be left in the dry land. There will be no more speaking and no more dying.' (p. 154)

This quotation is particularly significant because dying is partnered with sense, water, light, and speech. If the sensations of sight, sound, touch, and taste equate to life, then so too does death. Death is to be expected just as much as any other lived experience. "No marks of illness were on them. They were whole and healed. They were healed of pain and of life" (p. 173).

As previously stated, in Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy, souls are represented as slightly altered versions of Cain's (2009) second principle of the soul. Souls are invisibly connected to a human body and represent consciousness and conscience; however, they have a physical form distinct from the human to whom they are attached. The souls take on hetero-gender animal forms called daemons and are shape-shifters until the human body reaches



puberty. In Lyra's world of *The Golden Compass* (Pullman, 2005), it is considered an abomination to touch another's daemon. The daemon is only separated from the human at death. Although in a different form, the daemon version of the soul is still integral to the being—it is still natural. When Lyra is captured, she is immobilised by the second unnatural crime against the soul when her captor touches her daemon.

He had seized Lyra's daemon in his human hands, and poor Pan was shaking, nearly out of his mind with horror and disgust...They fell still. They were captured. She *felt* those hands...It wasn't *allowed*...Not *supposed* to touch...Wrong... (p. 275)

To touch another's daemon is the worst kind of violation whereas to separate it from the body is the unfathomable third crime. 'But why do they do it?' demanded one boy. 'Why do they cut people's daemon's away? That's torture! Why do they do it?' (p. 293). Amputation of the soul, whether forced unwillingly upon a character or willingly undertaken by the antagonist is a heinous act often committed with the intention of seeking immortality.

In the fourth of "The Chronicles of Prydain", *Taran Wanderer* (Alexander, 1967), Taran is an orphaned assistant pigkeeper, raised by a powerful magician, who sets out on his quest. During his wanderings, he encounters a seemingly invincible evil wizard, Morda.

'Your strength will not save you,' Morda hissed. 'It is no match for mine. You are weak as all your kind. Did I not warn you? My life is not in my body. Strong as death am I!

So shall you die, pig-keeper!' (p. 133)

Morda's gloating claim that his death lay other than in his body reminds Taran that during his quest, through a series of coincidences, he had stumbled upon the wizard's mortality: a severed finger bone hidden in a box hidden high in a hollow tree. Initially, he had thought the bone

inconsequential, but having sensed magic in it, he chose to keep it. When Taran notices Morda's missing finger, he recognises the purpose of the bone fragment. He snaps the shard in two and kills the wizard.

Even in folk tale one encounters the theme of separating the soul from the body to preserve life. In the Russian folk tale "The Frog Tzarevna" (Zheleznova, n.d.), Vasilisa the Wise and Clever is a talented witch transformed into a frog out of jealousy by another sorcerer. The witch Baba Yaga advises Tsarevich Ivan that his beloved wife Vasilisa is prisoner of Koshchei the Deathless. Koshchei is deemed near impossible to defeat as he keeps his death securely at the point of a needle, inside an egg. The egg is in a duck and the duck inside a hare. The hare is in a stone chest atop a tall tree, guarded by the magician's servants. Tsarevich Ivan calls upon animals who owe him a service: a bear, a hare, a drake, and a pike to retrieve the needle. When Ivan breaks the point of the needle, Koshchei dies, the curse is broken, and the Tsarevna returns to her true human form as Vasilisa the Wise and Clever. This example of Russian folk tale demonstrates that what I am calling the third crime of the soul against nature—the severing of the link between soul and body—occurs in more than just the high and wainscots fantasy sub-genres. Frazer wrote that "the idea that the soul may be deposited for a longer or shorter time in some place of security outside the body...is found in popular tales of many races...[T]he idea is not a mere figment devised to adorn a tale but it is real article of primitive faith, which has given rise to a corresponding set of customs" (p. 373). In the specific fantasy works we are considering, the purpose of the soul amputation for the unnatural preservation of life serves to elucidate the antagonist's actions counter to the natural supremacy of mortality.

The theme of severing the soul for the sake of immortality is so prevalent in fantasy

literature that, for specificity, I have added a fourth category for the crime for multiple mutilations to the soul, after the initial severing from the body. Lord Voldemort, in the "Harry Potter" series takes the amputation of the soul to a new level. Not to be satisfied with the oft-seen concept of concealing one portion of a soul, he both egotistically and paranoidly attempts to split his soul multiple times in the hopes that if even one part is discovered, he will still have other portions hidden to preserve him. In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (Rowling, 2005), a pre-Voldemort Tom Riddle consults a professor at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry about curious bit of dark magic that has peaked his interest.

'Well,' said Slughorn... 'it can't hurt to give you an overview, of course. Just so that you understand the term. A Horcrux is the word used for an object in which a person has concealed part of their soul.'

'I don't quite understand how that works, though, sir,' said Riddle. His voice was carefully controlled, but Harry could sense his excitement.

'Well, you split your soul, you see,' said Slughorn, 'and hide part of it in an object outside the body. Then, even if one's body is attacked or destroyed, one cannot die, for part of the soul remains earthbound and undamaged. But, of course, existence in such a form...few would want it, Tom, very few. Death would be preferable.'

Here, Professor Slughorn in his capacity as mentor wizard begins to voice his disapproval. He hints that Horcruxes are against the natural order.

But Riddle's hunger was now apparent; his expression was greedy, he could no longer hide his longing.

'How do you split your soul?'

'Well,' said Slughorn uncomfortably, 'you must understand that the soul is supposed to remain intact and whole. Splitting it is an act of violation, it is against nature.'

No longer hinting, Professor Slughorn comes straight to the moral point.

'But how do you do it?'

'By an act of evil—the supreme act of evil. By committing murder. Killing rips the soul apart. The wizard intent upon creating a Horcrux would use the damage to his advantage: he would encase the torn portion—'

'Encase? But how—'

'There is a spell, do not ask me, I don't know!' said Slughorn... 'Do I look as though I have tried it—do I look like a killer?'

'No, sir, of course not,' said Riddle quickly. 'I'm sorry...I didn't mean to offend...What I don't understand, though—just out of curiosity—I mean, would one Horcrux be much use? Can you only split your soul once? Wouldn't it be better, make you stronger, to have your soul in more pieces? I mean, for instance, isn't seven the most powerfully magical number, wouldn't seven—?'

'Merlin's beard, Tom!' yelled Slughorn. 'Seven! Isn't it bad enough to think of killing one person? And in any case...bad enough to divide the soul...but to rip it into seven pieces...' (pp. 464-6)

Voldemort's dismissal of the natural order and his sheer arrogance prove to be his ultimate downfall. Harry learns that Voldemort had destabilised his soul so greatly by the six previous mutilations, that a seventh, unintended piece attached itself to Harry himself.

