A Study of the Supernatural in Twenty-first-century Young Adult Gothic Literature

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Abstract

The field of Gothic studies is an ever-evolving one, and while existing critical studies have approached the Gothic through various thematic, cultural, and political concerns, little attention has been paid to the Gothic in Young Adult literature (YA), and specifically to the portrayal of the supernatural in twenty-first-century YA Gothic literature. This thesis fills this gap through close analysis of a selection of YA Gothic novels and by drawing from a variety of interdisciplinary sources, including mythology, folklore, fairy tales, and earlier Gothic texts. Central to this thesis is the understanding of the shifting representation of the supernatural as well as the Gothic and as such, over four chapters, this thesis traces the evolution of the supernatural, focusing primarily on what I refer to as the 'supernatural Other' in Gothic literature. Accordingly, it begins by an exploration of the rise of the supernatural Gothic, considering a spectrum of earlier Gothic narratives from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. This thesis demonstrates that the portrayal of the supernatural has always been defined in terms of experimentation, re-imaginings, and the authors' original approach to the supernatural. The supernatural Other is indeed a hybrid, created from the fusion of myths, folklore, and fairy tales. The study then analyses a range of twenty-first-century YA Gothic texts that offer a re-evaluation of supernatural beings who have been represented as monsters. I consider how such beings embody the societal and cultural fears and anxieties of particular times; the vampire in particular has often been read as a reflection of such anxieties.

The Gothic's concern with Otherness as well as the portrayal of supernatural beings as the ultimate Others and the personification of the uncanny, is central to the YA Gothic narratives examined in this thesis. However, the thesis argues that while the YA Gothic's supernatural Other is often portrayed as dangerous and as a threat destabilizing the set geographical and physiological boundaries as well as the prevalent cultural norms, values and morals of the time, it is also represented as sublime and desirable. The thesis concludes by examining the role of the supernatural in the development of the heroines of YA Gothic and suggests that supernatural Otherness becomes a medium of empowerment for the heroines who embrace it, allowing them to renegotiate their position within their socio-cultural environment, and thus reflecting social and cultural shifts in how gender is represented and understood. It is hoped through the discussion in this thesis to further the critical debate about twenty-first-century YA Gothic.

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Introduction

YA Gothic, Gothic YA: Crossing Boundaries

In contemporary Western culture, the Gothic lurks in all sorts of unexpected corners.
—Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*

The aim of this thesis is to explore the representation of the supernatural Other in twenty-first-century Young Adult Gothic literature (hereafter YA literature/fiction). In the last two decades, the field of Gothic Literary Studies has witnessed a remarkable surge of critical and scholarly examinations of the Gothic in various forms and media. In twenty-first-century YA literature, in particular, the Gothic is thriving. Indeed, a great number of Gothic narratives written and marketed for a young adult audience, and featuring adolescents as the main protagonists are published every year. Despite this, however, the field of YA Gothic literature is notable for its lack of scholarship. Thus, this research seeks to examine the twenty-first-century YA Gothic. Through an examination of what I term 'the supernatural Other', I am interested primarily in the evolution of the portrayal of the supernatural. I argue that there is a discernable trend among the authors whose work I examine in this study in their use of the supernatural that can be interpreted as a significant evolution in the representation of Otherness. Twenty-first-century YA Gothic, as the subsequent chapters will demonstrate, exerts a considerable influence on the portrayal of the supernatural Other, particularly the representation of both iconic and newly emerged supernatural beings.

This thesis is particularly concerned with the mutating ability of the Gothic and with the flexibility of what the term refers to in literature. Throughout it, I argue that the Gothic is in an ever-changing state and that it is precisely because it has mutated since the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* that attempting to formulate a single definition is futile. In this respect, the Gothic, like a shapeshifter, changes and adapts to the new social and cultural environment in which it emerges; in so doing, the Gothic, like the vampire, persists. For the purpose of this thesis I focus on texts which are specifically marketed for a young adult audience *and* in which the main protagonist is an adolescent.[1]

A number of Gothic scholars and academics agree on the relationship between the Gothic and the adolescent. In *Gothic Pathologies* (1998), David Punter stresses this relationship by suggesting that the inversion of boundaries that the Gothic is famous for is shared with adolescence and is fantasized in the adolescent's body. Punter states: "to put it very simply: we exist on a terrain where what is inside finds itself outside (acne, menstrual blood, rage) and what we think should be visibly outside (heroic dreams, attractiveness, sexual organs) remain resolutely inside and hidden" (6). This uncanny representation of the period of adolescence and the bodily changes and disturbances that accompany it, as the once familiar body becomes unfamiliar, then, marks the adolescent as a potential Gothic being occupying a liminal space. Spooner makes a similar point in her discussion of adolescence and the Gothic noting that the latter "has always had a strong link with adolescence" (88). She further suggests that "the heroines of early Gothic novels by Ann Radcliffe and her contemporaries were almost invariably young

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[1] Throughout the thesis I use the terms 'adolescent' and 'young adult' interchangeably.

women on the verge of adulthood, their threatened virginity the driving force of the plot" (88). The relationship between adolescence and early Gothic literature is of additional interest when one considers the fact that some of the most prominent Gothic authors themselves were teenagers (young adults) when they started writing. For example, Matthew Lewis was only nineteen when he wrote *The Monk*, Percy Shelley's Gothic romance *Zastrozzi* (1810) was composed when he was seventeen, and Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* when she was just eighteen, while the Brontë siblings wrote Gothic stories during their early adolescence. In addition, as Georgieva argues, young adult writers of early Gothic narratives were also readers of such stories at a young age (56). One can argue, then, that these young authors saw in Gothic literature a way to express adolescent frustrations concerning class, race, and sexuality.

Although the notion of adolescence as generally understood today was yet to be developed during the rise of Gothic literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the distinction between child, young adult, and adult would only occur in the second half of the twentieth century, the links that Spooner advocates, together with the number of significant young Gothic writers, posit the adolescent at the centre of Gothic literature. Furthermore, as adolescence is a period of growth wherein the individual prepares to transition from childhood to adulthood—but is yet neither child nor adult—the adolescent becomes liminal much like the supernatural beings examined in this study. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the notion of adolescence is nuanced by the socio-cultural environment in which it operates, as John Neubauer observes in his introduction to *Fin-de-Siècle Culture of Adolescence* (1992), "[i]t can never be proven definitively that the adolescent experience is the same everywhere" (4). The themes and concerns that may be

reflective of one culture's understanding of adolescence may not be as such in other cultures. Taking this into account, in this study, the YA Gothic texts I look at are specifically from an English-Speaking Western, mostly American, context.

In order to locate my study within the body of twenty-first century Gothic, I here identify some of the relevant studies of the Gothic for a younger readership as well as studies concerned with the supernatural Gothic. Children's Gothic in particular witnessed an enormous surge of such studies. Examples include: *The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders* (2009) edited by Anna Jackson and Roderick McGillis, *Under the Bed, Creeping: Psychoanalyzing the Gothic in Children's Literature* by Michael Howarth published in 2014, and more recently, Chloé Germaine Buckley's *Twenty-First-Century Children's Gothic: From Wanderer to Nomadic Subject* (2018); all three examples focus specifically on texts marketed as children's literature, such as Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999-2006) and Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002) both featuring children as their main protagonists. There exists, little critical engagement, however, with the Gothic as a category written and marketed specifically for a young adult audience. In the critical studies available, YA Gothic literature is either altogether ignored or is often confused with, and treated as, children's literature. *New Directions in Children's Gothic: Debatable Lands* (2017) edited by Anna Jackson, for example, makes little attempt to differentiate children's Gothic from YA Gothic. Although the chapters in the book deal with a mix of children's texts and YA texts, the title suggests that the collection views childhood and adolescence as interchangeable. In a similar vein, in *The Gothic Child* (2013), Maria Georgieva, establishes the child as a central component of Gothic writing. She suggests that,

[i]t is important to understand that in spite of the strict gothic conventions, the

child is not a character in a permanent, fixed state. Rather, the child is the only

character we find in a state of constant becoming. This becoming is triggered by

trial after trial. The vast gothic experiment that is built around the child intends to

show the outcome of this process. (68)

In Georgieva's understanding of the child in Gothic narratives, there appears to be a

conflation with the adolescent. Specifically, when she refers to the trials that the child

undergoes, she overlooks the fact that the child then is arguably no longer a child but

changes and becomes an adolescent. After all, adolescence *is a* period of transition,

which the YA texts that this thesis examines demonstrate.

In addition, Spooner's observation in *Contemporary Gothic* (2006), that "Teen

Demons" are a vital subject for enquiry, enables us to understand why the Gothic holds

so much appeal to teenagers. Spooner argues that the Gothic is "the teenage genre of

choice, an antidote to anodyne boy bands and pre-manufactured girl power" (29), and

further elaborates on the relationship of the adolescent with the Gothic, noting that in the

teen Gothic of the 1990s and beyond, the teenagers seem to have taken control of the

narrative, and they are more likely to be the demons than the victims. She proceeds in

giving examples of Regan and Carrie from William Blatty's *The Exorcist* and Stephen

King's *Carrie*. Although the texts Spooner cites do deal with monstrous adolescence to

some extent and Regan and Carrie are indeed both adolescent characters, the texts

themselves are not written for an adolescent audience, but rather an adult one, and the

anxieties and fears of the supernatural they portray represent adult fears vis-à-vis their

adolescents. Spooner touches on the subject of the adolescent and the Gothic again in her

discussion of 'the sparkly vampire' of contemporary YA in *Post-Millennial Gothic: Comedy, Romance and the Rise of Happy Gothic* (2017)—which I discuss in the following chapters. Here, she acknowledges the significant impact of the popularity of the *Twilight* series on popular culture. However, Spooner does not approach the subject as being specifically in relation to YA Gothic. Instead she focuses on the figure of the vampire in 'Supernatural Romance' which covers both YA and adult Gothic literature. By contrast, my thesis will be focusing on YA Gothic narratives more closely in order to demonstrate the engagement of the genre with representation of both the supernatural and the adolescent.

The relationship between supernatural Gothic literature and Popular Culture has also enjoyed much recent critical attention. Werewolves and vampires in particular are the focus of such studies. As an example of one such study, *Werewolves, Wolves and the Gothic* (2017) edited by Robert McKay and John Miller, contains eleven essays focusing on the wolf in literature and popular culture. The collection sets out to offer a new perspective in the study of the werewolf through the lens of ecoGothic, a merging of ecocriticism and Gothic studies concerned with the mediating of anxieties related to nature, often represented as uncanny and monstrous. An essay that is of particular interest to my work is "'But by Blood No Wolf Am I': Language and Agency, Instinct and Essence—Transcending Antinomies in Maggie Stiefvater's *Shiver* Series" which is indeed the only essay in the collection that deals with twenty-first century YA Gothic. A further helpful volume, *Open Graves, Open Minds: Representations of Vampires and the Undead from the Enlightenment to the Present Day* (2015), edited by Samantha George and Bill Hughes, looks at the history of the vampire and its portrayal in literature and

popular culture in order to examine questions of "gender, technology, consumption and social change" (George and Hughes xvii). However, whilst the collected essays consider various vampire texts, notably *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and HBO's *True Blood*, the only vampire narratives pertaining to YA Gothic literature examined are *Twilight* and *The Vampire Diaries*. None of these critical responses pay attention to my chosen focus, however, nor do they explore the varied incarnations of the supernatural in Gothic literature.

Although these works hold significance for my research, their focus on either children's Gothic or the vampire and the werewolf when discussing the supernatural in twenty-first century Gothic literature is ultimately limiting. Consequently, a thorough examination of the supernatural in YA Gothic is lacking. Thus, my research contributes to the field of Gothic literary and critical analysis by offering a study of the representation of the supernatural in a selection of YA Gothic narratives. Chapter One, "The Supernatural Gothic" provides a survey of the supernatural in Gothic literature through an examination of a selection of Gothic works. The chapter's primary concern is with the ways Gothic authors of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries experiment with the use of the supernatural, and how such experimentation was received during the time of their production. In this chapter, I argue that the supernatural in Gothic literature is produced by a series of trials influenced by the historical, social, and cultural context of the authors.

Chapter Two, "From the Shadows: The Supernatural Other from Folklore to YA Gothic Literature of the Twenty-First Century", establishes the focus of the thesis and explores the characteristics of some iconic supernatural beings. In this chapter, I consider

how the Gothic intersects with other categories, notably myths, folklore, and the fairy tale in its portrayal of the supernatural. I argue that the representation of the supernatural Other is an ever-changing one in Gothic literature, and the characteristics of what we have come to associate with vampirism in particular have been continuously evolving. In this respect, I suggest that instead of looking at supernatural figures as being modeled according to a set, unchangeable tradition, which eventually leads to the condemnation of any altered version of the latter as unauthentic, the creation of the supernatural Other in earlier Gothic as well as twenty-first century YA Gothic should be seen as a dialogue with other genres that influence its characterization.

Chapter Three, "'It's A Monster's World': Redeeming the Supernatural Other", offers a detailed analysis of three twenty-first century YA Gothic narratives: Holly Black's *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, V E. Schwab's Verity Duology, and Meyer's *The Twilight Saga*. While I focus primarily on these texts, I make references throughout the chapter, and the thesis, to other twenty-first-century YA Gothic texts to acknowledge the contribution of other authors in the genre as well as to highlight the wealth of material that YA Gothic provides in terms of the portrayal and the study of the supernatural in literature. In the chapter, I argue that YA Gothic proposes an alternative approach to Otherness through the positioning of the supernatural Others into an environment more familiar to the human self and attributes to them qualities that brings them closer to human understanding and veneration. I seek to avoid simply looking at the supernatural Other as humanized, stripped of all its Otherness. Instead, I read the selected texts as dealing with Otherness through an acknowledging and acceptance of difference despite the existence of some limited similarities.

My reading of supernatural Otherness concludes in the fourth and final chapter, "The Many Faces of the Twenty-First Century YA Gothic Heroine". The chapter focuses on the female characters of twenty-first century YA Gothic literature and their relationship with the supernatural. Besides the *Twilight* series, I look at two other series: Clare's *The Mortal Instruments* and *The Infernal Devices*, and Michelle Hodkin's Mara Dyer series. In my reading of these texts I consider the YA Gothic heroine's negotiation of agency within a supernatural environment, particularly in terms of complex family relationships and coming to terms with Otherness. I argue that through the supernatural and an embrace of Otherness, the heroine of twenty-first century YA Gothic becomes very much in control of her destiny.

Ultimately, we must take into account the lack of critical studies of YA Gothic, as noted above, and works that look at *and* beyond the vampire and the werewolf, and engage with the examination of other supernatural entities portrayed in twenty-first century YA Gothic. By contrast, I consider various supernatural beings including shapeshifters, vampires, warlocks, and Shadowhunters, and although I look at the vampire, my discussion of the iconic figure focuses on texts that subvert the vampire and offer an alternative characterization of the latter. This thesis aims to provide additional insights about the supernatural in Gothic literature, responding to a variety of new and innovative ways in which such figures have come to be conceived. Although my approach necessarily marks a somewhat cursory and at times even inconclusive discussion of the subject, it is to be hoped that I, as well as others, may further the serious critical debate about this vital and distinctive twenty-first-century narrative form even as it further morphs into ever newer variations.

Chapter I

The Supernatural Gothic: A Concise History

If this air of the miraculous is excused, the reader will find nothing else unworthy of his perusal.
—Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*

The supernatural is an ever-present force in literature. It colors our poetry, shapes our epics and dramas, and fashions our prose.
—Dorothy Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*

Introduction

"In the first place, how are we to account for the strange human craving for the pleasure of feeling afraid which is so much involved in our love of ghost stories?" asks Virginia Woolf in an essay on the supernatural in fiction, published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1918. Woolf goes on to suggest that the reason for the enjoyment we experience in being frightened lies in the fact that the terrors and horrors we experience while reading a work of fiction remain under circumstances that we can control. She adds that "the fear which we get from reading ghost stories of the supernatural is a refined and spiritualized essence of fear. It is a fear which we can examine and play with" (Woolf and Lowery 1918). Indeed, our undying fascination with the supernatural goes back as far as the first stories of humankind. From the epic adventures of *Gilgamesh*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or the magical tales of Scheherazade in *One Thousand and One Nights*, to the contemporary tales of vampires and witches, stories about the supernatural have always thrilled us. As H. P. Lovecraft argues, commenting on the supernatural in horror

stories, "As may naturally be expected of a form so closely connected with primal emotion, the horror-tale is as old as human thought and speech themselves" (3).

As a reminder of old, primitive, and barbarian beliefs, the use of supernatural tropes was highly discouraged and rejected during the early years of Gothic literature, a literary category that reflects and explores our anxieties and fears of the unknown. The transgressive nature of the Gothic narrative, however, and its ability to challenge and resist set norms, permitted the supernatural to survive, and more importantly, to evolve into a reflection of the individual and the society that creates it, as noted by Fred Botting who states that "[t]he Enlightenment did away with ghosts and supernatural beings", but they "kept on returning in Gothic romances, popular dramas and spectacular entertainments" (7). Regardless of the different forms in which the supernatural has manifested itself in literature, it is always in some way related to the social and cultural context in which the author is immersed. J. M. S. Tompkins states that authors of the genre "work by sudden shocks, and when they deal with the supernatural, their favorite [sic] effect is to wrench the mind suddenly from skepticism to horror-struck belief" (245). This chapter, then, addresses the manifestation of the supernatural in Gothic literature by exploring the various ways in which the supernatural is portrayed in the works of key Gothic authors. In my discussion I also briefly consider the reception of narratives featuring the supernatural.[2]

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[2] Taking into consideration the scope of this chapter, my exploration of the portrayal of the supernatural in Gothic literature is limited to English Gothic works that made a significant contribution to the development of the portrayal of the supernatural in Gothic literature.

The Spectacular, the Explained Supernatural, and the Demonic Supernatural

The use of the supernatural in literature prior to Horace Walpole's publication of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is well documented. Indeed, elements of supernaturalism had appeared regularly in the earliest epic tales, drama, poetry and folk tales, yet it is the Gothic novel—starting with Walpole—that marked a distinct change in the form in which the supernatural was depicted and expressed. Walpole's Gothic tale played a distinct role not only in "withdrawing terror from the remoteness of the Middle Ages and placing it fully in the contemporary world" (Joshi 228), but it also permitted the supernatural, in its various forms, to become one of the defining conventions of Gothic literature. *The Castle of Otranto* was as much the product of its time as it was a reaction to the prevailing thoughts influenced by Augustan ideals and the norms of the Enlightenment during the eighteenth century. In *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800*, E. J. Clery acknowledges the influence of the emergence of 'real' ghost sightings and hauntings on the Gothic novel, particularly Walpole's Gothic narrative.

Indeed, a few years prior to the publication of *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole took interest in a particular ghost sighting known as the 'Cock Lane Ghost' or 'Scratching Fanny' which had emerged in 1762 in London and quickly became of interest to several newspapers that carried regular reports on the progress of the supposed haunting. The ghost of Fanny Lynes, who was rumoured to have been murdered by her brother-in-law, and who now haunted the house in which she died, attracted crowds of Londoners who were eager to make the acquaintance of the vengeful spirit. Among them was Walpole, who later documented the events of an evening spent in the house in a letter to George Montague, stating, "I could send you volumes on the ghost; I went to

hear it—for it is not an apparition, but an audition" (qtd. in Clery and Miles 27). The language Walpole uses to describe his experience of the haunting clearly illustrates his skepticism towards the legitimacy of the Ghost of Cock Lane. By referring to the scene as "an audition", it is clear that he looked on the event as a spectacle, meant only to entertain those who sought novel forms of distraction.

Two years later, "after having dreamed about a giant hand on the staircase at his mansion Strawberry Hill, Walpole created his sinister novel *The Castle of Otranto*" (Botting 45), featuring giant suits of armour and vengeful ghosts. Purporting to be taken from an old Italian manuscript and translated by "William Marshall, Gent. From the Original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas at Otranto", the preface to the first edition of the work states:

> The following work was found in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear. The principal incidents are such as were believed in the darkest ages of [C]hristianity; but the language and conduct have nothing that savours of barbarism. The style is the purest Italian. If the story was written near the time when it is supposed to have happened, it must have been between 1095, the aera [sic] of the first crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards. (Walpole 5)

Walpole frames his story as a historical relic, a piece of a distant past, written in a foreign style from a distant land. The novel was discussed twice in the *Monthly Review*. Initially, in its February 1765 edition, the magazine highly recommended Walpole's tale to its readers who could "digest the absurdities of Gothic fiction, and bear with machinery of

ghosts and goblins", praising the "accurate and elegant" language and its "highly finished

characters" (*Monthly Review* 103). However, three months later, following the

publication of the second edition of the book, the magazine's judgment had changed from

appreciation to outraged disparagement. Unlike the first edition, the second edition of the

book, which now had 'A Gothic Story' added to the original title, was also signed with

Walpole's initial.

Walpole's acknowledgment of his authorship resulted in dismay for it was

deemed "more than strange that an Author, of a refined and polished genius, should be an

advocate for re-establishing the barbarous superstitions of Gothic devilism! *Incredulus

odi*, is, or ought to be a charm against all such infatuation" (*Monthly Review* 394). The

two editions, although telling the same story, became two separate works: one was a relic

of the Middle Ages presumably "printed in 1529 but written sometime between the

period 1095 and 1249" (Joshi 150), whilst the other was a 'modern' work by a 'modern'

author. It was Walpole's attempt to blend the ancient and modern which was deemed

unacceptable and the book was indeed "revealed to be a modern scandal rather than an

ancient curiosity, a sinister hoax rather than a naive genuine article" (Clery 53). Horace

Walpole was the first but certainly not the last Gothic writer to be accused of promoting

evil morals and encouraging 'Gothic Devilism' (*The Monthly Review,* 394) among the

public by the use of the supernatural in his writing. This hostility to the supernatural and

the Gothic might be expected in the Age of Reason as "many critics of the day were

gravely concerned that these ghostly goings-on would unduly confound the common man

into believing in the reality of the supernatural" (Colavito 3).

In Walpole's story, the supernatural is introduced in the first pages, setting the tone of the tale and marking the castle as a Gothic space where "lives hang in the balance at every moment" (Tatar 171). All the supernatural occurrences throughout the story—including the prophecies, the giant helmet, and the bleeding statue, for example—remain benign. They serve the purpose of reminding Manfred of the illegitimacy of his claim of ownership of Otranto and aiding the good characters to enact justice. In one example, the supernatural manifests when Manfred declares his intention to marry Isabella and she rejects his advances and flees and when he is about to chase her through the subterranean vaults of the castle, "the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting, uttered a deep sigh and heaved its breast" (Walpole 25). The animation of the portrait of Manfred's grandfather, Ricardo, enables Isabella to escape and emphasises the wrongness of Manfred's actions. Thus, through *The Castel of Otranto*, Walpole originated "a genre in which the attractions of the past and of the supernatural become similarly connected, and, further, in which the supernatural itself becomes a symbol of our past rising against us" (Punter 53).

It was thirteen years after the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* that Clara Reeve privately printed *The Champion of Virtue* (1777). One year later Reeve's novel was revised and republished with a new title, *The Old English Baron*. The novel was intended to be 'a correction' to the 'absurdity' of *The Castle of Otranto*. Reeve states in the preface to *The Old English Baron*:

> This Story is the literary offspring of *The Castle of Otranto*, written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel, at the same time it assumes a

character and manner of its own, that differs from both; it is distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic Story, being a picture of Gothic times and manners. (Preface)

Reeve declared that her novel was in fact the progeny of Walpole's tradition, though he disparaged her claim. Walpole wrote to William Cole saying:

I cannot compliment the author of the Old English Baron, professedly written in imitation, but as a corrective to The Castle of Otranto. It was totally void of imagination and interest; had scarce any incidents; and though it condemned the marvellous, admitted a ghost. I suppose the author thought a tame ghost might come within the laws of probability. (241)

Reeve believed that Walpole's violent use of supernatural machinery was the root cause of the strong criticism against the genre and wished to preserve her work from the same fate. A proper Gothic novel was, according to Reeve, a work that offered "a certain degree of the marvellous to excite the attention; enough of the manners of real life to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic to engage the heart in its behalf" (Preface). She acknowledged the important role of the supernatural to "excite the attention" of the reader, but her solution did not work well. Reeve's novel has all the elements featured in *The Castle of Otranto*: a tyrannical usurper, a young man of low birth who is in reality the rightful heir to the castle, and the castle itself. What Reeve considered to be a correction to Walpole's work comes with her use of a single supernatural episode throughout the whole story. Although Reeve's *The Old English Baron* did not have the same impact as the work of other practitioners of the genre, it was considered, nevertheless, as "the Gothic tradition's linking corridor between the

supernatural medievalism of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Mrs. Radcliffe's romances" (Kievitt 73).

Ann Radcliffe wrote six novels from 1789 to 1802; of these *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797) are by far the most famous and are often used as prototypes for the use of the explained supernatural mechanism. All the elements of the Gothic novels that came before are present in her narratives: innocent and sensible heroines; immoral villains; remote settings and castles, and occurrences that seem at first to be of supernatural origin. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, for example, chronicles the misadventures of Emily St. Aubert who, after the death of her parents, goes to live in the Apennine Mountains in Italy, in the castle of her aunt and her husband, Lord Montoni.[3] Throughout the novel, Radcliffe exhibits the Gothic heroine's tendency to faint in the face of terrifying events as she experiences a mixture of terror and horror in confronting a series of supposedly supernatural occurrences. In Chapter IV Emily is exposed to the supernatural in one of the most iconic—and most quoted—passages from the novel:

> This brought to her recollection the veiled picture, which had attracted her
>
> curiosity on the preceding night, and she resolved to examine it. … She then
>
> hastily entered the chamber, and went towards the picture, which appeared to be
>
> enclosed in a frame of uncommon size, that hung in a dark part of the room. She
>
> paused again, and then, with a timid hand, lifted the veil; but instantly let it fall –

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[3] Orphaned Gothic heroines and/or absent parents will continue to be a staple of Gothic literature, and feature profusely in children's and YA Gothic narratives. I return to this theme in Chapter Four.

> perceiving that what it had concealed was no picture, and, before she could leave
>
> the chamber, she dropped senseless on the floor. (248-249)

Faced with such a vision, Emily's rationality is unhinged and she is overcome by superstition. The nature of the occurrence remains uncertain however, as Radcliffe withholds the revelation, and the reader would have to wait until the second volume of the novel to finally learn the truth of what was concealed behind the black veil. Applying her newly developed technique of the 'explained supernatural', whereby "[a]ll circumstances of her [Radcliffe's] narrative, however mysterious and apparently superhuman, were to be accounted for on natural principles at the winding up of the story" (Scott 321), it is revealed that the "human figure, of ghastly paleness" (*Udolpho* 334) is in fact a wax figure of a decaying body. In several more episodes throughout the narrative, Emily experiences what appears at first glance to be a manifestation of the supernatural, only for all the apparitions and ghostly sounds to be given rational explanations by the end of the novel. In another example, the mysterious sounds that could be heard in the north side of the Château-le-Blanc at night are revealed to be caused by pirates who were using the vaults of the castle to hide their treasures, and were making the noises to make the inhabitants of the castle believe that the vaults are haunted. Yet, the supernatural elements remain shrouded in mystery for long enough to lead to moments of "momentary madness" (*Udolpho* 102) during which her heroine's reason is obscured, as in the above quotation, as "supernatural suggestions are typically formed in the heroine's imagination" (Clery 133) although they posit no real threat, either to the characters or the reader in the Age of Reason.

Radcliffe's technique of the explained supernatural stems from her heavy reliance on Terror rather than on Horror which, as she expresses in "The Supernatural in Poetry", an essay published in 1826 after her death, "are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them" (Radcliffe 168). However, although Radcliffe favours terror over horror, the supernatural occurrences—or suggestion thereof—incite both uplifting terror and abject horror in the heroine. The scene where Emily uncovers the veiled figure, quoted earlier, unmistakably corresponds to the experience of horror: "an emotion so strong that it is usually destructive in its effect" (Ware 15). When Emily revives after the sight of the effigy behind the veil causes her to faint, "[s]he had scarcely strength to remove from the room, and regain her own; and when arrived there, wanted courage to remain alone. Horror occupied her mind, and excluded, for a time, all sense of past, and dread of future misfortune" (*Udolpho* 249). Indeed, Emily is subject to horror rather than terror as she thinks she has seen a real corpse, for "an explicit representation of threat induces horror, whereas terror depends on obscurity" (Miles 93). Nevertheless, the horror that Emily—and Radcliffe's heroines in her other works—experiences is transient, and is gradually replaced by a sense of terror at the obscure and unknown that is finally overcome by the end of the narrative.

In a sense, Radcliffe subjugates her heroines to horrors engendered by presumably supernatural occurrences in order to enrich their minds and their experiences. For Radcliffe, the supernatural is, then, a vehicle for the expression of "many equivocal phenomena in our nature, lying within that debatable land where mind and body meet, such as dreams, omens, and presentiments, which admit of being referred by the mind, in

an excited state, to supernatural causes …" (Rogers 132). Furthermore, the manifestation

of the supernatural in Radcliffe's Gothic romances provides "egress for repressed

thoughts, usually linked to suspicions of some unthinkable paternal crime" (Miles 94);

this is evidenced in almost all her narratives as her heroines, in particular, navigate their

identity and uncover family secrets before the often-happy denouement of the narratives.

Radcliffe's explained supernatural and her emphasis on terror is partly indebted to

Edmund Burke's discussion of the sublime in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin*

of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757) in which he "assigns to [horror] an

effect so strong that all pleasurable emotion is precluded" (Ware 16). Burke defines the

sublime initially as

> [w]hatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to
>
> say, whatever, is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or
>
> operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is
>
> productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. (33;
>
> emphasis in original)

He further elaborates his definition throughout the treatise adding in a slightly revised

edition published in 1759 that "indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more

openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime" (39). Radcliffe acknowledged the

influence of Burke's treatise on her perception of the sublime, and by extension her

portrayal of the supernatural; it is apparent from her own works that she too saw that

terror was a source of the sublime, and that the two are closely connected. On the relation

between terror and the sublime, Burke writes that, "[w]hatever therefore is terrible, with

regard to sight, is sublime too, whether this cause of terror, be endued with greatness of

dimensions or not; for it is impossible to look on any thing as trifling, or contemptible, that may be dangerous" (47). It is indeed this connection between terror and the sublime that defines Radcliffe's explained supernatural.

> Radcliffe was praised for her innovation by the *Monthly Review*:
>
> Without introducing into her narrative anything really supernatural, Mrs Radcliffe has contrived to produce as powerful an effect as if the invisible world had been obedient to her magic spell; the reader experiences in perfection the strange luxury of artificial terror, without being obliged for a moment to hoodwink his reason, or to yield to the weakness of superstitious credulity. (Series 2; 280)

In a sense, the praise that Radcliffe's 'explained supernatural' received may be seen as an expression of relief because her work provided a solution to the threats posited by Walpole's spectacular supernatural; as such "[p]rogress and the taste for primitive superstition were reconciled … as if Radcliffe's innovation gave the opportunity to come to terms with the barbarians at the gates without surrendering the fort" (Clery 107). Radcliffe's form of the supernatural does indeed suggest an adherence to Enlightenment decorum rather than a challenging of it, which proves rather problematic, particularly when one considers the emergence of the Gothic and the re-introduction of the supernatural in literary narratives as a rebellion against the prevailing contemporary literary and cultural norms.

Consequently, Radcliffe's explained supernatural has been subject to much criticism which mostly centres around the argument that in explaining the supernatural by natural means and by rejecting the 'proper' supernatural, Radcliffe's narratives are, in effect, deceiving to the reader who is cheated "through the creation of unfulfilled

expectations" (Miles 101). Moreover, the narratives, employing the same technique, become predictable. Indeed, once the reader has established the pattern by which Radcliffe resolves her narratives, all supernatural (that is, ultimately 'natural') occurrences lose their mystery, and as such the effect they have on the reader is limited. Deborah D. Rogers argues that "the supernatural is always feared yet always averted. She [Radcliffe] was a great deal too enlightened ever to have anything to say to a ghost. In those days the ancient love of superstition had faded, and the new groping after spiritual presences had not begun" (165). Interestingly, in her novel *Gaston De Blondville* (1826), published three years after her death, and more than thirty years after *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the ghostly presences remain unexplained. This sudden change in her depiction of the supernatural suggests that Radcliffe was in fact not as much opposed to the idea of the proper, unexplained supernatural as she was concerned with adhering to the literary and cultural decorum of her time. Indeed, S. T. Joshi argues that Radcliffe's treatment of the supernatural was inevitable; he states: "[i]t might seem on the surface that the reduction of Walpole's plethora of supernaturalism to Reeve's single supernatural element would lead naturally to the entire elimination of the supernatural in the work of the most influential of Gothic writers" (173). Radcliffe's elimination of the supernatural can be considered as the result of her fear of being rejected as a writer, and was in fact an elaborate attempt not to offend and unleash the harsh criticism of the Age of Reason that still prevailed during the time in which she was writing; as Clery notes, "[a]woman wishing to publish fiction in a supernatural vein needed to be prepared to negotiate"

(106).[4] In explaining her supernatural evocations by natural means, Radcliffe established

herself as a prominent author of Gothic literature. According to Miles,

> Radcliffe's discrimination between 'terror and horror' virtually encodes the
>
> difference between her style of Gothic, and, say, Matthew Lewis's. His is full of
>
> 'positive horror'. Nothing is left to the imagination; all is shown. In Radcliffe
>
> very little is 'shown'; hers, rather, is an art of suggestion. Terror occurs in the
>
> mind of her characters. (47)

Here again Miles illustrates the difference between the concept of terror and horror by

drawing a comparison between Radcliffe and Lewis. While Radcliffe's supernatural is

'natural', Lewis's on the other hand is undeniably otherworldly.

Matthew Lewis was only nineteen when he wrote *The Monk* (1796), one of the most

notorious Gothic novels of the eighteenth-century and which earned him the nickname

"Monk" Lewis. The novel's role in the development of the Gothic and particularly the

supernatural in fiction is undeniable. In a letter he wrote to his mother, Lewis acknowledges

Radcliffe's influence on his own work and confesses the inspiration he drew from reading

The Mysteries of Udolpho:

> I have again taken up my Romance, and perhaps by this time Ten years I may make
>
> shift to finish it fit for throwing into the fire. I was induced to go on with it by
>
> reading 'the Mysteries of Udolpho', which is in my opinion one of the most
>
> interesting Books that ever have been published. I would advise you to read it by

---

[4] During the 1780s only one writer, Ann Fuller, wrote a ghost story, *Alan Fitz-Osbourne* (1787), following Walpole's tradition, but she chose to publish it anonymously.

all means, but I must warn you, that it is not very entertaining till St. Aubert's Death.

(Letter to his mother, 18 May 1794; qtd. in Joshi 233)

It was, however, not Radcliffe's tendency to explain the supernatural away with rational mechanisms that influenced him; his tale is in fact an amalgamation of Christian mythology, violence, superstition, and supernatural occurrences. Joshi argues that *The Monk* "presents as stark a contrast to the well-bred tameness of [Radcliffe's] work as could possibly be imagined; and its emphasis on flamboyant supernaturalism, even if grotesque and extreme, was vital to the subsequent course of weird fiction" (246).

Right from the beginning of the story, Lewis sets the tone and prepares the reader for the horrifying events to come as the scenes in the novel arouse both terror and horror. The setting is Madrid, "a city where superstition reigns with despotic sway" (9). Throughout the novel, Lewis's focus on the harm caused by an extreme profession of religion, and Catholicism in particular, is apparent. As the novel progresses, more and more episodes of the supernatural manifest themselves. In the first chapter of the second volume, for example, we are introduced to the figure of the Bleeding Nun, the ghost of Beatrice de Cisternas, who appears to Raymond in his bedroom. The ghostly figure visits Raymond repeatedly later in the novel as he suffers from nightmares and hallucinations. The figure of the Wandering Jew, who comes to help Raymond banish the Bleeding Nun, is also of supernatural origin; he has been travelling the world for centuries and he expresses himself regretfully, envying "those who enjoy the quiet of the Grave" (Lewis 169).

Although the supernatural occurs throughout the novel in different forms, it is in the passages highlighting the story of Ambrosio, the eponymous monk, and Matilda that

the most noteworthy images of the supernatural happen. In *The Monk,* the supernatural takes its role as a vehicle of deceit. Matilda's first appearance, for example, is an act of deception as she appears disguised as the novice Rosario and later in the guise of a Madonna—the object of Ambrosio's long-held forbidden fantasies. Later still, she is revealed as a "subordinate but crafty spirit" (440) of the Devil. The temptress Matilda who manipulates Ambrosio to succumb to forbidden fleshly desires, sacrificing his morals and ultimately his humanity, is one of the most fascinating characters of the novel. As the Devil's subordinate, Matilda is, as David Punter argues, in the Miltonic sense, "a fallen angel and latently a hermaphrodite" (53). In yet another scene where the supernatural is clearly expressed, Matilda promises Ambrosio that she can help him obtain what he desires, Antonia, by using dark magic and gives him an enchanted talisman that allows him to see Antonia bathing without her knowledge. She also speaks to him about a guardian who Ambrosio meets subsequently in the novel:

> It was a youth scarcely eighteen, the perfection of whose form and face was unrivalled. He was perfectly naked: a bright star sparkled upon his forehead, two crimson wings extended themselves from his shoulders, and his silken locks were confined by a band of many-coloured fires, which played round his head, formed themselves into a variety of figures, and shone with a brilliancy far surpassing that of precious stones. Circlets of diamonds were fastened round his arms and ankles, and in his right hand he bore a silver branch imitating myrtle. His form shone with a dazzling glory: he was surrounded by clouds of rose-coloured light, and at the moment that he appeared a refreshing air breathed perfumes through the cavern. (221)

This is by far the most striking supernatural occurrence in the novel. The character

described in the passage above, 'the Guardian', is revealed to be Lucifer. Lucifer, in this

case, is represented as inhuman, beautiful, and in Burke's terms, sublime, and his

revelation evokes a mixed feeling of terror and fascination.[5] Moreover, the scene quoted

above is particularly significant to my discussion of the supernatural in this thesis as it

encapsulates the portrayal of supernatural beings as sublime, evoking an intense level of

fascination in the human characters to whom they are revealed, as can be seen also in the

YA texts discussed in the following chapters.