Returning to the Freudian concept of projection in which the subject attempts to deny certain

attributes about him or herself by deflecting them onto another, we can see how Voldemort constructed his own demise. Voldemort always perceived Harry as a threat and so he became one. Harry learns this from Professor Dumbledore at the end of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Rowling, 2003).

'You are forgetting the next part of the prophecy, the final identifying feature of the boy who could vanquish Voldemort...Voldemort himself would 'mark him as his equal'. And so he did, Harry. He chose you, not Neville. He gave you the scar that has proved both blessing and curse.'

'But he might have chosen wrong!' said Harry. 'He might have marked the wrong person!'

'He chose the boy he thought most likely to be a danger to him,' said Dumbledore... 'He saw himself in you before he had ever seen you, and in marking you with that scar, he did not kill you, as he intended, but gave you powers, and a future, which have fitted you to escape him not once, but four times so far—something that neither your parents, nor Neville's parents, ever achieved.' (p. 742)

With the errant portion of Voldemort's soul within him, Harry possesses many of the magical abilities that enable him to defeat Voldemort. Harry is repeatedly described in the series as similar to Voldemort in all but his choices and his capacity to love.

'There is a room in the Department of Mysteries,' interrupted Dumbledore, 'that is kept locked at all times. It contains a force that is at once more wonderful and more terrible than death, than human intelligence, than the forces of nature. It is also, perhaps, the most mysterious of the many subjects for study that reside there. It is the power held

within that room that you possess in such quantities and which Voldemort has not at all.

That power took you to save Sirius tonight. That power also saved you from possession by Voldemort, because he could not bear to reside in a body so full of the force he detests. In the end, it mattered not that you could not close your mind. It was your heart that saved you.' (p. 743)

Ironically, it is because Voldemort corrupts nature by mutilating his soul and seeking immortality, that his mortality becomes so vulnerable. When he learns that a piece of Voldemort resides within him, as a benevolent agent of the natural order, Harry has no option but to sacrifice himself. In so doing, the fragile portion of Voldemort's soul is extinguished thus bringing him closer to mortal death. Arrogantly, Voldemort has perpetually underestimated Harry, although Harry is the foil he created for himself. After surrendering to Voldemort's killing curse, Harry returns to life. Ultimately, Voldemort is defeated not by superior power and knowledge (gifts he unintentionally bestowed upon Harry), but by a courage, determination, kindness, and the ability to choose—qualities in which Voldemort never placed credence.

### **Conclusion**

In the magical realm, the soul is not some extraneous appendage to be amputated and preserved in a lockbox. It must be cherished as an integral part of a being's existence. Those who strive to conquer death and devalue theirs or another's soul may temporarily gain knowledge and power but will eventually face their great fear: true death.

Foucault (1995) explaining how power and knowledge connect stated that "a corpus of

knowledge...is formed and becomes entangled with the practice of power to punish" (p. 23). At a certain point in the history of civilisation, the judicial system and the overt exertion of power through the application of punishment moved from corporeal punishment to rehabilitative measures for the soul. The concept of the soul as a symbol of individuality, introversion, and mortality became prevalent. It is precisely due to the sense of privateness of the soul, that its desecration strikes our contemporary minds as so abominable. As we have seen, fantasy antagonists seeking immortality and violating their souls present caricature-like foils so the protagonists may learn instead to cherish mortality and to uphold the natural order.

In the Freudian twist that is projection, it is the antagonist who so terribly obsesses over death whose existence ultimately becomes frail. In fantasy, feeling and goodness are connected to nature. Helson (1970) asserted that in fantasy "[t]ender emotion is emphasized, and what aggression there is is directed against the domineering aspirations of the ego...or the controlling forces in society...and what would appear to be evil" (p. 360). The antagonist, acting as foil, attempts to defeat the natural order and to conquer death. Whereas, the humble, modest protagonist who embraces mortality and chooses to preserve the natural order of life and death eventually proves more resilient.

In the following chapter, I narrate the story of my own identity quest. In so doing, I draw parallels between my life and that of a high or wainscots fantasy protagonist in a coming-of-age novel. I detail the process of my self-naming and how it relates to hybridity. I consider the issues with which we have been engaged in relation to the fantasy protagonist such as resistance to subjectification, agency, views of the soul, the natural world, and mortality.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Spark**

I have been exploring how children's fantasy literature offers essentially a coming-of-age quest wherein the protagonist develops a sense of identity through naming and definition of his/her soul. So intertwined with these fantasy works, their themes, and their landscapes is my identity that it is entirely uncoincidental, despite the multitude of ways in which to tell a story, that I find in the narration of my own quest I am compelled to follow a parallel fantasy plot.

Much like a protagonist in high fantasy, I perceived myself as a sort of orphan. I had a profound connection to the natural world, I sought to do good, to be understood, to expand my knowledge, and to cultivate my soul. I believe that children's fantasy literature was so influential upon me because it articulated the very marginality and otherness that I and so many children have felt. For this reason, it served not as escapism, nor even as wish fulfillment but more as a validation of my own narrative.

### **Parentage**

My parents both pursued PhDs in English Literature. My father became a professor of 18<sup>th</sup> century English literature and literary criticism. Later, he branched into post-colonial literature. My mother began in 18<sup>th</sup> century, then moved to 19<sup>th</sup> century literature but never completed her doctorate.

I heard various stories as to why they became involved: one felt sorry for the other, it was expected of them, it was to escape from family oppression. Whatever the ins and outs of their relationship, it influenced our household. My father was absent: concerned with his teaching but even more so with his drive to emancipate the underprivileged. His political work was all-



consuming. I spent much of my pre-adolescence at demonstrations, on picket lines, and distributing leaflets. Conversely, my mother poured herself into my older brother and me, in stifling fashion. She doted on us and demanded our full attention. I, a fiercely independent child, suffocated.

One particularly significant incident occurred after my parents had split. I was nine years old. I was staying with my mother for the weekend in her damp basement apartment. It was a glorious summer day in a lush Vancouver neighbourhood. I sat underground, peering out at the window high above my head, which let in a chink of sunlight from ground level. I heard children playing on the street. I asked my mother if I could venture out to play with those children. She scolded me and shamed me. How could I dare think of leaving her? Was she so terrible that I had to get away during our two days together? Did I want her to rot in that apartment by herself? Had I no compassion, no loyalty?

I devoted every weekend from that point on to her without question until she left the country when I was thirteen years old. I never asked to do anything away from her again. I kept her company. I kept her alive. She lived off me.

On the other hand, my father had a long term relationship with another academic from the university. I did not know at the time that he had fought tooth and nail for custody of me—to protect me from the emotional vampirism of my mother. My father was much happier but still absent. I was an original latch-key kid but never saw a problem with it. My brother and I learned to share the cooking and to do our own laundry. I felt proud of myself and my solitary existence. Not long after my father's relationship ended, my brother prepared to head off to law school. My dad and I were alone together for three years. He respected me a great deal and I

understood him a bit better. I became his emotional partner. Once again, I began to long for my independence and the self-sufficiency I had so cultivated.

You see, I was not literally an orphan but I did raise myself. One parent was overly dependent upon me, the other encouraged my independence. Then the roles shifted, the previously reliant parent became absent and the previously absent parent became reliant. What was it about me that drew a dependency out of people? I had to be free—to breathe.

The books I read were filled with orphans and self-sufficient children: Taran, the assistant pig-keeper in Lloyd Alexander's "Chronicles of Prydain" was an orphan. All the children in C.S. Lewis' "Chronicles of Narnia" were either orphaned, abandoned, or in some other way completely self-reliant. Sparrowhawk in Ursula Le Guin's "Earthsea Trilogy" left his father, from whom he was estranged, to study magic. Menolly in Anne McCaffrey's "The Harper Hall Trilogy" ran away from a disapproving family to study music and tame dragons. As an adult, I have relived something of my youth with J.K. Rowling's famous 'Harry Potter' series—Harry, of course, being an orphan—and with Lyra in Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials Trilogy". Lyra believed herself an orphan, having been abandoned by both mother and father. These were my stories. In the world of fantasy fiction, I was not marginal. My story was central. It was not that I imagined myself the protagonists in their supernatural environments but that for the first time I felt a sense of belonging.

### **The Natural World**

In children's fantasy, the protagonist is taught to uphold the natural order and to cherish mortality. Growing up in Vancouver's Lower Mainland, arguably the most beautiful landscape in North America, nature was very much part of my daily existence. I was used to walking alone

in ancient old-growth forests, swimming in the ocean or glacier-fed lakes, and telling time by the position of the sun over the mountain vista or the sandy beaches. I was always amongst living creatures, not just pets but the common wildlife: fish, whales, seals, otters, shy sea anemones to tickle, crouching crabs to uncover, and sea onions, which drifted onshore with their long seaweed tails. Once they dried out, the joy was in jumping on the bulbs, attempting the perfect pop. There were also snakes, birds, racoons, skunks to avoid, skunk cabbage (which reeked as expected), giant, multicoloured fungi growing on nursing logs, coyotes, deer, bears, cougars, and everywhere, everywhere slugs—on the sidewalks, in the forest, and once when I was camping, an inch from my face, betrayed by a slime trail across my sleeping bag. Long before any environmental movement gained popularity, as a child growing up in that locale, I beheld the awe of nature. The wilderness could give life as soon as take it away, but that did not cultivate a fear in me. In fact, it only made me more curious to discover what mysteries lay in the darkness. Being frightened of forests or of big, bad wolves was as far from my experience as imaginable. Nature, in its proximity was somehow implicit to my sense of self. So, it is not surprising that the children's stories which spoke to me were not fairy tales—teaching parables of conduct encouraging fear of the natural world, caution against corporeality, and Victorian prudence—but fantasy fiction, which worships the natural order above all else.

...Taran listened in wonder as Adaon told the ways and natures of woodland creatures, of bold badgers and cautious dormice and geese winging under the moon.

'There is much to be known,' said Adaon, 'and above all much to be loved, be it the turn of the seasons or the shape of a river pebble. Indeed, the more we find to love, the more we add to the measure of our hearts' (Alexander, 1965, *The Black Cauldron*, pp. 31-2).

It just so happens that in fantasy, there is an element of magic. It was not far reaching at all to perceive the supernatural in the natural. Of the three cognitive registers proposed by Lacan (1970, 1977), the Imaginary is the time of irrationality and emotion. Kristeva reworked and relocated Lacan's Imaginary and renamed it the Semiotic (1986). To Kristeva, the Semiotic (or the 'feminine Imaginary'—a term to which I have often referred throughout this paper) is the pre-linguistic, feminine, somatic, magical place—a location of the maternal. In my case, not mother but mother nature.

### **A Good Girl**

When I was nine years old and my father's girlfriend moved in, she brought with her her female dog. My beautiful well-trained Dalmatian boy was enraptured by her savage beauty. Together, they wrought havoc on our house. I returned home after a sleep-over when I was ten years old to discover that my father had given my dog away—not his girlfriend's dog but his daughter's. I had been betrayed. I had not been warned. I had not been consulted. I had to simply accept, like a good girl.

When they split, about five years later, she left that same dog. I had to tend to the abandoned animal I so secretly and avidly resented. I tried to find her a new home but she ran away night after night. She would stand outside my window, crying, howling in that tragic, pained way of a deserted creature. Having been abandoned myself, I completely understood her agony and sense of rejection. I let the dog back into our house. When the ex-girlfriend finally did inquire after the dog several months later, I told her she had been given away. Why did I

protect her from the truth? Why did I not tell her that I had taken her mutt to the pound and that very likely she had been put down, because she was unadoptable, weird, destructive, and emotionally damaged? It was because I did not want to cause any pain. I was good.

When my brother was away at law school, my father decided to downsize our house. With the move he told me that my cat would have to go. I, at the very pinnacle of 'good girlredness', accepted the situation without complaint. Once more, I made a trip to the SPCA to sacrifice an animal, knowing full well that she would probably not be adopted. Now in my adulthood, I am surrounded by a menagerie: two dogs, two turtles, lots of fish, and more dogs and cats to come. I nurture these representatives of the natural world. I cherish them. The experiences of my youth provided the impetus for who I was to be as an adult and, as we will see in the next section, for my self-naming.

### **The Spark**

"A name is a thing of immense power, a thing that holds soul and personality and self like a sculpted vessel" (Doyle, 1994, p. 12).

If we, like Lacan, accept that the subject is constituted both in and by language (1970, 1977), then the true nature of self must be found in words—in a word: a name. Yet, Foucault said that there is no truth, only power and that only the powerful may deem something to be true (1984). Moreover, power and knowledge are inextricably bound (1995). To control the dissemination of knowledge is to hold power.