> After being tortured to the brink of death by the Inquisition and only hours away

from what he believes is going to be his execution, Ambrosio succumbs to the Devil's

temptation and calls upon him, and in despair signs a parchment in his own blood,

renouncing his duty to God and his soul. At this point Lucifer, in triumph, tells Ambrosio

the truth: it was he who sent Matilda to him to lure him to his soul's destruction; through

her machinations, Ambrosio has raped and murdered his own sister. He is condemned to

eternal punishment. Lucifer, no longer needing to seduce the monk with his angelic

beauty, now appears stripped of his "romantic disguise" (411). Instead of the angelic

features of the first apparition, the reader and Ambrosio face a being with limbs that

> [s]till bore marks of the Almighty's thunder. A swarthy darkness spread itself over
>
> his gigantic form: his hands and feet were armed with long talons. Fury glared in

---

[5] The relation between the sublime and the supernatural still resonates in twenty-first-century YA
Gothic, particularly in the portrayal of the supernatural Other as the subsequent chapters
demonstrate.

his eyes, which might have struck the bravest heart with terror. Over his huge

shoulders waved two enormous wings: and his hair was supplied by living snakes,

which twined themselves around his brows with frightful hissings. (412)

As Lucifer's true form is finally revealed, the sublime gives way to pure horror. With his

use of the supernatural Lewis positions his characters and the reader "on thresholds

between the human and inhuman, sanity and insanity, and conscious and unconscious"

(Smith 11). Lewis's use of the supernatural as a constant blending of horror and terror

with the sublime creates a significant development in the portrayal of the supernatural.

For Varma, "Walpole had produced his effects by surrealistic contrast of light and shade;

Mrs. Radcliffe evoked sensations through her artistic use of sound and silence; Lewis'

world is a macabre juxtaposition of charnel-house horror and lust" (146). Furthermore,

prior to *The Monk*, the supernatural, unless it is the result of human machinery as in

Radcliffe's works, appears only to aid the good, as I have stated before in the case of

Walpole's tale; Lewis's evil is, on the other hand, *aided* by a supernatural intervention

from a satanic rather than divine source. The culmination of murder, rape, sorcery, and

the presence of the Devil, reflects the malign nature of Lewis' supernatural.

With the abundant use of supernaturalism in *The Monk*, Lewis succeeded in

overturning the 'explained supernatural' tradition and expanding the field of the Gothic

novel as it took on a more sinister—and, in some cases, a more perverse—aspect.

Lewis's tale unveils the destructive power of these emotions and allows the Gothic to

become "the source of greed and lust; of rape, violence, and murder" (Kelly 72). Lewis

also introduced the demonic to the supernatural in the Gothic genre. Although the Devil

figured in William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) as Iblis, it was Lewis who introduced him

in a Christian setting. The Devil is present in most supernatural literature onwards, notably Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) in which a man sells his soul to Lucifer in exchange for immortality, and in the work of Charlotte Dacre, whose central figure in *Zofloya; or, The Moor* (1806) turns out to be Satan.

Unsurprisingly, Lewis's grotesque tale received harsh criticism and condemnation; the detail in the first manuscript "was so horrific that the *Monthly Review* accused him of writing an obscene novel unfit for the public" (Snodgrass 236). The notoriety of the novel and its wide condemnation among reviewers and readers for 'immorality' pushed Lewis to turn his attention to drama, though he kept the horrific and supernatural themes in the plays he wrote even though the supernatural in his plays is far more subtle and more tame than in *The Monk*. In The *Castle Specter* (1797), for example, the supernatural is manifested to aid the living: the ghost of Evalina, who was killed by Osmand—Lewis' Gothic villain in the play—materializes to help her daughter, Angela, in finally disposing of the villain and saving her long-lost father and her lover. As such, Lewis returns to the notion that supernatural occurrences are often agents of retribution, and their appearance elicits the re-establishment of order in the narrative.

Nineteenth-Century Supernaturalism

The portrayal of the supernatural during the nineteenth century relies primarily on the combining of techniques established in the previous century, together with new forms of expressing the supernatural. In 1818, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, or *the Modern Prometheus* introduced a novel way of expressing the supernatural wherein as Fred Botting argues, "[g]hostly apparitions are alluded to only in a few descriptions of the

monster. In the novel, there are no ghosts or devils in the conventional sense" (38-39).

Indeed, in Shelley's tale the reader will encounter no giant suits of armour or bleeding

ghosts, nor any pacts with the Devil and other demonic forces. The story, instead,

influenced to some extent by the medical advances of the time, deals with the notion of

creation as Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret of imbuing inanimate matter with

life. David Ketterer argues that "*Frankenstein* is unlike the gothic romance in that the

supernatural is apparently excluded as a causal factor. The pseudo-scientific explanation

for the monster's existence goes beyond the 'explained gothic'" (9). Because of his desire

to know "the secrets of heaven and earth" (36), Frankenstein creates "a mummy again

endued with animation" (46). In the preface to the novel, Shelley states:

> The event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed, by Dr. Darwin, and
>
> some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence. I
>
> shall not be supposed as according the remotest degree of serious faith to such an
>
> imagination; yet, in assuming it as the basis of a work of fancy, I have not
>
> considered myself as merely weaving a series of supernatural terrors. (9)

Indeed, in the wake of scientific experimentation and discoveries at the time she was

writing, it seems only fitting that Shelley incorporated science with the supernatural; for

after all, as I have mentioned before, the portrayal of the supernatural, much like the

Gothic, is a product of the time in which it is produced. Shelley's mixture of the

supernatural and nineteenth-century scientific discoveries creates a world where

"scientific man is a kind of God, [and] his scientific method … a new supernaturalism"

(Miyoshi 86). Nevertheless, despite the narrative's apparent association with science, or

rather pseudo-science, the creature itself remains supernatural. A number of critics have

suggested a connection between Shelley's narrative and Jewish folklore, as she "may in fact have been inspired by [her] reading of her husband's poems about the Wandering Jew" (Bertman 46). Specifically, Frankenstein's creation might be read as a Golem in Jewish supernatural tradition, which is described as an animated artificial man. Commenting on the similarities between Frankenstein's creation and the Golem, Stephen Bertman notes that "[b]oth are nameless male humanlike creatures, gigantic in stature, that unexpectedly become a danger to others and a threat to their male human creators who had employed arcane knowledge (by Kabbalah or science) to bring them into existence, and later sought to destroy them" (46). The point of departure, however, is in Shelley's creature's ability to speak and relate its story; this forms a significant trait that plays a major role in the portrayal of supernatural beings onwards, particularly the notion of the 'sympathetic monster', which will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Likewise, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) followed in the technique of blending the supernatural with science and is perhaps the best-known example of 'chemical supernaturalism'. The premise of the story is simple: the respectable Dr. Jekyll, after drinking a potion, the so-called 'elixir', transforms into the evil Mr. Hyde, and loses control over his being. The novella uses science and the supernatural to address the pressures and anxieties to behave in accordance with societal norms, and the need to suppress transgressive desires. It also portrays humankind's conflicting natures and the duality of good and evil, themes that would continue in later Gothic novels such as Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). In both Shelley's and Stevenson's tales, the supernatural that originates from scientific experimentation is represented as monstrous

and destructive. An amalgamation of the supernatural with science would continue to be present in the Gothic tradition where supernatural occurrences are not explained in a Radcliffean fashion, but rather associated with science, as is the case in two twenty-first-century YA Gothic novels—*The Coldest Girl in Coldtwon* and the Mara Dyer series—where vampirism is the result of a virus outbreak and supernatural abilities are linked to genetics, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

The Victorian period witnessed an impressive diversity in the use of the supernatural in prose, meeting the demand of the reading masses, "whose taste for the weird and flamboyantly supernatural had already been whetted by the penny dreadfuls, which had commenced in the 1830s" (Joshi 511). Many prominent realist writers of the time experimented with the supernatural, notably Wilkie Collins, William Makepeace Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell, and of course Charles Dickens, whose social novels were tinted with occasional supernatural events—the celebrated novella *A Christmas Carol* (1843) is a good example of his use of a dark and Gothic sense of fear as a vehicle for social commentary, through a suggestion of the possible existence of the supernatural in the narrative. In *A Christmas Carol*, the supernatural is conveyed through the manifestation of ghosts who provide a commentary on individual and social conscience. Throughout the story, the ghosts are represented as an externalisation of psychological functions such as memory, anxieties about the future, and fear of the unknown. Commenting on the use of the supernatural in the Victorian ghost story, Lynch argues that such stories can be seen as "a vehicle for translating what was truly scary in private and public life, what was always lurking in the shadows in the corners, what could not be hidden in the domestic comfort of the hearth" (84). Furthermore, Janine Hatter notes that,

the supernatural infiltrated every area of nineteenth-century lives, from the books

that were read, the art that was viewed, and the performances that were watched,

to the religions practised (for instance, Spiritualism and Catholicism), the

photographs produced, and the scientific practices undertaken. One of the main

catalysts for this was the intellectual explosion that occurred over the long

nineteenth century, which led to many alternative theories of the world. (9)

Indeed, the nineteenth-century literary world was characterized by an unprecedented

production and consumption of supernatural narratives. Hatter identifies Marxism,

Darwinism, and Secularism caused by "anthropological explanations of religion" (9) as

the main theories that influenced the form and portrayal of the supernatural. The

Victorian period, in particular, witnessed a strong fascination with all things supernatural;

and the supernatural became an "important aspect of the Victorians' intellectual, spiritual,

emotional, and imaginative worlds, and took its place in the domestic centre of their daily

lives" (Bown et al. 2). Likewise, Fisher, commenting on the Gothic novel in England and

in America at this time, notes:

> The significant trend in horror tales of this period mirrored developments in the
>
> greater Victorian and American novels then emerging into a solidly artistic and
>
> serious genre. There was a shift from physical fright, expressed through numerous
>
> outward miseries and villainous actions to psychological fear. The inward turn in
>
> fiction emphasized motivations, not their overt terrifying consequences. The
>
> ghost–in–a–bedsheet gave way, as it did literally in Charles Dickens's *A*
>
> *Christmas Carol*, to the haunted psyche, a far more significant force in the
>
> "spooking" of hapless victims. (177)

Fisher refers here to psychological supernaturalism, revolutionised by American Gothic author Edgar Allan Poe, and used in the works of fellow American writers Hawthorne and Melville, and in Britain by the Brontës.

Emily Brontë's only novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), for example, is a "tense expression of man's shuddering reaction to the unknown" (Lovecraft 19). The supernatural in the narrative, although only suggested, is closely linked to folklore and the superstitious beliefs of the characters. What is interesting to note in the novel is how the nature of Heathcliff, the Byronic hero in the narrative, is questioned several times through the novel, and it is even suggested that he might not be human at all. In a letter to Nelly, Catherine asks "[i]s Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he the devil?" (99). This association of the Byronic hero with the supernatural is strongly evident in the figure of the vampire in particular through the nineteenth century and beyond, as will be discussed in the following chapters. Additionally, Catherine herself is accused of being "possessed with a devil" (116). After Catherine dies, Heathcliff states desperately that he wants her to haunt him: "You said I killed you— haunt me, then! The murdered do haunt their murderers. I believe—I know that ghosts have wandered on earth" (122). Much later, he declares: "I have a strong faith in ghosts; I have a conviction that they can and do exist among us!" (209). Throughout the narrative, Brontë illustrates the position and the impact of the supernatural on people's beliefs and actions during the Victorian period. Moreover, the passionate—although masochistic—tie between Heathcliff and Catherine can also be read as supernatural as it exceeds earthly love. When Heathcliff dies and is buried near Catherine, we are told that he still walks the lands. Nelly reports:

[T]he country folks … would swear on their Bible that he walks. There are those who speak to having met him near the church, and on the moor, and even within this house – Idle tales, you'll say, and so say I. Yet that old man by the kitchen fire affirms he has seen two on 'em, looking out of his chamber window, on every rainy night since his death. (244)

Whether or not Heathcliff and Catherine are reunited in death remains unknown, just as any of the supposed apparitions and ghostly hauntings in the story remain simply suggested, as the author makes no attempt to either deny or affirm the supernatural. As such, we can discern a different technique of writing the supernatural wherein its presence or absence in the text is left for the reader to decide; the supernatural is simply suggested.

Similarly, the supernatural is suggested through the protagonist's perception in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Brontë highlights the effects of supernatural incursions on the reasoning of a person. When Jane is incarcerated in the 'red room' she wonders what might happen if the stories she had heard were true:

as I sat looking at the white bed and overshadowed walls—occasionally also turning a fascinated eye towards the dimly gleaming mirror—I began to recall what I had heard of dead men, troubled in their graves by the violation of their last wishes, revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed; and I thought Mr. Reed's spirit, harassed by the wrongs of his sister's child, might quit its abode—whether in the church vault or in the unknown world of the departed—and rise before me in this chamber. (16)

The passage illustrates the influence of the widespread of supernatural tales on Jane who believes in the existence of ghosts. Yet the author, unlike Radcliffe, does not try to rationalise the suggested supernatural events in the closure of the narrative; instead, much like in *Wuthering Heights*, they remain open to the reader's own interpretation. Throughout the narrative Jane both experiences supernatural occurrences and evokes them herself. At one point in the story, after seeing a "fearful and ghastly" (286) face, she recounts to Rochester:

"It was a discoloured face—it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!"

"Ghosts are usually pale, Jane."

"This, sir, was purple: the lips were swelled and dark; the brow furrowed; the black eye–brows wildly raised over the blood–shot eyes. Shall I tell you of what it reminded me?"

"You may."

"Of the foul German spectre—the Vampyre". (288)

Much like the passage quoted previously, the above quotation illustrates the effect of Jane's exposure to accounts about the supernatural upon the manner in which she perceives the events unfolding around her. Yet Jane remains unapologetic in her beliefs until the very end of the story when, after fleeing Rochester's mansion, she hears him calling her name. This event is dismissed until Rochester, now blinded and crippled following the burning of Thornfield Hall, admits that he himself made such a cry at the exact time when Jane must have heard it (429). Jane observes: "[t]he coincidence struck me as too awful and inexplicable to be communicated or discussed" (456).

In this sense, the Gothic works produced in the nineteenth century play a significant role in the portrayal and evolution of the supernatural. They offer various incarnations of apparitions, ghosts and spirits, as well as vampires—which I discuss in Chapter Two. Commenting on the Victorian Gothic portrayal of the supernatural, Hatter notes: "[w]ithin this era, [the supernatural] can encompass everything from the occult, Spiritualism, and reincarnation, through telepathy, mesmerism, and resurrection, to Faustian bargains, ghosts, ghouls, and goblins" (9). The use of the supernatural in the following decades is largely influenced by the supernatural Gothic narratives of the nineteenth century, as the following section illustrates.

Twentieth-Century Supernatural Horror

The previous discussion of the portrayal of the supernatural during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries illustrates the development of the supernatural in Gothic literature. During the twentieth century, however, the "Gothic is everywhere and nowhere" (155), as Fred Botting observes. Indeed, as the focus of the Gothic shifted during the early years of the century, so did the portrayal of the supernatural. The world faced new wonders and terrors; the age of scientific advancement, atomic warfare, and social and political upheaval brought to the fore new concerns and required new literary approaches to address them. Nevertheless, the supernatural saw a substantial evolution with the emergence of pulp fiction magazines devoted to Fantasy literature during the 1920s. Indeed, a number of magazines, notably Unknown (1939-1943), *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* (1949), and *Weird Tales* (1923-2014), featured stories about diverse supernatural beings, from vampires and werewolves to the cosmic entities of

Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos (1928). This proliferation of weird tales signals the shift of the supernatural from the Gothic text to Horror narratives, insuring the continuity of supernatural tales.

It is only towards the last two decades of the century that a resurgence of the supernatural in Gothic fiction is witnessed, particularly through the tales of Angela Carter whose style, as Gina Wisker notes, is "excessive, elaborate, [f]illed with paradox, mixing use of both horror and humour . . . [and] elements of the gothic to critique social constructions and suggest alternatives" (6). In *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979), Carter adopts an innovative approach to traditional western fairy tales and uses the supernatural, legend and fairy tale to work "within and against the conventions of these genres" (Bristow and Broughton 13). Although the main focus of her tales is the modern retelling of the fairy tale, Carter is particularly well-known for her critical depiction of gender, sexuality and identity in which she clearly takes a feminist position. As she declares in her essay "Notes from the Front Line" (1983): "I would regard myself as a feminist writer, because I'm a feminist in everything else and one can't compartmentalize these things in one's life" (70). She states that she is "in the demythologizing business', because myths for her are "extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree" ("Notes" 71). Her works challenge the traditional myth and fairy tale endorsement of archetypal gender roles that marginalise women and portray them negatively. Female characters are indeed at the centre of Carter's narrative whereas male characters occupy the role of the Other.

Although Carter's work was categorized as Gothic by her reviewers, she herself refuted the categorisation and declared in an interview at the University of Sheffield: "I

knew perfectly well what a Gothic novel was. I knew it was all owls and ivy and mad passions and Byronic heroes, who were probably damned and I knew I wasn't writing them" (Carter 1977 qtd. in Gamble). Nevertheless, Carter's use of horror, the grotesque, and the supernatural would classify her work as belonging to the Gothic tradition. "The Bloody Chamber", for example, offers a retelling of the Bluebeard story in which a vulnerable heroine, married to a French Marquis, recounts discovering the bodies of her husband's murdered previous wives in a room she has been forbidden to enter. In "The Tiger's Bride", a reimagining of "Beauty and the Beast", a young woman moves in with a mysterious, masked "Milord", the Beast, after her father loses her to him in a game of cards; at the end the heroine transforms into a tiger, a beast, and as such embraces Otherness. I return to Carter's role in influencing the portrayal of the supernatural in YA Gothic literature in subsequent chapters of the thesis.

By the end of the twentieth-century, a plethora of beasts and other supernatural beings populate Gothic stories written for children in the last decade of the twentieth century. The supernatural in children's Gothic often comes in the form of magical elements such as supernatural abilities and creatures that aid the protagonists in overcoming obstacles and dangers, and ultimately defeating their opponent and restoring a sense of normalcy to their world. Perhaps one of the most well-known examples of children's supernatural Gothic of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century is J. K. Rowling's bestselling Harry Potter Series (1997-2007). The series illustrates how the portrayal of the supernatural has evolved in the last decade of the twentieth century. Throughout it, Rowling creates a Gothic space that is at once terrifying and fantastical,

populated by an array of supernatural beings ranging from wizards, ghosts and werewolves, to shapeshifters and dragons.

Being in touch with the supernatural, or being of supernatural nature, marks the protagonist of Gothic children's fiction as special within both the human world and the supernatural world. Harry Potter, for example, is a wizard with spectacular supernatural abilities, which mark him as special, and destined to be the hero of the narrative. Indeed, the supernatural in children's Gothic contributes to emphasize the specialness of the main protagonists. As such, it can be suggested that this characteristics of the supernatural symbolizes power, and acts as a medium of empowerment, enabling the characters to establish new spaces wherein they can construct complex individual identities—a shared function with the twenty-first century YA Gothic texts discussed in the following chapters.

Twenty-first Century YA Gothic

The last fourteen years have been a Golden Age for supernatural YA Gothic literature. Joseph Crawford suggests that "with the rise of paranormal romance, it has become possible to see outlines of a different sort of history of Gothic fiction, one in which romance has *always* played a central role; and within *this* history the paranormal romance … may be less an aberration than a return to form" (5; emphases in original). It is important to acknowledge the existence of texts that precede Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series and that have influenced the YA Gothic of the twenty-first century, notably, as Glennis Byron and Sharon Deans note, **"**Annette Kurtis Clause's *The Silver Kiss* (1990), Vivian Vande Velde's *Companions of the Night* (1995), and Mary Downing Hahn's *Look*

for Me by Moonlight (1995)" (88). These texts belong to a category of Gothic literature which is often referred to as either 'urban fantasy', 'dark fantasy', or 'paranormal romance', and which Crawford defines as a "work that tells the story of the development and consummation of a positive, loving romantic relationship between a human and a vampire, adhering to all the standard romance-novel tropes apart from the convention that the hero and heroine should be live human beings" (9).[6] In adult and new adult (or NA) Gothic book series, the portrayal of female characters and vampires as potential romantic partners are largely influenced by the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), such as Laurel K. Hamilton's Anita Blake: Vampire Hunter series (1993-present), Charlaine Harris' The Southern Vampire Mysteries series (2001-2013), and J. R. Ward's The Black Brotherhood series (2005-2019), which usually focus on sexual representation of the supernatural. In YA literature, however, it is the publication and subsequent popularity of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series in particular that marks an important milestone in the evolution of supernatural Gothic literature in the twenty-first century.

Translated into thirty-seven languages, the series gained worldwide recognition and sold over a hundred million copies, granting Meyer a dominant position on the children's best-seller list in 2008, the title of bestselling author of 2008 and 2009 (*USA Today* 2009), and a ranking at No. 49 on *Time* magazine's list of the "100 Most Influential People in 2008". The popularity of the series was compared with that of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series on several occasions and was described as the "spiritual

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[6] Although Crawford's definition only mentions vampires as the supernatural characters of paranormal romance, a plethora of varied supernatural beings populate the genre.

successor to *Harry Potter*" by *The Daily Telegraph* (2008). However, as Crawford

contends, the popularity that Meyer's books engendered was also confusing to those who

could not see the merits of them, and as such "*Twilight* was controversial *because* of its

success" (Crawford 181; emphasis mine). Indeed, the series and Meyer herself received

much harsh criticism from academics and fellow writers alike. In an interview published

by *USA Weekend,* Stephen King compares Meyer to Rowling stating that "the real

difference [between them] is that Jo Rowling is a terrific writer and Stephenie Meyer

can't write worth a darn. She's not very good" (7). Furthermore, Imogen Russell-

Williams turns to Meyer's religious beliefs and accuses the books and the author of

communicating "unsubtle Mormon agenda" (*The Guardian* 2009). In fact, many of the

opponents of the series deploy the same argument against the supposedly negative

aspects of the books and focus primarily on the depictions of sex and gender, claiming

that these enforce negative, even harmful behaviour in adolescent readers by

romanticizing relationships that are abusive. Moreover, as Crawford observes, "some

have scorned [the series] simply for being a romance" (3). However, romance has always

been part of the Gothic. Indeed, Walpole's introduction to *The Castle of Otranto* clearly

establishes a link between the two genres. Interestingly, both Walpole and Meyer have

said that the idea for their tales came from their own dreams. On her website, Meyer

writes:

> I woke up (on that June 2nd) from a very vivid dream. In my dream, two people
>
> were having an intense conversation in a meadow in the woods. One of these
>
> people was just your average girl. The other person was fantastically beautiful,
>
> sparkly, and a vampire. They were discussing the difficulties inherent in the facts

that A) they were falling in love with each other while B) the vampire was particularly attracted to the scent of her blood, and was having a difficult time restraining himself from killing her immediately. ("The Story Behind *Twilight*")

The dream Meyer had describes a scene from the first book, *Twilight* (2005), in which Bella sees Edward in the sun for first time. This particular scene is, as I discuss in Chapter Two, one of the most important in the series, as well as in YA Gothic's portrayal of the supernatural as sublime.

Regardless of the criticism the series has received, its appeal to readers is phenomenal, as Crawford notes "the same material which her critics found most unpleasant, unappealing and anti-feminist was evidently experienced by many other readers as romantic, moving, empowering and erotic" (4).[7] Furthermore, the popularity of Meyer's series has in fact reignited an interest in the earlier vampire books published before it. L. J. Smith's *The Vampire Diaries* for example, published originally as a series of three books between 1991 and 1992 and featuring an array of supernatural beings, was repackaged with designs and colour schemes that evoked the *Twilight* series cover designs and was even adapted into a TV series by The CW Television Network in 2009; a further four volumes of a total of eleven novels were published between 2007 and 2014. Moreover, this rebranding of earlier texts did not stop at vampire fiction; classic Gothic texts such as *Wuthering Heights*—which Bella and Edward allude to constantly throughout the series alongside other classics such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Pride and Prejudice*—were repackaged with a *Twilight*-like cover design and published by

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[7] For a full account on the readers' reception of Twilight, see Crawford *The Twilight of the Gothic? Vampire Fiction and the Rise of the Paranormal Romance* (2014).

HarperCollins US in 2010, in their Teen Series, carrying slogans and tag lines reading "Bella & Edward's favourite [sic] book" and "Love Never Dies". This *Twilight*-inspired branding of YA Gothic texts, is not exclusive to classic novels. A considerable number of books published between 2007 and 2015, have covers that evoke *Twilight*. The 'YA Gothic Book Cover' section on Goodreads, for example, lists over four-hundred titles; all emphasising the impact that Meyer's series has on twenty-first-century YA Gothic.

Conclusion

Horace Walpole's Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* introduced a genre that has endured through centuries of criticism and reforms. His use of supernatural elements provoked a series of condemnations from critics at the time who deemed the use of supernatural elements evocative of primitive times, and inappropriate during the Age of Enlightenment. His innovation also generated a genuine interest in other writers who would go on to adopt the supernatural in their own works. Nevertheless, not all of them followed Walpole's formula of the spectacular supernatural, preferring to experiment with the nature and representation of the supernatural. Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe both condemned the excess of supernaturalism in *The Castle of Otranto*, favouring a more subtle use of it. Walpole utilised the supernatural in a spectacular approach to blend old literary traditions with the new ones. Radcliffe, on the other hand, used the supernatural to create a feeling of terror before exposing its rational machinery by the end of her narratives. Meanwhile, Matthew Lewis endowed his supernaturalism with demonic elements to create horror. As mentioned before, these three types of supernaturalism employed in the eighteenth century continued to surface and develop further in the works

of nineteenth-century writers such as the Brontë sisters, and in the twentieth century as in the works of Angela Carter, whose work combines "horror, gothic and … fantasy" (Wisker 235), and the vampire literature which influenced the supernatural of the twenty-first century.

The culture in which any author is immersed acts as a great influence on the works produced. The works of Gothic writers offer insights into not only the evolution of the use of supernatural tropes during that time, but also how the influences of society and culture shaped the development of the genre. Although the emergence of the supernatural in fiction was condemned by some critics, who believed its use inappropriate and belonging to ancient, barbaric times, the formula prevailed in the different experimentations of the writers of the genre. As this chapter illustrates, practitioners of the Gothic tradition used the supernatural to represent "transgressions that symbolize both desires and fears that are inner to people's conscience as consequences of moral and sexual constraints, expressing specific cultural and historical contexts" (Punter 188). Finally, a better understanding of the emergence of the supernatural in Gothic literature prior to the twenty-first century, through an examination of selected Gothic works, provides a useful tool to survey the development of the portrayal of the supernatural and the factors that influenced its development in Gothic literature. Such a study is essential in understanding the perseverance of the supernatural in Gothic literature, in particular from the eighteenth century, through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the twenty-first century, where supernatural beings from vampires to faeries and werewolves abound. The following chapters of the thesis thus focus on the incarnation of the

supernatural in twenty-first century YA Gothic literature and explore the ways in which

the genre subverts the traditional portrayal of the supernatural.

Chapter Two

From the Shadows: The Supernatural Other from Folklore to YA

Gothic Literature of the Twenty-First Century

"I'm a monster," said the shadow of the Marquess suddenly. "Everyone says so."
—Catherynne M. Valente, *Deathless*

And the lord, Host of Many, with his immortal horses sprang out upon her—the Son of Cronos, He who has many names.
—Hugh G. Evelyn White, *Hymn to Demeter*

Ancient civilizations and cultures had their own mythologies concerning mystical and supernatural beings and deities. Many of these beings possessed abilities that allowed them to shape-shift and take different forms, both animal and elemental. They were worshipped, presented with sacrifices to gain their protection and appease their anger, and feared for their destructive tendencies. Centuries later, during the Medieval Ages and as monotheistic religions became widespread; the once venerated supernatural beings became endowed with demonic characteristics and regarded as monsters. The very possibility of their existence instilled fear in the heart of villagers who, when confronted by uncanny deaths and unexplained events, blamed every misfortune on the supernatural. Writing as late as the eighteenth century, the Benedictine monk Dom Augustin Calmet notes:

> each century, each people, each country has…its own maladies, its own fashions, [and] its own inclinations, which characterize them … often, what seemed admirable at one time becomes piteous and ridiculous at another …

In this century, a new scene has represented itself to our eyes … people

see, they say, dead men…come back, speak, plague villages … suck the blood of

their intimates, make them sick, and finally cause their death. (29-30)

Indeed, people no longer viewed the supernatural as the sublime manifestation of

something greater; rather they associated different supernatural entities, such as vampires,

werewolves, witches, and shapeshifters in general, with the Devil. During the nineteenth

century, the publication of John Polidori's story, *The Vampyre: A Tale* (1819), formally

introduced the enigmatic figure of the vampire to literature, allowing supernatural entities

to emerge from folklore into Gothic English prose.

What follows in this chapter is not a comprehensive survey of all the incarnations

of vampires and other supernatural beings across cultures, for that is not my purpose here.

This chapter briefly traces the earliest appearances of vampire-like entities and

shapeshifters in mythology and folklore, then in Gothic literature in order to form an

understanding of incarnations of such beings in twenty-first century YA Gothic literature.

The discussion is divided into three sections which discuss the earliest references to

mythological deities and the folkloric undead, the adaptation and depiction of vampires

and shapeshifters in literature—mainly in *The Vampyre* (1819), *Varney the Vampire; or,*

the feast of blood (1845-47), *Carmilla* (1871), *Dracula* (1897), and *The Vampire*

Chronicles (1976-2014)—and the supernatural in the fairy tales and myths which inspire

today's authors of YA Gothic. This examination of the broad mythological and thematic

evolution of popular supernatural beings illustrates how they embody Nina Auerbach's

often quoted comment on the vampire, that "[e]ach age embraces the vampire it needs"

(145), in that they are continuously morphing through the ages and assimilating new characteristics.

The Origins of Vampires and Shapeshifters in Mythology and Folklore

Tales and legends about supernatural beings have populated the myths and legends of every civilization known to anthropologists since the earliest recorded accounts of humanity. Roger Ivar Lohman notes that "the supernatural can be viewed as a universal assumption among humans, or as the unique spiritual reality of a given culture" (175). Indeed, as Lohman suggests, the idea of the supernatural is ubiquitous and a common characteristic of all cultures—although it is expressed and interpreted differently from one culture to another over the centuries, as I will demonstrate in the following discussion. Moreover, although the majority of polytheistic societies considered different supernatural beings as deities as I have mentioned above, monotheistic religions which are largely practised today—mainly Islam, Christianity, and Judaism—also include various supernatural beings. The belief in Jinns, angels, and demons, for example, is an important part of Islam, Christianity and Judaism respectively. While investigating the representation of supernatural beings in folklore, mythology, and literature, it is hard to ignore the striking similarities found amongst different cultures, as examples of incarnations of the same deity or supernatural entity exist in more than one culture. Although these entities often take a different name depending on the language of a given culture, and there are cultural and temporal variations of these beings, they all share characteristics that are similar enough to suggest that they represent the same entity.

Amongst the plethora of supernatural beings that are embedded in the beliefs of different cultures, supernatural beings who consume human blood are some of the most fearsome and fascinating. Indeed, several cultures believed in the existence of supernatural beings who consumed the blood and flesh of mortals. Whilst today the act of drinking human blood is more commonly associated with the figure of the vampire, such a term did not exist until the eighteenth century.[8] Nevertheless, the notion of vampire-like creatures can be traced back to the beginning of recorded history and a number of writers and scholars have tackled the study of the figure. Antoine Faivre mentions supernatural beings endowed with vampire-like qualities in both Chinese and Indian Folklore in his seminal work *Les Vampires* (1962). Likewise, in "The Vampire in Legend, Lore, and Literature" (1970)—an introduction to the first twentieth-century edition of *Varney the Vampire*—Devendra P. Varma traces the vampire myth to the folklore of Nepal, India, and China, among other Asian countries, and comments on a series of paintings and carvings found in the Indus Valley depicting deities such as the Nepalese Lord of Death, stating that the green-faced, fanged creatures portrayed are presumably a depiction of the first incarnation of the vampire in the region (14). He adds that while "[w]esterners have viewed vampire lore as a fascinating but unsolved enigma, the origins of this myth lie in the mystery cults of Oriental civilizations" (14). Moreover, Montague Summers, in his extensive documentation of vampire mythology, similarly traces the origins of the first vampires to Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt, and other parts of the ancient world. He writes in *Vampires and Vampirism* (2005):

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[8] According to the Oxford English Dictionary the word 'vampire' first entered English in 1734.

Assyria knew the vampire long ago, and he lurked amid the primaeval forests of

Mexico before Cortes came. He is feared by the Chinese, by the Indians, and the

Malaya alike; whilst Arabian story tells us again and again of the ghouls who

haunt ill-omened sepulchres and lonely cross-ways to attack and devour the

unhappy traveller. (vii)

Ancient Assyrians and Babylonians had a rich mythology replete with supernatural

entities. Lamatsu, the demon serpent who feeds on children, is among the most prominent

incarnations of the vampire in mythology. The vampire *demoness* has several

incarnations throughout cultures and times. She is known as Lilitu in Sumerian myth and

later in the Hebraic writings as Lilith, Adam's first wife, who was considered the mother

of all demons. Lamatsu shares many characteristics with the succubus, a female entity

who preys on unwary men and takes their life essence by seducing them through sexual

activity and feeding on their blood.[9] Another incarnation of the mythological female

vampire is found in ancient Greece where the story of the Lamia is eerily similar to

Lamatsu's and Lilith's. According to Greek mythology, Lamia was a Libyan princess

who, after being cursed by Hera, transformed into a half-woman, half-snake and preyed

on children and young men. She was also said to have the ability to appear in a beautiful,

seductive guise in order to facilitate her hold on her victims—a very common theme that

persists in the depiction of the vampire in Gothic literature and YA Gothic, as will be

seen later in this chapter.

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[9] The Qarinah in pre-Islamic Arabian and North-African mythologies, and the Estries in Jewish folklore are also incarnations of the succubus who seduce and harm men, often causing death by appearing in erotic dreams, and possess vampire-like characteristics.

Very similar ideas prevail in other cultures. Other female deities with vampiric attributes include, for further examples, the Indian goddess of war Kali who feasts on the blood of the men she kills, and the Egyptian goddess Sekhmet, whose thirst for blood was celebrated by her worshippers who held regular blood-sacrifices to sooth her and gain her favour. Nevertheless, although female deities and supernatural entities seem to be those most associated with vampire-like behaviour, accounts of male deities who consume human blood exist in most cultures. In Egyptian mythology, for instance, Seth and Osiris—the deities of chaos, and life and death—both exhibit attributes found in our modern understanding of the vampire, notably supernatural abilities and the consumption of blood. Likewise, the Greek deity of death, Hades, and the Mayan deity Camazotz, who is said to take the form of a bat, were associated with death and sacrifice (Miller and Taube 44). The supernatural beings mentioned here are but a few examples of the different incarnations of vampire-like deities, as it is beyond the scope of this chapter to cover all deities linked to vampirism. What is common between the deities mentioned here is that they are all described as being equally powerful and destructive—two defining characteristics of the vampire in literature. Moreover, this universality of blood-consuming deities and supernatural beings is, I suggest, one of the reasons why the figure of the vampire in literature and film maintains a level of fascination and appeals to audiences from different cultures.

What is of particular interest in the discussion of these supernatural entities, besides the ritualistic act of consuming blood, is a defining characteristic shared by all those I have referenced above: namely, shapeshifting. All the vampire-like deities and entities I have mentioned possess the ability to take on various forms—animal or other—

at will. By far the most common form of shapeshifting is therianthropy—the transformation of a human being into an animal and vice versa. Instances of shapeshifters and shapeshifting abound throughout mythology and appear in later folklore and fairy tales. Indeed, one of the very first stories known to humankind—the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh dating back more than four millennia—abounds with instances of therianthropy, especially lycanthropy. The story concerns Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, in what is now Iraq. In the tale, Gilgamesh is courted by the deity Ishtar, but fearing for his life, he rejects her and reminds her of the tragic fate of her previous lovers:

> You loved the Shepherd, the Master Herder,
>
> Who continually presented you
>
> with bread baked in embers,
>
> And who daily slaughtered for you a kid.
>
> Yet you struck him, and turned him into a wolf,
>
> So his own shepherds now chase him
>
> And his own dogs snap at his shins. (Tablet VI)

It can be argued in relation to Gilgamesh's Epic that the tale has established some of the elements and characteristics associated with shapeshifting, most notably the notion that it often occurs as result of a deity's wrath and as punishment; the Shepherd is cursed to live as a wolf.

In addition to Persian mythology, on which Gilgamesh's Epic is based, several other mythologies feature shapeshifters. In Norse mythology, Odin, Loki, and Berserkers—the mythological Norse warriors who wore animals' pelts—are known to be shapeshifters. Likewise, Egyptian and Olympian deities demonstrate their ability to shift

their shape and that of others on numerous occasions. In Egyptian mythology, the were-jackals are warriors cursed by the priests of Anubis, who take human form during the daytime and that of beasts during the night. Indeed, curses as the cause for shapeshifting are a recurring theme. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid relates the story of the Arcadian king, Lycaeon, who decides to trick Zeus by serving him human flesh in one of the many dishes served in a banquet in honour of the Olympian deity. However, the flesh is none other than that of Lycaeon's own son, and as Zeus discovers the truth, he curses the king and condemns him to take the form of a wolf. The story of King Lycaeon is but one example among many others in which humans are transformed by angry or jealous deities into animals as a punishment. The belief in therianthropy was also prominent in Greek mythology, in which there are several accounts of how a person can be transformed. In *Giants, Monsters, and Dragons* (2002), for example, folklorist Carol Rose notes that "in ancient Greece it was believed that a person could be transformed by eating the meat of a wolf that had been mixed with that of a human and that the condition was irreversible" (391). New accounts and new methods of transformation were later added to myths of shapeshifters such as being cursed, bitten or scratched by a werewolf, "sleeping under the full moon, or even drinking water that has been touched by a wolf" (Rose 391).[10] This

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[10] Although there is no definitive explanation as to why the wolf is the animal most associated with transformative curses in folklore—especially European and American folklore—it may be suggested that a fear of the wolf's reputed representation of the dangers of bestiality as well as wildness, in opposition to Man and civilization, is the cause of such beliefs which would continue to be part of oral and written narratives, especially in fairy tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Three Little Pigs*. In regions where the wolf is not a common animal, stories mention deities and people turning into other carnivorous animals. In Western and Central Africa, for example, hyenas and panthers are most associated with shapeshifting, whereas foxes are most common in Japan, tigers in China, and bears in Russia. A rising number of twenty-first-century YA books either feature such supernatural beings or are inspired by similar folktales.

would eventually make its way into the Gothic literary imagination where earlier incarnations of the Gothic vampire exhibit shapeshifting abilities, and examples similarly abound in twenty-first century YA Gothic literature, ranging from vampires and deities to kitsune,[11] the fae, and jinns, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter and throughout the thesis.