There is a gap between the signifier and the signified over which we must make a

semantic leap. The gap is in reality a chasm and the leap is a metonymic jump: a spark. We rely upon this same spark in combustion engines, just as we rely upon cognitive jumps in the assignment of meaning to our symbols. Launching ourselves into the unknown is uncomfortable, nauseating even, but we feel better having done it. Saussure's proposal of "*l'arbitre du signe*" suggested that meaning is arbitrarily and that words themselves have no inherent value (2011). Therefore, we can never be sure that our intended meaning will be received by the recipient of a message. We can, however, control certain variables in the delivery of the message. As the signifier to which we are the signified, our names are one such message. Stump (1998) argued that one approach is to concentrate not on the holistic meaning of the message but instead on the meaning of the use of the specific words. In the first chapter, I looked at the problem of seeking truth in a name. Here, I am narrating the journey for my own name and how I sought to clarify the intended meaning of my signifier by personally investing in it and thus making it less arbitrary; somehow more true. The potential for the multiplicity of interpretations of messages is vast—as vast as the chasm itself. Referring to naming, Akiko (2007) warned that in the use of language we must protest its misuse because "...we have already been (mis)addressed and mis(named) nonetheless" (p. 506). She spoke of the resistance to an arbitrary naming and seeking empowerment in that which has been bestowed upon us. Perhaps words are meaningless and fleeting. But, if we control the meaning of our own names, is that not power? And if we are able to accept the impermanence of words rather than struggling to attain some kind of pedantic perfection, then we awaken to a more fluid notion of truth.

One the books that most influenced me as a child was *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Le Guin, 1968). In it the protagonist Sparrowhawk is given his true name, Ged, by his mentor wizard. He

learns that all things in Earthsea have a use name and a true name. The true name houses a thing's quintessential core. The result is much like Lacan's theorised S/s (1977) and the resulting fading subject wherein the signifier extracts power from the signified it represents. As Lacan said, "When the subject take the place of the lack, a loss is introduced in the word...[T]his is why the subject is always a fading thing that runs under the chain of signifiers...[T]he fading subject yearns to find itself again" (1970, p. 6). The Lacanian fading subject explains why in Earthsea the true name becomes a greater force than the subject it represents.

I never felt that my name adequately represented me. I would hear my name and yes, be responsive to it, but it seemed somehow devoid of my essence. I was sensing what Hughes (2010) referred to as a sense of conformity or obligation to my name, when I should have felt connected to it by choice. Butler (1997) described this alienation from one's name and how it marginalises the subject:

After all, to be named by another is traumatic: it is an act that precedes my will, an act that brings me into a linguistic world in which I might begin to exercise agency at all...I have been entered into linguistic life, refer to my self through the language given by the Other, but perhaps never quite in the same terms that language mimes (p. 38).

How could I make myself understood, how could anyone truly know me, if my signifier—the most concentrated form of my selfness—was malapropos? Rybczynski (1986) defines the notion of comfort as the absence of discomfort. A negative of a negative somehow creating a finite, albeit theoretical, positive. I was not uncomfortable in my name, just never comfortable in it.

**Pater**

My father's family is Bengali. In the Hindu caste system, the most privileged of all is the Brahmin caste: the priests and scholars. The irony of my Brahmin birth right is not lost on me: my father, who has fought his entire life for secularism and democracy, I, with my almost cellular discomfort regarding status; atheists the lot of us.

Similar to Earthsea, in Bengal all people have a pet name for family use and a formal name. It is a given that Brahmins will have a Sanskrit name for formal use. Furthermore, in some families the suffix *moy*, meaning fullness, will be added to male names to aesthetically complete the sense of privilege. My grandfather's name was Jyotirmoy:  *jyoti*  meaning light so altogether meaning 'lightfulness' or 'full of light'. My father's name is Chinmoy:  *chin*  is like  *chit*  meaning soul so his name is 'soulfulness' or 'like Brahma'. My brother's name was Anandamoy.  *Anand*  means bliss; therefore it becomes 'blissfulness'. Beautiful yes, but pretentious. An ordinary person may understand the concept of bliss but a poor, uneducated peasant is unlikely to spend his or her day contemplating the notion of blissfulness. This is likely why my parents did not object to my brother relinquishing the family tradition and shortening his name to the more common Anand.

**Mater**

My mother's family was Hindu from what was part of Punjab but is now Pakistan. They were Kshatriyas—the caste of warriors and kings, second only to Brahmins. When they fled during Partition, most of the family was massacred. Only my mother, her two sisters, their parents, and one other small branch of the family survived. My grandfather had been a gold



bullion merchant and although he lost much wealth, he retained his financial adeptness. They set up a home in then-Bombay and one in Pondicherry, for spiritual worship.

Because the family had almost completely died out, and my mother was the middle child of three girls, there was greater-than-average pressure to produce a boy. My eldest aunt and my mother were in competition (as the sisters had been their entire lives) being pregnant at the same time. My eldest aunt was considered the brightest of all three and she ended up married to a brilliant philosopher who happened to be the Mahatma's grandson—no small catch. My younger aunt was considered the most beautiful of the three and she has had a very successful career in the theatre. My mother was intelligent, but not the best at anything. She was plain, with an acne-scarred face. Yet, she had the only boy child. She had married above her caste and produced a boy. It is no wonder that she spoiled him and that he so resented me when I arrived. Obviously then, having produced 'blissfulness' itself, her next child would be equally deified.

### **Nandini**

Nandini ['nʌnðɪni] is, of course, a Sanskrit name. Nandi was a Hindu god: a bull. His daughter was Nandini. Surely most little girls in receipt of hegemonic gender indoctrination would be happy to be associated with a name that essentially means princess goddess. Not I. Banerjee ['bænədʒɪ] is a surname recognisable anywhere in the world as indicating a Kolkata Brahmin family. In India, this name 'Nandini Banerjee' has status. Sanskrit, goddess/princess, Brahmin. Can't do much better than that. Yet, despite the implicit privilege of my name, it did not ignite my spark. As Corrigan (1988) said, "we are more than any sign system" (p. 272).

For some reason, my brother and I never had pet names like other Bengalis. My father

thinks this is perhaps because we were rootless, as first generation Canadians. At least, Anand had two versions of his name but I had nothing to which I could escape when my name did not suit me. Some people have suggested that I changed my name to deny my ethnicity and to replace the Indo in my Canadian identity with Anglo. To perfectly honest, I did ponder the likelihood of post-colonial assimilation for quite sometime before making my final decision. But no, such was not the case. My action was, as Corrigan suggested (1988) "to refuse the authorisation...on offer, as the only possible form of being. This refusal is in/formed from the body, from/by imaginactions based on practical, hopeful, possibilities" (p. 263). I am neither more nor less 'Indian' after my name change. I am, however, more empowered having been an agent of my own signification.

The point is that if my intention (however shielded it may have been from my conscious) was to assimilate to the dominant social ethnicity, I would have felt the need to drop my name for Michelle, Lisa, or Jennifer—as girls were often called at the time of my name change. Yet, I did not because the rationale for my self-naming was to cross the gap by finding a signifier that better represented me and to get to my own proximal fluid truth. Said (1999) described this very fluidity: "I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flow currents. I prefer this to the idea of a solid self, the identity to which so many attach so much significance" (p. 295). Moreover, as I will discuss later, my choice of an Anglo name had less to do with post-colonial assimilation and more to do with place-related identity, namely the landscape of the fantasy novels by which I felt validated.

I have never been afraid of my ethnicity. As children, it was my brother who refused to eat Indian food, not I. I loved when my mother wore a silk sari to my school functions and all

the other mums felt underdressed in their cotton frocks. After some particularly painful early teasing was destructive to my idiolect (such as my pronunciation of bath [bʌθ] and banana ['bʌnʌnʌ]) I fortified myself and began to relish the opportunity to correctly pronounce Indian words such as Bengal [bɛŋ'gɔl] tiger and Buddha ['bʊðʌ]. I enjoyed bringing my lunch to school in my Bombay-style stainless steel tiffin. Because I was academically successful and socially confident, I had a particular leeway to be myself and I certainly revelled in the shock value of my dissimilarity to others. I always was a keen manipulator of social situations.

One thing I hated was that institutional people could not or would not pronounce my name correctly. ['nʌnðɪni] became ['nændɪni]. It seemed that when I met people outside of school, they could take the time to pronounce it correctly. Yet, in school, no one had the time; the message I received was that if a name was not easy to pronounce at first then do not bother. I detested how teachers with too many announcements to read over the PA system would let my name run away from them. It would become [næn'dini bændʒə'ini], like some Italian banjo-playing circus performer.

Why did I accept it? I was so forgiving, so modest. These were cultural and gendered traits. I was a good girl, after all. Strangely, my brother never expressed any discontent at the anglicism of his name from Anand ['anʌnd] to [ʌ'nænd]. But then, he also had some voice in his naming having been supported when he chose to drop *moy*. I wanted to scream at people to pronounce my name correctly because I was becoming disassociated from it, I was being diminished. I felt (even then, a semiotician!) that if I had no name, I would cease to exist.

I envied other Indian girls I knew: Ritu, Nikki, Geetu, Renuka, Lopa, Shoma, and Leela. (Here I am referring to Hindu girls. The Sikh kids all had more cumbersome but essentially

manageable names.) How on earth did I get stuck with unpronounceable Nandini? If I had any sense, I would have gone by Dini but that never occurred to me. Not having been granted a pet name, I could not imagine a diminutive beginning other than with the same first letter as the original name. Even as a child, I recognised the complex emotional ramifications of having a name bestowed upon me. I did not wish to demonstrate any lack of respect towards my parents.

In junior high, as a gymnastics nickname, I happily took on Nano. Nandini Banerjee was always too unwieldy to be announced during the gymnasts' entry march onto the floor. I felt Nano was an acceptable diminutive because the specific context for its usage was relatively limited and was in no way disrespectful to my family.

### **Adaon**

In the second installment of Lloyd Alexander's Chronicles of Prydain, *The Black Cauldron* (1965), the character Adaon exists for a mere 100 pages. He is the son of the chief bard, Taliesin, and possesses the gift of second sight. He is a profoundly empathetic soul who respects the gentle harmony of life and who has a quiet spirituality. The word that best describes my impression of him is righteous.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines righteous as morally right or justifiable (2002, p. 1232). I first encountered this word when, on our weekends together, my mother read aloud to me the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* (Subramaniam, 1980). *Mahabharata* is so well known (as are the characters of the five Pandava brothers) that it is in league with scripture. The characters are considered archetypes. It would be no exaggeration to say that a billion people know the tale. In the saga, Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti and Yama: the Lord of Dharma (dharma

being righteousness itself) and the eldest of the five Pandava brothers, is upheld as being righteous and good. At the end of the story, when Yudhishtira approaches heaven with his four brothers and Draupadi, the one wife to all the brothers, all but he and a companion dog die. The god Indra appears to him and offers Yudhishtira the privilege of entering heaven in human form, if he accepts to ride in Indra's chariot. Yudhishtira proves his righteousness by refusing the offer of immortality unless he may bring his dog.

‘Please let me bring this dog with me. It has been with me ever since I left Hastinapura. It is devoted to me. I would like to bring it along with me to heaven.’ Indra laughed at him and his foolish love for a dog.

He said, ‘Yudhishtira, you have been granted immortality. You are my equal. You have been the most fortunate person in the world. Please do not lose all this because of your love for a dog. There is no place in heaven for a dog. Please abandon it and come with me...I cannot take this dog in my chariot.’

Yudhishtira said, ‘All the acts of mine which have earned this heaven for me will be destroyed if I behave without compassion towards this dog. It has been my rule never to abandon one who is dependent on me. This dog is a dependant. I cannot leave it and go.’

Indra said, ‘You have abandoned all your brothers and your queen. Is this dog, then, more dear to you?’

Yudhishtira said, ‘They were all dead. I could not revive them. I would not have left them if they were alive. But this dog is alive. I cannot leave it. I will not enter heaven unless I am allowed to bring this dog with me. That is certain.’ The dog now changed

its form. It assumed the form of his father, Dharma.

He said, 'My son, I am proud of you. Your compassion wins my heart. Once before...I tested your righteousness...Again, I have tested you today. You have pleased me. Go with Indra to the heavens you have earned.' (p. 742)

Understandably with my love for dogs and my familiarity with their abandonment and betrayal, Yudhishtira's actions made perfect sense to me.

Perhaps, as my father says, it is because we were rootless, that I did not soulfully connect to the *Mahabharata*. Perhaps it is because, although born a Hindu and familiar with the rituals, I did not actually believe in any god, let alone a pantheon. Or perhaps it is because we were so afflicted by British colonialism that the real Saviour of my family was English literature. I think that more than post-colonial assimilation, it was the landscape of the stories that mattered to me—that I was profoundly connected to their sense of place. Whatever the reason, despite Yudhishtira's grand heroism, he did not epitomise to me what it was to be righteous—only Adaon did.

When I first read Adaon's pages, he was familiar like a déjà-vu. I felt that he was the epitome of who my soul longed to be: not heroic but simply wise, perceptive, and modest.

Adaon, Taran saw, was tall, with straight black hair that fell to his shoulders. Though of noble bearing, he wore the garb of an ordinary warrior, with no ornament save a curiously shaped iron brooch at his collar. His eyes were gray, strangely deep, clear as a flame, and Taran sensed that little was hidden from Adaon's thoughtful and searching glance.

'Well met, Taran of Caer Dallben and Doli of the Fair Folk,' said Adaon, clasping their

hands in turn. 'Your names are not unknown among the bards of the north.'

'Then you, too, are a bard?' asked Taran, bowing with great respect. Adaon smiled and shook his head.