The rise of monotheistic religions, especially Christianity once it had become strongly established in Europe, had a significant impact on the way people viewed and interpreted the supernatural, particularly in light of Catholic doctrine which condemned the worship of pagan deities and which most often viewed the supernatural as the manifestation of the Devil. As such, the revered supernatural entities and deities of the past were no longer a source of fascination but of fear and superstition—the antithesis of good. Bishop Augustine of Hippo, for example, in *The City of God* (originally published in 426 AD), writes on shapeshifting entities whom he links to demons, stating that "[j]ust as [the demon] can from the air form a body of any form and shape, and assume it so as to appear in it visibly: so, in the same way he can clothe any corporeal thing with any corporeal form, so as to appear therein" (295). Augustine's use of the term 'demon' clearly exemplifies the general view of the Catholic faith and its followers in that demonic evil is the source of supernatural entities, with the exception of angels.

Furthermore, this change from pagan, polytheistic beliefs coincided with the outbreak of 'inexplicable' diseases such as the plague, which soon became associated

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[11] In Japanese mythology, the Kitsune is a shapeshifting fox with nine tails that appears in Japanese literature and more recently in YA literature, such as Julie Kagawa's *Shadow of the Fox* (2018), and Kat Cho's upcoming novel *Wicked Fox* (set for June 2019).

with the supernatural as it was believed that these maladies were caused by malevolent

entities, specifically revenants. In Slavic folklore, for instance, it was believed that the

vampire was a revenant, a corpse which, reanimated by demons, would leave its grave to

haunt the living and cause chaos. Agnes Murgoci writes of the vampire in early Christian

Europe stating that

> In Roumania [sic], bodies are disinterred at an interval of three years after death
>
> in the case of a child, of four or five years in the case of young folk, and of seven
>
> years in the case of elderly people. If decomposition is not then complete, it is
>
> supposed that the corpse is a vampire; if it is complete, and the bones are white
>
> and clean, it is a sign that the soul has entered into eternal rest. (320)

In this sense, instead of renouncing the existence of vampires and supernatural entities,

the Catholic Church further established the existence of such entities and was largely the

cause of the widespread superstition surrounding the supernatural. It was during this

period that people started viewing vampire-like creatures differently, and the vampire

moved from its status as a deity to a peasant. The peasant revenant, known by many

names in Eastern Europe—vorkudlak (Serbo-Croatian), obour (Bulgarian), and upir

(Russian, Ukranian, and Polish) to cite but a few—became an integral part of everyday

life, as this passage from a record in the *Romanian Journal of Folklore* states:

> There was a time when vampires were as common as leaves of grass, or berries in
>
> a pail, and they never kept still, but wandered round at night among the people.
>
> They walked about and joined the evening gatherings in the villages, and, when
>
> there were many young people together, the vampires could carry out their habit
>
> of inspiring fear, and sucking human blood like leeches. (Quoted in Murgoci 341)

Such beliefs in the existence of vampires gave rise to a vampire hysteria that spread across most of Europe during the seventeenth century.[12] Sightings of vampires were reported in journals and gazettes, and accounts such as the affair of Countess Erzsebet Bàthory in Hungary, who was accused of kidnapping, torturing and murdering young peasant girls from surrounding villages and using their blood to maintain eternal youth and beauty, strengthened the belief in the reality of vampires. Soon after, by the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, physicians were put to the task of investigating such reports.[13] The rise of medical reports of 'real' vampire epidemics across Europe played a major role in both informing the public and influencing works of literature. Johann Fluckinger, an Austrian medical officer, produced a first-hand report on vampire beliefs and practices in Eastern Europe in 1742 and covered the case of Arnold Paole, a Serbian soldier who reportedly came back as a vampire a month after his death in 1727. Such accounts ignited an unprecedented interest in vampires among the public in England and allowed for the emergence of vampire-like beings into literature, as Richard Noll states: "[t]hroughout the latter half of the 18th and the entire 19th centuries, vampires were the subject of many poems, stage plays, novels, and "penny dreadfuls" throughout Europe, but particularly in England. This interest was directly due to the peaking of the vampire epidemic in central Europe in the 1730s" (9; figures in original).

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[12] For more on vampire sightings and superstition in Europe, see *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality* (1988) by Paul Barber.

[13] In *The Phantom World* (1746), Augustin Calmet identifies premature burials as the most likely explanation for the vampire hysteria across Europe.

In their introduction to *Open Graves, Open Minds: The Representation of Vampires and the Undead from the Enlightenment to the Present Day* (2016), Sam George and Bill Hughes argue that "folkloric and mythical revenants and bloodsuckers loom from antiquity, but these are only assimilated to the vampire proper through a progressive series of unwarranted abstractions that strip the creature of all regional and historical particularity" (9). While I share George's and Hughes's argument *vis à vis* the uniqueness of certain characteristics that are purely informed by the culture that generates them, as I have stated earlier, I suggest that in attempting to narrow down the definition of what may be categorized as vampire, and by dismissing the universality of the vampire and its incarnations in ancient mythology, we are faced with limitations in discussing the vampire and other supernatural beings. This, I argue, is one of the main reasons behind the criticism and frequent rejection of the various incarnations of the vampire—and supernatural beings in general—in twenty-first-century YA Gothic, which uses elements from different sources to portray the supernatural, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

The irrefutable popularity of the supernatural in literature and popular culture raises questions about our need to indulge in vampires, werewolves, faeries, and the like. Why are supernatural beings so popular? There are certainly various theories that attempt to explain our fascination with them. In *The Idea of the Holy* (1917, translated into English in 1923), Rudolf Otto suggests that our relation with the supernatural is based on religious and spiritual experiences:

We are dealing with something for which there is only one appropriate expression, mysterium tremendum.… The feeling of it may at times come

sweeping like a gentle tide pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest

worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul,

continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away

and the soul resumes its "profane," non-religious mood of everyday experience. .

.. It has its crude, barbaric antecedents and early manifestations, and again it may

be developed into something beautiful and pure and glorious. It may become the

hushed, trembling, and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of—

whom or what? In the presence of that which is a mystery inexpressible and above

all creatures. (12)

Indeed, Otto suggests that our undying fascination with the supernatural is the result of a

complex mystery that is terrifying while being appealing at the same time. This

conflation of emotions becomes characteristic of the portrayal of the supernatural as the

following chapters will demonstrate.

The supernatural, with all the meanings and functions attributed to it, is thus

universal. Gilmore argues that "people everywhere and at all times have been haunted by

ogres, cannibal giants, metamorphs, werewolves, vampyres, and so on"; the universality

of these beings therefore "must reveal something about the human mind" (ix). Carl Jung

has identified images, themes, and patterns that appear in the myths of many different

cultures. Jung proposes that these similarities result from archetypes present in the

unconscious levels of every person's mind. As he observes:

The primordial image, or archetype, is a figure—be it a daemon, a human being,

or a process—that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever

creative fantasy is freely expressed. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological

figure. When we examine these images more closely, we find that they give form

to countless typical experiences of our ancestors. They are, so to speak, the

psychic residua of innumerable experiences of the same type. They present a

picture of psychic life in the average, divided up and projected into the manifold

figures of the mythological pantheon. (127)

In Jungian theory, the concept of archetypes refers to the initial form of a model that is

adapted and cultivated within many cultures. Existing in the collective unconscious,

which serves as a unique repertoire of shared knowledge and experiences, archetypes

manifest throughout various cultures and various times. Jung identifies a list of some

common and recurring archetypes including the hero, the mother, the self, the trickster,

and the shadow, contending that his list is suggestive rather than conclusive. He notes

that archetypes are indeed innate, culturally hereditary, and universal and states: "It

seems to me that their origin can only be explained by assuming them to be deposits of

the constantly repeated experiences of humanity" (109). Jung's notion of the archetypes

and the collective unconscious as being hereditary is in fact quite similar to Freud's

notion of the archaic heritage whereby memories, totems and taboos are transmitted

through the collective, archaic, heritage of humankind. Yet while Freud views the

subconscious as the realm of the perverse where anxieties and fears are buried, Jung

envisions it as the source of archetypes. Furthermore, scholars of comparative mythology

also express a similar idea to that of Jung. In "The Historical Development of

Mythology" (1959), Joseph Campbell, for example, argues that:

The comparative study of the mythologies of the world compels us to view the

cultural history of mankind as a unit; for we find that such themes as the fire-theft,

deluge, land of the dead, virgin birth, and resurrected hero have a worldwide

distribution— appearing everywhere in new combinations while remaining, like

the elements of a kaleidoscope, only a few and always the same. (15)

From what has been discussed earlier in this chapter and building on the notion of the

collective unconscious, it can be suggested that vampire-like entities and shapeshifters

fall into the broad category of archetypes. Moreover, their continuous existence in

mythology and folklore and their prevalence in the literary tradition attest to their

complex universality.

From the Depths of Myths and Folklore to Gothic Literature

While vampire figures have manifested in numerous works of poetry and theatre, notably

in France, Germany, and England, the focus of this section is to examine the portrayal of

the vampire in selected works of prose fiction in order to establish a link between the

vampire of mythology, the folkloric vampire and the fictionalised vampire in Gothic

literature. As noted earlier, the first vampire figure in English Gothic fiction was

introduced by Doctor John Polidori in his influential short story *The Vampyre*, which first

appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* in April 1819, supposedly as a new tale by Lord

Byron, and which was published anonymously in book form shortly afterwards. There are

three common assumptions popular among scholars regarding this story. Firstly, it is

assumed that the tale originated during a ghost story writing contest in June 1816, often

referred to as the year without summer, at the Villa Diodati near Lake Geneva in

Switzerland, the same event that produced Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern

Prometheus*. John Polidori was at that time Lord Byron's physician and was one of his

guests at the Villa Diodati. The second assumption is that the tale was based on Byron's

Augustus Darvell, the main character in his unfinished work "A Fragment of a Novel".

The third assumption is based on the feud between Byron and Polidori—that Polidori had

indeed written the tale as an act of revenge on his now estranged former companion, Lord

Byron, and the vampire of his tale is in fact a portrait of Byron himself. Although Byron

did not deny the fact that the foundation of *The Vampyre* was inspired by his own

unfinished segment, he rejected any personal association with the tale, in a letter to Jean

Antoine Galigani, editor of the *Messenger*, stating:

> if the book is clever it would be base to deprive the real writer—whoever he may
>
> be—of honours; and if stupid I desire the responsibility of nobody's dullness but
>
> my own […] I have besides a personal dislike to 'Vampyres' and the little
>
> acquaintance I have with them would by no means induce me to divulge their
>
> secrets. (Byron; qtd. in Colavito 104)

Nonetheless, Byron's influence had a major role in shaping and characterizing what

would become 'the Byronic hero' and "the archetypal 'Byronic' vampire was firmly

established only as a result of Byromania" (Aquilina 27). Indeed, Byron provides a model

that informs not only the portrayal of Polidori's Lord Ruthven but also the portrayal of

the figure of the vampire in the following two centuries: aristocratic, attractive, with a

physique appealing to the eye, yet mysterious and tormented. The literary, and later

cinematographic, vampires that followed all display the Byronic vampire's sense of

rebellion and irresistible charms, and this tradition certainly continues in twenty-first-

century YA vampire narratives, ensuring the "unprecedented cultural phenomenon"

(Elfenbein 8) that the Byronic Hero embodies persists in people's fascination with the tormented, seductive outsider.

Polidori's *The Vampyre* narrates the story of a young man called Aubrey who becomes fascinated by the sophisticated yet misanthropic Lord Ruthven, a name used earlier by Lady Caroline Lamb to satirise Byron in her novel *Glenarvon* (1816). Aubrey decides to accompany Ruthven on a trip via Brussels and Rome to Greece, where Ruthven dies, but not before extracting a promise from Aubrey that he will keep his death secret for a year and a day. On his return to England, Aubrey is shocked to discover that his sister's suitor is none other than Lord Ruthven, who is apparently alive and well. Aubrey tries to warn his sister about Ruthven and prevent her marriage to him but is hindered by his oath. By the time the promised period has lapsed, it is already too late. Aubrey dies of a broken blood vessel and Aubrey's sister "had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!" (Polidori 47; upper case in original).

Throughout the story, there is no mention or clear indication of Ruthven's true nature, and it is not until the very end of the story that Aubrey's suspicions are confirmed; however, if one is familiar with the characteristics of the vampire the link is more easily made. Aubrey's inability to 'break his oath' to Ruthven, for instance, further confirms the supernatural status of Ruthven and the dangers of the hypnotic power he exerts over his victims, in this case Aubrey who is incapable of saving his sister and putting an end to Ruthven's machinations.

In the introduction to *The Vampyre*, Polidori gives a short history of vampire superstition, stating that "the superstition upon which this tale is founded is very general in the East. Among the Arabians it appears to be common" (12), and carries on

explaining the vampire myth's dissemination throughout Greece and Europe, and its promotion of the belief that the dead can rise from the grave to cause chaos and feed on the young and beautiful. Alongside such reports, Polidori mentions two romantic poems, Robert Southey's "Thalaba" with its portrayal of "the vampyre corse of the Arabian maid Onaiza" (15), and Byron's "The Giaour", as works that influenced his story. Juliette Wood argues that "Polidori's tale can be seen as an early example of the tendency to exploit the dramatic possibilities of folk tradition in a literary context" (2), for although *The Vampyre* is not obviously folkloric, nevertheless Polidori exhibits a fair knowledge of vampire lore, referring to vampire stories reported in Calmet's *Traité sur les apparitions des ésprits et sur les vampires ou les revenants* (1751), and Pitton de Tourefort's, *A Voyage into the Levant* (1741). In this regard, Polidori anticipates later writers in their need to authenticate their works through the historical truthfulness of their established sources. Regardless of his knowledge of the different vampire accounts, however, Polidori's Lord Ruthven has very little in common with the folkloric revenant found in the accounts of Calmet and other folklorists who wrote on the subject. Indeed, the only similarity between Polidori's vampire and the folkloric revenant is that both sustain themselves by consuming the blood of the living. However, they differ in many other characteristics. For example, whereas the vampires of folklore return to their graves to rest and are vulnerable to a number of elements, including religious relics, Lord Ruthven is immune to sunlight and has no apparent vulnerability to crosses, holy water, or garlic, and he certainly does not return to his grave. The way of destroying him, or even whether he can be destroyed at all, is not mentioned in the story. Indeed, when Ruthven is shot by thieves in Greece, his body is exposed to the first rays of the moon,

and he mysteriously revives. Polidori provides no explanation as to why this happens and, as stated earlier, this characteristic does not appear in any of the folkloric accounts that he had access to. However, it was commonly believed in pagan folk tales that moonlight possessed healing powers often called upon by witches and spirits. Whether Polidori was indeed referring to earlier myths and intended his vampire to possess shared characteristics with other supernatural entities remains unknown.

Polidori's Ruthven is a fascinating character. He is depicted as extremely attractive to women with his "dead grey eyes" (17) and a "deadly hue of face, which never gained a warmer hint, either from the blush of modesty, or from the strong emotion of passion" (17). He also has a reputation for persuasiveness, and "[h]is peculiarities caused him to be invited to every house; all wished to see him, and those who had been accustomed to violent excitement, and now felt the weight of ennui, were pleased at having something in their presence capable of engaging their attention" (17).[14] Ruthven's characteristics are easily perceived as those of the "romantic Byronic hero recast in the mould of the vampire. The physical features are present as well as a concern with the evil aspects of egoism, a theme closely associated with this romantic literary figure" (Wood 3). The folkloric vampire is commonly described as an ill-advised, thoughtless, reanimated corpse whose only purpose is to spread disease and destruction. Ruthven, on the other hand, is a seductive character who has "the reputation of a winning tongue" (Polidori 18) and this is the way in which he attracts the sympathy of his victims, women

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[14] Ruthven echoes the portrayal of the supernatural Other in YA Gothic in the charisma he exerts and more importantly in the manner in which his presence is desired among the humans. In this respect, he is consumed by the humans much like the supernatural Other of twenty-first-century YA Gothic, as I discuss in Chapter Three.

in particular. Polidori's description of Ruthven's seduction of Aubrey's sister illustrates the charming effects that the vampire uses on his victims:

> Who could resist his power? His tongue had dangers and toils to recount—could speak of himself as of an individual having no sympathy with any being on the crowded earth, save with her to whom he addressed himself;—could tell how, since he knew her, his existence had begun to seem worthy of preservation, if it were merely than he might listen to her soothing accents—in fine, he knew so well how to use the serpent's art, or such was the will of fate, that he gained her affection. (Polidori 45)

It is worth noting that the image of the serpent holds significant symbolism as to the nature of Ruthven as not only a trickster, but also an immortal, as "the serpent represents immortal energy and consciousness engaged in the field of time, constantly throwing off death and being born again" (Campbell 53). The serpent often represents a common symbol of evil and chaos in most ancient civilizations (Charlesworth 136); the Lamia, for example, is said to be half snake. Moreover, in Judaeo-Christian traditions and later in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament serpents are identified with the Devil—and the Devil, or incarnation of him, features regularly in supernatural Gothic literature as is the case in Lewis's *The Monk* (discussed in Chapter One), as well as numerous examples in twenty-first-century YA Gothic. Ruthven, being able to "use the serpent's art" (Polidori 47), emphasises his deceptive, demonic nature. Like the Devil in the form of the serpent who tempted Adam and Eve and caused their banishment from Heaven, and whose words are both beautiful and deceiving, Ruthven's acts are destructive. His powerful, captivating gaze and its influence on people is mentioned on several occasions,

and would become characteristic of the literary vampire in subsequent works of Gothic supernatural literature.

Lord Ruthven's choice of victims is also worthy of consideration. Ianthe, a young Greek girl, mentions that the vampire drinks the blood of beautiful young women to maintain his vitality (22). Unlike his folkloric counterpart who has no apparent preference when it comes to his victims, Ruthven preys and feeds only on pure and innocent women:

> But though the common adulteress could not influence even the guidance of his eyes, it was not that the female sex was indifferent to him: yet such was the apparent caution with which he spoke to the virtuous wife and innocent daughter, that few knew he ever addressed himself to females. (18)

Ruthven's criteria of selection places him above the folkloric vampire, making him more sophisticated, which brings us to perhaps the most influential change Polidori's vampire brought to the supernatural figure: the depiction of the vampire as a high-born member of the aristocracy, as many critics have pointed out. It can be said that this change has brought the figure of the vampire back to its earliest incarnations as a superior entity, instead of the "disheveled [sic] peasant" (Barber 2) of folk superstition. Indeed, Polidori's Lord Ruthven sets the standard for the aristocratic, ruthless, and demonic vampire that would dominate the depiction of the vampire in Gothic literature, right up to the present day. Brown states:

> A favourite twist was to portray the vampire as a creature of noble birth, an allusion popular with the general public as it provided a convenient means of illustrating the blood-sucking propensities of royalty with a minimum of risk.

Naturally, the locale for most of these works was somewhere in the Balkans– a

setting that would return again and again throughout the history of the genre.

(103)

Nevertheless, Lord Ruthven is a supernatural being who feeds on the blood of the living

and this element contributed to the success of the tale which spawned a series of vampire

imitators across Europe. In 1836, the French writer Théophile Gautier published "La

Morte Amoureuse", a short story about a priest, Romuald, who falls under the seduction

of Clarimonde, an alluring vampire courtesan "with a form and bearing of a goddess"

(Gautier 55) and with a beauty that "neither the verses of the poet nor the palette of the

artist could convey" (55). The story features a number of themes and tropes present in

vampire fiction. In the story, Romuald succumbs to the temptation of eternal love and

leaves his religious duty to be with Clarimonde, until she is finally destroyed by holy

water. In Russia, Count Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoi produced two vampire novellas,

La Famille du Vourdalak (1939) and *Oupyr* (1841), both influenced by Southern Slav

folklore and the accounts of Dom Calmet. Both in Gautier's and Tolstoi's vampire tales,

the vampires are seductive and fascinating, while also being deadly.

The rising interest in the supernatural amongst the Victorian English working

class during the 1800s, as seen in Chapter One, resulted in the emergence of the

inexpensive and poorly-printed sensational serials known as the "Penny Dreadful".

Amongst the most successful published stories that appeared weekly was James Malcolm

Rymer's thriller *Varney the Vampire, or the Feast of Blood* (1847). The story, which ran

for over two hundred chapters, contains a number of elements in common with John

Polidori's *The Vampyre,* including the aristocratic, blood-drinking supernatural being,

and the young and beautiful female victim who falls prey to the perverse desire of the vampire. Similar to Lord Ruthven, Rymer's Varney is brought back to life and regains his strength through exposure to moonlight, an element that features often through the events of the story. Also like Ruthven, Varney has a compelling, hypnotic gaze and can only feed on women of virtue. Varney like the traditional vampire is a predator—a theme that would become characteristic of vampires in YA Gothic literature of the twenty-first century. In the first chapter of the story, Sir Frances Varney is introduced lurking at the window of the young Flora:

> A tall figure is standing on the ledge immediately outside the long
>
> window. Its finger-nails upon the glass that produces the sound so like
>
> the hail, now that the hail has ceased. Intense fear paralysed the limbs
>
> of the beautiful girl. That one shriek is all she can utter—with hand
>
> clasped, a face of marble, a heart beating so wildly in her bosom, that
>
> each moment it seems as if it would break its confines, eyes distanced
>
> and fixed upon the window, she waits, froze with horror. The pattering
>
> and clattering of nails continue. (Rymer 3)

Paralyzed and terrified by the invading monster at her window, Flora is unable to resist as he bites her neck. She is fortunately rescued by her family before he is able to kill her. Unlike Lord Ruthven's appealing physical appearance, Varney is described as a "hideous being" (3), his figure is "tall and gaunt" with a "long, gaunt hand which seemed utterly destitute of flesh" (3), echoing the horrendous appearance of the peasant creature of folklore and contrasting with the beautiful physical traits that would become characteristic of different supernatural beings, not only the vampire.

Whereas there is no mention of how Lord Ruthven came to be a vampire, Varney's transformation is mentioned in three different versions, possibly because of the fact that different authors collaborated on the work and each of them had a different version of how Varney came to be a vampire. First, it is mentioned that he became a vampire for killing his wife and then later for killing his son. Second, the reader is informed that Varney has lived since the age of Henry IV and became a vampire during the Restoration, and third, that he was a criminal who turned into a vampire after being hanged. Most importantly, the first and second versions, although different, follow the folkloric tradition of the creation of a vampire. Varney, unlike Ruthven, is tormented by his condition and disgusted by his monstrous actions. His condition becomes unbearable and by the end of the story he throws himself into Mount Vesuvius to put an end to his torment.

An equally influential contribution to the evolution of blood-consuming supernatural beings was made by the Irish author Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, who introduced the vampire version of the *femme fatale* to English fiction. "Carmilla" (1871-72) appeared as part of Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly* collection of five tales allegedly selected from the papers of Dr Martin Hesselius, a German scholar of the occult.[15] The story is narrated by Laura, who relates a series of supernatural incidents which occurred when she was nineteen years old. Living with her father in Styria, in the south-east of Austria, Laura feels lonely and wishes for some female company. Her wish becomes real

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[15] Le Fanu's introduction of the fictional Dr Hesselius has the purpose of authenticating his stories, lending them a rational voice. It also employs the traditional frame narrative of the Gothic tale.

when a young girl, Carmilla, stays with them after her carriage crashes. Soon after, young girls in the vicinity begin to die of an inexplicable, wasting illness, and slowly Laura too finds herself weakening, all her strength draining away. It is revealed later in the story that Carmilla is in fact a seventeenth-century Styrian Countess who has returned from the dead, haunting and hunting young girls for their blood. Carmilla not only draws Laura's blood but also her vitality and well-being. Carmilla's behaviour is parallel to that of a succubus, sustaining herself on the life force of her victims. This element is also an important contribution to the development of the literary vampire. Le Fanu clearly draws from the tradition of the folkloric revenant, known for inflicting weakness and illness in his victims before they die. He was also possibly familiar with Calmet's work and Martin Delrio's authoritative study *Magical Investigations* or *Desiquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex* (1608), a treatise on magic and witchcraft, as they were the most circulated works on vampire lore and the supernatural at that time.

Le Fanu restored the tradition of vampires' shapeshifting powers that was a common trait of the mythological, vampire-like deity and which would significantly influence Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. In *The Vampyre* and *Varney the Vampire* the only reference to shapeshifting characteristics is suggested through the moonlight healing effect on Ruthven and Varney, an element often associated with shapeshifters as I have stated earlier, and more specifically werewolves; however, neither of them shape-shift in the narratives. Carmilla however, like the blood-drinking Egyptian deity Bastet, shape-shifts into a cat and she can also take the form of a dark object "which swelled in a moment into a great palpitating mass" (Le Fanu 87) which allows her to enter any rooms she wishes through locked doors and small apertures. Moreover Carmilla, unlike her

literary predecessors, *is* vulnerable to religious relics. While there is no indication in the text of Carmilla being weakened by daylight, she is inactive and lethargic during the day, never leaving her room before one o'clock in the morning, needing to return to her coffin to rest. However, like Ruthven and Varney, she possesses hypnotic abilities and supernatural strength. When the true nature of Carmilla is revealed, the other characters decide to open her grave. The description of her body and her destruction is very similar to the folkloric vampire's burial mentioned in earlier reports. Carmilla's true nature becomes a certainty for all the "signs were present". She is undeniably a vampire, the description of her body and features as "tinted with the warmth of life" despite the fact that she has been dead for over a century betray her nature. In her coffin, her "limbs were perfectly flexible, the flesh elastic […] Here then, were all the admitted signs and proofs of vampirism", Carmilla's body was then destroyed and "that territory has never since been plagued by the visits of a vampire" (92). The signs revealing that she is a supernatural entity and the means by which she is destroyed are clearly influenced by the accounts of actual cases of vampirism found in Calmet's work. The brutal act of beheading her and burning her to ashes, sanctioned by "ancient practice", mirrors, not only the medical description of how 'real-life' vampires are recorded to look in the grave and how to dispose of them, but also the brutalities committed against the supernatural Other—as discussed in Chapter Three.

Moving away from the folkloric tradition, however, Le Fanu adds a new characteristic to his vampire. Carmilla must call herself by an anagram of her name: thus, she is known as Mircalla, Millarca, and Carmilla. The reader is later informed that this is a characteristic of the vampire but no further clarification is given by Le Fanu. However,

it can be argued that Carmilla's repetitive use of anagrams is suggestive of her fluid and shifting identity. Her name(s), then, function as a mask concealing her true identity—and *super* nature—as she evades immediate and certain identification, a detail that fits well with the characteristics of the vampire; like Ruthven, Carmilla's *super*-nature remains ambiguous until the very end. Moreover, her vampire nature is further reflected through her tendency to only change the position of letters in the spelling of her name(s) which suggests a repetitive, never-ending cycle, indicative of her status as a revenant and a vampire.

Comparing early literary vampire works, James B. Twitchell argues that "while the male vampire story was a tale of domination, the female version was one of seduction" (39). However, Carmilla as a female vampire—and the first in English Gothic prose—is no different from Ruthven, Varney, or later Dracula, in that she too exhibits the power of dominion over her victims and she too is thirsty for the pleasures she gets from exerting such power. Laura describes being with Carmilla:

> It was like the ardour of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet overpowering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips travelled along my cheeks in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, "you are mine, you shall be mine, and you and I are one for ever." Then she has thrown me back in her chair, with her small hands over her eyes, leaving me trembling. (Le Fanu 30)

The passage is an example that illustrates the dominant, even brutal nature of Carmilla, and by extension the female vampire of the earliest Gothic texts. A *femme fatale par excellence*, she is both dominant and seductive, resembling an ancient Greek Lamia,

further bridging the link between the literary vampire and the mythological deities and demons mentioned in the previous section.

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed a revival of supernatural literature, through different authors experimenting with new, unusual kinds of blood-consuming creatures, such as Arthur Conan Doyle's psychic female vampire in "The Parasite" (1894), and H. G. Wells' short story "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid" (1895) which features a vampire-like, blood-consuming plant brought from the Andaman Islands to England. In 1897 Bram Stoker published *Dracula*, undeniably the most famous and influential work of literature featuring a vampire. Armeniur Vanbery, a professor of languages at Budapest who provided Stoker with information on vampire mythology from Eastern Europe, seems to have influenced significantly his idea for *Dracula*. Stoker also did a great deal of reading in the British Museum library to supplement his ideas (Ludlam 80). In addition, Emily Gerard's travel book on Romania, *The Land Beyond the Forest* (1888), arguably had a great impact on Stoker's notion of the vampire, as did earlier vampire fiction, in particular, Le Fanu's *Carmilla*. Indeed, Stoker employed a number of characteristics used previously in Le Fanu's tale. For example, *Dracula* too features a foreign occultist from Holland, Dr Van Helsing, who has much knowledge on vampires and vampirism and who comes to aid the characters in their fight against Count Dracula. In addition, Stoker used several folkloric elements in the creation of his vampire, such as the appearance of vampires as points of light, the introduction of St. George's Eve as a time favoured by evil spirits, and the necessity of the victims' free will as the vampire is powerless if not given permission. Jonathan enters Dracula's castle to the words: "enter freely and of your own free will!" (Stoker 25).

Count Dracula leaves no reflection in mirrors, a motif used by Alexander Dumas in *The Horror at Fontenay*, a lost novel discovered by Dennis Wheatley and published in 1975, which reflects the folkloric belief that the vampire is a soulless corpse. Van Helsing informs his companion that the vampire "throws no shadow; he makes in the mirror no reflection" (223). The absence of the shadow or the reflection of the vampire is perpetuated through a range of belief systems from mythology and folklore wherein it is commonly believed that mirrors and reflective surfaces show the soul and not the body. In this respect, then, the vampire casts no shadow for it has no soul, or as was the belief of Muslim Gypsies in what was Yugoslavia, the vampire throws no shadow because it is indeed the shadow of a dead person (Barber 188). Another characteristic element borrowed from folklore and earlier vampire texts, is Dracula's vulnerability to religious items and garlic. When he arrives at a village, a woman offers Jonathan her crucifix, garlic, mountain ash and wild roses when she learns that he is going to Castle Dracula, as she believes that those items will ward off the vampire. In addition, sunlight cannot destroy him but his powers are limited during the day. Jonathan notes that:

> The sun that rose on our sorrow this morning guards us in its course. Until it sets to-night, that monster must retain whatever form he now has. He is confined within the limitations of his earthly envelope. He cannot melt into thin air nor disappear through cracks or chinks or crannies. If he go through a doorway, he must open the door like a mortal. (Stoker 294)

Indeed, the vampire's aversion to the sun was developed much later as the result of cinematographic vampire adaptions and was first introduced in Murnau's film, *Nosferatu* (1922).

In addition to common folkloric elements of vampirism, Stoker also introduces

the belief that evil demons and the dead cannot cross running water, and can only do so

"at the slack or the flood of the tide" (243), because of the purifying attributes of water.

Moreover, like Carmilla, Dracula is endowed with shapeshifting abilities and can assume

the form of a wolf-like dog and a bat, as well as a fog or mist. Dracula's shapeshifting

abilities are not limited to such complete bodily transformations; he can also change his

physical appearance to appear younger. Indeed, the Count first appears to Jonathan in the

guise of an old man, "clean shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black

from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere" (27). Later,

Jonathan further notices the strange appearance of the Count when he notes:

> the back of his hands as they lay on his knees in the firelight, and they had
>
> seemed rather white and fine; but seeing them now close to me, I could not but
>
> notice that they were rather coarse-broad, with squat fingers. Strange to say,
>
> there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut
>
> to a sharp point. (30)

Dracula's physical appearance, especially the hairy palms, alludes to that of a

werewolf or a beast, further emphasizing his inhuman nature. Once in London,

however, Dracula's appearance is that of a young and rather attractive man,

embodying the figure of the flaneur as he navigates the streets of London. He is

indeed rejuvenated through the blood he consumes feeding on Lucy and his

other victims.

Stoker elaborated upon the folkloric tradition of destroying the undead. Lucy's

destruction by a stake to the heart is similar to that of Carmilla and the folkloric tradition.

Stoker, however, adds the need to sever the head and fill the mouth of the vampire with garlic. Count Dracula, on the other hand, is destroyed by Morris's Bowie knife instead of a wooden spike, which, one might argue, is suggestive of the nature and characteristics of vampires as ever-evolving. Stoker incorporates history and fiction in his story, and the characterisation of his vampire is inspired by the historical figure of Vlad III, a Wallachian prince who came to power in Hungary in 1456. According to Rosemary Guiley:

> At some point in his work on the novel, Stoker named his vampire "Count Vampyr." But in 1892 his notes show the name Count Dracula … Stoker liked the name and its meaning, and so he lifted it for his vampire. He did not base the count on Vlad, except to describe Dracula as being descended from the line of fierce warrior noblemen. (80-81)

Vlad III was notorious for being a cruel tyrant who enjoyed impaling his prisoners on large stakes, an act that would gain him the name of Vlad the Impaler. Historical accounts about Vlad Tepes's horrific deeds are plenty, yet there is nothing in them to suggest a connection between him and the vampires of folklore or mythology. Indeed, Stoker was the first to make such a connection between the Wallachian prince and vampirism, and his portrayal of the historical Vlad as Count Dracula inspired by Romanian superstition is purely fictional (McNally and Florescu 11), and the result of a mixture of vampire myths, folk beliefs and Byronic hero characteristics introduced in Polidori's *The Vampyre*. Through Van Helsing's knowledge of the history of the vampire, Stoker establishes a link between his vampire and the vampire of mythology and folklore. Van Helsing informs the reader that the vampire "is known everywhere that

men have been. In old Greece, in old Rome; he flourishes in Germany all over, in France, in India, even in the Chersoneses; and in China … The vampire live on, and cannot die by mere passing of time; he can flourish when that he can fatten on the blood of the living" (Stoker 242).

Indeed, the vampire lives on and vampire-like beings continued to populate numerous works of fiction throughout the twentieth century. Many contributors to American Pulp magazines wrote stories about blood-drinking supernatural beings. Popular examples include: "Four Wooden Stakes" by Victor Rowan (1925), and works by H. P. Lovecraft such as "The Hound" (1926) and "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" (1941), all published in the *Weird Tales* pulp magazine from 1923 until 1954. What these tales have in common is a rather distinct characteristic in that they all combine horror, the weird and the Gothic in the portrayal of the respective vampires.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* paved the way for the contemporary supernatural being. In 1976, only a couple of weeks after her five-year-old daughter, Michele, died of leukaemia, Rice started writing her vampire tale. *Interview with the Vampire* is imbued with Rice's own grief over the loss of her daughter, inspiring the creation of one of Rice's most uncanny vampires, the child-vampire Claudia. Claudia's uncanniness is enhanced by the fact that as time passes she becomes an adult woman trapped in the body of a child for decades, until her ultimate death. One can speculate that through Claudia, Rice creates a reflection of the young woman her own daughter might have been. Through her vampire family (composed of Louis, Lestat, and Claudia), Rice attempts to both create and subvert the model of the nuclear family. However, the nature of the Gothic family is often characterised by

conflict, and Rice's vampire family is certainly conflicted. As Lestat and Claudia resent their creator, the family is destroyed. This further emphasises the negative approach of pre-twenty-first century Gothic towards family dynamics within a supernatural context. Twenty-first century YA Gothic, on the other hand, subverts the nature of the Gothic family to allow for a more positive dynamic, as I discuss in Chapter Four.

Rice's Gothic novels are also influenced by her own life experiences in another notable way. The existential questioning that Rice's vampires go through and the moral and theological anguish they experience reflects, for example, her own struggles with organized religions and institutionalized Christianity in particular. Rice has had a tumultuous relationship with religion, rejecting the church when she was eighteen, only to return to it in 1998 as she began writing Christian-themed novels. However, in 2010 Rice rejected Christianity once again, in a message posted on Facebook, confirming her disagreement with the Church's view on a number of issues, notably homosexuality and gender.