'Many times my father has asked me to present myself for initiation, but I choose to wait.

There is still much I hope to learn, and in my own heart I do not feel myself ready. One day, perhaps, I shall be.' (Alexander, 1965, *The Black Cauldron*, pp. 9-10)

He spoke to an instinctive yearning to understand the world around me: 'There is truth in all things, if you understand them well' (p. 43). His landscape of Prydain, in reality Wales, had become so firmly etched on my psyche by years of reading U.K.-based children's fantasy, that although my lived experience was of a different natural world, his seemed a dream memory. I grieved his death as a young adolescent often experiences emotions: intensely. I tucked away those memories I had of a person I had never known, completely unaware that I would realise their potential many years later.

### **Aedon**

It is peculiar to admit that the decision-making process around changing my name is somewhat of a blur. I suspect that it was a period of such heightened emotion and reflexion that linear memory is too simplistic. I recall watching Gary Oldman perform as Sid Vicious in *Sid and Nancy* (Felner & Cox, 1986). His profoundly moving performance elucidated to me that I had been hiding from my love of the stage for the sake of having a respectable career. I had done one year of undergraduate work in the faculty of Applied Sciences, Communication, and had not pursued theatre since leaving high school but that spring, with none of the prerequisites,

I auditioned and was accepted into The School for the Contemporary Arts' theatre programme at Simon Fraser University. I remember that I was the very first person to audition from a list of names that was several pages long. There were fifteen spots. After I presented my piece, the committee told me that they would obviously and happily accept me into the programme but that I was not to tell anyone as they had everyone else yet to audition. I was in a daze. It was one of the first occasions of using my special power to achieve something significant. I completely understood the expression 'being on cloud nine'. I felt high, lighter than air. I'm sure I had a ridiculous grin on my face as I walked to the bus stop, listening to Led Zeppelin's 'D'yer Mak'er'<sup>1</sup> on my Walkman.

For the first time in my life, I felt the accuracy of a decision and how enacting the right choice affected the physical, mental, and spiritual domains. Ever since that moment, I have used that very sensation of perfect alignment to guide my decisions and the use of my secret ability. When something is 'right', I will experience the same feeling as I did that day. Moreover, the perfect alignment will be paired with ease: just as it was easy to be the first person to audition and to be granted automatic acceptance. I experienced something very similar when I decided to leave Vancouver, to move to Newfoundland, and to enroll in the education programme at Memorial University. It was without question that I would be accepted. After my B.Ed, I did not have to substitute a single day. I fell into full time teaching immediately and was tenured by my second year. Perfect ease.

My acceptance into the theatre programme was the pivotal moment when I recognised the discordance of my identity. It seemed incoherent to have experienced such simple perfection of choice paired with the incongruous name against which I had struggled. This was not to be a



period of struggle but one of realisation. I was making a momentous change: not following the path of the good girl, but of my heart. I knew I would urgently need to take action for the completion of my self-realisation. It was imperative that before I began my studio training, I be working in my true name. I had to change my name.

I did so in the summer of 1989, before I turned 19. Because I was not yet a legal adult, I had to have consent from my father and a legal affidavit from my mother in India. But how to choose a name? It was one thing to know that my name was untrue but to pull a new one out of the thin air was not any magic I knew. Then, I recalled Adaon.

I was not deluded. I knew Adaon was a character and that in reality, such a person would be flawed, multidimensional, and perhaps contradictory. But still, I had always known that he must not die—that his harmonious, virtuous, righteous spirit should live. And so, I restored him. Just as my decision to study theatre was actualised with ease, the moment I began to consider Adaon, I knew I had stumbled upon the answer. Yet, 'Adaon' did not seem quite right. The balance of the vowels was too repetitive, and it was too masculine. Yet, in a way, I liked the androgynous ambivalence this name proposed. Referring to the complexity of the issue of political correctness, Andrews (1996) argued:

if linguistic maintenance of taboo is one of the factors that plays a role in determining the appropriateness of a name—including common and proper nouns and pronominals—then taboo systems in English and other languages can be a starting place (p. 390).

If part of the role of naming is to reassert dominant rules of languages and to maintain a particular order in society, given the opportunity for a new 'starting place' (ie. my renaming), why should I not subvert those very rules? Why not challenge ethnic and gender expectations?

Still, it was too evident an homage to a character. The signifying act of self-naming was too important to be a mere two-dimensional character sketch. I was not pretending to be someone else, I was pulling my self out from within. I manipulated Adaon until it became Aedon ('ejdʌn).

As for Young, I am stricken by the same sort of haziness that has afflicted the entire recollection of my name change. I do not recall having spent much time in consideration of it. What I do remember is that almost as soon as I had worked out Aedon, I knew that Young was its completion. Given some of the detail with which I remember arriving at Aedon, I now find it troublesome that my memory has glossed over the particulars of settling upon such an Anglo surname. I recall having seen it written in joined writing (half printing, half cursive writing) and having loved the way it looked. It was aesthetically satisfying. I did briefly consider keeping Banerjee but I was concerned that I would end up at times emphasising one name and downplaying the other and in other circumstances, doing the opposite, like Edward Said described in *Out of Place* (1999). My naming was not about wanting a clear, superior Anglo name and subservient Indian one. Although it seems paradoxical, given the origins of both my first name and my surname, I still maintain the choice was not driven by ethnicity, a preference for culture, or a desire for assimilation. My love was first and foremost for the landscape of Britain and the stories that captured me. My naming was about identifying, as Bhabha said, "the particular kind of subject that is constructed at the point of splitting" (Mitchell, 1995)—a new complex sense of myself. I was making my own meaning and I desperately did not want to be further marginalised in the act. Steedman (1985) described how when a young Punjabi immigrant girl set a tale to music and sang it to practise the intricacies of English as her second language, her English school peers laughed. Steedman wrote:

One specific result of the dissemination of multicultural theories is the clear expectations that some schools now have of the creative achievements of minority group children: even at the time Amarjit would have made more sense in school if she had painted an elephant, or a temple—something Indian—rather than making her own meaning out of a tale in the European tradition. (p. 153)

If I had kept Banerjee once I had taken Aedon, I would be doing nothing other than painting an elephant. I would be re-situating myself back in the same paradigm of 'multiculturalism', not negotiating a new identity. Referring to the incongruity of his name, Said wrote, "The one thing I could not tolerate, but very often would have to endure, was the disbelieving, and hence undermining, reaction: Edward? Said?" (1999, p. 3). Mitchell in his interview with Bhabha (1995) suggested that "'otherness' and various forms of ethnic authenticity are being commodified" and that "the global circulation of cultural stereotypes is becoming a major industry" (p. 80). Combining Aedon with Banerjee would, in their irreconcilability, serve to commodify me. In retrospect, perhaps because I simply could not yet articulate these intricacies to myself but felt them nonetheless, Young—with its pleasing aesthetic simplicity and monosyllablism—was much more of considered choice than I permitted myself to believe at the time.

Everyone I have encountered from that point on, has known me as Aedon Young.

I cannot adequately describe the feeling of satisfaction that comes from finding and claiming one's name. It was like a peg falling into place or a latch clicking contentedly. It is the refrain of a lost song that comes whispering to mind or a dry branch that finally flickers into flame. It becomes essential to never extinguish the spark.

### The Soul

At this point in my story, the spark has been ignited because the gap between signifier and signified has been broached. We have looked at the supernatural in the natural and thus magic has been enacted. But nature has an even more significant role to play in children's fantasy literature in its connecting to the protagonist's mortal soul. The integrity of the protagonist's soul is maintained by two factors: reverence for the natural world—in the maintenance of balance between knowledge and power—and an adherence to the mandate of mortality. In human characters, it is only the antagonist who will attempt to violate nature, upset the equilibrium of knowledge and power, and desecrate the soul by striving to attain immortality. I, as the protagonist of my own narrative, have already described my innate love of nature. Furthermore, struggling for justice in the domains of power and knowledge by challenging hegemonic authority is a tradition in my family. Finally, my thoughts about mortality are equally in line with fantasy protagonists because I have never relished the dream of eternal life.

I quite enjoy teaching religion. I am fascinated by religious mythologies. We all operate within particular narratives we find compelling or agreeable. I, for example, have chosen to follow a narrative style that equates the story of my naming to a young adult fantasy novel. I find it intriguing how in the complexity of our individual stories and multiplicity of narrative threads available to us, some people require a web of religious stories to be spun around them to make order out of chaos, while others simply do not. Many assert that religion quells the inherent fear of death housed within us. It seems to me that religious stories only prey upon that fear by promising eternal life for the price of faith. This fear of death, encouraged by religion,

strikes me as exactly what characters in children's fantasy face. Similarly, it is the protagonists who accept limited mortality who triumph and not the characters who waste their lives seeking eternity. Even in the examples of overtly Christian children's fantasy that we discussed in the last chapter, the fantasy protagonists' primary responsibility is to uphold the natural order, not to intentionally strive for immortality. Maybe I have so internalised the children's fantasy fictional stance on mortality that, rather than aligning myself with any religious mythology, I do not believe in any god.

Existence is very short. The only way to maintain our souls is by living benevolently; not because there will be either judicial reward or punitive discipline at the end. We are only responsible to our own conscience—the cruellest critic of all. I believe that when I die, my body will cease to exist and so will my soul. I adhere to Aristotle's conception of the soul as a composite of matter and form resulting in consciousness (Cain, 2009). In death and in the dissolution of my body, a certain energy contained in my body and perhaps even from my consciousness will be released back into the universe. But I, in my selfness, will cease to exist. The world will be neither more nor less when I am gone. Natural order will be in equilibrium because the energy that was me will have simply dispersed and reformed into something, someone, or some others. I am happy with this. I don't need the ghostly spirits of my ancestors hanging over me. Indeed, I am quite content to know that my dead mother is not floating around me, haunting me into eternity with guilt and shame.

### Conclusion

Clearly, the development of my identity was greatly influenced by children's fantasy literature. I come from a family that cherished literature. Moreover, the conflicts within my home pushed me further towards the solace of books. I felt akin to the characters in children's fantasy because I perceived myself as quasi-orphan. Another commonality between my childhood and that of the fantasy world protagonist was in the appreciation of the surrounding natural world. Perhaps it was because my parents were both Indian, coming from an experience of British colonialism that, even as a child, I assumed a sense of marginality and unknowingly internalised a notion of English superiority. The landscape of Britain, so familiar from books, would take priority in my psyche over that which I physically experienced. Especially because I am a Canadian, I clung to that which made me unique; which happened to be a diasporic reaction to hegemonic British sensibility.

Anders (1990) wrote that the world itself is not enough, that we want to be in our own worlds and to find our own truth. This condition of not being satisfied and striving to transcend exists even in the realm of fantasy literature. However, children's fantasy models this transcendence as an identity quest and very clearly delineates between benevolent protagonists and malevolent antagonists. Even in the realm of the supernatural and magical, the protagonist endeavours to maintain the natural world and to protect the integrity of his/her soul; whereas the antagonist disregards nature and any viability of the soul because his/her desire to utilise knowledge to gain omnipotence and immortality is paramount.

The desire to make one's own meaning and to assert power by renaming is as old as language. There are many historical references to important figures who were reinscribed or

chose to resignify. God himself changed Abram's name to Abraham and Abraham's wife from Sarai to Sarah (bethanyschuler, 2011). Lao Tsu, the father of Taoism was originally Li Erh, which means long ear. Lao Tsu, meaning old master, seems a considerably more appropriate moniker for a spiritual leader. Caligula, an affectionate nickname meaning little soldier's boot, was actually Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus. This Roman emperor utilised not his inherited name, which was authoritative and suited to his rank, but his diminutive (Nancy, 2011). His amiable nickname proved frighteningly contradictory, as he is purported to have been atrociously blood-thirsty. Once when he was bored while presiding over some games, he commanded an entire section of the crowd to be thrown into the arena to be eaten by animals (Aldrete, 2004). The philosopher Plato preferred his nickname to his birth name, Aristocles, which meant son of Ariston from Colytus (Nancy).

Fiction, too, has always recognised a good name as more than a prerequisite: "it is also an emblem of knowledge, and an essential element in its communication" (Stump, p. 9). In *The Life & Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (Sterne, 1912) by a series of comic accidents, Walter Shandy's son was inauspiciously conceived and mangled at birth. By bestowing upon his son the benefit of a great name—Trismegistus—the poor father desperately seeks to counteract the great evil that had befallen his son after having his head compressed by forceps and his glorious Shandian nose having been crushed during delivery. Alas! Walter Shandy, in his hasty attempt to fasten his trousers, fails to intercept Susannah the chambermaid, who errs in presenting the child's name to the curate. The unfortunate boy was named Tristram, meaning sorrowful: the very worst name possible. "Unhappy Tristram, child of wrath! Child of decrepitude! Interruption! Mistake! And discontent!" (p. 215).