Rice's personal life experiences contribute significantly to the innovative aspect of the figure of the vampire in her tales. Within the Gothic literary tradition, Rice's vampires, both as a continuation of the tradition established by early Gothic fiction and a manifestation of innovative characteristics, have added more depth to the traditional literary vampire. Her vampires are aristocratic, seductive, pale-skinned and physically attractive, and exhibit heightened philosophical views on the meaning of existence and their own damnation. The transformation process they go through refines and perfects their physical beauty and strength, allowing them to better lure their victims, and the older they get the less human they become—a characteristic that is also used in twenty-

first-century YA vampire narratives. In her description of the interviewer's first glance of

the vampire in the first book in the series, *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), Rice writes,

"[t]he vampire was utterly white and smooth, as if he were sculpted from bleached bone,

and his face was as seemingly inanimate as a statue, except for two brilliant green eyes

that looked down at the boy intently like flames in a skull. But then the vampire smiled

almost wistfully" (6). Rice's vampires, it can be argued, rise to the status of the blood-

drinking deities of ancient mythologies. In *The Queen of the Damned* (1988), for

example, Akasha, the progenitor of all vampires in the series—also referred to as the

Great Mother—was a queen of Kemet, present day Egypt, who rose to the status of a

deity when a bloodthirsty spirit, "Amel, the terrible" (291), entwined himself with her

dying soul. Rice endows her vampires with characteristics and supernatural attributes

observed in the vampire-like deities mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Indeed,

Rice uses an amalgamation of characteristics from folklore and mythology (with an

emphasis on the latter), earlier vampire texts, and even vampiric elements from the

cinematic tradition to create her vampires. Although Rice's vampires are not affected by

garlic or crosses, nor can they be destroyed by wooden stakes through their hearts, they

cannot tolerate daylight, and when exposed to it, younger vampires combust and turn into

ashes. Furthermore, they are unable to shape-shift, but instead their enhanced telepathic

and telekinetic powers allow them to communicate and to control elements and influence

the human mind—this particular ability is not exclusive to them, however, as telepathic

connections also feature in *Dracula* where after drinking the blood of the Count, Mina

becomes connected to him. Yet, regardless of the fact that Rice's vampires bear limited

similarities to the traditional vampire in Gothic literature, as I have suggested earlier, her

vampires are regarded as much as a continuation of a literary tradition as they are a reworking of some of the established elements associated with the vampire—a prominent technique of writing the vampire in twenty-first-century YA Gothic.

One reason behind my detailed discussion of the characteristics of the vampire from Polidori to Rice in the above section is because vampires shape most of the critical discussion regarding monsters, both in adult and YA Gothic fiction, as I have mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis. Discussions of the portrayal of the vampire in contemporary YA Gothic are, more often than not, concerned with what form, shape and nature the vampire should take, and linger on whether or not vampires should sparkle, or be vegetarian, or fall in love, or marry, or procreate. Stephenie Meyer's vampires, for example, have been strongly criticized because they are not frightening enough and because they sparkle in the sun, and for that they are often rejected from the canon of legitimate vampire literature.

This characteristic is added by Meyer to explain why her vampires cannot go out in the sun: when the vampire venom is injected into the victim it freezes, crystalizing all organs and blood, and hence the victim, now a vampire with "icy marble skin" (Meyer 227), sparkles in the light. Yet the Twilight Saga continues to be rejected as Gothic by some academics, readers and even other writers, on the basis that the series' vampires are different to any other fictional vampire that preceded them—they are not 'real' vampires. In 2011, Anne Rice posted her opinion on Meyer's vampires in *Twilight* on her official Facebook page:

> Lestat and Louie [sic] feel sorry for vampires that sparkle in the sun.
>
> They would never hurt immortals who choose to spend eternity going to

high school over and over again in a small town—anymore than they

would hurt the physically disabled or the mentally challenged. My

vampires possess gravitas. They can afford to be merciful. (Facebook

Post 2011)

Although Rice has never read one of Meyer's books, here, she essentially establishes

distinct boundaries between her vampires and the vampires in *Twilight*, dismissing any

relation they may have with her vampires who in her view are an *authentic* representation

of the vampire. By stressing that Louis and Lestat would never hurt the Cullens for the

choices they have made, she places herself at the self-proclaimed serious end of the

hierarchy of vampire literature authors, deeming the two types of vampires unworthy of

comparison. The above quotation sparked backlash and criticism from fans of Meyer,

following which Rice declared in a video interview on her YouTube channel that she

simply did not agree with how "the concept of the immortal and how we imagine the

immortal" (YouTube 2011) was portrayed in the Twilight books, and stressed that the

idea of a vampire attending high school instead of travelling the world did not appeal to

her. This statement, however, suggests that Rice is not taking into account the diversity of

vampires in the series, for while the Cullens choose to live a seemingly normal life

amongst humans, the other vampires lead very different lifestyles; the fact that the

Cullens occupy the same geographical space as humans is also very important in the

development of the supernatural, as I discuss in Chapter Three. Yet Rice's vampires may

not be so different from their counterparts in the Twilight saga. In addition to their

tendency to grieve over a possible eternal damnation, their constant questioning of what

constitutes good or evil and their search for meaning and redemption, which they share

with a number of supernatural Others in the YA Gothic texts discussed in Chapter Three,

Rice's vampires share common ground with the contemporary YA vampire. Indeed,

Hannah Priest draws attention to a possible connection between Rice's vampires and

Meyer's; specifically, Priest comments on Lestat's appearance with his "extremely white

and highly reflective skin that has to be powdered for camera of any kind" (Rice 9 qtd. in

Priest 2011). Lestat, in other words, sparkles too, since he resorts to using powder to

cover his mirror-like skin. Whether or not Meyer was influenced by this detail is

unknown, but the indication of a possible similarity between Lestat and Edward is

compelling. Nevertheless, produced in the Eighties to mirror a different time and a

wholly different readership's expectations, Rice's vampires do not necessarily appeal to a

contemporary YA readership as they reflect a culture and a society that is different to

theirs today.

　　　　The physical appearance of the vampire plays a pivotal role in the development of

its reception and appeal to readers. In *Twilight*, Meyer describes Edward as follows:

> His skin, white despite the faint flush from yesterday's hunting trip,
>
> literally sparkled, like thousands of tiny diamonds were embedded in
>
> the surface. He lay perfectly still in the grass, his shirt open over his
>
> sculpted, incandescent chest, his scintillating bare arms. His glistening,
>
> pale lavender-lids were shut, though of course he didn't sleep. A perfect
>
> statue, carved in some unknown stone, smooth like marble, glittering
>
> like crest. (228)

In this passage Edward is described as possessing otherworldly beauty; he might well be

a work of art, a masterpiece of some genius artist. Of course, this description is not

exclusive to Edward, since the Cullens are generally described as statuesque and astoundingly, inhumanly beautiful; Rosalie, for instance, is described as beautiful "beyond belief" (Meyer 34). This emphasis on the vampire's physical appearance that most often transcends the human attainment of beauty is not something new, as I have indicated earlier. The first vampires of Gothic literature, with the exception of Varney, are always described as physically attractive. Lord Ruthven, for example, is introduced in the story in terms of attractiveness and although his face is deathly pale, "its form and outline were beautiful" (Polidori 22); and Dracula in his rejuvenated self is also attractive (Stoker 139). Furthermore, in "La Morte Amoureuse", Clarimonde is described as "all sparkling with prismatic colors [sic], and surrounded with such a purple penumbra as one beholds in gazing at the sun" (Gautier 55); likewise, Lewis' Lucifer—although not a vampire—is described as beautiful with the shimmering light that emanates from him, as I have noted in Chapter One. So the idea of the sparkling supernatural being is not entirely novel and was indeed used to emphasise the otherworldliness of the supernatural characters in earlier Gothic narratives.

The scene from *Twilight* quoted above evidently highlights how Edward is both appealing and perplexing; Bella even finds his appearance to be "shocking" no matter how long she stared at him (Meyer 228). His appearance and his very nature— mysterious, unknown like "the unknown stone" (*Twilight* 228) he might have been carved from—emphasize his Otherness. Moreover, Bella's description of Edward is also suggestive of her confusion in regard to what he truly is; at this point in the novel Bella has already discovered that Edward and his family are indeed vampires after his strange behaviour incites her to do her own investigation. However, Bella's description of how

Edward reveals to her his vampire nature by exposing his bare chest to sunlight—quoted above—is surprisingly sublime and far from what one might expect the experience of witnessing a vampire reveal its supernatural nature would be like. His very status as a vampire is confusing to her. Bella is taken aback by the radiant beauty of the being lying next to her, and is mesmerized by him, oblivious to the dangers he represents and the damage he might cause her. Edward here, arguably, resembles the supernatural beings of the late-eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Gothic literature; like Lewis's Lucifer and Gautier's Clarimonde, Edward is described as luminous. He also echoes Lord Ruthven's, Carmilla's and Dracula's ability to hypnotize their victims with his hypnotic-like hold over Bella, shielding the truth of the dangers he represents from her and the human world.[16] Edward is, then, "like a mirage, too beautiful to be real" and everything "paled next to his magnificence" (261).

Moreover, the passage quoted above also associates Edward, and by extension Meyer's vampires, not only with the Victorian vampire—although they share, as stated earlier, their charisma and aristocratic-like status, and are certainly not the decomposing, grotesque vampires of folklore—but with more ancient incarnations of the vampire: namely, the blood consuming deities of myths and legends. Edward, with his scintillating, statuesque appearance, is presented as god-like, and several critics have indeed pointed out the connection between Edward and Apollo, the Greek deity of light; Spooner, for instance, indicates that Edward is more "Apollonian rather than Dionysian" (86). This connection with light (Apollo) rather than darkness (Dionysus) can be read in Spooner's

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[16] The hypnotic powers of the vampire in Gothic literature are often associated with his or her erotic nature.

words as "anti-Gothic" (86) because of the Gothic's emphasis on darkness as a medium

of expressing and representing the supernatural. However, this can also be suggestive of

the nature of the Gothic in twenty-first-century YA literature, in that YA Gothic is more

invested in the aesthetic, romantic roots of the Gothic rather than the barbaric,

particularly in portraying the supernatural Other as Sublime. The vampire—and by

extension, the supernatural Other—has almost always been portrayed as barbaric,

unsophisticated, and a harbinger of chaos, as the examples examined earlier in this

chapter illustrate. However, while twenty-first-century YA Gothic is still concerned with

the disruptive, often destructive, nature of the supernatural Others, it emphasizes their

ability to inspire awe and veneration. Additionally, this connection between YA Gothic

of the twenty-first century also signposts a milestone in the development of the vampire

myth, and supernatural beings in general, whereby they become, as Spooner suggests, a

representation of "order rather than chaos" (87). Indeed, the supernatural Others of YA

Gothic, such as the Cullens and the Shadowhunters, have for the most part become more

sophisticated and civilised than their human counterparts—a point to which I will return

in Chapter Three. This distancing from the barbaric, offers, I argue, a progressive

approach to Otherness in twenty-first-century YA Gothic.

Interestingly, when Bella starts her 'investigation' after she becomes suspicious of

Edward and the Cullens' strange behaviour, she turns to her friend, Jacob Black, who is

later revealed to be a werewolf. Jacob tells her of an ancient story about "the *cold ones*"

(Meyer, *Twilight* 107) who are, supposedly, the enemies of the Quileutes, and how his

great-grandfather made a peace treaty with them for as long as they remain away from

their territories and feed only on animal blood.[17] Later in her room, now even more obsessed with finding out the truth, she starts her own research and stumbles on an "academic-looking" (*Twilight* 116) website with, on the home page, two quotations by Montague Summers and Rousseau respectively. Meyer's reference to Summers's and Rousseau's research and writing on the subject of the vampire—both mentioned earlier—illustrates Meyer's knowledge of the different mythologies and lore surrounding the vampire. Meyer attempts to place her vampires within the wider, established tradition of vampiric beings recorded throughout history instead of basing them on the image of the vampire that has become canonical, especially in films. Hence at one point during her research Bella notices that the vampires shown in her web search results are nothing like the vampires she has seen on television (*Twilight* 116).

In the film adaptation of Meyer's novel, the research is shown in a scene where Bella, following her discussion with Jacob, purchases a book on Quileute mythology and comes across 'The Cold One' or Apotamkin, a vampire deity from Native American mythology[18]. On typing the words on her computer, the search engine brings up images of vampire-like beings from across various mythologies. In the book—as well as in the movie—Bella takes the role of the investigator, the researcher who uncovers the truth about the vampire:

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[17] 'Quileutes': a tribe residing in Forks whose members possess the ability to shape-shift into wolves.

[18] There is no such being as 'The Cold One' in Native American mythology, as Stephenie Meyer states in an article published on her website. She has however added this fictional legend to create a link between the Quileute's legends and superstitions and her vampires. (stepheniemeyer.com)

> I made a little catalogue in my mind as I'd read and carefully compared it with each myth. Speed, strength, beauty, pale skin, eyes that shift color; and then Jacob's criteria: blood drinkers, enemies of the werewolf, cold skinned, and immortal. There were very few myths that matched even one factor.
>
> And then another problem, one that I remembered from the small number of scary movies I'd seen and was backed by my today's reading — vampires couldn't come out in the daytime, the sun would burn them to cinder. They slept in coffins all day and came out only at night. (Meyer, *Twilight* 117)

In her investigative research, Bella "read[s] carefully through the descriptions" (*Twilight* 116) and considers historic reports, Jacob's story, and whatever little knowledge she has from television to try and unravel the truth about Edward. Meyer, through Bella's research, thus clearly demonstrates the nature of her vampires, a demonstration which almost reads as a disclaimer, stating that in reading her story one will indeed encounter a 'new' interpretation of the vampire, different to the one we may have become accustomed to.

Moreover, the tradition of endowing the vampire with new characteristics in YA Gothic does not end with Meyer's series. Indeed, Silvia Moreno-Garcia's *Certain Dark Things* (2016) introduces vampires from Latin American, European, Asian and African mythologies, and in Julie Kagawa's *The Immortal Rules* (2012- present) vampires are formed as the result of a virus. Kagawa, who writes mainly about shapeshifters and fairies, and is more famous for The Iron Fey series (2010-2015), expresses her apprehension about writing vampire fiction following Meyer's success during an interview with *Publishers Weekly*; she states: "I didn't feel I had anything to add.

Twilight was in full swing, and I didn't want to follow the crowd…I was a little bit apprehensive because vampires were so popular, but I decided my vampires would be old-school: nasty, blood-drinking creatures that burst into flames in the sun" (Lear, Q&A with Julie Kagawa). Kagawa's statement also points to the variety of material available to YA Gothic writers, and vampire fiction writers in general, in terms of the characterisation of their vampires and stresses the idea that vampire fiction can still be inspired by "old-school" portrayals of the vampire. In the Vampire Academy series (2007-2010), for example, Richelle Mead bases her vampires on Slavic folklore and mythology after she took a class on the subject at the University of Michigan (Mead and Rowen 253); the series features some of the most common incarnations of the vampire in folklore, notably Moroi (royal vampires possessing elemental magic), Strigoi (evil, demonic vampires), and Dhampir (human-vampire hybrids).

In yet another prominent example of vampires in YA Gothic fiction, Cassandra Clare re-associates the vampire myth with Vlad III. Clare's *The Shadowhunter's Codex* (2013), a companion novel to *The Shadowhunter's Chronicles* (2007- present) and set as a guide to the Shadowhunters' universe, offers the reader a concise history of the Shadowhunters and their world, as well as information on all the supernatural beings in the series. Clare's vampires, also referred to as "Children of the Night" (Clare and Lewis 87) are a species of "Downworlders" (88) whose origins are linked to "the Court of Wallachia, in what is now Romania" (90) and associated with Vlad III Tepes.[19] However

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[19] 'Downworlders' are supernatural hybrid creatures who are said to be the offspring of humans and demons. They consist of four species: vampires, werewolves, warlocks, and the fey. (Clare and Lewis 81)

in Clare's universe, Vlad III, in a sacrificial blood ceremony where he impaled soldiers captured in war on tall wooden spikes, summoned the "Greater Demon Hecate" (90) who, pleased by the blood that was shed in her name, transformed Vlad III and the majority of his court into the first vampires and granted them immortality (90). Ironically, wooden spikes shaped in a similar fashion to the ones Vlad III used to impale his sacrifices became one of the most common weapons to kill a vampire. Through Vlad III and his court, vampirism in Clare's account spread throughout the world as a demonic disease—a common theme in contemporary YA vampire narratives to which I will return in Chapter Three. In *City of Ashes* (2008) Raphael Santiago, former leader of New York's vampire clan, explains how a vampire is created; he says: "[i]t is how we are made. We are drained, blooded, and buried. When he digs his own way out of a grave, that is when a vampire is born" (Clare 195). The description that Raphael provides here is very similar to that of the folkloric vampire mentioned previously.

Indeed, Clare remains true to most of the characteristics associated with the vampire in folklore and introduced in early Gothic literature as she explains how her vampires came to be. Characteristics such as aversion to sunlight and religious items and the special properties of "the dirt of the grave in which a vampire was buried" (Clare and Lewis 93) are also present in Clare's depiction of the vampire; in addition, they leave no reflection in mirrors because "more than any other Downworlders [they] seem to have one foot in Hell already and to not be entirely present in our world" (92). Clare brings together various elements from different literary and religious sources. For example, the Shadowhunters are based on the notion of the Nephilim mentioned in Genesis as the offspring of 'the sons of God' and the 'daughters of men'. Moreover, the Angel Raziel

worshipped by the Shadowhunters is an Archangel in Jewish Kabbalistic tradition, often referred to as the Angel of Knowledge and known for having given Adam a book of wisdom in the Garden of Eden.[20]

In examining the history of supernatural beings in the first section of this chapter, the purpose has been to present their tales and their numerous incarnations as an evolution rather than a set formula to be used and re-used *à la lettre*. For what constitutes a 'good' vampire in Gothic literature? What makes one portrayal far more acceptable than another? The answer to these questions lies within the nature of the Gothic itself and urges us to reconsider the reception of not only the earliest depictions of the vampire in Gothic fiction, but the reception of Gothic literature in general, which has been discussed in Chapter One. Roberto Fernández Retamar, commenting on Stoker's *Dracula*, observes that fifty years earlier, "taking the Count [Dracula] seriously was not considered respectable" (22); here Retamar's observation resonates clearly with the dynamic surrounding the act of writing and reading both the Gothic and the vampire as a process defined by the possibility for change and adaptability.

On the subject of the vampire's continuing appeal in the twenty-first century, Priest suggests that:

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[20] *The Shadowhunters Chronicles* comprises of five series (three published, and two upcoming in 2020 and 2022). When it comes to literary references, each series in the chronicles is based—loosely—on a significant work of literature that informs the overall series: *The Mortal Instruments* is based on Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Inferno*, while its prequel *The Infernal Devices*, and its sequel *The Dark Artifices* are based on Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* and Poe's *Annabel Lee*. In recent interviews, Clare announced that her two upcoming series in the chronicles, *The Last Hours* (coming out in November 2020) and *The Wicked Powers* (scheduled for 2022) are based on *Dickens's Great Expectations* and Arthurian Legend, respectively.

The reason so many of us hate sparkly vampires is because, put simply, they are not written for us …when we rail against sparkly vampires, we are railing against another generation's Gothic. We embody *Northanger Abbey*'s description of commentators who 'abuse such effusion of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in thread-bare strains of trash with which the press now groans'…What is significant is that 'trash' to which Austen refers is now the 'correct' Gothic against which sparkly vampires fiction is now measured. (Priest 2011)

Priest's argument that "sparkly vampires" are indeed "not written for us"—referring to an older generation of vampire literature readers—may suggest that the issue most detractors of the 'new' vampire have is an issue of identification. This suggestion echoes Auerbach's commentary on the vampire's adaptability to different ages, in the sense that every age has its own vampire, a mirror to the culture that creates it, and it would be wrong to return to earlier Gothic incarnations of the vampire to judge its portrayal in contemporary times. Accordingly, the sublime vampire-like deities of mythology, the folkloric grotesque vampire, the aristocratic vampire of early Gothic writings, the rock-star vampire of the late twentieth century, and the 'sparkly' vampire of the twenty-first century are all legitimate representations of the blood-consuming being—all have their own place in the literature and make their own contribution to the continuation of vampire fiction and supernatural narratives in general. The vampires—as well as other supernatural beings—of twenty-first-century YA Gothic literature are indeed, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, written with a contemporary, mostly young adult reader in mind.

Moreover, considering the long and diverse history of vampire lore and the properties of vampire-like beings that informed the first incarnations of the vampires of Gothic literature, it is futile to try to enforce fixed definitions and characteristics that cannot be changed and condemn all vampire narratives that do not follow them as inauthentic, as I have argued earlier. Stoker's Dracula, for example, is as much a reinvention of vampire folklore as he is a product of it. It is for this reason that the vampire, I would like to suggest, should be equally created and read as an ever-evolving character reflecting the literary genre it belongs to, a character that, although its roots go back as far as the earliest accounts of human history as demonstrated earlier in this chapter, is permitted to reinvent itself. The vampire must be liberated from the constraints imposed on its characterization, only then can it truly be immortal. The nature of early vampire folk tales was fluid, with the notion of what exactly qualified as a vampire varying widely from culture to culture as discussed earlier. Some of the creatures classified as vampires in those tales referred to different entities in the past and are now segmented into different categories in modern monster pantheons, including shapeshifters, werewolves, ghosts, jinns, faes and deities. So, rather than being simple 'copies' of each other, they offer an exploration into the wealth of sources that YA authors use for their writing. These sources are not limited to traditional Gothic texts, as I have mentioned before, rather they range from myths and legends to fairy tales as the following section demonstrates.

Before I move on to the next section of this chapter, however, it is important to note here that the figure of the vampire plays a significant role in the revival of supernatural fiction during the second half of the twentieth century, leading to a

phenomenal popularity in the twenty-first century and especially in the genre of YA

supernatural fiction as I have demonstrated in Chapter One. Furthermore, the changes

that the vampire undergoes in the development of its portrayal in literature can often be

re-inscribed to other supernatural beings, notably to the werewolf, who was

overshadowed by the vampire in early Gothic fiction. Indeed, it is difficult to find any

literary representations of the werewolf, as stories with such supernatural beings were

relegated to the Penny Dreadfuls, with few examples published as short stories; as

Andrew Barger argues in his introduction to *The Best Werewolf Short Stories 1800-1849*

(2010), the "transformation of the werewolf in literature made its greatest strides in the

nineteenth century when the monster leapt from poetry to the short story" (13).

Consequently, as Robert MacKay and John Miller observe, "the werewolf is the least

tracked of the three cardinal species of monster, overshadowed in the moonlight by

vampires and the recent zombie hordes" (xx). Belonging to an ancient lore of

shapeshifting beings, they are arguably more present in the fairy tale tradition where

transformations and metamorphosis are very common. This, however, does not imply the

supremacy of the vampire over other incarnations of the supernatural in contemporary

YA Gothic literature. On the contrary, YA Gothic narratives offer a space for the re-

emergence of almost-forgotten monsters and supernatural beings from the Gothic realm,

and, as the next section will demonstrate, from the fairy tale tradition as well. Gail

Carriger, for instance, in The Parasol Protectorate series (2009-2012) depicts a Victorian

England where vampires and werewolves are integrated members of society; likewise,

Maggie Stiefvater's werewolves in The Wolves of Mercy Falls series (2009-2014) take

the role of protectors, and Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Saga features shapeshifters who take the form of wolves.

Tales of Wonder and the Gothic

Hitherto it has been pointed out that the early Gothic texts and the YA Gothic of the twenty-first century use diverse source materials for the characterization and the portrayal of the supernatural. In the last two decades, the fairy tale has also become an increasingly popular format of storytelling for authors of contemporary YA Gothic literature. Although I do not intend to dwell on the various definitions and detailed history of the fairy tale as a genre, for that has already been done by a number of scholars—namely Bruno Bettelheim, Katharine-Mary Briggs, Jack Zipes, Marina Warner and Maria Tatar—who have written extensively on the subject of the fairy tale, a brief overview of the history of the fairy tale as a literary tradition is necessary here to identify some of the similarities it shares with the Gothic genre and to effectively analyse its use in YA Gothic, in terms of it being a source for supernatural beings.

In "The Meaning of Fairy Tale within the Evolution of Culture" (2011), Jack Zipes notes that the fairy tale was first "a simple, imaginative oral tale containing magical and miraculous elements and was related to the belief systems, values, rites, and experiences of pagan peoples" (221). It is not until the development of print production that "the conventions of literary storytelling were established" (Zipes 212), and tales were adapted from the oral tradition. Much like the Gothic and YA literature, the fluid nature of the fairy tale, as it is most familiarly called now, makes the task of setting a fixed

definition for it quite challenging, and nearly impossible as most scholars of the genre

agree. Defining the genre has been rendered even more challenging because of the

simplistic form of the fairy tale as well as its most common conventions and themes,

which most often include cannibalism, incest, curses, and shapeshifting. Indeed, as

Donald Haase notes:

> Despite its currency and apparent simplicity, the term "fairy tale" resists a
>
> universally accepted or universally satisfying definition. For some, the term
>
> denotes a specific narrative form with easily identified characteristics, but for
>
> others it suggests not a singular genre but an umbrella category under which a
>
> variety of other forms may be grouped. Definitions of "fairy tale" often tend to
>
> include a litany of characteristics to account for the fact the term has been applied
>
> to stories as diverse as "Cinderella," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Hansel and
>
> Gretel," "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Lucky Hans," "Bluebeard," and "Henny-
>
> Penny". (322)

Furthermore, the role that fairy tales play in society, culture and history, has been the

subject of debate for decades, and as such the ways to approach the genre differ

significantly. Another possible reason for the difficulty in defining the fairy tale or

tracing its exact origins, according to several critics including, Haase, Zipes, and Tatar, is

related to the term 'fairy tale' which was never used to refer to tales we now recognize as

such. The term 'fairy tale' stems from the English translation of *contes de fées*, coined by

Baronesse Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy in 1697 in her collection of stories titled *Les contes*

des fées (1697-98), and which was later translated to English as *Tales of the Fairies*

(1707).

Moreover, Zipes notes that unlike in France and Germany, the fairy tale did not

properly emerge in England until the nineteenth century:

> This late flowering is somehow puzzling, for Great Britain had been a
>
> fertile ground for folklore in the Middle Ages ... however the literary fairy
>
> tale failed to establish itself as an independent genre in the eighteenth
>
> century, when one might have expected it to bloom as it did in France. The
>
> fairies and elves seemed to have been doomed from their homeland, as if a
>
> magic spell had been cast over Britain. (xiv)

He blames this on the rise of the Enlightenment which assumed a hostile position towards

the fairy tale and supernatural literature, as has been discussed in Chapter One. One can

certainly discern a pattern here and a parallel between the Gothic and the fairy tale,

especially in regards to supernatural beings, vampires and fairies alike being deemed

dangerous for the reader. As Zipes points out in *Victorian Fairy Tales: The Revolt of the*

Fairies and the Elves (1989):

> The nineteenth century saw a resurgence of interest in the fairy tale as a legitimate
>
> element of literary culture, influenced by translations of the Brothers Grimm's
>
> tales (1823), the tales of Hans Christian Andersen (1846), and new translations of
>
> the Arabian Nights. Twenty-nine new literary fairy tales emerged, like John
>
> Ruskin's 'The King of the Golden River' (1841). (35)

This "resurgence" that Zipes refers to further emphasises the role of the

nineteenth century in the revival of supernatural literature, a revival that is indebted to a

renewed fascination with tales of wonder from around the world and from different

cultures, and the various beings that characterize them. Most of the fairy tales produced

in the nineteenth century were marketed for children, and thus, perhaps as a consequence, in Victorian literature the fairy tale takes a utopian tone, diverging greatly from the more traditional, often sinister, dark and Gothic themes of the tales. The emphasis on the didactic element of literature intended for children necessitated that the tales had to undergo extensive changes and edits designed to make them more appropriate for a young audience. As Zipes observes:

> [The Grimms] eliminated erotic and sexual elements that might be
> offensive to middle-class morality, added numerous Christian
> expressions and references, emphasized specific role models for male
> and female protagonists according to the dominant patriarchal code of
> that time, and endowed many of the tales with a 'homey' or
> *biedermeier* flavour by the use of diminutives, quaint expressions, and
> cute descriptions. (78)

However, originally, children were not the intended audience of fairy tales. Fairy tales are vastly different before and after the Grimm Brothers and the Victorian valorisation of on children's innocence. As Maria Tatar writes:

> In fact, Wilhelm Grimm rewrote the tales so extensively and went so far in the
> direction of eliminating off-color [sic] episodes that he can be credited with
> sanitizing folktales and thereby paving the way for the process that made them
> acceptable children's literature in all cultures. (24)

Before these events, fairy tales were darker in tone and often extremely violent. Yet even after the Grimm Brothers effected their sanitization of the tales, gruesome and violent elements tended, however, not to be eliminated, and as Patrick Bridgwater notes "some of

the Grimms' Nursery and Household tales are in effect Gothic tales" (76). Furthermore, commenting on Gothic literature's connection with the fairy tale, Karen Coats states that "traditional adult Gothic has tended to give a sinister inflection to fairy tale tropes and motifs, combining elements of horror and the supernatural to produce situations in which the humble subject can become a hero or a heroine, beset on all sides but ultimately (usually) triumphant" (78). In *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)* originally published in 1812*,* "The Juniper Tree", for instance, confronts the reader with the dark themes of the Gothic: murder, death, child abuse and cannibalism, as well as shapeshifting. In the tale, the boy killed by his step-mother turns into a bird that flies from one house to another to sing his fate:

My mother, she killed me,

My father, he ate me,

My sister Marlene,

Gathered all my bones,

Tied them in a silken scarf,

Laid them beneath the juniper tree,

Tweet, tweet, what a beautiful bird am I. (153)

Several other stories in the collection feature similar dark themes, such as *Snow White*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Red Riding Hood*.[21] Whether they are indeed written for children

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[21] It comes as no surprise that these tales are amongst the most reworked in twenty-first-century YA Gothic. Rosamund Hodge's *Crimson Bound* (2015), for example, is a retelling of Red Riding Hood set in a fantastical medieval France setting, while Merissa Meyer's *Scarlet* (2013) offers a version of the tale set in a futuristic world. A recent anthology by Leigh Bardugo, *The Language of Thrones* (2017), reimagines a selection of myths, folklore, and fairy tales, including Hansel and Gretel.

or not, fairy tales and the Gothic are thus similar in their key motifs, as exemplified above.

Having now briefly introduced the fairy tale and its relation to the Gothic, the discussion in the following section focuses on the Gothic aspects of the fairy tales that manifest themselves in YA Gothic of the twenty-first century. Also, despite the apparent narrative and thematic similarities between fairy tales and Gothic narratives noted above, it is not my wish to suggest that they are effectively the same. Rather, I argue that because the fairy tale and the Gothic in literature both use the same sources for the creation of the narrative, a connecting link can be established. For the purpose of this chapter, I focus primarily on fairy tales that feature supernatural beings.

In retracing the origins of the fairy tale to Lucius Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, which dates back to the second century AD, Bridgwater remarks that "it includes incidents as 'horrid' as any of those devised by the writers of Gothic Romance" (74), and he comes to the conclusion that the fact that the "fairytale [sic] and Gothic have a common origin is shown by the fact that *The Golden Ass* contains models for the fairytale [sic] as well as for the Gothic, and by the narrative stocks-in-trade common to both" (75). Indeed *The Golden Ass* is an important source for fairy tale retellings—old and new—as it features as one of its stories a variant of one of the most retold and readapted tales in YA Gothic of the twenty-first century, "Beauty and the Beast". Apuleius' tale "Eros and Psyche", also referred to as "Cupid and Psyche" (in Hamilton's 1942 translation) as well as "The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche", is regarded by several scholars, including Tatar and Warner, as the first incarnation of the "tale as old as time", as Disney refers to its animated adaptation of *Beauty and Beast* (1991). In Apuleius' tale Psyche, the heroine, is

the youngest of her sisters, endowed with great beauty, and she sparks the envy of

Aphrodite who asks her son to curse Psyche with "a passion for some low, mean,

unworthy being, so that she may reap a mortification as great as her present exultation

and triumph" (Tatar 8). Cursed and unable to find a suitable husband, Psyche is taken by

her worried parents to the oracle of Apollo who informs them that she is destined to

marry "a monster whom neither gods nor man can resist" (8). Sure enough, Psyche

marries and leads a pleasant life despite having never seen what her husband looked like,

until her sisters convince her to light a lamp and see him in his sleep, and cut off his head

if he is indeed a monster. Following her sisters advice, Psyche lights a lamp and uncovers

the truth about her husband, who upon waking up leaves her for she has not respected his

request. What ensues is Psyche's journey to reclaim Eros, and by means of supernatural

assistance she is able to achieve all the tasks Aphrodite imposes on her and finally

reunites with her husband. The themes and tropes in the tale are replayed continuously in

YA Gothic, as in the examples mentioned below. Moreover, the description of Eros

offers a number of parallels with the supernatural beings of Gothic literature. He

possesses the ability to shape-shift, being described at the beginning of the story as a

golden-winged serpent, and he is believed to be a monster, only to be revealed later as

"the most beautiful and charming of gods, with his golden ringlets wandering over his

snow neck and crimson cheek" (11). In this respect, Eros is described in a similar fashion

to Edward and most of the male supernatural beings of YA Gothic literature.

Another incarnation of the tale is also found in the Norwegian fairy tale "East of

the Sun, West of the Moon," a haunting story in which a youngest daughter weds a

terrifying bear only to discover that he is a handsome, enchanted young man who casts

off his bear pelt in the dark hours of night. The prince here can easily be read as a

shapeshifter who takes the form of a bear. Indeed, shapeshifting is a theme common to

both fairy tales and the Gothic and one that is commonly used in contemporary YA

Gothic fairy tales. Stories like "East of the Sun, West of the Moon", where the heroine

marries either an animal or an invisible bridegroom who turns out to be a handsome

youth at the end of the story, are very common in many of the world's fairy tale

traditions. These stories also draw upon the motif of the "animal bridegroom" as

categorised by Bettelheim; as Tatar notes, "'Beauty and the Beast' is so deeply

entrenched in our thinking about tales featuring a companionate/romantic pairing of beats

and humans that we are often unaware that it is a mere nostalgic remnant of a vast

repertoire of stories about animal grooms and animal brides" (xi).[22] The tales often follow

the same trajectory of events: both Psyche and the Norwegian heroine break a promise to

their bridegroom when they light a candle in order to see their husband's human form,

thus chasing him off and beginning a quest that will take them to the ends of the earth,

often in some kind of disguise, to find him again. Stories classified by scholars as subtype

C[23]—"The search for the lost husband"—usually end with the nonhuman husband's

transformation into a human in older version of the tales. De Beaumont's version of "The

Beauty and the Beast", for instance, emphasizes the restoration of the

human/animal/supernatural borders through the Beast's return to his former, human self,

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[22] The beastial shape that the prince/male character takes varies depending on the local folklore
from which the tale emerges, and the common beast of the area, as I have explained earlier in
regard to shapeshifting.

[23] For more information on the different tale type classifications and descriptions, see "From the
Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography" (1964) by Antti Aarne and Stith
Thompson in *The Classic Fairy Tales* (1999) by Maria Tatar.

thus relinquishing all aspects of his supernatural nature and taking on the role of the ideal husband. The prince is literally freed from his bestial prison. This presents a sharp contrast with the retellings of the animal bridegroom tales in contemporary YA Gothic literature, as more often animal partners become supernatural lovers and no attempt is made to restore them or transform them to a human, as the subsequent chapters will demonstrate.

The twenty-first-century YA gothic fairy tale often adapts traditional fairy tales, continuing what has become a literary tradition of adaptations. One particular example of fairy tale adaptation in Gothic literature is *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* by Angela Carter (1979), as I have mentioned in Chapter One. Although written for adults, this collection, revisionist in nature, offers retellings of some of the most well-known fairy tales, including "Blue Beard", "Little Red Riding Hood", and "Beauty and the Beast". In "The Tiger's Bride" Carter subverts the tale of "Beauty and the Beast" through the portrayal of both Beauty and Beast, as do YA authors Rosamund Hodge, Sarah J. Mass, and Meagan Spooner, each drawing from various myths to adapt the tale and rewrite it for a twenty-first century YA audience. In *Hunted* (2016) by Meagan Spooner, the tale is set in Russia and as such is imbued with Slavic mythology and folklore; the Beast in the tale is none other than Prince Ivan Tsarevich, the hero of many Slavic folk and fairy tales and often cast in opposition to Koschei the Deathless. Slavic mythology and folklore feature considerably in twenty-first-century YA Gothic, with tales drawing on several themes, as well as supernatural beings. A few examples worth mentioning are Catherynne M. Valente's *Deathless* (2011), a retelling of the tale of Marya Morevna and Koschei the deathless and Prince Ivan; and *The Winternight Trilogy* (2017-2019) by

Katherine Arden which is a retelling of various Slavic myths and fairy tales centering

around Vasilissa the Beautiful—Vasya in the trilogy—and Morozko, the Frost King.

In *Cruel Beauty* (2014) Rosamund Hodge connects the classical tale with Greek

mythology, casting her Beast—the supernatural Other in this narrative—as a "demon

lord" (Hodge 25) from ancient Greece. By doing so, *Cruel Beauty* offers a story that is as

much indebted to De Beaumont's classical tale as it is to the arguably earliest version of

the tale, the tale of "Cupid and Psyche", in its depiction of its main characters. In addition

to the Cupid and Psyche tale, *Cruel Beauty* also echoes the tale of Persephone. Likewise,

The Court of Thorns and Roses series by Sarah J. Mass features a number of central

themes all inspired by myths and folklore. The first book of the series makes references

to the tale of Tam Lin and incorporates elements from "Beauty and the Beast" and the

myth of Hades and Persephone. The beast, also Hades, in Mass's tale manifest in the

characters of two immortal Fae princes, Tamlin, the "High Lord of the Spring Court"

(Mass 128), and Rhysand, the "High Lord of the Night Court" (160). Feyre, the series

lead heroine, serves as both Beauty in the first book and Persephone in the second and

third books of the series. As the story progresses the link to the tales it is inspired by

strengthens, and by the end of the narrative, after facing seemingly impossible obstacles,

Feyre, like Psyche, achieves immortality.[24]

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[24] Mass's series is amongst some of the most popular YA Gothic texts of twenty-first-century that cast the fae as their main supernatural characters. Indeed, fae stories have, in some respect, replaced the vampire and the werewolf in recent YA Gothic. Texts such as Mass's, Margaret Rogerson's *An Enchantment of Ravens* (2017), and Holly Black's *The Folk of the Air* (2018 - present) portray the dark and ambiguous aspects of these characters, much like the vampire, and as such they illustrate the varied incarnations of the supernatural in YA Gothic literature.

These three examples engage in what Tatar refers to as "hitting the refresh button" (xi) of the "Beauty and the Beast" tale. Moreover, they support Zipes's argument which claims that "[fairy] tales are culturally marked: they are informed by the languages that the writers employed, their respective cultures, and the socio-historical context in which [they] were created" (41). Hodge, Mass, and Spooner, each in their own style, seem to infuse the Gothic fairy tales they tell with specific relevant cultural references.

Zipes, in *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (2006)*,* suggests that authors continue to rewrite fairy tales because "the transformative and utopian qualities of the fairy tale appeal to young and older audiences and make it both stable and flexible as a literary form" (100). Moreover, I would argue that the continued popularity and prevalence of fairy tales across time and cultures, paired with the proliferation of YA Gothic in the twenty-first century as I have shown in Chapter One, and the rising interest in the supernatural in fiction from authors, publishers and most importantly the readerships, is the reason behind the plethora of YA Gothic fairy tales. These YA retellings and reworking of original tales take on the tone, mode and form of the Gothic fairy tale.

Conclusion

When we think of a blood-sucking entity we might readily think of *Dracula,* but as this chapter illustrates, vampire-like creatures existed in human belief systems dating back to Mesopotamian mythology. Present in every culture, supernatural beings are encoded in the human collective consciousness, as Jung's theory suggests, and their universality is what allows them to persist in human traditions and folklore. Although their

representation changed significantly during the Middle Ages, whereby the hideous

revenant of folklore replaced the sublime deities of mythology, the appeal of such beings

captivated the imagination of a considerable number of poets, playwrights and novelists.

As far as the portrayal of supernatural beings in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Gothic

literature is concerned, creatures who survive by drinking the blood of their victims are

the most common. Polidori, Rymer, Le Fanu, and Stoker developed their characterisation

of the vampire relying on both traditional elements and elements from their own

imagination. The aristocratic Lord Ruthven, the creation of John Polidori, gave way to Sir

Francis Varney in the Penny Dreadfuls, and later Sheridan Le Fanu introduced his

sensual female vampire Carmilla Karnstein, who influenced the creation of the most

reworked vampire, Count Dracula, whilst later still Anne Rice's deity-like vampires

foreshadow the twenty-first-century YA Gothic romantic supernatural Other.

Yet what started as a sublime manifestation of supernatural entities in ancient

civilisations later transformed into an expression of the uncanny in Gothic literature, as I

will demonstrate in Chapter Three. Early cultures' understanding of supernatural beings

as an integral aspect of reality, the basis of their system of belief, and a crucial part of

everyday life, was very different from that of the 'modern' man, for whom the

supernatural became synonymous with the abnormal and the monstrous. The supernatural

character then becomes the personification of the uncanny Other, representing what

endangers the individual's sense of security, stability, and purpose.

However, YA Gothic literature of the twenty-first-century, in its employment of a

combination of both traditional Gothic aesthetics and the characteristics of other sources,

notably myths and fairy tales, allows for more freedom and flexibility in the creation of

its characters, especially in the re-imagining of supernatural beings. Contemporary YA Gothic actively engages with fairy tales, folktales and mythological traditions from many world cultures, from the Greek tales of Gods to the Western European and Eastern European traditions—and more recently to Islamic/Middle Eastern and African stories.

In brief, the texts mentioned in this chapter highlight the enduring nature of the supernatural beings they portray. They indicate that the likelihood that the supernatural Other will cease morphing is highly improbable, especially in light of the current appeal of supernatural Gothic narratives to YA Gothic readers. Consequently, the supernatural Other in Gothic narratives exists in a cycle where each writer appears to want to put their own mark on the vampire, the werewolf, the fae, or the shapeshifter motif and figure in their narrative, influenced by the times, other authors and history, as well as their own interpretation of the subject. If one was to visually recreate this cycle it would take the shape of an infinity loop whereby folklore and the fairy tale, myths and legends, and the Gothic all connect and at times overlap, creating the supernatural Other of twenty-first-century YA Gothic literature. Finally, this chapter provides a backdrop against which to examine the representation and characterisation of supernatural entities in twenty-first-century YA Gothic fiction in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three

"It's A Monster's World": Redeeming the Supernatural Other

The truth is that monsters are real, and ghosts are real too. They live inside us, and sometimes, they win
—Stephen King, *The Shining*

We all wind up drawn to what we're afraid of, drawn to try to find a way to make ourselves safe from a thing by crawling inside of it, by loving it, by becoming it.
—Holly Black*, The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*

Introduction

What started as a sublime manifestation of supernatural entities in ancient civilisations—as I have explored in Chapter Two—transformed into an expression of uncanniness in Gothic literature, as early cultures' understanding of supernatural beings as an integral aspect of reality, the basis of their system of belief, and a crucial part of everyday life, was very different from that of the 'modern' man for whom the supernatural became synonymous with the irrational, the abnormal and the monstrous. This chapter will examine the contemporary portrayal in YA Gothic literature of once alienated supernatural beings. In the following sections of this chapter, I explore the process by which the monster, as portrayed in YA Gothic literature, diverges from the traditional literary archetype and in so doing creates a new one. I will then analyse the reception of this new archetype, arguing that the 'new monster' is paradoxically both integrated and marginalized. Throughout the chapter I employ a broad definition of the term 'monster', encompassing a wide range of supernatural beings—such as vampires, shapeshifters, angels, demons, and deities—that inspire fear, for as Halberstam notes "[t]he monster

functions as monster … when it is able to condense as many fear-producing traits as possible into one body" (22).[25] Noël Carroll in *The Philosophy of Horror* claims that monsters are confined to the horror genre and that horror must be defined by the appearance of monsters in the work, specifically monsters "of either a supernatural or sci-fi origin" (15). He defines monsters as being any creature "not believed to exist now according to contemporary science" (12). Carroll's argument, while at first offering a broad approach to monstrosity, implies that the sole role of monsters within the narrative is the engenderment of fear. In fact, Carroll, through his definition, attempts to separate the horror genre completely from the Gothic. However, I believe that the relation between horror and the Gothic should, and can, be maintained if a broader definition of monstrosity is applied, since horror essentially first emerged as a Gothic sub-genre, as stated in Chapter One in terms of the emergence of 'weird tales' that focused primarily on horror in their representation of the supernatural.

The monster—the supernatural Other—in Gothic literature is almost always viewed as an embodiment of Kristeva's notion of the abject, which for many critics constitutes an important element in the study of the Gothic and the monstrous. The abject is, in Kristeva's words, "the place where meaning collapses", where "I am not" (9). Abjection, according to Kristeva, does not "respect borders, positions, rules". Instead, it "disturbs identity, system, order" (36). In the same way that monsters often defy classification because of their hybrid nature, monsters fall into abjection because of their inability to function according to the human social mandate, and as such, they

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[25] I alternate between 'monster' and 'supernatural Other'.

unsettle the boundaries between normality and abnormality, the natural and the unnatural. The uncertainties caused by the monster make it abject, and condemn it to be rejected by society. When it comes to traditional monsters as portrayed in early Gothic narratives, the very reason they are repulsive and loathsome is because, through their appearance, which often externalizes their vice, they stand separate from the human Self and are inherently both Other and abject at once. Kristeva writes: "I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be 'me.' Not at all an Other with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be" (10). She further adds that, "If, on account of that Other, a space becomes demarcated, separating the abject from what will be a subject and its object, it is because a repression that one might call 'primal' has been effect" (10). In this process, and in simpler terms, the threat of the invasion of boundaries of any sort has a significant impact on first, the identification of the Other, and second on the separation between the Self and the Other, and the expulsion of the latter. This separation between the Self and the Other implies that the Other *must* be rejected. As such the separation and rejection then stem from a desire to protect what is known and familiar to the Self, and what constitutes it—as the examples discussed in this chapter illustrate.

Twenty-first-century YA Gothic is replete with examples of the Gothic supernatural as abject, as that which is 'opposed to I" (1), according to Kristeva's notion of abjection. The texts examined in this chapter not only showcase the examples of abjection, but they also offer a revised vision of Otherness. The primary changes in the depiction of the monster reflect the change in society's perception of the figure of the alienated supernatural Other, the outsider. As observed in Chapter Two, supernatural

beings indicate the boundaries separating the known and the unknown, as Punter and Byron argue: "located at the margin of culture, [supernatural beings] police the boundaries of the human, pointing to those lines that must not be crossed" (263). However, the very existence of boundaries suggests not only the possibility of trespassing them, but also of abolishing them entirely.

While the supernatural Other is represented as horrifying in the eyes of other characters in the text, the main protagonist in YA Gothic, as well as the readers, can recognise his/her complexity, and identify with the more benign monsters, who usually exhibit high morality in comparison with other members of their species, as the examples discussed later in the chapter demonstrate, revealing how this creature, although not human, is similar to themselves. While evil supernatural Others are not easy to identify with, they still hold a certain degree of appeal to some readers and even characters within the stories—as the examples examined in this chapter exemplify. The concept of Otherness is critical to an understanding of narratives concerning characters of a supernatural nature. The supernatural Other's considerable adaptability accounts for much of its popularity, since it has served numerous vital functions for different people during previous centuries, as I have illustrated in Chapters One and Two. Today in YA Gothic, the supernatural Other symbolizes and expresses fears and anxieties, as well as culturally supressed elements of the individual's life. In "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" (1996), Jeffery Jerome Cohen extensively analyses monsters in connection with the cultures from which they arise. He outlines a thesis of seven arguments in which he suggests that the monster is a reflective mirror image of cultures; emerging when cultural and social anxieties are heightened. Cohen states that "[a]ny kind of alterity can be inscribed across

the monstrous body, but for the most part monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, [and] sexual" (7). The physical alterity is in fact of paramount importance in gothic supernatural narratives, as it is the appearance of the monster that labels him as Other, whether the alterity is manifested through monstrous/ugly features or beautiful, otherworldly features, as is the case with the supernatural Other in contemporary YA Gothic.

In the YA fiction space of "melancholic adolescent identifications" (Punter 12), a space distinctively gothic, the Other, although still threatening, has been turned into an object of identification and justification with the recognition that the abjected Other can in fact act as a mirror revealing the deepest fears and desires of the self. Supernatural beings, such as vampires and shapeshifters, are marginal figures, and may therefore reflect the marginal nature of the adolescent protagonist. Commenting on the vampire, DeMarco notes, for instance, that s/he then, "presents a mirror, even if a dark mirror, to the adolescent and shows them that all the problems they may face can be resolved" (28); and this is certainly echoed in YA Gothic fiction. Alison Waller, in *Constructing Adolescence in Fantastic Realism* (2008), argues that "[a]dolescence is always 'other' to the more mature phase of adulthood, always perceived as liminal" (1). The adolescent protagonist and the supernatural Other occupy the same space within YA gothic narratives, and often explore issues of identity and morality, as I shall explain in the following sections. This pairing of the characters of the Other and the adolescent highlights the link they share, as both are often portrayed as alienated within society. As such, Otherness in YA Gothic narratives becomes a source of empathy and identification. As Spooner notes in regard to contemporary YA Gothic, which she refers to as 'teen

Gothic': "the outsider takes on a new and different role [and] a recurrent feature of contemporary Gothic is sympathy for the monster: those conventionally represented as 'other' are placed at the center of the narrative and made a point of identification for the reader or viewer" (103). This signals one of the most important transformations in our perception of the monster; it is no longer predominantly a figure of fear, but rather a figure of sympathy. However, it is important to note here, that the supernatural Other with whom human characters may identify and sympathize with is the one who *chooses* to be good in the stories. By contrast, supernatural beings who continue to exhibit evil and vicious tendencies are usually met with resistance and are often defeated by the end of the narrative, as the stories examined in this chapter demonstrate. In order to write the supernatural Other into a YA narrative, s/he must be transformed from their traditional portrayal in Gothic literature. At the very least, the 'evil' qualities attributed to the supernatural in earlier Gothic narratives must be reconsidered. The monster must be sanitized just enough so that s/he becomes a character that both the reader and other characters in the narrative can sympathize with. Besides the ones who represent evil, s/he must become a plausible hero. YA Gothic fiction takes the tendency toward idolization of the Other and both legitimizes and romanticizes it. However, the Other should retain a level of fluidity, equivocality and strangeness to demonstrate the breaking of boundaries.

While contemporary supernatural beings fit to an extent within a certain monster tradition, they do not conform in a number of other ways. Each new supernatural story defines the nature of its monsters in its own distinct way, setting itself apart from others, and creating at the same time a new prototype. The supernatural Others in Gothic fiction are fearless and audacious rebels that break physiological, moral, geographical and social

boundaries and represent our own desire to overcome these boundaries. Gilmore claims that "the power of monsters is their ability to fuse opposites, to subvert rules, to overthrow cognitive barriers, moral distinctions, and ontological categories" (194). One method for the composition of supernatural beings therefore is fusion. As Carroll argues: "[o]n the simplest physical level, this often entails the construction of creatures that transgress categorical distinctions such as inside/outside, living/dead, insect/ human, flesh/machine, and so on" (43). He further defines this fusion in supernatural beings as "a composite that unites attributes held to be categorically distinct and/or at odds in the cultural scheme of things in unambiguously one, spatio-temporally discrete entity" (43). Vampires, werewolves, and Nephilim—half angels/half humans—are fusion figures in this respect. Each, in different ways, blurs the distinction between human and inhuman, the living and the dead. Each, in some sense, is a hybrid being.

Vampires play an important role in the representation of the supernatural Other, as Chapter Two demonstrates. Their complex, liminal and transgressive nature allows the individual to see reflected in the supernatural Other the fears and desires of the human Self. As the ultimate revenant, vampires force humankind to confront their own fears of mortality, invasion, and infectious diseases. Yet, "for all the horror they inspire" (Ingebretsen 3), vampires—and especially in YA Gothic, as I shall demonstrate—can be sources of admiration, wonder, and even attraction. Kristeva's abjection theory helps to explain the ambivalence surrounding YA monsters in general, and the vampire in particular. The abject, in this case the supernatural Other, is both a source of disgust, representing something to be rejected, while at the same time evoking a sense of the sublime and engendering a desire to embrace what the Other offers. Poole argues that it is

"while producing this strange combination of what [Kristeva] calls 'phobia, obsession and perversion' (1), [that] the abject creates a devoted following" (15). Though vampire mythology has certainly changed throughout the decades, this paradox of being both attracted to and repelled by the vampire continues through all incarnations of the supernatural being, and ultimately reflects upon the reader's own desires and fears.

In *At Stake: Monsters and the Rhetoric of Fear in Public Culture* (2001), Ingebretsen suggest that more generally, "monsters have, or seem to have, freedoms humans lack. Monsters transgress, cross over, do not stay put where—for the convenience of our categories of sex, race, class—we would like them to stay" (4). This habit of the supernatural Other to threaten and blur set boundaries, its ability to cause a sense of 'deterritorialization,' and their tendency "to do just what they desire" is indeed what "frightens us" (4), as we feel more comforted when the boundaries separating the Self and the Other are clearly established. As such, when the boundaries are transgressed, tensions and fears arise, as the examples in this chapter showcase. In the following three sections, I go on to examine the impact that the collision of the human world with the supernatural world has on individuals in Holly Black's *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* and Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Series; I also look at the ways in which the supernatural Other is rendered more complex through the re-visioning of monstrosity, and finally I examine the aesthetic representation of supernatural beings in contemporary YA Gothic.

For You Are Everywhere: Monsters and Borders

"Difference most often functions to exclude" (145) suggests Cynthia Lowenthal in *Performing Identities on The Restoration Stage* (2003), proceeding to explain how 'difference' is often used to create a 'safe' perimeter from which the Other is excluded.

Our fear of aberration and what it may entail is often analogous to our own fear of rejection. Consequently, a display of any sort of difference often results in the subject becoming abject. Accordingly, supernatural beings who exhibit their true nature to the world condemn themselves to possible abjection and alienation at the beginning of the narratives, as I shall go on to demonstrate. The concept of Otherness is critical to an understanding of contemporary YA Gothic narratives dealing with supernatural beings, since YA Gothic provides a space in which exposure to, and engagement with the very objects of intrusion, exclusion, and deviancy is made possible. Early Gothic representations of monstrosity, notably during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, employed the figure of the monster to emphasise the civilised nature of the Western Self which is posited in contrast to the monstrous outsider. The Gothic portrayal of the supernatural Other focused upon the fear of the Other by fortifying the differences that separate it from the Self, and subsequently justifying prejudice towards the Other and its ultimate exclusion and/or destruction, as in the examples discussed in Chapter Two, notably Dracula and Carmilla. As Laura Knoppers and Joan Landes confirm, "[t]he monstrous Other served to define selves and nations. But that Other both marked and violated boundaries, threatening the identities it served to define" (21). Alternatively, although twenty-first-century YA Gothic also views the monstrous supernatural Other as a warning, it does so in a fashion that renders the Other more desirable, regardless of the peril it represents, as can be seen in most of the texts examined in this chapter. It does so while also exposing the dangers of supernatural Others who act as villains in the narratives. The works analysed in this section exemplify the contradictory and paradoxical effect resulting from the supernatural Other's crossing of boundaries.

One of the most striking depictions of the vampire as an abject figure and a 'desirable' outsider who trespasses set physiological and geographical boundaries is that of Holly Black's vampires in *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* (2013). Developed from a short story first published in an anthology, *The Eternal Kiss* (2009), Black's novel fuses YA Gothic with YA dystopia, in an attempt to answer the question of what would happen if vampires were exposed to modern day society. The premise for *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* sets it apart from other vampire narratives published around the same time. In this narrative, Black portrays vampirism as a 'gift' that had once been bestowed only on a small number of people chosen by feudal vampire lords who wished to strengthen their ranks. As the figure of the vampire became romanticised in fictional books and films, a young 'real' vampire, Caspar Morales, "started romanticizing himself" (11). In an act of rebellion against the order of vampires and centuries-old traditions which forbid vampires to expose themselves to the human world or to turn human beings, Caspar started biting humans without killing them in order to spread vampirism: "he would seduce them, drink a little blood, and then move on, from city to city" (11). In Black's world, vampirism is portrayed as an infection spread through the bite.

As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Black's notion of vampirism draws upon several folkloric elements, such as the association of the undead with infectious diseases, as I have mentioned in Chapter Two. Whilst the infection does not directly turn the infected into vampires, it drives them into an ever-strengthening craving for human blood, and if they should succumb and taste another human's blood, then the infection becomes fatal. After death they rise again as vampires. Alternatively, if they can resist drinking human blood for eighty-eight days, they will remain human. Those who are

bitten by vampires are referred to as the Cold ones, for they have "gone Cold" (13). The vampire (the Cold one), in this case, is an abject thing by Kristeva's definition: s/he used to be a subject of society (a man or woman) but has since become an abject (a revenant), "Colder than before. Cold through and through, forever and ever" (13). As Lowenthal argues, "[t]he monster always infects with monstrosity everything that it touches … Sometimes monsters become monsters because they've been preyed upon by other monsters" (145), and that, added to its uncontrollable nature, is exactly why the monster must be exterminated.

Interestingly, the infection caused by Caspar Morales is not unwanted, quite the opposite, in fact; it is a *desired* infection, and, as will be demonstrated later, many human characters in the novel seek to be contaminated. The effect of the vampire outbreak in the narrative is presented to us as ambiguous: on the one hand, the revelation that vampires existed in the world generates fear and apprehension in the human characters within the narrative—as well as in the reader—who are uncomfortable by the unknown and the breaking of boundaries between Self and Other, while on the other hand, the premise of what vampirism may offer fascinates humans. Ingebretsen, commenting on the feelings and emotions that the figure of the monster engenders, suggests that:

> Sometimes it is [the monster's] painful beauty, or untrammelled individuality; other times it is simply the liberties they take (and *that* they take them in the first place) that so astonish us. They get away with murder and that fascinates us. Monsters are supposed to do just what they desire, and that frightens us. (4; emphasis in original)

In this sense, extending Ingebretsen's argument to Black's vampires, it is possible to suggest that the very reasons that humans fear the vampire are simultaneously what fascinate them about it. The eternal life of glamour and magic that the vampires embody attracts a great number of individuals, as I will discuss later in the chapter. Nevertheless, in spite of the society's fascination with them, vampires are still extremely dangerous, as Black's heroine, Tana Bach, learns firsthand. The first chapter of the book opens with Tana who has just woken up, hungover after a house party, only to realize that she is the only survivor of a vampire massacre; or to put it more accurately, the only *human* survivor. Her ex-boyfriend, Aidan—who was with her at the party—although still alive has been contaminated by the vampires and left "tied to the bed" (9); with him she finds an actual vampire, Gavriel, "gagged and in chains, amid the jackets someone had swept to the floor" (10). At first Tana is apprehensive of Gavriel as she believes that he is the vampire responsible for the death of everyone at the party, but he explains to her that he too was left there to die; that he was "*condamné à mort*" (31). Convinced that the vampires who murdered her friends, and who are still looming in the corridors of the house, waiting for the sun to set to kill Gavriel, will kill her and Aiden as well, Tana decides to take them to a place where they can all be safe. What ensues is a road trip to Coldtown; a safe haven for vampires.

Before the massacre of Tana's friends, such occasional vampire attacks happened mainly in Europe and nearby towns "where the streets teemed with vampires and shops didn't open until dark" (6). Her town was relatively safe. Vampire raids are, as Tana explains, very rare where she lives and with the exception of her mother, she has never seen a contaminated person before. Tana's mother was contaminated in an art party when

the former was only ten years old. A week later, in an attempt to prevent her mother from mutating and turning into a vampire, Tana's father locked her mother into their basement from where Tana could hear her "screams that went on all day long while her father was at work, and then all through the night, when her father turned up the television until it drowned out every other sound and drank himself to sleep" (13). The notion of the basement where the 'monster' resides denotes the Gothicisation of the space, as the Gothic "uses spaces that are dangerous, at the edge, such as cellars, dungeons, attics, and haunted castles, illustrating and enacting how we push worrying elements of our life into safe, distant places" (Wisker 26). Tana's mother, now Othered, must be "pushed" away, yet the basement in which she is kept is within the perimeters of safety. In this sense, Tana's house, her safe place, becomes unsafe and invaded by the Other who is at once familiar and unfamiliar. Indeed, the Gothic atmosphere is maintained throughout the novel and tropes of entrapment and imprisonment remain persistent.

It is a truism that the monster—in its various incarnations—is the personification of the *unheimlich*, the uncanny. "They stand for what endangers one's sense of at-homeness, that is, one's sense of security, stability, integrity, well-being, health and meaning. They make one feel *not at home at home*. They are figures of chaos and disintegration *within* order and orientation" (Beal 5). Gilmore, for example, explains that when monsters break physiological boundaries they represent a force that is unknown to the human mind, and are often physically uncontrollable (15). In other words, the monster—the vampire in the case of Black's tale, and the supernatural Other(s) discussed in this chapter—threaten the individuals' sense of security and stability; and the very meaning of the Self is challenged. As such, the monster is represented as a harbinger of

chaos into the relatively ordered realm of humans. Moreover, the notions of monstrosity and Otherness that the monster embodies have always been interrelated with the idea of territorial invasion, and this has played a major role in the portrayal of the supernatural Other in earlier Gothic narratives where concerns about geographical and territorial boundaries are dominant. Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, for example, denotes the fear of foreign invasion—or rather the fear of unnoticed foreign infiltration—which resulted in the initial alienation and rejection of the Count. In essence, then, Gothic authors have traditionally utilized the perception of space and place as a means to destabilize one's sense of Self.

Black's vampires are represented as the supernatural Other who disturbs both physiological and territorial boundaries. The outbreak first starts when Tana is seven, and people treated the few incidents reported on local news with incredulity; no one believes it as "it seemed like a journalist's prank" (Black 12). However, things escalate quickly as more people are transformed all around America. What started as a regional problem soon becomes global: "[v]ampirism is an American problem, the BBC declared. But the next outbreak was in Hong Kong, then Yokohama, then Marseille, then Brecht, then Liverpool, after that it spread across Europe like wildfire" (12). In an attempt to control the infection and prevent further contaminations, the American government sets up quarantine zones known as Coldtowns to serve as highly policed urban spaces that are encircled by walls. Here, vampires and those who have gone Cold are confined. Coldtowns are in effect read as prisons or internment camps, as suggested by the high security and armed guards around them. Black's vampires are in this case abjected— rejected, and contained away from the human subject.

Moreover, Coldtowns are envisioned as functioning as a safety perimeter, offering protection from the contagious Other. In his discussion of monsters in society, Cohen argues that:

> [T]hrough the body of the monster, fantasies of aggression, domination, and inversion are allowed safe expression in a clearly delimited and permanently liminal space. Escapist delight gives way to horror only when the monster threatens to overstep these boundaries, to deconstruct the thin walls of category and culture. (17)

The Other is then allowed "safe expression" as long as the boundaries separating the Self and the Other remain intact. However, when those boundaries collapse, the proximity to the supernatural Other—the monster—engenders terror at the prospect of being contaminated by monstrosity in turn. The need for protection from the Other, then becomes imperative for the survival of the Self, and as such, the creation of Coldtowns aptly exemplifies Kristeva's notion of the abject as being that which is rejected.

Coldtowns, described as "cities running upside down, where day was night and night was day" (Black 204), perform a Gothic function: as uncanny Gothic sites of liminality, the rules that govern them exist outside the typical rules by which the outside world operates. Their "upside down" and reversed features dislocate space—and time—and render it unfamiliar. In this case, Coldtowns echo Manuel Aguirre's comment on the Gothic space as a site which "can be said to postulate two zones, on the hand, the human domain of rationality and intelligible events, on the other hand, the world of the sublime, terrific and chaotic. Numinous worlds which transcend human reason" (3). Indeed, *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* introduces this divisive concept of space in terms of spatial

separation between the human territory and the Coldtowns. The narrative also

exemplifies the problematic and contradictory nature of the relationship between the Self

and the Other within the Gothic Space—I will return to this contradiction in the

paragraph below. Furthermore, it can be argued that Coldtowns are portrayed, just as the

traditional Gothic setting—the castle, the graveyard, or the haunted house—"as

embodying a past that goes back behind—or beneath—the 'moment' of the subject"

(Punter and Byron 51). Coldtowns are the Gothic space which once belonged to humans

but are now the space where the supernatural Other is located, a constant reminder of a

world forever changed by the intrusion of vampirism.

The contradictory effect the Gothic space engenders in the Self is highlighted in

Black's narrative. To read Coldtowns as Gothic spaces, we must take into consideration

another defining characteristic of the Gothic space, and that is the existence of

"thresholds … which invariably involve[s] movements from one site to another to the

other [which] is presented as a transgression, a violation of boundaries" (Aguirre 3). The

government is determined to keep the quarantine areas contained, to the extreme of

refusing to allow the uninfected humans who were inside the perimeters of the Coldtowns

before they were officially established to leave; they remain imprisoned within the Gothic

space. The government's reasoning behind their decision is simple: if there were no

uninfected people inside the walls of the vampire cities at all, then "what would the

vampires eat?" (Black 91). Nonetheless, the government's extreme plan fails to keep

vampires from violating the boundaries, invading the human space and feeding on people

outside the Coldtowns; the massacre of Tana's friends at the party being an example. It is

in the nature of the supernatural Other to invade. More importantly, however, the

boundaries fail to keep the very individuals they were set to protect from wanting—

willingly—to infiltrate the domain of the supernatural Other in turn as "everyone wanted

to see [vampires], if from afar … and no one really wanted them gone" (108). Coldtown

tangibly exemplifies Heidegger's notion of the boundary in *Building Dwelling Thinking*

(1971) as being "not that at which something stops … but that from which something

begins its presencing" (152; emphasis in original), in this case the supernatural Other. As

a result, entering Coldtown, the domain of the Other, signals the desire to destroy

boundaries not by the vampires, but by the humans. This is further exemplified in the

novel as Tana repeatedly hears that "[t]here were so many girls and boys running away to

Coldtown, who would do anything to have the infection burning through their veins"

(Black 69). In this sense, it can be argued that the Self too craves the Other.

Indeed, such a desire is reinforced through the exposure of the Self to the Other.

Throughout *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, Black places great emphasis on the role of the

media in shaping a glamorized, seductive image of the supernatural Other:

> After the infections started burgeoning and the first walls around the infected
>
> areas were built—the crude ones that kept only some things inside—news
>
> cameras couldn't get enough coverage. Reporters were always climbing around
>
> the rubble, filming, putting their lives in danger.
>
> And it wasn't just television and newspapers. Flickr, Tumblr, and
>
> Instagram were full of pictures of teeth and blood. In the beginning, an amateur
>
> videographer uploaded footage of long-limbed vampire girls feeding on a shock-
>
> faced middle-aged man. It got hundreds of thousands of hits in a matter of hours.

> Gossip columns ran long pieces on vampires who acquired an almost celebrity
>
> status, their string of kills only seeming to increase interest. (107-8)

First, the media romanticizes fictional vampires and as a result Morales engages in spreading vampirism; and it continues to romanticize vampires even after the creation of Coldtowns. Angela Connelly notes that "if terror produces a 'sickness of the soul', nevertheless individuals seem to actually take pleasure in terrifying themselves" (408), and this is certainly exemplified in Black's narrative. Whilst they are quarantined, many vampires have managed to break from the monstrous image with which they have been associated since the outbreak first happened, and have become celebrity superstars. Tana's twelve-year-old sister, Pearl, for example, has pictures and posters of her favorite Coldtown vampire, Lucien Moreau, hung up on the walls in her room. Tana's 'American culture' has become obsessed by the supernatural Other:

> Televisions along the walls broadcast popular feeds from inside Springfield's
>
> Coldtown. On one, golden-haired Lucien Moreau was teaching a human girl how
>
> to waltz; on another, a ginger-haired vampire girl was talking to the camera,
>
> describing how her night had gone while a human boy cuddled up to her pale
>
> skin, offering her a piece of tubing taped to the needle in his wrist. (Black 94)

The effect of such proximity to, and obsession with the Other does not end in mere admiration of the undead: Tana's world is invaded by vampires, in multiple ways. Besides TV shows—featuring both vampires hunters and vampires—and YouTube broadcasts from within the Coldtowns, stores feature all sorts of vampire-related merchandise, from T-shirts with inscriptions saying: "CORPSEBAIT across the front [and] big black sleep shirts with dripping letters: UP ALL NIGHT AT THE DEAD

LAST REST STOP, I BITE ON THE FIRST DATE", to "mirrors with cartoonish

rivulets of blood running from two puncture wounds … so that when you looked in the

mirror it seemed as if you'd been bitten" (Black 99; upper-case in original). In a sense,

vampires and humans are both equally consuming and being consumed by one another,

as "the United States stabilized into an odd détente with vampires" (109) and adapts to

become a culture that celebrates the supernatural Other. In a way, the narrative stands as

a commentary on the distorting effects of the modern world's obsession with reality

television shows and the seemingly ideal life they propagate, as well as the ways in which

the media, in its various forms, exploits experiences, especially those that are dangerous,

and influences how the Other is experienced and interacted with by society. [26]

 As Tana embarks on her journey to Coldtown with Aiden and Gavriel, she

becomes conscious that she is caught between two worlds, the world that her "rare and

desirable" (69) condition can offer her: immortality and everlasting youth, but also the

world of monstrosity. Having witnessed at first-hand the dangers they pose, Tana's

reaction to vampires is not as enthusiastic as is the reaction of people around her. Indeed,

the infection of her mother when she was young has remained a traumatic episode in

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[26] In an interview with *Parade*, Black explains the role of modern technology and the media in romanticizing danger:

> For me, I think one of the key things I wanted to explore in the book is the idea of our love of danger—and what we do in the face of it on such a staggering scale. That's where the reality TV aspect of it came. We like watching people get hurt—on TV, on YouTube. There's that vicarious thrill. I wanted to take that to an extreme and see what happened. What would it really be like if we had a world with vampires in it, given our iPhone, camera-obsessed culture? We like the idea that we could get close to danger and survive. And also the idea that someone else could get close to danger and not survive. (Charaipotra 2013)

Tana's life and she still carries the physical scar of the wound her mother inflicted on her

when she attacked her, maddened by her insatiable craving for human blood. The "big

messy scar on her hand" (16) remains a constant reminder of the undeniable dangers of

the infection. However, a part of Tana has always been curious about vampirism. Her

curiosity is mainly related to her desire to see what her mother would have become had

she not been killed by her father. In fact, ever since her mother died, Tana has been

having a recurring dream in which "she and her mother were together, undead, dressed in

billowy white gowns with ruffles at their collars and at the hems of their skirts. They run

through the night together in a darkling fairy tale of blood and forests and snow, of girls

with raven's wing hair and rose-red lips and sharp teeth as white as milk" (27). Indeed, in

this dream that evokes both classical depictions of female vampires in films and

television and Gothic fairy tales, Tana's own unconscious desire to become a vampire is

brought to the surface. Later, when she comes to terms with being infected, she thinks

that it is only fair that she is now Cold. She explains: "my mom got bitten and here I am,

following the path of what would have happened if she'd turned" (150). This paradox of

conscious and unconscious desires exhibited in Tana adds credence to the argument that

very often the persons whose everyday life has been contaminated by the unexplained

experience both fascination and terror as a result of the narrowing boundaries between

themselves and the Other. Tana's contradictory thoughts intensify as she develops

romantic feelings for Gavriel. Her feelings for him disturb the supposedly natural

boundaries between humans and monsters.

Tana is not the only one who exhibits confused emotions about vampirism. A

passage from Chapter 38 illustrates the perplexing thoughts of the human characters in

relation to the nature of the supernatural Other they are confronted with. In a blog entry, Bill Story, a human journalist who was trapped inside a Coldtown during the first quarantine, writes on vampires:

> The big question of vampires, the question that haunts governments and individuals alike, the question that bugs me every night when I see their red eyes watching the citizens of Coldtown the way hungry cats watch fish in a bucket is: What are they? Are they diseased or demonic? Are they citizens who have become ill, deserving hospitals and care, as some have argued? Or are they the bodies of our loved ones animated by some dark force that we ought to seek to destroy? Living here in Coldtown, I've tried to observe and document our new world, but I have failed to be able to answer this one question. I have even failed to decide for myself. (398)

In foregrounding the idea that vampirism is an infectious disease, Black further complicates the nature of the vampires in the narrative and indeed renders it perplexing and confusing to humans, as the quoted passage illustrates. Connolly in her discussion of liminal figures in the Gothic in psychoanalytic terms suggests that they represent in both the individual and collective spheres "different ways of dealing with limits, differences, evil and death" (410), and this is echoed in Bill's questions regarding whether or not the vampires that have invaded his world are just like him, or whether they are evil or simply sick—which in turn exemplifies the dichotomy between good and bad supernatural Others in twenty-first-century YA Gothic. Being the epitome of the uncanny, as family members, friends, and neighbours are turned and cities rendered unhomely, the vampires disturb the human identity and question its nature.

However, the same confluence of the supernatural world and the human world that resulted in the creation of the Gothic space creates new possibilities for human and vampires alike that did not exist before. Humans in particular can assume new identities as Tana realises in regard to Aiden who, unlike her, has every reason to want to go through the transformation, become a vampire and live in Coldtown:

> Being a vampire would get him all the glory he could ever imagine—he wouldn't just be known as the guy at a party most likely to seduce someone else's girlfriend or the small-town boy yearning for a big city. In Coldtown, he would be drowned in attention—and the massacre at the farmhouse would make his story only more tragic. More romantic. (71)

Vampirism, then, and the closeness to the Other, becomes a means by which the Self assumes a new identity defined by fame, glory, and everlasting youth and beauty. Moreover, such proximity to the supernatural Other can be seen to offer the human Self the possibility of an "unconscious participation in guilty pleasures through the identification with the monster and its subjectivity" (Connelly 419). For the human characters in the story—particularly adolescent characters—the ultimate erosion of the boundaries and the encounter with the supernatural Other, the vampire, result in the Self's recognition that the monstrous invader cannot be contained or repressed for "the perverse and psychotic desires of the monster are a mirror image of [their] own perverse desires and the perversity of [their] own community and culture, based as they are on mechanisms of sacrifice and of scapegoating" (419-20)

In Black's narrative, this identification with the Other is apparent in the case of Midnight and her twin brother Winter—two teenagers who are determined to become

vampires and whom Tana meets on her way to Coldtown—as well as a number of other characters who are attracted to the glamorized image of vampirism. Midnight and Winter view themselves as othered among their own kind, and they make the decision to further alienate themselves from 'normal' humans. Indeed, they do so deliberately through their aesthetics: lining their eyes with kohl, dressing up in Goth clothing and dying their hair blue like "the vibrant azure blue of butterfly wings and gum balls" (74). They have even rejected the mundane names their parents gave them—Jennifer and Jack—and adapted new names that they have chosen for themselves, which both reflect the coldness and darkness that accompanies vampirism. This sentiment of not-belonging is unsurprisingly echoed by other characters in the novel, such as Valentina, a girl working at a shop in Coldtown, who explains: "we didn't fit in, and we thought we were going to run away to a place where everyone was like us and we'd be transformed" (226). The role of the media discussed earlier is emphasised even more through the character of Midnight who explains that she and her brother are

> part of this online network for people who are planning on going to Coldtown. We used to post all the time about meeting our destiny. Claiming all the stuff that normal people don't want. We'd talk and talk and talk, but how many of us actually did anything? We say that you've got to be willing to die to be different. I bet you believe that, too. (75)

David Punter notes that adolescence is a time when there is a "fantasised inversion of boundaries" (6). Indeed, the adolescent characters 'fantasise' the glory awaiting them in Coldtown, as the passage above suggests. Midnight runs a blog with a large readership where she documents her brother's and her quest towards the realisation of their fantasy

as she explains to Tana and her companions: "[a] hundred thousand unique visitors are watching Winter's and my adventure" (Black 76). When Tana asks Midnight about what her parents would think about their transformation, "Midnight snorted. 'Our parents don't get what we do online. They're not smart enough. They're *nothing* like us. Trust me, by the time they figure out what happened, we'll be long gone'" (97; emphasis in original).[27] By emphasising their Otherness to the humans, they simultaneously minimise their Otherness to the vampires, and in a sense signal that they too are the Other, just like the vampire.