My parents named me a particularly significant Indian name. I felt distanced from them, they who had named me. Partially, it was because I felt alienated from their culture and traditions. In part, it was because I felt excluded from the very society in which I had been raised. I was an outsider: marginal as a girl, as a child, as an Indian, as a Canadian and burdened by hybridity. Framed in such deceptively simple rules of inclusion and benevolence, I can readily comprehend why so many children (particularly boys who find themselves outside dominant masculinity) take comfort in the realm of fantasy literature and gaming. Eco (1975) argued that “[i]f something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell a truth: it cannot in fact be used ‘to tell’ at all” (p. 7). Maybe it was 18<sup>th</sup> century Walter Shandy who enabled my father to recognise how my name change reflected my desire to tell. The domain of fantasy was where I truly belonged.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

This thesis began in my childhood. I knew implicitly how important were the stories that filled my imagination and how relevant they were to my being. I have chosen to look back at that time and those experiences to elucidate for myself how my identity was constructed through the literary experiences of my childhood. I felt drawn to decipher the connection between my naming and the high fantasy genre and to resolve once and for all why Le Guin's idea of true names has stuck omnipresent in my mind for decades like something caught between my teeth. Why, even at a young age, did the ideas of true names, balance in the natural world, the integrity of the soul, and magic seem so very significant to me? Why did I always wonder where I belonged and to whom? And why was it that I felt more at home in Prydain than in Canada?

I translated this personal investigation into an academic one. For my line of inquiry, I utilised Wilkie-Stibbs' connection between Kristeva's notion of the Semiotic (the feminine Imaginary) and children's literature. I explored children's fiction, specifically the coming-of-age story in the fantasy sub-genres of high and wainscots fantasy. Through these sub-genres, I examined the quest for identity and how it relates to naming and conceptions of the soul using psychoanalytic, semiotic, post-modern, and post-colonial lenses. In the first chapter, I concentrated on the critical themes of agency, resistance, and empowerment. I linked the feminine Imaginary with the critical themes and used theory to negotiate a resolution between the seemingly unconnected notions of truth in naming and the concept of hybridity. In the second analytical chapter, I considered how high and wainscots fantasy are situated on a foundation of representations of the natural world and depictions of the soul. To investigate the

significance of mortality, I applied a binary motif of the literary foil. I looked more closely at how post-modern notions of power and knowledge relate to magical information. Finally, in the third analytical chapter, I was able to make sense of my own journey of self-naming by narrating it as a plot in a high or wainscots fantasy novel. I can see now that the way in which I constructed meaning for myself, through the literary genres, was indelibly marked by a sense of place.

Bhabha (in Mitchell, 1995) said:

I have always felt that while I was trying to work out a theory of the resistance to authority, and the subversion of hegemony, on certain colonial and postcolonial grounds, I was in fact also addressing problems relating to other moments and locations of authority (p. 81).

The rationale for exploring the questions posed in this paper was to identify the 'other moments and locations of authority' of which Bhabha spoke by examining how identities are constructed through the literary experiences of childhood and how some of the earliest signifying practices, after mastery of the first language, affect our connection to our own names, to our sense of self, and to the landscape of our imagination. There were several areas, given the limited scope of a master's thesis, into which I was unable to delve further. I would have liked to consider in greater detail the representation of Lacan's temporal moments--the mirror phase and the Oedipus complex--in children's fantasy. The idea of Freudian projection being represented in the literary foil could have taken a chapter to itself, as could have repression of desire/loss and the Abject. Personally, though, I would like to continue with the concept of sense of place and look more closely at the history and culture of Wales in relation to mythology, English colonialism,

assimilation, loss of language and how all those post-colonial issues have had a residual effect on the entire genre of fantasy fiction.

I will conclude with a final quotation from *The High King* (Alexander, 1968). In it, Taran learns that his identity, his story has been woven on a loom by the witches Orwen, Orddu, and Orgoch. It is the tale of his life and how all his decisions to uphold the balance between life and death, to be kind and humble, and to embrace the natural world have resulted in a lush, complex tapestry—the truth of his self.

‘I have seen this on your loom,’ Taran said, more than a little distrustful. ‘Why do you offer it to me? I do not ask for it, nor can I pay for it.’

‘It is yours by right, my robin,’ answered Orddu. ‘It does come from our loom, if you insist on strictest detail, but it was really you who wove it.’

Puzzled, Taran looked more closely at the fabric and saw it crowded with images of men and women, of warriors and battles, of birds and animal.

‘These,’ he murmured in wonder, ‘these are of my own life.’

‘Of course,’ Orddu replied. ‘The pattern is of your choosing and always was.’

‘My choosing?’ Taran questioned. ‘Not yours? Yet I believed...’ He stopped and raised his eyes to Orddu. ‘Yes,’ he said slowly, ‘once I did believe the world went at your bidding. I see it is not so. The strands of life are not woven by three hags or even by three beautiful damsels. The pattern indeed was mine. But here,’ he added, frowning as he scanned the final portion of the fabric where the weaving broke off and the threads fell unraveled, ‘here it is unfinished.’ (pp. 286-287)

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## Notes

*Chapter 1: Introduction*

1. For some examples see: Capaccio, 2011, O'Brien, 2009, and Fields, 2007.
  2. Alexander states in the Author's Note: "This chronicle of the Land of Prydain is not a retelling or retranslation of Welsh mythology. Prydain is not Wales—not entirely, at least."
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*Chapter 2: The Paradoxical Quest for a True Name*

1. In reality—in quotidian practice of language—the signifier does have meaning. As users of language, we are so accustomed to the semantic meaning bestowed upon words that we internalise it and come to accept it as almost *a priori*. Here, I am clarifying Saussure's point that before we knew that *apple* referred to a specific fruit, it was nothing but a combination of phonemes.
2. Benczes found the metonymy 'Hogwarts headache' in: (N.A.) (2003, October 30). Potter 'gives children headaches'. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>
3. This statistical information comes from India's 2011 census. Information was retrieved from <http://censusindia.gov.in/>
4. Folktales are classified by folklorists by a scale called the Aarne-Thompson tale type index. Name of the Helper tales are categorised as Aarne-Thompson type 500.
5. Matthews, D. (1994). *Ants marching*. On *Under the Table and Dreaming* [CD]. New York: BMG Music.

6. Of Monsters and Men. (2012). Little talks. *On My Head is an Animal*. Reykjavik, Iceland: Universal.

*Chapter 3: The Natural and Unnatural*

1. This is based on Peter Gay's description of projection: Gay, P. (2006) *Freud: A Life for Our Time*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
2. Although, we have seen a return to torture and genocide (such as the spate of war crimes addressed by the Hague and mass genocides as in Rwanda, etc.), despite the Geneva Convention. Perhaps these human atrocities never ceased but were simply better concealed and are now being revealed by the pervasiveness of media.

*Chapter 4: The Spark*

1. Carnegie, D. (1936). *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.
2. Bonham, J., Jones, J.P., Page, J., & Plant, R. (1973). D'yer Mak'er. *On Houses of the Holy*. [CD] London: Atlantic.