The premise of Coldtown is not limited to the young humans; older humans too are attracted to the appealing walled city. When Tana and her companions stop at a store on their way to the quarantined zone, they witness an "elderly lady with grey hair" purchasing ammunitions on her way to Coldtown who states: "you think dying is just for the young?" (99). Dying in Coldtown signifies a new beginning, as the line separating life and death is blurred and the meaning of both is confused within the Gothic space. The hostile nature of the Gothic space is supposedly a warning against the desire to venture inside it, and yet Coldtown becomes a sort of 'dark safe Heaven', where the Self can become one with the desired monstrous supernatural Other. Hence, the appeal of the vampires in Black's novel offers an "argument for the pleasure in the confusion of

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[27] In a Gothic fashion, parents are mostly absent from *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, and adolescents are deliberately detached from them as they find in the supernatural Other the image of ideal family, as is the case with Tana, Midnight and Winter and more teenagers in the story. In one scene, Tana comes across a "tired-looking middle-aged woman" (Black 94) looking for her missing twelve-year-old daughter; and Tana wondered what such a young girl "had imagined was waiting for her behind the gates [of Coldtown]" (95). I discuss Gothic families and the supernatural in more detail in Chapter Four.

boundaries and for responsibility in their construction" (Haraway 150) as the characters indulge in crossing into the 'forbidden'. This confusion of boundaries endows both the human characters and the vampires with the ability to transgress imposed boundaries.

Throughout the narrative, Black illustrates that when in contact with the vampire, it is not only their Otherness that becomes romanticized and sensualized, but the idea of death as well. Accordingly, death is a recurrent theme in the story and each chapter opens with an epigraph about death—from Whitman, Wilde, and Eliot, to name but a few of the references Black makes. Death in the narrative acts as a crucial boundary between the humans, the vampires, and the Cold ones who inhabit the boundaries, vacillating between life and death. In this respect, death, like the vampire, is also a desired Other. In a chapter with an epigraph reading "*call no man happy till he is dead*" (Aeschyllus qtd. in Black 107), Tana, who although not as enthralled by the general romanticizing of vampires understands the allure that death and rebirth as a vampire has on humans, notes:

> Vampires were fairy tale and magic. They were the wolf in the forest that ran ahead to grandmother's house, the video game big boss who could be hunted without guilt, the monster that tempted you into its bed, the powerful eternal beast one might become. The beautiful dead, *la belle mort*. And if, after gorging themselves in an orgy of death, they became less lovely, if they became bloated and purple and horrible, then they hid it well. (108; emphasis in original)

Much like the Gothic fiction of the preceding centuries, then, twenty-first-century YA Gothic is almost always accompanied by anxieties about death. This will be apparent in Twilight for example, as Bella is seen to fear ageing and mortal death and tries to convince Edward to turn her into a vampire so that she can acquire immortality.

Moreover, in a story where the supernatural Other is mainly the vampire, death becomes a central element, as the vampire is placed at the boundaries of life and death through his/her association with death, as I discussed in Chapter Two. As such, the vampire embodies in Lacanian terms the 'object of desire' or *objet petit a* (168). In *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, Midnight is *determined* to die and become the object of her own desire. Her motto in life is "no more birthdays" (79), as she prepares to relinquish her human life and mortality, and this is, for the most part, related to her overwhelming sense of alienation and her desire to belong to a 'species' she deems more superior to hers. She writes in a post on her blog that evokes Bella's fear of aging:

> I've posted lots of times about hating how every second I was getting older. You (her readers) saw all my freak-outs that my cells were dying and my hair was falling out. Every time I woke up with strands on my pillow, I was sure that piece of hair was gone forever and I would go bald and be ugly. Sometimes I thought I could feel the decay inside me, taste the rot in my mouth before I brushed my teeth in the morning. For days before I left for Coldtown, I couldn't eat, because the idea of food disgusted me, the way I could feel it heavy in my stomach. (261-2)

The language Midnight uses to describe her human state echoes Kristeva's definition of the abject and its connection with 'decay' and 'rot', and emphasises the way Midnight views her human Self as abject and rejects it. Midnight's only solution to overcome her self-abjection is through death as "[t]hat which aligns with death in any given representation is Other, dangerous, enigmatic, magnetic and to study representations of death is to study how not only individuals but also groups have defined themselves

against what they are not but wish to control" (Bronfen and Goodwin 20). When Aidan asks her whether she is "willing to die to be different", her answer is "for sure" (Black 76). In fact, she has been waiting for the right moment—her eighteenth birthday—which "seemed old enough [for her] to go" (76).

Once they arrive in Coldtown, Tana and her companions, along with Midnight and Winter, start noticing that the reality of the vampire city is nothing like the glamorized portrayal of it on television and the internet, that "Coldtowns were jails ruled by their inmates. Within them vampires were free" (109) and they exert full power over the humans. Midnight and Winter, in particular, are forced to confront the reality. As it turns out, Coldtown is "closer to a zoo" (150) where humans provide entertainment and feeding stocks for vampires. Very few of the humans who infiltrate the city ever attain what they desire—getting infected, becoming Cold, turning into a vampire, and gaining everlasting youth—because vampires inside the city are not so open to the idea of infecting and 'turning' humans as this would result in more vampires who could potentially challenge their authority; vampirism in this sense is a means to achieve and maintain power. This disillusioned version of the Coldtown emphasizes the city as the ultimate Gothic space in which nothing is safe or certain. The humans who venture there in search of a new eternal life are instead faced with death, for "every night, in every Coldtown, people die" (247) and do not necessarily rise again. Valentina, the shopkeeper in Coldtown, recounts to Tana how her friend who accompanied her into Coldtown hoping to be transformed was attacked by vampires who sliced his skin and licked his blood "like it was candy", yet "they were careful never to bite him" (226). Midnight's dream "to be a marvelous monster and beautiful like the dawn" (263), ends in loss and

death as when she is finally turned into a vampire, she kills her brother in a feeding frenzy. The story arc of Midnight and Winter is read as a darker, more sinister, version of the tale of Hansel and Gretel, and through their characters, Black delivers a cautionary message about the breaking of boundaries.

Coldtown represents in Lacanian terms the *ligne de démarcation* between the supernatural Other and the human. It acts as a forced boundary when the Other overtly challenges the Self's sense of being through the invasion of its geographical space. Similar patterns can be found in other contemporary YA Gothic narratives where the supernatural is part of everyday life. One example is found in Silvia Moreno-Garcia's *Certain Dark Things* (2016), where the discovery of the existence of vampires in the 1970s has fundamentally reshaped the world of the twenty-first-century, having a considerable effect on the world's geopolitics. Countries around the world have put measures to contain the vampire population; however, overwhelmed by the mythological blood-consuming creatures, several European countries started deporting them. Mexico, where in most of the cities, laws against blood-consuming Others are not as restrictive as they are in the rest of the world, becomes a Gothic space populated by a variation of vampires from every culture in the world. The vampires in the story, described as "something both strange and awesome and intimidating" (10), are born vampires, not created, and are genetically different, depending on where they have originated and which mythology they belong to. Their bite, while it may kill the person being bitten, does not transform. Unlike Black's vampires, they pose no threat of contamination and offer no hope of gaining immortality. These vampires come as invaders, and cities like Zacatecas are spaces of conflict between the indigenous and the deported vampires

fighting against each other for territory and control over the humans. Because of their unwillingness to negotiate their co-existence with humans, vampirism and the idea of becoming the supernatural Other is not as desirable as it is in Black's story. Indeed, although Mexico City was "an apocalyptically dysfunctional place at the best of times" (235), humans have come together creating gangs to keep the city a seemingly "vampire-free territory" (9).

'Some Angels Are Destined to Fall': The Angel as the Enemy

An interesting alternative to vampires when it comes to the supernatural Other violating the geographical space of the Self are angels and fallen angels.[28] They too venture beyond the boundaries that separate them from the human world in twenty-first-century YA Gothic literature. Although angels have often been "left entirely unmentioned in favour of focusing exclusively on demonic horrors" (Joshi 32) in early Gothic texts, they still made some appearances in a few examples. Whilst initially portrayed in the form of pure entities, benevolent spirits and protectors of the human kind, they are, in many respects, portrayed closer to vampires—and monsters—in YA Gothic. They are indeed subversive, uncanny, and, most importantly, othered. Angels are often depicted as intruders and the harbingers of destruction, as is the case in yet another example of the abolition of the boundaries between humans and the supernatural, Susan Ee's Penryn &

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[28] By 2009, angels and fallen angels have invaded the YA Gothic literature market and were considered 'the new vampires' by publishers.

the End of Days series (2012-2015).[29] Comprising three books (*Angelfall*, *World After*, and *End of Days*), the series fuses biblical references with the Gothic.

Angelfall, the first book in this apocalyptic Gothic trilogy, introduces the reader to the main character Penryn Young, whose world has fallen into chaos after a hoard of angels decide to punish humankind for reasons that remain unknown. The fact that Ee does not provide reasoning behind her supernatural Other's transgression of boundaries suggests that it is the aftermath of the act of transgression and how the human Self reacts to it that is of most importance here. As such, following the twenty-first-century YA Gothic tradition, the text also expresses cultural and psychological anxieties related to the Other, and poses the question: what if humanity's most trusted beings turned against it? "Who will guard against the guardians?" (*Angelfall* 4). Indeed, the idea that angels— regarded as protectors in different cultures and religions—could become our enemies, is in itself uncanny.

The Gothic is always concerned with conveying the fear of invasion, of the violation of set and defined boundaries, as I have already noted. Ee's trilogy, in addition to expressing those fears, also engages with a consideration of the aftermath of such violations on the spatial domain of the Self. Much like the distress caused by the global spread of vampirism in *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, the angels' invasion triggered a worldwide panic: shop windows in the streets are all covered with newspaper pages

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[29] *Penryn & the End of Days* differs considerably from YA narratives published around the same years and that employ the figure of the angel and/or fallen angel and demons as their supernatural Other, notably, Lauren Kate's *Fallen* (2009) and Becca Fitzpatrick' *Hush Hush* (2009). Admittedly, the series was not as popular among readers as the other works discussed in this chapter, however, the author's portrayal of angels as monstrous destructors, as well as the use of the Gothic convention of space and geographical boundaries, is worthy of consideration.

reporting the early days of the Great Attack and which evoke images of the end of days found in religious scriptures:

> PARIS IN FLAMES, NEW YORK FLOODED, MOSCOW DESTROYED
>
> WHO SHOT GABRIEL, THE MESSENGER OF GOD?
>
> ANGELS TOO AGILE FOR MISSILES
>
> NATIONAL LEADERS SCATTERED AND LOST
>
> THE END OF DAYS. (*After* 2; upper case in original)

Indeed, as a consequence of the violent arrival of the angels, the world in which Penryn lives turns into an uninhabitable wasteland as the news headlines illustrate. The World After—as the humans in the narrative refer to their world after the angels' Great Attack—is indeed an apocalyptic Gothic space that inspires terror and horror: the streets are shadowed by "abandoned buildings" (*Angelfall* 9) that serve as a reminder of a world where boundaries were undisturbed. Northern California, for instance, is portrayed as the ultimate Gothic site in the story. Street gangs that formed due to the disintegration of society, apocalypse cults, and immortal predator angels roam the city at will, rendering it a dangerous place where no-one is safe, not even the invading angels. As Penryn explains in one example:

> According to Justin, who was our neighbour until a week ago, word on the street is that somebody has put a bounty on angel parts. A whole economy is being created around tearing angels to pieces. The wings fetch the highest price, but hands, feet, scalp, and other, more sensitive parts, could also fetch a nice sum if only you can prove they're from an angel. (*Angelfall* 62)

As the passage suggests, the humans in the narrative retaliate and recourse to violence to fight back the angels who invaded their spatial perimeters. Here, the demarcation between Other and Self is not clearly established. Rather, the monstrous Other and the monstrous Self are conflated, in that monstrous acts are committed by both the angels and the humans. The World After is, therefore, a numinous space in which both humans *and* angels live in a state of perpetual danger.

Moreover, uncertainties and insecurities regarding the nature of the supernatural Other and the effects it may have on the human world are at the core of the series. Unlike vampires, angels have very little to offer in comparison, as they have no transformative abilities, rendering the process of othering and violent exclusion inevitable. The angels are portrayed as oppressive conquerors and invaders, "[s]upernatural beings who've pulverised the modern world and killed millions, maybe even billions of people" (*Angelfall* 10), and who assume the position of masters over the humans who survive and whom they deem inferior. As such, the humans find themselves in a perplexing situation as they attempt to navigate their new world while wanting to reclaim mastery over it before every trace of their past is destroyed and their identity is erased by the supernatural invader, as Penryn observes when she reflects upon the impact of the invasion on human culture:

> They (the angels) can power lights and elevators and ensure a steady supply of gourmet food. I suppose it could be magic. That seems to be as good an explanation as any these days. But I'm not quite ready to throw away centuries of scientific progress to start thinking like a medieval peasant.

I wonder if, a generation from now, people will assume everything in this building is run by magic. I clench my teeth at the thought. This is what the angels have reduced us to. (*Angelfall* 280)

The angel invasion results in the rise of a resistance by humans determined to reclaim their boundaries, as Penryn further observes after the humans finally defeat the angels: "[w]e have declared war on any being that dares to think they can wipe us out without a fight. No matter how celestial, no matter how powerful they are, this is our home and we will fight to keep it" (*Days* 265). In contrasts to the vampires' ability to make the individuals question their identity *vis à vis* humanity, the angels in the story reinforce the human nature of the characters: "I never thought about it before" expresses Penryn, "but I'm proud to be human. We're ever so flawed. We're frail, confused, violent, and we struggle with so many issues. But all in all, I'm proud to be a Daughter of Man" (*Angelfall* 279).

In the beginning of the story, Penryn forms an alliance with Raff, an injured angel whom she saves and who is later revealed to be the Archangel Raphael, and as the narrative progresses, they develop mutual romantic feelings towards each other. It is worth mentioning that Raff is 'othered' amongst angels; having lost his wings in a battle he is cast out as 'Fallen' by his own kind. His own alienation is what makes him, in a similar fashion to Gavriel in *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* and the Cullens in the Twilight series, a sympathetic supernatural Other. However, in spite of the fact that Raff agrees to help the humans in defeating the angels, humans are still reluctant to trust an angel. In this respect, the reaction of the human Self to the supernatural Other is

expressed in similar ways to the reaction experienced in earlier Gothic narratives, notably *Dracula*: that is, rejection and resistance.

'Monsters, Monsters, Big and Small': Monsters Within

Interestingly, while the humans in Susan Ee's angel series consider themselves better than the angels who invaded them and refuse any association with them, the human characters in V. E. Schwab's[30] Monsters of Verity duology (2016-2017) do not, and cannot, have the same luxury. In *This Savage Song*, the first book of the duology, we are introduced to a world divided into ten territories. Twelve years before the start of the story, an unexplained phenomenon occurred in one of the territories causing any act of violence committed by humans to engender a monster. Verity City, the territory of protagonists Kate and August, is portrayed as more violent than any of the other nine territories. As such, the boundaries set between the territories do not only hold off the product of the Phenomenon, they are also set to keep the people of Verity away as they are believed to be the cause of the monsters' outbreak by the inhabitants of the other territories who do not seem to have the same problem—at least not in the first book. The origins of the Phenomenon—much like the reason behind the Great Attack in Ee's story—are never revealed in the story; the humans ignore what triggered the creation of monsters and how to put an end to it. Instead, they are only left with speculations, as Kate explains:

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[30] V. E. Schwab also writes under the name of Victoria Schwab.

> Someone pulls a trigger, sets off a bomb, drives a bus full of tourists off a bridge, and what's left in the wake isn't just shell casings, wreckage, bodies. There's something else. Something *bad*. An aftermath. A *recoil*. A reaction to all the anger and pain and death. That's all the Phenomenon was really, a tipping point. (*Song* 56; emphases in original)

In Schwab's story, monsters are not born out of contagious outbreaks, they are not of divine origin, and they are not created through curses, rather they manifest through acts of violence. Each human death causes the emergence of a new monster. The Phenomenon is then a *cause et conséquence*: it is humans' crimes and physical violence that create the monsters by giving shape to the violation committed against the laws that govern the society.

In the first book we are introduced to three types of monsters that manifested through the Phenomenon: the Corsai, the Malchai, and the Sunai. Each type possesses attributes defined by the way he/she was created:

> The Corsai seemed to come from violent, but nonlethal acts, and the Malchai stemmed from murders, but the Sunai, it was believed, came from the darkest crimes of all: bombings, shootings, massacres, events that claimed not only one life, but *many*. All that pain and death coalescing into something truly terrible; if a monster's catalyst informed its nature, then the Sunai were the worst things to go bump in the night. (*Song* 190)

August, his older foster-brother Leo, and his older foster-sister Ilsa, are the only three Sunai in the world—they are the rarest of monsters. Although different to some extent, the three types of monsters all share two things in common: they are all the manifestation

of human violence, and they despise the humans who have created them. The boundaries between Self and Other, monster and human, subject and abject are abolished in the narrative. The monsters in this narrative evoke a mixture of uncanniness and abjection, which, as Kristeva argues, is "different from 'uncanniness,' more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory" (5). The flesh-eating monsters, the lethal shadows, and the soul reaping beings are all the embodiment of the Self's darkest desires—violence, murder, and sins—made visible. Commenting on the Victorian monster, Judith and Jack Halberstam, suggest that "monsters produced and were produced by an emergent conception of the self as a body which enveloped a soul, as a body, indeed, enthralled to its soul" (2). The preoccupation with the soul—with its existence and/or non-existence— is at the heart of many Gothic narratives, notably *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Dracula*, and in more recent texts such as The Twilight Series, and Schwab certainly explores the consequence of rendering the soul visible within a Gothic space. In this sense, the supernatural other(s) in Schwab's story question the boundaries of the Self by demonstrating how the humans' sins will come back to haunt them in one form or another, and they will never comprehend or control what they have unleashed. Adults and children alike are now at the mercy of monsters their own race has created. They live in constant fear of being devoured by the monsters, or worse give in to violence and create a monster of their own. The children are taught about monsters in schools, and every child—and adult—memorises the hymn of Verity:

Monsters, monsters, big and small,

They're gonna come and eat you all.

Corsai, Corsai, tooth and claw,

Shadow and bone will eat you raw.

Malchai, Malchai, sharp and sly,

Smile and bite and drink you dry.

Sunai, Sunai, eyes like coal,

Sing you a song and steal your soul.

Monsters, monsters, big and small,

They're gonna come and eat you all!" (*Song* 54)

Similar to Holly Black's work, the Gothic elements of Schwab's narrative are clearly visible in the setting of the story. The city is portrayed as a space of Gothic excess. The scenes of murder, the evocation of death, the shadows in the walls "who started growing teeth" (*Song* 93) and all the emerging monsters, culminate in the narrative to create a haunting Gothic setting. In this sense, the city itself is tormented by the sins of its inhabitants. It is haunted by the monsters who are humanity's own creation. The Gothic element of the setting is further intensified through the association of the city with death, and in the manner in which the city is described through images of death and decay as "being eaten alive" (*Song* 57) and as "a ravaged corpse" (*Song* 48); the city itself becomes abject. The Barren, a "ruined block of scorched earth" (*Song* 49) which once was a Plaza, before Ilsa lost control over her power and caused the death of many people during the war, now holds "the outlines of the dead still ghosted on the pavement" (49). Some parts of the north side of the city seem glamorous from the outside, but the truth is the city inside is rotten to the core "like a bad apple" (*Song* 92), mirroring the people and creatures that occupy it. The south of the city with its "cracked sidewalks"

and "boarded windows" and "burned-out … abandoned" buildings (*Song* 48), however, does not attempt to cover up the truth. In South V-City, the images of destruction stand as a reminder of the reality of a world populated by monsters. The Human world, which traditionally constitutes the realm of order, and the realm of chaos that is the world of the monster, are intertwined to a point where they appear to be the same realm. The name of the city itself, 'Verity', is suggestive of its nature: it is a place where the truth is made visible, and it is not a beautiful sight to behold. Kate's city, unlike Coldtowns in Black's vampire narrative, does not exert any allure on the human subjects; on the contrary, many people attempt to escape the city and its monsters.

The media also plays an important role in this story; however, unlike its role in glamorizing the supernatural Other in *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, television programmes are all regulated by the authorities, broadcasting only carefully selected shows and news excluding any monster-related "incidents" that occur in the city so that the fake sentiment of "normalcy, of safety" (*Song* 54) wouldn't be disturbed. North City 'appears' ostensibly safe under the paid-for 'protection' of Callum Harker who promises to keep the monsters at bay. However, the protection Harker provides is only a façade offered by him and he is less and less able to maintain it as the Corsai and Malchai who work under his command are starting to rebel against his rule. The monsters want the city for themselves. In fact, this sense of protection promised by Harker is rendered more ironic as the surveillance cameras posted at every corner of his side of the city to locate monsters and keep them outside the boundaries of the city, and away from the humans, are used against them by the Sunai in South V-City to locate human 'sinners' who, through acts of violence, continue to create more monsters. These sinners are marked and

are later dealt with by Leo who assumes the role of their judge and executioner, as I will

demonstrate later in this chapter.

Schwab remains true to the YA Gothic trope of employing schools as a Gothic

space invaded by the supernatural Other—the use of the school setting is also present in

in the Twilight Series as will be seen shortly. Following the commands of his foster

father and foster brother August joins Colton Academy, a prestigious school in North V-

City, to spy on Kate who cannot be trusted for being the daughter of Harker whom they

suspect is trying to break the truce. However, life in the city space is detrimental to

monsters and humans alike. August is safe in the compounds where his foster family

resides because the humans in there are aware of his nature. However, the school, the

streets of the city and the metro August rides back home from school every evening are

outside of his experience. He feels out of place in Colton where everything looks

disturbingly 'natural'—or at least is attempting to look natural. August can't get rid of the

feeling that he is indeed an imposter. He lives in constant fear that "someone would see

through the Colton clothes and the practiced smile, and notice he wasn't human" (*Song*

63).

By the end of the first book, North V-City is run by monsters under the command

of Sloan, a Malchai born of Harker's violent crimes and who for years served as his most

trusted confident. The city is in effect even more divided, populated by monsters, and

haunted by the past and by the anticipation of a future that promises nothing but more

darkness. The Gothic nature of the decaying city in this story is accompanied by a sense

of melancholy manifesting through the anxiety of attempting to define and navigate the

familiar and the unfamiliar. The once known and familiar world of the humans has

become uncanny. The often unavoidable act of breaking all the geographical and physiological boundaries, of transgressing and invading the threshold is, I argue, the driving force behind Schwab's story as well as twenty-first-century YA Gothic texts that are populated by an array of supernatural Others—as is the case in the examples discussed in this chapter.

A New Age of Monsters

Holly Black's vampires and the supernatural beings I have mentioned briefly in the above section are clearly not as easily welcomed as Stephenie Meyer's sophisticated vampire 'family' in the Twilight Series (2005-2009). Whilst monsters from *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, *Certain Dark Things*, *Angelfall,* and *This Savage Song* have invaded the space of the Self in every aspect—geographical, cultural, physical and psychological—Meyer's vampires keep their existence hidden and exert minimal contact with the human Self. The Cullens, Stephenie Meyer's principal vampire family, embody what Emma Somogyi and David Ryan label as the "mainstreamer" or "mainstreaming vampire" (197), since they choose to assimilate into the society they inhabit while keeping their supernatural Otherness secret. The vampire Edward Cullen informs Bella that he and his family "try to blend in" (*Twilight* 174) with the humans. This attempt takes place as the Cullens infiltrate institutions that are traditionally for humans. Meyer utilizes the High School setting as introduced by L. J Smith in *The Vampire Diaries* series (1991). The Cullen 'children' are enrolled in the town's high school, they attend classes, and they sit in their high school cafeteria like humans during lunch and pretend to eat (*Twilight* 181). By

situating the supernatural within a space that is often seen as a safe environment for

learning and growth, YA Gothic set in schools, disrupts the purpose of such space.

Indeed, the high school or schools in general, as Gothic spaces are prominent in most YA

Gothic books of the twenty-first century.[31] In *Twilight*, the school setting serves not only

as a means to expose Bella to the supernatural, but also as a way by which Edward and

his siblings attempt to emulate a seeming sense of normality. Additionally, their adoptive

father, Carlisle, works as a doctor at a hospital and is admired by his colleagues and his

patients for his craft. They enjoy American sports and often play baseball in in the fields

behind the forest. The Cullens have been acting out their seemingly normal 'human' life

for decades, following rituals that allow them to pass undetected.

The notion of the Gothic space is also present in the Twilight tetralogy, as Meyer

positions her supernatural Others in towns, cities, and forests. Tara K.

Parmiter argues that in so doing, "Meyer complicates our reading of her Gothic tale"

(221) as the vampires in *Twilight* are not limited to a contained, or quarantined, space. In

this sense, "their existence within the human world is eased by a respect for social

customs and niceties" (Spooner 151), and they are free to wander the urban modern

world. Indeed, as the story progresses through the four books, we learn of the existence of

other vampires living in Italy, Egypt, Romania, and Brazil. Although these vampires do

not adopt the Cullens' 'vegetarianism', they maintain minimal contact with the human

world in order to preserve the balance between them and the humans. 'Vegetarianism',

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[31] The boarding school in particular gained a lot of popularity in YA Gothic narratives after the publication of Richelle Mead's *Vampire Academy* (2007) and Lauren Kate's *Fallen* (2009) where the protagonists live separated from their families in isolated Gothic edifices.

here, is a term used by Meyer to describe the Cullens's choice of feeding exclusively on animals, which sets them apart from most of the vampires in the series.

The principal Gothic space in the series is Forks, a remote, small town in Washington State, known for its bad weather and the "murky and ominous" (Meyer, *Twilight* 116) forested wilderness surrounding it. In *Twilight*, Bella often refers to Forks as her "personal hell on Earth" and views it "like a cage" (*Twilight* 11); in fact, her sentiment towards it echoes the sense of enclosure and claustrophobia that usually accompanies the Gothic space. Throughout the four books, the town stays relatively safe from the dangers of vampires, unlike the forest which surrounds it. Indeed, it is in the forest that Bella comes into contact with the nomad vampires James, Victoria, and Laurent who wish to kill her, and later with Quileute wolves, and the Volturi—the equivalent of royalty in the vampire world. The Volturis' residence in Italy is the only example of the Gothic space employed in traditional, older, Gothic narratives. Their official residence in Volterra, a town in Tuscany, is as old as they are. [32] The history of the town is closely linked—as Alice informs Bella on their way to stop Edward from his suicidal mission as he thinks Bella is dead and decides to reveal himself to humans in Volterra—to the vampires of that area as it was believed that vampires once terrorised the people of Volturra, until a "Christian missionary, a Father Marcus—Marcus of the Volturi, in fact—drove all the vampires from Volterra fifteen hundred years ago". Alice continues to explain that rumours of his death in Romania are nothing but myth for "he's

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[32] In an interview with TwilightLexicon.com, Stephenie Meyer says that "the long history" of the town is what made her choose it as a setting, instead of creating a whole new fictional town.

never left the city" (*Moon* 388). This Father Marcus is none other than Marcus Volturi, one of the three ruling Volturi brothers.

However, unlike the traditional Gothic space where the monstrous transgresses and violates boundaries, and where human life is in danger, Volterra is the safest place in the world from vampire attacks. The Volturi prohibit any kind of hunt for human blood in the city, fearing that it would expose their nature to the world. Instead, they 'hunt' in remote and foreign lands. That is exactly why Edward chooses it as the location of his 'suicide', knowing how protective the Volturi are of their town; they would kill him rather than allowing him to reveal the existence of vampires to the world. Parmiter suggests that in addition to her intent to "debunk the tired clichés of vampire lore" (222), Meyer, through the choice of Forks as the central setting of the story, "draws its fear of the wilderness from the American gothic tradition" (223). A number of YA texts, including Cami Garcia's and Margaret Stohl's Beautiful Creatures series (2010-2012) and Martina Boone's *Compulsion* (2014), are framed within the American Gothic tradition wherein the haunted castles, the monasteries and the ruins that characterised the setting of British Gothic are replaced by a distinctly American setting that reflects the new nation's anxieties and fears of frontier and wilderness. Indeed, Meyer follows what has now become a standard feature of YA Gothic, in that she positions the supernatural in close proximity to the human world, allowing the intrusion of the supernatural Other into both the modern urban twenty-first-century and its surroundings, as is exemplified in the texts explored previously.

Although there are differences between the narratives—Meyer's vampires desire assimilation, while Holly Black's and Moreno-Garcia's vampires, Susanne Ee's angels,

and V. E. Schwab's monsters explicitly show their Otherness—the texts exemplify the fundamental premise of twenty-first-century YA Gothic: deconstructing preconceived ideas and archetypes and creating new ones. They illustrate the use of the supernatural Other not only to deconstruct carefully constructed borders, but also to create an uncanny space where the human and the monster exist alongside each other; even when such co-existence is not always peaceful. Contemporary YA Gothic literature therefore challenges both the human Self and the supernatural Other: on the one hand, the Self in the narratives is encouraged to reconsider the concepts of boundaries, monstrosity and Otherness as defined by culture/society; on the other hand, the supernatural Other must reconsider its nature, and it is often her/his moral nature that needs revision, as demonstrated in the following section.

'We Are All Made of Stardust': Moral Monsters

Early Gothic narratives are more concerned with the politics and the processes of othering and are seldom representative of the perspective of the Other. In other words, othering is often explained but rarely challenged. Conversely, twenty-first-century YA Gothic provides a platform where the supernatural Other is given a voice and is able to showcase its complex nature, as I will demonstrate later in this section.

The characters in twenty-first-century YA Gothic, with some exceptions, do not engage in a simplistic, binary differentiation between the Self and the Other, and they resist enforced division between the nonhuman and the human, the abject and the subject, and more importantly, good and evil. Indeed, the distinction between such categories

becomes blurred and as such the supernatural Other complicates the demarcation of categorical boundaries. Part of the popularity of the array of supernatural entities in contemporary YA Gothic can be situated within the context of the rising fascination with the figure of the villain in the last few decades. In *Vader, Voldemort and Other Villains: Essays on Evil in Popular Media* (2011), Heit writes: "evil occupies a central position in our cultural conception of narrative and morality in its capacity to interrogate the moral assumptions underlying a simplified notion of the good" (6); the lines between good and bad characters are easily blurred. This is another reason why supernatural beings, now represented as tormented, dark, brooding anti-heroes, might be so popular amongst contemporary YA authors and readers. A recent anthology, *Because You Love to Hate Me: 13 Tales of Villainy* (2017), edited by Ameriie and featuring some of most acclaimed YA authors of the twenty-first century—including V. E. Schwab, Samantha Shannon, and Renée Ahdieh—in collaboration with thirteen popular YA BookTubers, focuses exclusively on villains. In the introduction to the anthology, the editor explains the appeal of villainous characters stating:

> We love villains because they turn their aches into action, their bruises into battering rams. They push through niceties and against societal restraints to propel the story forward. Unlike our lovable protagonists, villains—for better or worse—stop at literally nothing to achieve their goals. It's why we secretly root for them, why we find ourselves hoping they make their grand escape, and it's why our shoulders sag with equal parts relief and disappointment when they are caught. (1)

Furthermore, Heit suggests that the universal conflict between good and evil is symbolic of the opposition of God and the devil. This opposition is according the Heit, central to contemporary Western narratives wherein "[g]rounded firmly within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the devil (or, more broadly, evil) has his moments, but in the end, good people and their values prevail when facing the devil's challenges" (5). This notion can also be seen in early Gothic texts where monsters must be defeated and eliminated—and those who succumb to their lure must be punished—for order to be restored. It is important to note that some supernatural figures, as I have illustrated in Chapter One, assume the role of 'good spirits' and usually hold a minor role within the narrative, acting as omens and warnings for the main characters. Yet, despite the existence of these few exceptions, the traditional portrayal of the supernatural in early Gothic fiction remains overwhelmingly that of an 'evil' one.

However, in twenty-first-century YA Gothic, and contrary to early Gothic texts, supernatural beings are no longer portrayed as universally evil; rather YA Gothic authors adopt a complex, non-binary approach in their portrayal of supernatural characters focusing on the multiple degrees of good and evil. Commenting on the vampire, Brian J. Frost argues that, "the prevailing trend in literature and cinema is to portray vampires as highly intellectual beings living a separate but not entirely incompatible existence alongside the human race" (24). Frost then goes on to say that knowledge is what they primarily pursue. While it is true that most vampires are educated and intelligent, in consequence of their immortality, I would argue that knowledge is not their most common pursuit; in reality it is the pursuit of redemption and the desire to be 'good' and this desire is not exclusive to vampires in YA Gothic. The same holds true for

werewolves, deities, and angels who seek the same thing: redemption from the wrongs they have committed in the past.

In *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, the nature of vampirism, as well as the moral capacity of vampires, is unclear to many of the book's characters. Reflecting on the nature of vampires, Bill writes:

> There's something easy about the idea that vampirism is some kind of disease—then they can't help it if they attack us, that they commit murders and atrocities, that they can only control themselves sometimes. They're sick; it's not their fault. And there's something even easier about the idea of demonic invasion, something forcing our loved ones to do all manner of terrible things. Still not their fault, only now we can destroy them. (Black 399)

As the passage illustrates, the humans in the story view vampirism differently: the truth behind the nature of vampirism or how it has originated is unknown, and as such, they are reluctant to condemn them as inherently evil beings. Bill goes on to state a third option: "the possibility that there's something monstrous inside of us that can be unleashed, the most disturbing of all". Thus, if vampires are to be condemned and rejected as monsters for their wrong-doings, so should humans because vampires "could be just us with a raging hunger, us with a couple of accidental murders under our belt" (340).

The Coldest Girl in Coldtown, and a significantly important number of texts in YA Gothic, as noted above, break free from the pre-conceived and traditional notions of good and evil, allowing the supernatural Other to express its complex nature—her/his capability to be good. As such it proposes a revision to the use of the term monster and monstrous to differentiate between 'evil' monsters who refuse to display any morality

and as a result must be eliminated, and relatively 'good' monsters who often question their existence and their nature, and express their desire for something different that would not impel them to commit the follies and atrocities that their supernatural status dictates. These 'good' supernatural beings are to be saved from the humans who see them as monsters, and from their own race that sees them as a threat.

Gavriel, for example, in *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, is described as being imbued with madness caused by a violent past and is dangerously unhinged. His mind is fragmented and his character is unpredictable as he sways between moments of lucidity and madness. During his lucid moments, he is tortured by his past choices; Black even suggests that he suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). His trauma is the result of him being mercilessly tortured for a decade, for unintentionally causing the vampire outburst by not killing Morales when he had the chance—killing him would have meant avoiding the vampire epidemic—to the point where he "came apart" (333), and when he "came back to himself, his memories were disjointed" (334). Cathy Caruth defines trauma as a phenomenon "in which the overwhelming events of the past repeatedly possess, in intrusive images and thoughts, the one who has lived through them" (151), and Gavriel is haunted by his past. Of course, Gavriel escapes his prison, killing his captors in the process, but nonetheless he is still possessed by the memories of the pain he endured during his imprisonment, and by the guilt he feels for his actions. Nevertheless, although Gavriel can seem cruel at times, his violence in the novel is arguably justified by his mental condition and his desire to rectify his mistake. He is in Mullan's words "a protagonist who draws us into sympathy despite doing things that should appal us" (91), and his violence has more of a purpose than simply the impulse to

do wrong. Black's use of flashbacks to narrate Gavriel's past life highlights his human life, his transformation, his life as a vampire, and later his pain. The flashbacks do not only give him a way to justify his actions to some extent, they also evoke sympathy from the reader.

Gavriel's character contrasts dramatically with that of Lucien, his maker.[33] Lucien is in some respects similar to Anne Rice's Lestat in *The Vampire Chronicles*, and indeed Black acknowledges the influence of Rice's vampires on her own in a number of interviews.[34] Lucien is rebellious and all about the spectacle, showcasing the glamour of vampirism and immortality to those susceptible to the charms of Coldtown. He conceives of the parties he broadcasts to the world and his Eternal Ball, where humans and vampires indulge in their desires, as his own idea of a rebellion and a challenge to old rules, both human and vampiric. Lucien's appeal to humans outside Coldtown and other vampires alike is undeniable. He is the opposite of Gavriel, for while Gavriel portrays the tortured moral aspect of the monster, Lucien, on the other hand, represents its dark and cruel nature; they are two different faces of the same coin.

The dualism at play here is not directly oppositional; instead it is complementary, serving as a link between the benevolent and the malignant, rather than the extreme

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[33] The name of the main male characters in this *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* and *This Savage Song* are suggestive of their nature and role in the narrative. Lucien's name for example is closely allied with Lucifer, the Devil, while Gavriel is allied with the arch angel, Gabriel. Likewise, August and Leo are both names of Roman Emperors and of Christian saints. Lucien further evokes a connection with Lucifer, in that he tempts and lures the humans to Coldtown similar to the way Lucifer tempted Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden and caused their banishment to the mortal world.

[34] Notably in an interview with Huffinpost.com titled "The Coldest Girl in Coldtown Author Holly Black on Vampires, Vine & Violence" (2013) and in "Q & A with Holly Black" on Publisherweekly.com (2013).

demarcation of good and evil. Gavriel is not entirely good, nor is Lucien entirely bad; they both act according to their agendas, which happen to be opposed, for while Gavriel's sole goal is to avenge what has been done to him, Lucien's is to gain power. He states: "I like this world and I would keep it moving forward, unlike the ancient vampires. Their dream of returning to the old ways is like the Romanov's dream of a return to power. It won't happen, no matter how much they cackle about it in their crypts and catacombs" (Black 330). Lucien's intention is to break free from the rules imposed by centuries of vampiric traditions. This can also be read as a representation of modern YA supernatural Other breaking away from the portrayal of 'ancient' monsters in traditional Gothic fiction. Lucien is the villain of the story, not because of his supernatural status or his desire to change the world into a place where vampires are revered as gods, but because of his acts and his choices that lead to his ultimate demise at the hands of Tana, for "a villain, however fascinating, exists to be defeated" (Mullan 91).

Similarly, V. E. Schwab's The Monsters of Verity series explores the notion of 'moral monsters' in great detail. It does so through alternating between Kate's and August's immediate perspectives, allowing for an exploration of the Gothic world created by the Phenomenon from the perspective of both human and supernatural Other. August's perspective is often confused as he struggles to grapple the mystery of his existence and its purpose. As he considers his nature he fears "not being" (Schwab, *Song* 304) anymore. On the other hand, Kate, human and angry at the current state of humanity in her world, tries to navigate her identity as a human in world replete with monsters. She is perplexed by August's desire to be human and to understand what that feels like. The following dialogue takes place between them:

"Why would you even want to be human? We're fragile. We die."

"You also live (says August). You don't spend every day wondering why you exist, but don't feel real, why you look human, but can't be. You don't do everything you can to be a good person only to have it constantly thrown in your face that you're not a person at all" (*Song* 305).

Towards the end of the book, as she learns to trust August who saves her life after Leo tries to kill her, she comes to the realization that her knowledge of the monsters that have invaded her city and distanced her further from her father derives from lies told only to make the monsters even more othered.

August's nature as Sunai further alienates him, even among other monsters who fear the Sunai. The only two individuals who would understand him and his struggle are his foster siblings. However, this is not as simple as he thinks; his siblings are 'older', born during the early days of the war between Harker and their foster father; as such, their vision of the world is different and much more cynical. While Ilsa feels regret and remorse for her actions and remains enclosed in the family's compounds, Leo is ruthless in his treatment of humans, having no faith in them. He sees the world as broken by the actions of the humans who pollute it with their sins. Leo is their "judge, jury, and executioner" (*Song* 201). Sunai Ilsa, Leo, and August fulfil a quasi-religious role as their powers incite the sinners to confess all their sins to them before they proceed to reap their souls. After every 'feeding', Leo reassures August that "[h]e'd made the world a little better, or at least, prevented it from getting worse. That was his purpose. That was his point" (*Song* 131). Indeed, Leo clearly does not consider himself, or the Sunai, as the monster. Instead, he considers himself to be the "holy fire" (*Song* 374) that will cleanse

the world and purge it of the real monsters—in other words, the humans who triggered the Phenomenon. Similar to the vampires in Black's story and the invading angels in Ee's narrative, Leo assumes the position of master over the humans. He warns August not to confuse the Sunai with humans whom he views as "base creatures". As he states: "[w]e are not Corsai, swarming like insects. We are not Malchai, feeding like beasts. Sunai are justice. Sunai are balance" (*Song* 106). This hostility Leo exhibits towards humans and his refusal to work towards unity is what makes him a villain in the story—and by the end of book one he is killed by August after trying to break the truce and kill Kate.

The second book in Schwab's series, *Our Dark Duet* (2017), picks up six months after the events of the first book. August is seemingly more comfortable with what and who he is and focused on keeping the monsters of the north side of the city from crossing to South V-City. August, working overtime to protect the city and ensure that humans do not fall victims to their violent desires, embodies the role of the protector. His aching need to be a protector, however, clashes with his desire to be human, for he cannot be both: "[i]t was a cruel trick of the universe, thought August, that he only felt human after doing something monstrous" (*Song* 130). Here we are introduced to a new monster that manifests itself in the city of Prosperity—a city where the phenomenon has not occurred before—where Kate is now residing under a different name. This new manifestation, known as the Chaos Eater, who has arisen from the violent events that occurred in the first book and who feeds on the chaos and violence engendered by both the humans and the monsters created in Verity City, poses a greater threat to the characters in the story, as it is capable of bringing out its victims' inner demons. Indeed, the conceit of violence resulting in more violence remains consistent throughout the two books. Kate considers

the monsters created by the Phenomenon and comes to the conclusion that "[t]here were two kinds of monsters, the kind that hunted the streets and the kind that lived in your head. She could fight the first, but the second was more dangerous. It was always, always, always a step ahead" (*Duet* 145).

The humans, ostensibly righteous and civilized in contrast with the supernatural Other, are the very reason monsters exist. The monsters in this story are not only a mirror of the Self's darkest and deepest desires, they are its violent deeds externalized. Schwab's monsters are sins and fears made shadows … and flesh. The story reads almost as a warning as it provides a vision of a Gothic version of a disintegrated society where "plenty of humans are monstrous, and plenty of monsters know how to play at being human" (*Duet* 122). V. E. Schwab's duology posits the following question: how can we keep the monsters 'outside' if they have from the very beginning always been 'inside'? In this respect, one might say that the supernatural Others in this tale in particular are a re-emergence of the repressed as an object of horror and terror. The message of the story is indeed "violence *breeds* violence" (*Song* 36) and that our monsters are our own creation.

Ultimately, Kate and August both, in their own way, struggle to understand a world forever profoundly altered by the Phenomenon. Fred Botting emphasizes how Gothic narratives "retain a double function in simultaneously assuaging and intensifying the anxieties with which they engage" (26), and indeed such a premise is reflected throughout the story. In the end, the duology is an exploration of human nature as much as it is an exploration of the supernatural Other, which throughout the story seem to be very close, as Kate and August note:

"I read somewhere," said Kate, "that people are made of stardust."

He dragged his eyes from the sky. "Really?"

"Maybe that's what you're made of. Just like us." (Schwab, *Song* 309)

What the texts examined above illustrate is that the moral choices the supernatural Other makes is the factor that determines the reaction of the human Self to it. In the Twilight Series, the choices the Cullens have made and their respect of borders are what has enabled their seemingly smooth assimilation into the human world. The Cullens have made a free choice to be 'vegetarian', influencing the Denali coven to adopt their lifestyle. While such a choice is rather difficult given the nature of the vampire, they do not hesitate to take it for the greater good. Their decisions and choices often position them above and beyond human morals. True, some slips happen through the story, notably Jasper attacking Bella when she cuts her finger, but overall, by choice, they deconstruct the image of the vampire and the monster as being inherently evil and devoid of any moral constraints.

The final battle between the Cullens and the Volturi in the final book, *Breaking Dawn*, can be viewed as a representation of the conflict between 'good' and 'evil', between imposed force and free will. As Garrett, one of the vampires who have joined the Cullens as allies, explains, "[the Volturi] seek the death of our free will" (*Dawn* 719). In fact, free will plays a crucial role in the Twilight Series overall, as Meyer explains in an interview with *Time* magazine: "I really think that's the underlying metaphor of my vampires … it doesn't matter where you're stuck in life or what you think you have to do; you can always choose something else. There's always a different path" (qtd. in Grossman 2008). Indeed, the importance of choice and free will is crucial for the re-visioning of the supernatural Other in YA Gothic in general. By endowing supernatural

beings with free will, YA Gothic authors create characters who have the ability to make a moral choice between 'good' and 'evil', and it is on the basis of their choices that their place and role in the narrative are decided.

Meyer repeatedly demonstrates the moral complexity of her vampires who experience ceaseless questioning of their monstrous nature. Carlisle, for example, in *Twilight* tries unsuccessfully to kill himself instead of hurting anyone, until he realizes he can survive on animal blood, whereupon he decides to attempt a new kind of life as a vampire. Like Bella, he has never tasted human blood. Likewise, Edward sees himself as a monster for what he did in the past: soon after his transformation, he rebels against Carlisle's lifestyle and reverts to drinking human blood again. Yet even then he chooses to kill only those who are corrupted and his ability to read the minds of his victims prevents him from killing innocents. As such he rises to the status of a vigilante-like vampire; Bella even argues that he is a vampire "who ran around saving people's lives so he wouldn't be a monster" (*Twilight* 204), which also emphasizes his desire to be 'good'.

Through the Cullens, Meyer offers vampires who have the capacity to be monsters but who have chosen to be civilized, even if sometimes they are still tempted to give in to their monstrous sides; a temptation that dominates early Gothic narratives. Such characteristics align the morally good supernatural Other with the superhero, the saviour, adapting what was once viewed as inherently monstrous into something heroic and desirable. This heroic version, then, serves to redeem the supernatural Other from its portrayal as horrific in early Gothic texts, and brings the supernatural back to mythological origins. The same, however, cannot be said about monsters that choose to act in opposition to the heroic supernatural Other, as is the case with the Cullens'

enemies, Leo, and Lucien for example. In this case, YA Gothic authors establish a distinction between the two kinds of monsters; the good and the bad. Examples are seen in a good number of contemporary YA Gothic texts that emphasize a reflective discussion on the connection between the supernatural Other and monstrosity. My argument is that instead of being rendered human, as most critical analyses suggest, the monster is given the possibility to be redeemed in twenty-first-century YA Gothic, while maintaining its status as a supernatural Other. It is important to clarify that redemption does not make the monster human—he/she is already beyond that—but it allows us to see the Other as a being capable of both good and evil, as shown in the previous section. Moreover, stating that YA monsters are humanized and stripped of their Otherness ignores their complex nature, as well as the existence of villainous, evil characters who belong, in most YA Gothic fiction, to the same race of supernatural beings as the anti-hero, or to another form of supernatural Other. Tana in The Coldest Girl in Coldtown, for example, points out that each day since Gavriel became a vampire was not one where he aged but rather one where he became more distant from humanity

Uncanny Yet Sublime

In *Dimensions of Monstrosity in Contemporary Narratives: Theory, Psychoanalysis, Postmodernism* (2004) Andrew Hock argues that

> [m]onstrosity is largely interpellated by the Symbolic gaze which prescribes
> certain significances to particular bodies and behaviours, rendering them
> monstrous. And as aberrant bodies are most directly visible, it is not surprising

that such bodies, failing to conform to the Symbolic normative, are immediately

coded as monstrous. (2)

The very sight of the monster is morally disagreeable to human beings as is seen in early

Gothic texts such as in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* or *Frankenstein*. The

creature is placed outside the margins of human society and his monstrous Otherness,

usually in the form of grotesque appearance, means that human beings are unable to

relate to him. However, as has been shown earlier in this chapter, the portrayal of the

modern type of monster is not always compliant to its subjection and finds ways to

challenge and even subvert archetypal depictions. Moreover, the degeneration of the

body that is often regarded as a physical manifestation of alienation is not applicable to

contemporary YA monsters as it is often their inhuman perfection that positions them as

Other. In this section, I argue that supernatural beings in contemporary YA Gothic

literature defy their classification as monstrous in the traditional Gothic vein and instead

create novelised archetypes that are strongly reminiscent of the early portrayal of the

supernatural in mythology, and function as a source of the Sublime; as such the

supernatural Other transforms from the monstrous Other to the sublime Other.

Commenting on the vampire, several studies suggest that the human appearance

that they take is one of the reasons behind the mixed feelings of fear and fascination that

they engender. As Poole points out, commenting on the nineteenth-century vampire,

"[y]ou would never know the vampire did not share our humanity until she showed her

fangs" (122). However, while it is often argued that part of the fascination towards the

supernatural Other in YA Gothic stems from their humanisation, their appearance is far

from being that of an average human; if anything, most of the time their physical

descriptions are reminiscent of mythological deities, which further marks them as the Other. Edward in *Twilight*, for instance, is often compared to Adonis for his perfect, otherworldly features, as discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, most of them possess abilities that are exclusive to them individually, such as superhuman strength and speed, and psychic powers. Some of Meyer's vampires, for example, possess distinct gifts that make them even more unique amongst their kind. Throughout the four books several gifted vampires are introduced: Alice has visions of possible futures, Edward can read minds, Jane, a member of the Volturi, can inflict pain, while Benjamin, from the Egyptian coven, can control the elements, and the Amazonian vampire, Zafrina, creates audio-visual illusions. In *Breaking Dawn*, even Bella acquires a gift—she is able to shield herself and people around her from mental attacks. Consequently, contrary to what Poole suggests, contemporary YA vampires are not given away by their fangs, but by their non-human—super-human—physical and psychic abilities and their unnatural aura, which evokes a sense of superiority. The contemporary YA monster, then, has shown a distinct trend towards a 'perfect' appearance that allows them to fit in to some extent within a human society that values physical beauty, and enables them to infiltrate the human world without disrupting the 'natural order' of things. The effect of this is illustrated in most twenty-first-century YA Gothic texts. Instead of creating fear that leads to the ultimate rejection of the monster, the 'new monster' engenders apprehension mingled with fascination and desire in the human characters. This is, of course, not exclusive to twenty-first-century YA Gothic; Rice's vampires, as I have noted in Chapter Two, exhibit the possession of a very similar attraction.

The vampire in contemporary YA Gothic is a figure of desire whose perfection and attractiveness is otherworldly, and share none of the characteristics of the bloated corpse-vampire of folklore. Indeed, as if their supernatural nature did not already mark them as otherworldly, vampires and supernatural beings in general, are often compared to works of art; this is of course not limited to male supernatural beings, since their female counterpart is also described as inhumanly beautiful, as discussed in Chapter Two. In *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, Black repeatedly draws attention to Gavriel's appearance emphasizing his inhuman beauty. Tana describes him as someone who

> must have been handsome when he was alive and was handsome still, although made monstrous by his pallor and her awareness of what he was. His mouth looked soft, his cheekbones as sharp as blades, and his jaw curved, giving him an off-killer beauty. His black hair a mad forest of dirty curls. (Black 18)

Indeed, Gavriel's description is echoed in several other YA Gothic narratives. Likewise, the last thing Edward resembles is a corpse, and the rest of the vampires in the Twilight series are indeed represented as sublime creatures. Rosalie Cullen, Edward's sister for example, is described as beautiful beyond words, and her statuesque appearance is as Bella notes, worthy of "the cover of the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue," (*Twilight* 18). The Cullens' parents, Carlisle and his wife Esme, are both described as strikingly perfect—I return to their role as parents in Chapter Four. Indeed, despite their paleness and the dark shadows under their eyes (*Twilight* 18), all the Cullens, as well as the rest of the vampires in the series, are depicted as "devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful," with "straight, perfect, angular" features. Their faces were, as Bella observes, "faces you never expected to see except perhaps on the airbrushed pages of a fashion magazine. Or painted

by an old master as the face of an angel. It was hard to decide who was the most beautiful—maybe the perfect blond girl, or the bronze haired boy" (*Twilight* 19).

Meyer's emphasis on the otherworldly beauty of her vampires is reiterated throughout the series. As stated in Chapter Two, the vampires in the Twilight Series are said to resemble *des oeuvres d'art*. Edward's beauty and perfection evoke that of the deities of mythology, as I have stated earlier. Interestingly, the reaction that Edward and other supernatural beings in YA Gothic produce in human characters who come in contact with them is similar to what Otto explains as a meeting with the Holy, and the sensation of coming into contact with something overwhelmingly super-human, beyond logical explanation or reasoning (7). In addition, Otto states that the Other "allures with a potent charm, and the creature, who trembles before it, utterly cowed and cast down, has always at the same time the impulse to turn to it, to make it somehow his own" (Otto 31). It can easily be argued here that what Otto refers to as Holy can be extended to the supernatural Other in YA Gothic, as has already been demonstrated in Chapter Two.

Conclusion

Judith Halberstam, in her book *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, writes that the monster's body in Gothic literature and in later horror films "condenses various racial and sexual threats to nation … The Gothic monster represents many answers to the question of who must be removed from the community at large" (3). The twenty-first century has witnessed a significant change in the portrayal of the Gothic monster in YA literature. Traditionally, monsters are condemned as abhorrent based on

three main reasons: their Otherness and their invasion of territories, their immorality, which classifies them as inherently evil, and their physical appearance which gives away their monstrosity.

While this is true when dealing with earlier Gothic texts, it no longer applies to the contemporary monsters in YA Gothic, which invites a revaluation of our understanding of the Other and the binaries of good and evil. No longer is the monster portrayed as simply loathsome and evil. Now, the monsters in works such as *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, the Monsters of Verity duology and the Twilight Series, as well as several examples of other YA Gothic texts, possess the ability to pass as human, if that is what they desire. They have free will and are capable of making morally sound decisions. Additionally, commenting on Meyer's contemporary vampires, Catherine Spooner states: "sparkly vampires have manners; they suppress their desire to snarl in order to enjoy the benefits of integrating with mainstream society. At the same time their sparkliness indicates their difference, their Otherness, their specialness" (162). This, on the other hand, does not mean that all vampires, and by extension all supernatural beings are unconditionally assimilated within society; some of them are still alienated and othered. This is mainly caused, as the discussion in this chapter illustrates, by the decisions they make as they experience internal moral struggles choosing between being 'good' and being villainous, and while some monsters are capable of love and sacrifice, and exhibit sympathetic traits, others are not.

The supernatural Other in these narratives can be read as a mode of self-scrutiny and self-exploration. The monsters in The Verity duology and the vampires in *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* perform the role of an individual and a social critic; indeed,

they interrogate the Self's attitude towards Otherness. Through the encounter with the supernatural other, the human characters come to question their own nature, their weaknesses, and their desires. They come to recognise their own Otherness. This is more accentuated in *This Savage Song* as the monsters are quite literally the creation of the humans. Nevertheless, all the works I have considered posit questions of identity, morality, and judgement.

In this chapter, I have argued that YA Gothic proposes an alternative approach to Otherness through the positioning of the supernatural Others into an environment more familiar to the human self and attributes to them qualities that brings them closer to human understanding and veneration. As Ed Cameron notes, there is an undertone of desire in the uncanny as

> the Gothic has always used alien figures that are obscure yet, somehow, intimate in order to produce its sublime effects. This baffling yet intimate nature of the uncanny sublime in Gothic fiction produces a seductive craving in both characters and critics alike to tame its radical uncertainty with rational understanding. (19)

More specifically, what YA Gothic does is take the traditionally demonized, evil figures and rewrite them in such a way as to force the reader, as well as non-supernatural characters in the narrative, both to sympathize with and admire the characters. On the whole, twenty-first-century YA Gothic's depiction of the supernatural is both uncanny and sublime. It is uncanny in that the Self is faced with something beyond its comprehension, yet strangely familiar, something Other whose existence threatens the Self's stability. Yet, that same feeling of insecurity engenders a sense of fascination that can only be achieved when faced with the sublime. Monsters become a figure of desire as

Lucien explains: "now the world sees our true faces. It is remade by us into something glorious, something where men aspire to be immortal" (Black 330). The supernatural, then, is restored to its mythical status, as I have mentioned earlier, and as such, contemporary monsters are in fact more reminiscent of the old mythological supernatural beings. They are the sublime Other that threatens and enchants, and empowers through his/her Otherness, as the following chapter demonstrates.

Chapter Four

The Many Faces of the Twenty-First-Century YA Gothic Heroine

"I can't always be Lois Lane … I want to be Superman, too."
—Stephenie Meyer, *Twilight*

An angel sat on one shoulder, a devil on the other. Both of them wore my face.
—Michelle Hodkin, *The Retribution of Mara Dyer*

Because I could not stop for Death, He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves And Immortality.
—Emily Dickinson, "The Chariot"

Introduction

Since its inception in the late-eighteenth century, the genre of Gothic literature has featured unique female characters who subvert earlier depictions of women in literature. Such women occupy a central position within the narrative, where they engage with uncanny events that characterize the Gothic genre. The earliest manifestations of the Gothic heroine foregrounded a set of characteristics that have become closely linked to the portrayal of the female character in such narratives. In what is now understood as the first Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the young virgin, Isabella, is pursued by the tyrant Manfred who tries to force her into marrying him and fulfil his wish of producing an heir. The fact that Isabella was meant to marry his son who dies, tragically crushed by a giant helmet during the wedding ceremony, and the fact that she is much younger than he is does not stop him from pursuing her, disregarding his role as her guardian in the absence of her father. Throughout the story, Isabella is chased and confined, living in fear of Manfred's wickedness. Likewise, Manfred's daughter, Matilda, is a victim of her father's schemes, ultimately paying the price with her life as

she is mistakenly killed by him when he believes her to be Isabella. Constantly mistaken identities would, in fact, continue to be a common element in the Gothic genre.

Later, as the Gothic genre spread amongst prominent writers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an array of innocent, fragile, and persecuted female characters populated the Gothic texts of the period, and established the archetypal characteristics of the Gothic heroine. The role that the Gothic heroine plays in such narratives has attracted considerable literary scholarship and the relationship between the Gothic as a literary form and the role of women has been discussed by several critics, including Kate Ferguson Ellis, who notes how, "from its beginnings in the late eighteenth century, the Gothic genre, as seen by many critics, has enjoyed a complicated relationship with women" (457). My focus in this chapter will be on the relationship of female characters and the supernatural, specifically the impact of the supernatural on the development of the archetypal Gothic heroine in twenty-first-century YA Gothic narratives.

The first section of this chapter will consider the genesis of the Gothic heroine in earlier Gothic texts in an attempt to set a context for the heroine of twenty-first-century YA Gothic literature. In the second section of the chapter I discuss the twenty-first-century YA Gothic heroine and family dynamics, while in the last section of the chapter, I consider the ways in which YA Gothic authors negotiate agency and the empowerment of the contemporary Gothic heroine, particularly in terms of the complex relationship with the supernatural and Otherness. I suggest that through a confrontation with, and an exposition to, the supernatural, the twenty-first-century YA Gothic heroine shifts from being a 'victim-heroine' to becoming a more assertive figure who is very much in control of her destiny by the end of the narrative. Throughout the chapter I argue that the role of

the twenty-firs- century Gothic heroine in YA Gothic fiction is not to serve as a feminist model of conduct for young adolescents, but rather her role is to act as a figure of reassurance—not only for adolescents but for adults who consume the literature as well— since contemporary YA Gothic literature portrays teenage protagonists who are often seen struggling to negotiate identity politics and to find their place in the world they live in. Catherine Spooner points out that the Gothic "has always had a strong link with adolescence" (88); as a genre that concerns itself with figures and aspects of Otherness, it is only fitting that its adolescent characters are marginal figures themselves.

The 'Victimised' Persecuted Gothic Heroine of Earlier Gothic Literature

Several critics, notably Ellen Moers, Robert Miles, Diane Hoeveler, David Punter, Donna Heiland, and Diana Wallace, have examined the obvious tendency of Gothic narratives to diverge in their portrayal of the Gothic heroine. This divergence in portrayal often depends on whether the text is written by a male or female author. In 1976, coinciding with a surge of feminist scholarship, Moers coined the term 'Female Gothic' in her critical study, *Literary Women: The Great Writers*, to describe "[t]he work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic" (90).[35] Moers suggests, through her analysis of Gothic texts, a separation between "male writers [who] tended towards a plot of masculine transgression of social taboos, exemplified by Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796)" (qtd. in Smith and Wallace

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[35] Moers acknowledges the difficulty of defining the Gothic and states that her understanding of the term Gothic refers to that which "has to do with fear" (90).

2), and the works of women writers. According to Moers, 'Female Gothic' is recognizable through certain persistent modes of expression used by women writers of Gothic literature during the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to expose and address anxieties over women's domestic life—often viewed as entrapment— notably in terms of their sexuality, and their agency. Although the work of Ellen Moers generated a strong feminist scholarship and interest in the works of women writers of the Gothic and their lives, the categorization of all works of Gothic literature written by women authors as 'Female Gothic' seems to be problematic. Primarily, the term 'Female Gothic' suggests a certain gendered reading of female-authored Gothic texts closely linked with the ideological goals of second-wave literary feminist criticism. As such, the term, while still valuable, is arguably more about feminist criticism and less about the Gothic writing of women authors during the late-eighteenth and nineteenth century.

The significance of the Gothic novel, especially the female-authored Gothic novel—the Female Gothic novel—lies in the fact that it allows the Gothic heroine in particular to step out of the role of the objectified, victimized young woman. In such fiction, the heroine is portrayed as much more independent. This marks a clear contrast with male-authored Gothic fiction of the same period—the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—in which the narratives often conclude either with the death of the victimized heroine, such as Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto*, or with the hero rescuing her at the last moment, as is the case with Isabella in the same novel. Within that power struggle, the female character of the story and in Gothic texts in general, has to fight to reclaim a certain degree of agency, and preserve that which is hers. In the case of Isabella, it is her body that is under threat, and she is left "fearing that pursuit of a domineering and

lascivious patriarch who wants to use her womb as a repository for seed that may help

him preserve his property and wealth … yet worried that, fleeing in an opposite direction,

she is still 'within reach of somebody [male], she knew not whom'" (Hogle 6). The

emphasis on the 'male threat' in women-authored Gothic narratives is often at the very

centre of the struggle, and the reason behind the Gothic heroine's plight.

Yet, it is also that very same 'male threat' that forces the Gothic heroine to do

what she could not have done on her own, as is the case with the Gothic writings of Ann

Radcliffe. Critics agree that Radcliffe, whose Gothic romance texts saw her young, often

orphaned and persecuted female characters as the focus and the central figure of the

story, made one of the most important contributions to the development of the portrayal

and characterization of the traditional Gothic heroine. On the surface, Radcliffe's

heroines are very similar to their predecessors—incarcerated, distressed, threatened

physically and morally—yet instead of creating a female character who acts only as a

victim, she writes, as Moers states, narratives with female protagonists who are both

heroines and victims at the same time (126). Moers even goes on to suggest that what

Radcliffe's 'travelling' Gothic heroine performs is an act of feminist heroism, or more

accurately 'heroinism' which she defines as: "the challenge to tell the woman's side of

the love story in her own words" (160). Moreover, Robert Miles argues that Radcliffe's

popularity is directly related to her ability to borrow and elaborate on a major theme from

her predecessors; he states that "her most significant innovation was to expand a

particular element of *Otranto*, the heroine in flight from a patriarchal ogre in a European

setting" (46). Indeed, Radcliffe places her heroine in a gothic setting dominated by an

individualistic and anti-social villain where she is constantly threatened. However, her

heroines, unlike those of Walpole, for instance, do take the initiative in certain instances as Miles notes: "Walpole's text features a heroine who retreats ever deeper into the castle's labyrinth; Radcliffe picks this up, but she also included a period of extend escape and flight …" (46). Nevertheless, Radcliffe's heroines cannot be viewed as entirely passive. Adeline, the protagonist in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), for instance, attempts to escape the confinement imposed on her by the Marquis on several occasions. Furthermore, her actions impact the course of the narrative; the evidence she provides in the trial of Theodore also contributes to the defeat of the villainous Marquis and Theodore's release from prison, who, as she discovers, is actually the son of Monsieur La Luc, her adoptive father. The story unfolds towards a happy ending, as Adeline, whose real father is revealed to be the late Marquis who was murdered by the Gothic villain, inherits a large sum and finally marries Theodore.

Through the gaze of the Gothic villain, the Gothic heroine is generally perceived as weak and fragile. In Radcliffe's novels, the descriptions are mostly concerned with an obsessive emphasis on her physical beauty. When the Marquis sees Adeline for the first time, for instance, he describes her as follow:

> unfortunate companion, who, pale and exhausted, leaned for support against the
> wall. Her features, which were delicately beautiful, had gained from distress an
> expression of captivating sweetness: she had '[a]n eye / As when the blue sky
> trembles thro' a cloud / Of purest white'. A habit of grey camlet, with short
> slashed sleeves, shewed, but did not adorn, her figure … Such elegance and
> apparent refinement, contrasted with the desolation of the house, and the savage

manners of its inhabitants, seemed to him like a romance of imagination, rather

than an occurrence of real life. (Radcliffe 10)

As this passage illustrates, Adeline is already cast as a victim from the beginning of the

story. She is characterized by her delicacy and the distress that she experiences.

Radcliffe's Gothic heroines do not necessarily take physical action against their

tormentor; instead they subtly show their personal strength through intellect, dignity,

morality, and logic. Eugenia DeLamotte suggests that "conscious worth provides [the

Gothic heroine] direct, physical, and extremely temporary protection from the villain"

(34) and argues that this "conscious worth" adopted by the heroines of Radcliffe

functions as an act of "self-defence" (34). In *The Italian* (1797), for example, when

Ellena is threatened physically by the men who abduct her, she attempts to use reason

to evade the situation: "[h]er breath and courage were gone, yet she struggled to sustain

herself, and endeavoured to ask with calmness, what was their errand" (Radcliffe 59).

However, Ellena's passive attempt fails and—unsurprisingly—leads to a more physical

response from her abductors as they decide to give her "no reply, but threw a veil over

her face, and seizing her arms, led her almost unresisting, but supplicating, towards the

portico" (59).

Walpole's Isabella and Matilda, Radcliffe's Ellena and Adeline, and a host of

other heroines pertaining to the same tradition, together established the qualities of the

archetypal Gothic heroine. The term itself conjures up in the mind of the Gothic reader

images of innocent, beautiful, objectified, passive, chaste, and inexperienced young

women who are imperilled and persecuted by the men who desire them, but who are

ultimately rescued by a valiant hero. The Gothic heroine is also habitually portrayed as

possessing an investigative spirit that leads her to venture into dark and dangerous places to uncover some sort of sinister secret—a characteristic that is usually at play in twenty-first-century YA Gothic, as I shall demonstrate. Carol Ann Howells observes that the Gothic heroine is "constantly threatened by emotional and physical assault" (9); such an observation asserts the vulnerability of the Gothic heroine and positions her in the role of what several critics have termed 'victim-heroine'. Moreover, her innocence and passivity suggest the ease by which she can be corrupted by external forces, and as such she must be protected. Avril Horner notes that while the Gothic heroine is "portrayed usually in relation to contemporary notions of the proper lady, the heroine demonstrates a passive courage in the face of such danger" (180), the passivity that always accompanies her courage also emphasizes her victim status.

It is not my intention in this chapter to suggest that there is indeed a continuation of the 'Radcliffean' formula—which Moers terms the 'Female Gothic'—in contemporary YA Gothic; however, it is important to acknowledge its influence on the portrayal of the twenty-first-century YA Gothic heroine, since it made a significant shift in the portrayal of female characters in the early years of the Gothic novel. Although the model suggested by Moers in her study of the 'Female Gothic' works very well when applied to early Gothic texts written by women, such as Clara Reeve, Ann Radcliffe, or Mary Shelley, the same cannot be said about twentieth-century Gothic texts and even less about twenty-first-century YA Gothic. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the Gothic text, and by extension Gothic characters, are very much influenced by the time of their creation and as the times change, our methods of interpreting the Gothic need to adapt to account for modern culture—which inevitably has some impact on both the authors and their

heroines. Since Moers developed this term, the relationship between feminist criticism and the 'Female Gothic' has been questioned and re-examined by several scholars in their attempt to answer at specific periods of Gothic criticism whether we still need to use the term 'Female Gothic.' Brabon and Genz point out that Moers's "conception of the category is very much a product of its time, emerging from the rise of feminist consciousness and feminist literary criticism in the late 1960s and 1970s" (Brabon and Genz 6). Moreover, besides being the product of the time of its emergence, the 'Female Gothic' formula that usually sets out to explain the supernatural does not fit contemporary YA Gothic where the supernatural is 'real' and there is no attempt by the author to either dismiss it or explain it by means of logic, as I have argued in Chapter One.

Radcliffe's heroines, as well as the succession of heroines that followed throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, resolutely endorse her rejection of the supernatural as discussed in Chapter One. Emily, for instance, exemplifies the reaction of the Gothic heroine to the manifestation of the supernatural in earlier Gothic texts. In one of the most iconic scenes in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily is terrified to the point of fainting because of an unknown figure she sees behind her curtains; the figure is later revealed—in the Radcliffean tradition of the explained supernatural—to be a made of wax. What is of importance to my argument here is not the figure in itself; rather, it is Emily's reaction to it. As has been previously explored in Chapter One, the supernatural was almost always unwanted and rejected in the Gothic fiction of the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, as it often took the form of evil manifestations and entities threatening and endangering the very being of the

characters; if not, it represented regressive behaviour and superstition, and through their denial of it, the authors showcase a rejection of it which, in some cases, ends in the eradication of the supernatural Other by the end of the stories. It is important to note here that there are two main roles for female characters within the supernatural Gothic: on the one hand, there is the victim who is persecuted by a supernatural force, but succeeds with the help of a man—or a group of men—to preserve her purity and free herself from the malefic hold of the supernatural, as is the case with Le Fanu's Laura in "Carmilla" and Bram Stoker's Mina in *Dracula.* On the other hand, there is the sinner who succumbs to the lure of the supernatural and as a result is destroyed because of her 'Fallen Woman' status, as is the case with Carmilla and Lucy. This is evident in particular in Lucy, whose eyes are described as "unclean and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we (the men in her life) knew" (Stoker 225) after her transformation to a vampire. While Carmilla is already a supernatural Other when the narrative begins, Stoker's Lucy is very much human. Nevertheless, even in her human state, Lucy is problematic as she not only does not follow the rules established by Victorian society in regards to the proper conduct of young women when she is alive, but she rejects them entirely after her death and transformation to a vampire. Indeed, as Lucy rises from the dead she becomes a child-devouring revenant and as such she further alienates herself from the ideal Victorian woman. Her non-maternal behaviour is not acceptable to the men in her life who represent order and norms even after her death. As such, in a gesture passing as retribution, Lucy's punishment follows her beyond death when she is staked through the heart.

So, a rejection of the supernatural Other, or of the idea of the existence of the supernatural, based on rational and sensible thinking, is the best chance the traditional Gothic heroine has for survival in earlier Gothic narratives. The reaction of the Gothic heroine to the supernatural in traditional Gothic texts mirrors the general reaction of the society of that time towards superstitions and the belief in the world of the supernatural. As Fred Botting states,

> [g]ood was affirmed in the contrast with evil; light and reason won out over darkness and superstition. Antitheses, made visible in Gothic transgressions, allowed proper limits and values to be asserted at the closure of narratives in which mysteries were explained or moral resolutions advanced. (8)

In *The Romance of the Forest*, Adeline's emotions, for instance, often overpower rationality, as is the case when she experiences what she believes is of supernatural origin. At first, she dismisses the voices and sounds she hears in her chamber, thinking that they are either produced by the wind or by her imaginative mind. However, when she sees in her dream the victim murdered by the Marquis and later finds a manuscript holding the records of her father, she starts to believe that "such a combination of circumstances … could only be produced by some supernatural power" and "although she had never been superstitious" (Radcliffe 59), she allows herself to be so, as there was no other way to explain what she experienced.

As an extension of the moral dimension of Gothic texts, the traditional, Gothic heroine is often an advocate of good behaviour, illustrating how girls should be "educated in a new mode of female heroism—in rationality, self-command, and moral autonomy" (Myers 34). According to Horner and Zlosnik, and as mentioned earlier, the traditional

Gothic heroine is influenced by her contemporary dominant socio-cultural norms, and as such presents:

> [a] response to the cultural anxieties and dominant discourses of the time ... For example in Ann Radcliffe's fiction, usually set in a previous age, the beautiful, sensitive and vulnerable heroines (they are often orphans or motherless) are complex products of romanticism and the cult of sensibility ... the way in which they react to moments of crisis (for example by fainting, blushing or falling into silence) derives as Daniel Cottom has pointed out, from a body language specific to notions of femininity and sensibility current from the mid-eighteenth century. (35)

The Gothic heroine, in addition to controlling her emotional urges and acting as rationality dictates, must embody the traditional standards of femininity. It is for this reason that the interpretation of the Gothic heroine is inextricably linked to the context of the literary work that produced her, as mentioned earlier.

However, to clarify again, as already outlined in Chapter One, the depiction of and the reaction to the supernatural in earlier female-authored Gothic texts was highly influenced and shaped by how women's writing was received in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and how the reception history of supernatural fiction and Otherness in general was shaped by literary criticism. As such, I argue that the contemporary YA Gothic offers a portrayal of the traditional Gothic heroine, marked by a series of revisions and subversions. This point of contact can be analysed in and through the Gothic heroine's encounter with, and contestation of, Otherness and the supernatural.

In my overview of the historical development of the representation of the supernatural in pre-twenty-first-century literature, I have discussed the impact of Angela Carter on the portrayal of the supernatural. Carter's contribution to the genre is even more palpable in her subversion of the victimised Gothic heroine through revisions that posit her female characters, more or less, in a position of power in the narrative. The fiction of Carter offers socially and sexually liberated Gothic heroines who through their transgressive character question and challenge conceived ideas about the politics of gender and identities. Carter's contribution to the portrayal of the Gothic heroine resonates in the YA Gothic texts I examine in the following sections, as they portray heroines who re-negotiate their place within the family structure, defy patriarchy, and through embracing supernatural Otherness, subvert the portrayals of some of the earlier characteristics of the traditional Gothic heroine.

The Gothic Heroine, Family Dynamics, and the Supernatural

A common trope in the portrayal of the Gothic heroine is, as mentioned previously, the positioning of the latter within complex family dynamics. Families in Gothic literature do not generally fair well—likewise their portrayal in YA literature is often problematic and closely linked with anxieties, as the texts discussed in this section of the chapter demonstrate. The parent-child relationship in Gothic literature has always been an ambiguous and complex one; with one or both parents absent, the Gothic heroine—the focus of this chapter—left orphaned, is always in peril. In this section, I consider how through embracing the supernatural Other, the YA Gothic heroine establishes a safe and supportive familial environment.

In Stephenie Meyer's Twilight series, the life of seventeen-year-old Bella changes the day she uncovers a deadly secret in Forks, the town she has recently moved to: namely that it is the residence of a family of vampires. It would appear at first, mainly through the first two books, that Meyer is fixing Bella's identity within the convention of the traditional Gothic heroine of earlier Gothic narratives discussed in the previous section. The first chapter of *Twilight* introduces us to Bella, who already exhibits certain similarities to the heroine of earlier Gothic texts. After her mother's marriage to another man, Bella moves to the gloomy town of Forks—from where her mother "escaped with [her] when [she] was only a few months old" (Meyer, *Twilight* 3)—to live with her father in an 'act of sacrifice'. Referring to her mother's separation from her father and her move from Forks as an escape already sets the Gothic tone of the novel and establishes Bella as a possible Gothic heroine, since—as I have discussed earlier—the feelings of entrapment and imprisonment, together with the absence of one or more parent, are embedded in Gothic narratives. Notably, in the beginning of the story in the first book, Bella sees Forks as a prison, stating: "it was to Forks that I now exiled myself [—] an action that I took with great horror. I detested Forks" (*Twilight* 4). Yet, in spite of the fact that she is apprehensive of her new life she obstinately denies her parents this knowledge, preferring to lie, even though she had "always been a bad liar" (*Twilight* 4). Indeed, she represses her true sentiments about her new life because, after all, her mother had already made plans of her own, and Bella was not part of those plans. This repression and occlusion of feelings is already indicative of a parent-child dynamic governed by emotional distancing.

The 'absent mother' motif that is all too common in Gothic fiction is presented in a different light in *Twilight*, as although Bella's mother—whom she refers to by her first name, Renée, establishing an unconventional mother-daughter relationship from the outset—is still alive, she remains absent for the greater part of the series; she is only present on the periphery. Moreover, Meyer inverts the dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship, depicting a daughter who is far more responsible than her mother. On her way to Forks, for instance, Bella worries about leaving her mother and she keeps thinking "[h]ow could I leave my loving, erratic, hare-brained mother to fend for herself? Of course she had Phil [her new husband] now, so the bills would probably get paid, there would be food in the refrigerator, gas in her car, and someone to call when she got lost, but still" (*Twilight* 4).

We are first introduced to both of them, daughter and mother—through Bella's point of view, through a time of separation. There are, in fact, very few scenes between Bella and her mother throughout the four books. However, Bella is not entirely dismissive of her mother; on the contrary, daughter and mother exchange regular emails—on Renée's insistence—and brief phone calls, and Bella is often thinking about her mother and about how *not* to be like her. In one particular scene in *Eclipse*, the mother-daughter relationship is restored, only to be distorted again when Renée recognizes Bella's hesitation at marrying Edward as a fear of ending up in a failed marriage like her parents. In an attempt to ease away the worries of her daughter, she admits to Bella that every warning she has given her about men and relationships, and every apprehension she has expressed about commitment, applied only to her and not to Bella; they were her own fears of failure *vis-à-vis* marriage. Furthermore, Renée

emphasizes the fact that daughter and mother are very different: "you're a completely different person than I am … You have a better chance of making this work than most forty-year-olds that I know … my little middle-aged child" (*Dawn* 17). This is a difference Bella agrees with, as she often notes, when she thinks about her mother, how "she was never in harmony with me, never on exactly on the same page" (*Twilight* 9).

Correspondingly, at the beginning of the story, Bella's relationship with her father is equally far from harmonious. When she first goes to live with him, all their interactions are described in Bella's own words as "awkward" (*Twilight* 5), as neither of them "was what anyone would call verbose" (*Twilight* 5). The fact that her mother ran away with Bella when the latter was only a few months old, abandoning her husband and Forks— which Bella considers to be the main reason behind her mother's unhappiness—is brought up on several occasions throughout the four books. Everything in the house is a reminder of her mother, from the kitchen cabinets that her mother had "painted eighteen years ago in an attempt to bring some sunshine into the house" (*Twilight* 10), to pictures of her parents' marriage in Las Vegas and their first picture as a family, to her bedroom which still had the rocking chair from when Bella was a baby. The house has remained unchanged, as if her mother had never left: "[i]t was impossible, being in this house, not to realize that Charlie had never gotten over my mom. It made me uncomfortable" (*Twilight* 11). Her father's inability to move on and the unchanged house create a space in which Bella is constantly reminded of the family unit she did not get to experience.

Although Bella acknowledges that she looks like her mother physically, it is with her father that she most often compares herself, stating on several occasions that they are alike. Having 'inherited' his quietness and tendency to hide his emotions and never speak

about them, Bella's new life in the house is made much more pleasant; she never has to speak about how she truly feels about her move to her father's house and the new life she is starting, preferring to make of her bedtime "a crying jag" (*Twilight* 9). This lack of communication between daughters and their parents is indeed a recurring element in the twenty-first-century YA Gothic texts I examine in this chapter. Indeed, in a certain way, it reinstates the absent parent motif of earlier Gothic texts.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Bella finds in the vampiric Cullens what she could not possibly find in her own family: stability and unity. For while Bella's parents are separated, the Cullens have remained together for decades. Carlisle and Esme—who have been together for over eighty years—are the personification of the 'perfect parents' to Edward and his adoptive siblings, and Bella idealizes them as such. Silver notes that "Meyer has not written solely a romance novel about Edward and Bella. She has written, instead, a romance about family and the human need for connection" (135), and indeed, throughout the series we witness Bella's eagerness for that "connection". The Cullens are presented to us as balanced, functioning on principles of support and unity. They are, in this respect, a sharp contrast to Bella's human family, in which she has never had the chance to experience the presence of both of her parents simultaneously in her life. Instead, Bella is traded off between her father and mother every time one of them fails in effectively fulfilling their role as parent.

After Edward leaves Bella and Forks in *New Moon*—for fear that her proximity to him and his vampire family will kill her—Bella's world changes dramatically. She goes through several months of depression—which Meyer dramatically portrays by omitting four chapters of the book and writing only the months' titles (October, November,

December, January)[36]—during which she distances herself from many of her human friends while she grieves the loss of the family she thought she was becoming part of. Bella often compares herself to a living dead person—a comparison that will be made again in *Breaking Dawn* when Bella is pregnant—during her time without the Cullens:

> Charlie stared at me during breakfast, and I tried to ignore him. I supposed I deserved it. I couldn't expect him not to worry. It would be weeks before he stopped watching for the return of the zombie … After all, I would be watching for the return of the zombie, too. Two days was hardly long enough to call me cured. (Meyer, *Moon* 152)
>
> In a chapter titled 'Waking Up', her father—who although extremely worried about her state does nothing to transform the situation, preferring to wait and hope "it would get better" (*Moon* 86)—finally threatens her with sending her away from Forks—

the very town she loathed at the beginning of the story but which now she sees as her home and a proof of the existence of the supernatural, emphasising the nature of Forks as a Gothic Space as I have discussed in Chapter Three. Looking more closely, however, one might see that the fact that Bella is now reluctant to leave Forks, also implies that it is her mother that she does not want to go back to. Knowing her mother all too well, Bella

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[36] In the movie adaptation of the book Bella's depression is portrayed through spiralling scenes showing Bella seated in her bedroom looking blindly out of the window as people around her go on about their lives. The seasons go by mimicking the blank chapters in the book. Unlike the book, however, where the blank chapters are followed immediately by Bella being confronted by Charlie, the movie adaptation emphasizes her depression and focuses on her failed attempts to contact the Cullens, namely Alice, to whom she writes about her feelings regularly in emails: "Dear Alice, you've disappeared, like everything else. But who else can I talk to? … I'm lost, Alice. When you left—and he left—you took everything with you. But the absence of him is everywhere" (*New Moon* 2008).

realises that she will have to embody the role of the responsible daughter again instead of finding emotional comfort in reuniting with her mother. Bella has spent most of her childhood taking care of her 'vulnerable' mother; her mother's well-being always came first. So, the mother/daughter roles are, as I have stated earlier, clearly reversed here. It is then, to a certain extent, the idea of leaving and going back to live with her mother that alters Bella's "lifeless" (*Moon* 85) state. Surprisingly enough, it is in the company of yet another supernatural being that Bella finds comfort and solace. Her friendship with the shapeshifting werewolf Jacob Black seems to 'reanimate' the living-dead person she has become.

In her essay "Sparkling Vampires: Valorizing Self-Harming Behavior in Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Series", Lydia Kokkola states that young adults need literature which "acknowledge[s] that many adolescents are grappling with such difficult emotions", which may lead to outburst of anger, self-harming, addictions, anxiety, depression, or attempted suicide (35). She adds that "Bella's behaviour resembles that of real life self-harmers"(35) in many ways, particularly as she repeatedly places herself in harm's way in *New Moon* in order to experience an adrenaline rush that helps her to remember Edward's voice and conjure up a spectre-like image of him: "Bella's personal manifestation of the endorphin rush—hearing Edward's voice admonishing her—is first ritualized through motorbike accidents, but gradually she increases the degree of harm until it becomes life threatening (she jumps off a cliff)" (34). Bella's behaviour without the Cullens is in fact quite similar to the behaviour observed in unattended children seeking the attention of their parents—which further suggests that it is in the Cullens that Bella sees a family: her family.

Bella's reaction to the loss of the Cullens is by no means suggestive of her weak character, as several critics and readers have argued, condemning her as passive and as romanticizing abusive relationships. Instead, Bella's depressed state offers a reading of her character as one that is defined by her repressed fear of abandonment which is often accompanied by low self-esteem, all of which are exhibited in her character. Moreover, Meyer structures her work so that throughout the first half of *New Moon*, Bella is presented to us as living in a continuous stance of being an objective observer of her own state. For the first time in a long while, Bella gets to become dependent on someone rather than the other way around. With Edward and the rest of the Cullens, she does not have to worry about taking care of them; they are the ones who take care of her. Consequently, the role that her human parents should have occupied is relegated to the supernatural family who are more able to provide her with the necessary physical and emotional support. This further reveals how anti-Twilight and anti-Bella critics fail to take into account the fact that Bella's loss is not just as simple as losing a boyfriend or a love interest, as her father reminds her. He *mistakenly* assumes her depression is 'normal' teenage heart-break which happens to everyone when he states "[h]oney, you're not the first person to go through this kind of thing, you know" (*Moon* 85). However, the reality of the situation is that Bella mourns the loss of not only Edward but the loss of his family as well, for it "had been more than just losing the truest of true loves … it was also losing a whole future, a whole family" (*Moon* 389).

After reuniting with the Cullens, Bella further distances herself from her parents as she prepares to be transformed into a vampire following her wedding with Edward. During her wedding, it is Rosalie and Alice who are in charge of preparing her for the

ceremony; her mother, on the other hand, is quickly dismissed. Indeed, Bella's link to the Cullens is stronger than the one she shares with her biological parents. The Cullens have welcomed her as one of their own, as Esme and Carlisle both express how Bella is already a member of their family, and a "beloved daughter" (*Dawn* 216), while she is still human. That very link is further strengthened through marriage, and later through her pregnancy and her transformation into a vampire as she observes that now, after she has been transformed, the Cullens and she are "physically linked by blood and venom" (*Dawn* 519).

It is indeed during Bella's pregnancy that the strength of the link she shares with the Cullens is more visible. Through a pregnancy that no one has expected, Bella and her new vampire family face something unknown to all of them. Commenting on the portrayal of pregnancy in the Gothic, Clare Kahane states:

> That women writers should find in pregnancy an appropriate Gothic metaphor is not surprising. In this most definitively female of conditions potentially lie the most extreme apprehensions: about the body as subject, about bodily integrity which shapes one's sense of self. In pregnancy, the woman's very shape changes, as she begins to feel another presence inside her, growing on her flesh, feeding on her blood. (11)

Fears and anxieties about pregnancy and childbirth permeate Gothic narratives—particularly female-authored Gothic texts, including Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* which is often read as a Gothic metaphor for motherhood and childbirth anxieties. The gothicisation of motherhood and of the pregnant body persists in some twenty-first-century YA Gothic texts—although it is not always through the adolescent Gothic

heroine that it is portrayed; instead it is often seen through another minor character or the heroine's mother as is the case in *The Mortal Instruments* (discussed later in this chapter).

Altogether, Bella's pregnancy articulates the fears and anxieties expressed by Kahane in the quotation above. In an interview, Meyer states that her intent was to reflect the dangers of childbirth that a lot of women have faced in past times when giving birth was like "looking death in the face" (*FAQ* 2011). In this sense Bella's experience is located within a wider, shared, experience of motherhood. Furthermore, the terms and images that Meyer deploys to describe Bella's pregnancy are indeed uncannily Gothic, offering images akin of Rosemary's demonic pregnancy in *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). Bella's fears and anxieties for the wellbeing of her much-desired child compel her to endure the excruciating pain caused by her unborn hybrid-child as it perniciously feeds off her, all while preventing her from getting any nutrition herself, as Jacob notes: "it wasn't enough for the monster to beat her from the inside out. No, it was starving her, too" (*Dawn* 217). This reading of the baby as a monstrous intruder, a parasite, is indeed located within the tradition of the Gothic. In general, while the pregnant body reveals the state of pregnancy, the nature of what it carries remains concealed. While modern technology allows pregnant women to 'see' what exactly is growing inside them, to know the gender and overall health of the baby—a reassuring proof that everything is fine—Bella is denied this reassurance as Carlisle attempts and fails to reveal the nature of the baby because "the fetus is well protected". Carlisle further explains that "the fetus isn't compatible with her body [sic]" (*Dawn* 217). The fact that the foetus and Bella are unable to exist together echoes the observation Bella made in *Twilight* that she was not in harmony with her mother, that they seemed to be from two different worlds. Bella and

her unborn child are indeed from two distinct worlds, especially as the foetus's dietary requirements are the same as its vampire father.

As her pregnancy progresses with unnatural speed, Bella is reduced to a famished, weak, *cadaveresque* state. Indeed, the description of her pregnant body pointedly evokes the figure of the famished, ill-looking vampire as described in folkloric narratives, which I discussed in Chapter Two. This resemblance is further emphasized through Bella's new dietary requirements, which consist primarily of blood that she must consume to ensure the survival of her baby. Nevertheless, Bella persists in loving the baby unconditionally. As such the relationship between Bella and the child she is carrying becomes defined by interdependency as opposed to opposition and conflict. The child has granted Bella what she has always wanted: a family and to become a vampire. Feeding herself blood to ensure the survival of her baby is indeed her "first vampire act" (*Dawn* 224).

However, to return to the role of the Cullens in Bella's life, regardless of the alienating nature of her pregnancy, Bella's relationship with her vampire family is, as I have stated earlier, stronger during this time, in particular her relationship with Rosalie. Although Esme and Alice welcome Bella into their family from the moment they meet her, Rosalie, on the other hand, despises her for her choice to relinquish her mortal life and all it has to offer. Yet, despite their differences, we see their relationship change dramatically when Bella is pregnant, as the two of them decide to protect the child Bella is carrying against the Cullens who want her to abort the baby and the werewolves who see in the unborn child a fatal danger to Bella's life; "Rosalie and Bella were both talking in plurals now. Like they'd formed a pack of their own" (*Dawn* 205). As such, Rosalie who "was all about babies" (*Dawn* 229), and Esme, who has lost a child when she was

human and agrees to side with Rosalie to protect Bella's unborn child, become the latter's

bodyguards and surrogate mothers, tending to her every need. In their roles as surrogate

mothers, Rosalie and Esme are better able to support Bella during her pregnancy—a time

in a woman's life when the mother figure is usually most present. As Bella's pregnancy is

in itself unnatural, the support she requires is as a consequence unnatural in turn, or, in

other terms, supernatural. Furthermore, Bella makes the decision to keep her pregnancy

and later the existence of her daughter a secret from Renée, knowing that the supernatural

is not for everyone to comprehend, and certainly not her fragile mother. She does,

however, tell her father and allows him to have a relationship with his grand-daughter.

Nevertheless, her decision to not inform her mother does not suggest a complete

separation between them; rather it indicates that Bella has finally come to terms with the

fact that she and her mother will always be in two different worlds. Kahane notes that

"pregnancy also confirms a woman's identification with her own mother" (345). In the

case of Bella, it is indeed her daughter who becomes a symbol of her identification with

both her human/biological mother and her adoptive vampire mother. Bella chooses to

name her daughter Renesmee "like Renée and Esme put together" (*Dawn* 430); she later

gives her a middle name too, Carlie, in honour of Carlisle and Charlie. Through the

portmanteau name of her daughter, Bella finally manages to reconcile her relationship

with both her human family and her supernatural family.

'Not Your Little Girl': Negotiating the Mother-Daughter Relationship

The reconciliation of the relationship between mother and daughter and the renegotiation

of family dynamics within twenty-first-century YA Gothic is not confined to Meyer's

work. The mother-daughter dynamics are also rendered more positive in Cassandra Clare's *The Mortal Instruments*, the first published series in the Shadowhunters Chronicles. *The Mortal Instruments* replicates a number of the conventional motifs that typify the Gothic: the supernatural, confused identities, Gothic space(s), family secrets, and child sacrifice, among others. In this sub-section, I focus particularly on Clare's use of the absent mother motif within a supernatural context.

Similarly to Bella, discussed in the above section, the life of Cassandra Clare's heroine, Clarissa Adele Fairchild (Clary) is changed dramatically when she comes into contact with the supernatural, only in Clary's case, she is also of supernatural nature—a secret that her mother has kept from her for years. Indeed, Clare discloses Clary's identity within the tradition of earlier Gothic narratives whereby the identity of the heroine is gradually revealed after being concealed. Raised by her single mother, Jocelyn, in New York, Clary—along with her mother and Lucian Garroway (Luke), her mother's friend—leads a life defined by normality. However, that sense of seeming normality is revealed to be nothing but a mirage created and imposed on her by her mother. Indeed, during her quest to save her mother who has been kidnapped by demons in the third chapter of the first book, Clary discovers the reality of her lineage, and she is torn away from her sheltered life and plunged into a world of secrets, of supernatural beings and of Gothic villains.

Clary is introduced to the world of the supernatural after she defies her mother's orders and goes with her best friend, Simon Lewis, to Pandemonium, a night club whose name refers to the name Milton gave to the capital of Hell in *Paradise Lost*; a name that evokes chaos and evil— indeed references to Lucifer/Satan, and Hell are in fact made

throughout the series.[37] There she encounters three young Shadowhunters, siblings

Alexander (Alec) and Isabelle Lightwood and their adopted brother Jace Wayland.

Clary's ability to see them when no other human being around her can convinces them

that she is just like them. Clary *is* indeed like them. However, as I have stated above, she

is oblivious to her true nature.

In fact, family secrets abound in Clare's stories and indeed, there are a lot of

secrets that cloud the mother-daughter relationship in her work. Jocelyn, for example,

"never talked about Clary's father" (*Bones* 36), other than that he was in the navy and

died when Clary was too young to remember him—another one of her mother's lies—

since Clary does not know anything about her father. Prior to her mother's kidnapping,

Clary shares a delicate relationship with her; the latter being extremely overprotective,

she controls every aspect of her daughter's life. Jocelyn's control over Clary is clearly

exerted in the following exchange:

> "Look, go if you want to go. I don't care. I'll stay here without you. I can work;
>
> I can get a job at Starbucks or something. Simon said they're always hiring. I'm old
>
> enough to take care of myself—"

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[37] In a recent anthology—*Ghosts of the Shadow Market* (2018-2019)—Clare included two short stories with Jace as a main character, titled "Son of the Dawn" and "Forever fallen"; after announcing the titles, Clare replied to a question I posted on her Tumblr site wherein she confirmed that both stories refer to Satan. She states "'Son of the Dawn' is a reference to Lucifer, also known as the Morning Star (invoking the name Morgenstern) The title comes from a quote—'how thou art fallen, O Lucifer, son of the dawn' … And Forever Fallen is a quote from Milton, writing of Lucifer and his angels having just fallen from heaven. 'Awake, arise, or be forever fallen'" (Clare 2018). Jace in his role of the tragic Gothic hero is paralleled to Satan, before and after his fall from grace.

"No!" The sharpness in Jocelyn's voice made Clary jump. "I'll pay you back for

the art classes, Clary. But you are coming with us. It isn't optional. You're too

young to stay here on your own. Something could happen."

"Like what? What could happen?" Clary demanded. (*Bones* 35)

The heated argument takes place when Jocelyn announces that they are going to Luke's

farm house for the summer. Clary, who had already made her own "plans", (34) sees her

mother's attempts to assert her authority as a parent, disregarding her wants, as unfair:

"[l]ike grounding me every other week wasn't bad enough. Now I'm going to be exiled

for the rest of the summer" (*Bones* 39). Indeed, Clary sees her mother's attempt to

protect her more as punishment than an act of caring. Because Clary, at this point, still

ignores the reality of their situation, it is hard for her to understand her mother's sudden

plans. Luke urges Jocelyn to tell her daughter the truth, but she insists, still holding on to

her maternal authority, that it is for Clary's best interests not to know anything, especially

not about her father, who I will return to. The failure and inadequacy of

communication—like the one I have noted in Bella's relationship with her parents—

invites conflict in the mother-daughter dynamic.

The quoted passage also indicates that Clary, unlike Bella who still needs a family

to rely on, is ready to be independent of her mother, financially and emotionally, as she

wants to live on her own and find a job. This terrifies Jocelyn, more so, because she

senses that she is losing her "too young" daughter. "I can't just keep her at home", she

realizes after they have had the argument and Luke is quick to remind her that Clary is

"not a pet, she's a teenager. Almost an adult" (*Bones* 36). Jocelyn actions, however well-

meaning, are indicative of her possessive behaviour towards Clary; a common

characteristic of parents who are still in the lives of their children in Gothic texts. In effect, it is when Clary does not conform to her mother's rules that the tension between them intensifies. Moreover, the mother-daughter relationship is challenged when Clary learns that her mother has had the warlock Magnus Bane erase her memories from a very young age; the only reason she was able to see the Shadowhunters in the club is because the spell put on her has worn off. Her mother has 'blinded' her "of the Sight" (*Bones* 240)—the Shadowhunters' ability to see beyond what is visible to the human sight—and Clary is incredulous at her mother's ultimate betrayal; as she angrily puts it: "[m]y mother did this to me? … this mind-rape?" (*Bones* 239).

As Clary uncovers more of her mother's secrets and learns more about Jocelyn's life as an active member of the 'Circle of Raziel'—a group of fanatics obsessed with the purity of Shadowhunter blood and "dedicated to wiping out all Downworlders and returning the world to a 'purer' state" (*Bones* 154)—the image that she had of her mother becomes distorted. This obliquely suggests the presence of the Uncanny in the mother-daughter narrative, for, on the one hand, there is the familiar mother who is caring, albeit overprotective, and on the other hand there is the mother who is a stranger to Clary, both familiar and unfamiliar. Clary does not recognize the Shadowhunter version of her mother and she "wonder[s] if anyone does" (*Bones* 38). Clary in effect finds herself trapped between her desire to save her mother and re-establish a sense of normality by reuniting with her and her feelings of anger and outrage towards her; for "[h]er mother had become a stranger to her, a liar, a hider of secrets. What *wouldn't* she have done?" (*Bones* 159-160). Here, the language makes evident the ideological tensions of the mother-daughter relationship. Clary is not only shocked by her mother's betrayal of her

trust, she is in disbelief that her mother had once belonged to a group of "fascists" who "planned to slaughter [Downworlders], unarmed and defenseless [sic]" (*Bones* 154).

Nevertheless, as Magnus and Luke explain to Clary that her mother's actions were meant to protect her, she represses her anger and sets out to save her mother. Consequently, Clary's quest is tinged with a sense of a duty that she, as a daughter, needs to fulfil. Furthermore, she is unable to free herself of a sense of a "familiar bite of guilt" (*Bones* 40) and as "[s]he could see her mother in her mind's eyes, small and alone in the doorway of their apartment. Guilt unfurled in her chest" (*Bones* 43). Clary, in this sense, remains under the hold her absent mother has on her. I would suggest that this is precisely the reason why Jocelyn's temporary removal from Clary's life is inevitable. Indeed, the direct influence that Jocelyn exerts on her daughter must be suspended, and the all-too-present mother must become the absent mother.[38] The separation of mother and daughter is necessary to allow the latter to fashion an identity separate from not only her mother's as she knows it, but also from her mother's past as well.

Jocelyn's past as a Shadowhunter is the main reason behind the mother-daughter conflict in the narrative. Jocelyn's marriage and first pregnancy, in particular, echo earlier Gothic texts depiction of female characters within the confines of an environment

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[38] Interestingly in the second season of the TV adaptation of the series, Jocelyn is killed after finally being reunited with Clary. This divergence from the book caused discontent among readers of the book who did not approve of such a change. However, the TV series executive producers argued that Jocelyn's death felt necessary not only for the sake of keeping the show exciting but also for the development of Clary's character and her journey into a hero's journey. "In order for someone to become a hero, they need to go through adversity, and the death of parents is part of becoming a true adult—a true soul unto yourself" (Swift 2017) argues Todd Slavkin, adding that that Clary's grief and the trauma she suffers after the loss her mother are necessary for her development. As such the TV series suggests that Clary could not have become the hero that she is had her mother not died, which certainly is problematic, given that the book series does it all while restoring the mother-daughter relationship.

dominated by patriarchal rules. Indeed, Clare employs a number of Gothic conventions in describing Jocelyn's past, and portraying her as a victimised Gothic heroine. I will give a brief analysis of Jocelyn's character here in order to demonstrate how Clare navigates both traditional and novel depictions of the Gothic heroine.

Jocelyn's past as a Shadowhunter is sinister, particularly through her marriage and her pregnancy. Jocelyn's first pregnancy is, in fact, another example of Gothic pregnancies as I have mentioned in the previous section. Unlike Bella's pregnancy however—which fulfils Bella's desire to have a family—Jocelyn's pregnancy ends in horror. Throughout her pregnancy, Jocelyn suspects that something wrong, evil, is happening to her: "she could hear screams through the walls" (*Bones* 410) of their manor, and her husband, Valentine Morgenstern, is acting strangely. Curious and worried about her and her child's safety from her husband's "erratic" (*Bones* 410) behaviour, she ventures down the labyrinths of their manor house in a scene that evokes the traditional Gothic narratives whereby the heroine's curiosity leads her down the labyrinthine passages of the Gothic space. It is then that Jocelyn first discovers her husband's 'bloody chamber', where he keeps imprisoned—and tortured—Downworlders, using them for his own sadistic experiments. Here Jocelyn compares herself to "Bluebeard's wife" (*Glass* 361) who, defying her husband's instruction, "never to look in the locked room, she looked" (*Glass* 361). However, her husband manages to convince her that what she saw was a hallucination and he dismisses all "her fears as the jitters of a woman carrying her first child" (*Bones* 410). After giving birth to her firstborn, Jonathan, she discovers much to her horror and repulsion that Valentine had conspired with the Greater Demon, Lilith, who offered him her blood in order for him to inject it into his unborn child while he was

still in his mother's womb. Jocelyn's husband has become a stranger to her. More importantly, her desire to be a mother is in effect hindered by demonic forces. In this sense, Jocelyn's role is reduced to that of a vessel carrying Lilith's demon-son.

Somewhat similar to Bella, Jocelyn's baby is also read as a monstrous, demonic "parasite" (*Glass* 358). Both Renesmee and Jonathan are liminal entities, except that, unlike Renesmee, Jonathan is half demonic. Furthermore, convinced that he is indeed not her son, Jocelyn is unable to care for him or to love him: "I was a monster", she tells Clary, "a mother who couldn't stand her own child" (*Glass* 395). All she felt was revulsion at the very sight of him. Jonathan becomes, in Kristeva's terms, abject, and indeed, Jocelyn's sentiment towards him is rooted in the process of abjection; she even refers to him—in *City of Glass*—as a "*thing*" (362). When she confronts her husband with what she has discovered, he once again assumes a paternalistic authority and dismisses all her accusation as paranoia caused by the stress of being a new mother. In these terms, as Jocelyn's exploitation occurs within the privacy of her marital relationship, her body, and her desire of motherhood, she echoes earlier Gothic heroines—and Gothic female characters in general—whose privacy and agency is violated by the Gothic male villain. The loss of her love for her husband, her trust in him, and her repulsion for her son, leaves her vulnerable and makes her suicidal. As such, she is reduced to the status of the Gothic female victim, helpless, silenced, and repressed. However, this changes as Jocelyn learns that she is pregnant with Clary. It is then that she breaks free of her victimised-heroine status.

In this sense, Clary's role *vis à vis* Jocelyn is arguably similar to the role of Renesmee in Bella's life in Meyer's tale, in that she too offers her mother the chance of a

new life and allows her to assume the role of a mother. However, overwhelmed by guilt

and haunted by the memory of her abandoned and rejected baby, as well as fearing the

return of her husband whom she suspects is not dead, Jocelyn projects her fears of loss

and her anxiety into her relationship with Clary. Thus, Jocelyn's overprotective,

smothering behaviour becomes justified. Yet, in trying to repress her guilt and fear, and

in failing to do so, Jocelyn traps herself and her daughter in a dangerous loop of conflicts

and unspoken truths that remain unresolved until later in the series. When Clary finally

finds her mother, the latter is in a self-induced coma:

> She was on her back, one hand thrown carelessly across her chest, her hair spread
>
> across the pillow. She wore a sort of white nightdress Clary had never seen, and
>
> she was breathing regularly and quietly. In the piercing moonlight Clary could see
>
> the flutter of her mother's eyelids as she dreamed.
>
> …
>
> [Clary] followed the line of [Luke's] gaze and saw what she had not wanted to see
>
> before. Silver manacles closed around Jocelyn's wrists and feet, the ends of their
>
> chains sunk deep into the stone floor on either side of the bed. The table beside
>
> the bed was covered in a weird array of tubes and bottles, glass jars and long,
>
> wickedly tipped instruments glinting with surgical steel. (*Bones* 442)

Such imagery establishes a strong connection between Jocelyn and the dispossessed,

persecuted, and imprisoned Gothic heroine of earlier Gothic texts. With her hair spread

and her white nightdress, "the preferred garb of the Gothic heroine" (Muir 321), Jocelyn

looks like the stereotypical portrayal of the heroine, and in so doing, she serves her role

as the incarcerated Gothic heroine in every aspect. What is also of much interest to note

from the passage quoted above is that the language Clary uses to describe her mother in

her state of unconsciousness, as a "badly jointed doll", hints at a certain inversion of the

mother/daughter roles, as it is now Clary who sees her mother as fragile. Moreover, by

comparing her mother to a "doll", a symbol most associated with children and childhood,

it is she who is now in charge. Clary assumes the duty of protecting her mother: "[t]here

was no terror in her now, and no self-pity: only a bitter rage and a need to find the man

who'd done this, the one responsible for all of it" (Clare, *Bones* 444). Through the

shifting roles of Clary and Jocelyn, Clare presents a complex re-figuration of parent-child

dynamics within a YA Gothic narrative.

The Gothic Heroine, Tyrannical Fathers, and Incestuous Brothers

In this section, I focus on Clare's use of two other common motifs in Gothic narratives in

relation to the Gothic heroine and her family, namely villainous fathers and sibling-

incest. In a truly traditional Gothic fashion whereby daughters, sisters, and *protégées*

came to be seen as prey at the mercy of their male relatives and/or guardians in earlier

Gothic narratives, Clary becomes prey to the machinations of her father, and later, her

brother. Clary's father, Valentine, is the typical Gothic husband and father as he locates

himself within a patriarchal structure, and attempts to exert full power on his wife, his

daughter and his two sons, whom he considers as possessions, the results of his own

"experiments" (*Glass* 368). With the return of Valentine, Clare anchors her narrative in

the Gothic tradition—particularly the 'Female Gothic'—of portraying patriarchal

dominance and villainy as a major threat. His return is constructed as the return of the

repressed, or as that of the spectre which, as Derrida suggests, always finds a way to

come back and haunt (10). Indeed, Valentine is first introduced in the narrative as a spectre, a haunting memory of a disgraced past the Shadowhunters wish they could erase. The younger generation of Shadowhunters barely know anything about him as even the mention of his name is discouraged—almost forbidden.

When his identity is revealed, Clary is distraught. On seeing her father for the first time, Clary notes that "[h]is face was not what she had expected: it was a restrained, closed, interior face, the face of a priest, with sorrowful eyes" (*Bones* 385). Clary's initial description of his outward appearance is rather interesting as it further locates him within a Gothic tradition of patriarchal male villains—and particularly with deceptive priests and religious figures that abound in earlier Gothic narratives, the likes of Radcliffe's Schedoni and Lewis's Ambrosio. Indeed, Valentine aligns himself with religious figures further when he quotes from sacred religious texts, which establishes an explicit connection with religion as the narrative progresses.

One reading of the character of Clary in the series is that of the "helpless daughter confronting the erotic power of a father or brother, with the mother noticeably absent" (Kahane 335). In the absence of her mother, Clary is subjected to emotional and physical abuse from her father and later her brother, after the former is killed. Within the Morgenstern family, Clary—although more powerful for her extra angel blood and her ability to create runes unknown to the Shadowhunters—comes last in her father's hierarchy echelon, preceded by her demon-brother, and with her mother and Jace occupying the highest position. Valentine blames her weakness on the way in which her mother had raised her away from him. As he explains:

"I realized," he said, "that the reason she left me was to protect you. Jonathan she

hated, but you—she would have done anything to protect you. To protect you

from *me*. She even lived among mundanes, which I know must have pained her. It

must have hurt her never to be able to raise you with any of our traditions. You

are half of what you could have been. You have your talent with runes, but it's

been squandered by your mundane upbringing." (Clare, *Glass* 439; emphasis in

original)

The above passage highlights Valentine's true feelings towards his daughter as

dominated by paranoid jealousy and even hatred, he blames her for the loss of his wife: "I

knew that Jocelyn would never come back to me, because of you. You are the only thing

in the world she ever loved more than she loved me. And because of you she hates me.

And because of that, I hate the sight of you" (*Glass* 438). Above all, Clary is a reminder

of her mother's rebellion against his order and personifies his own impotence to exert his

power, which, in Creed's words signals "a split between the two orders: the maternal

authority and the law of the father" (13). He even expresses his disapproval of Clary's

name as he sees it as his failure to assert his rights to his daughter over those of Jocelyn:

"'Clary,' he said again, as if tasting the sound of her name. 'Short for Clarissa? Not a

name I would have chosen'" (Clare, *Ashes* 456). Valentine would have called her

Seraphina, after his mother (*Souls* 530). Valentine's paranoid jealousy is further fuelled

by his fear that Clary is taking his adoptive son, Jace, away from him. In wanting to keep

Jace under his control and manipulate him into supporting his cause, Valentine realizes

that the only way he can do so is to lie to both Jace and Clary. As such, the complexity of

the relationship between Clary and her biological family is made even more complicated

by the 'revelation' that Jace, the young Shadowhunter who saved her life and aided her in her quest of finding her mother, and with whom she is in love, is in fact her own brother. The 'revelation' is, of course, yet another machination of her father's gothic villainy, because Jace is not her biological brother: he is her father's adopted son, although the word 'kidnapped' would be more accurate, as Jace came to be in Valentine's care in one of the most tragic and gruesome stories in the Shadowhunters' world.

As is evident from the above, Clare employs a set of clearly discernible themes and elements that correspond to certain earlier Gothic narratives, particularly those related to the depiction of the Gothic heroine. Moreover, writing in the Gothic, a genre that is well acquainted with taboo, Clare is at much freedom to tackle unconventional issues and she certainly does not shy away from these issues. In Books Two and Three, and then in Books Five and Six of the series, Clare introduces one of the most prominent Gothic conventions: incest. In this respect, the series stands alone in its depiction of this taboo, as incest is not a common theme discussed in twenty-first-century YA Gothic. Clare depicts it as the ultimate symbol for her villain's corruption, a signifier of moral corruption and decadence in Clary's biological family.

It is only in *City of Glass* (2009), the third book in the series that the reader is introduced to Clary's real brother. Replacing his father, and taking his position in the narrative as the Gothic villain, Jonathan—who goes by the name of Sebastian throughout the rest of the series—poses an even more dangerous threat to Clary. Indeed, his deeds strengthen her position as the Gothic heroine of her story, although her response to his threats is what differentiates her from the passive Gothic heroine of earlier Gothic narratives, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter. As soon as he is introduced into the

narrative—first disguised as Sebastian Verlac, a Shadowhunter whom he murdered—

Jonathan threatens Clary's virtue, which as Gallagher notes is "the most unspeakable

threat to the Gothic heroine" (132). His blood tie with Clary does not prevent him from

wanting incestuous contact with her. On the contrary it only amplifies his obsessive

desire for her, which Clary finds utterly disturbing and disgusting:

> She [Clary] tasted bile in her throat. "You're my brother."
>
> "Those words don't mean anything where we're concerned. We aren't human. Their rules don't apply to us. Stupid laws about what DNA can be mixed with what. Hypocritical, really, considering. We're already experiments. The rulers of ancient Egypt used to marry their siblings, you know. Cleopatra married her brother. Strengthens the bloodline." (Clare, *Souls* 446)

From this passage we have a sense that Jonathan views his desire for his sister as

justified, since he sees himself above any human law. Clary is, in his eyes, his given

right, his property. Clare's depiction of Jonathan's attitude towards Clary echoes earlier

Gothic texts' depiction of incestuous family relations wherein "brothers saw their female

relatives less as extensions of themselves or members of their own clan and more as

possessions in their power, hence possible sexual objects: close at hand and available"

(Perry 262).

Indeed, Jonathan's obsession with his sister serves to further his dominance over

her. He tries, and fails, on several occasions to initiate a sexual act with her, promising

her to make her his queen once he wins the war. When he believes that Clary has been

sexually involved with Jace, he attempts to rape her and goes as far as to physically

assault her as he quotes passages from the Bible:

"It's in the Bible," he said. "The Song of Solomon. 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.'" His fingers brushed her throat, looping into the chain there, the chain that had held the Morgenstern ring. She wondered if he would crush her windpipe. "'I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love.'" His blood dripped onto her face. (*Souls* 457)

What ensues is a brutal physical confrontation that illustrates the extent to which Jonathan is willing to go to exert his dominion; a dominion that is charged with sexual force. As such, Clare establishes a model of incestuous brother-sister desire accompanied by violence, reminiscent of earlier Gothic narratives, notably in Mathew Lewis's *The Monk,* where Ambrosio rapes his sister Antonia—the fact that he does not know that she is his sister when he rapes her, does not excuse the appalling act he committed. Again, what is disturbing about Jonathan's character is that he sees all his actions—even the attempted rape and the murders—as justifiable. The fact that he quotes from the Bible proves that he feels entitled to his behaviour; he is not human after all and he rejoices in that fact. Here again, Jonathan echoes Ambrosio who also uses religion to justify his acts. Commenting on his character, Clare explains on her official Tumblr page:

Gods can take lives, and Sebastian (Jonathan) does that; gods are immortal and invulnerable, and Sebastian wants that for himself, too; and in trying to set up a romantic relationship between himself and his sister Sebastian (Jonathan) is *explicitly* saying "I want to be/I am like a god: the Egyptian gods regularly

married their siblings, the Greek gods married their siblings, the Norse gods

married their siblings, and *I can too*". (Clare 2013; emphasis in original)

George Haggerty asserts that "a Gothic trope is fixed: terror is almost always sexual

terror, and fear, and flight, and incarceration, and escape are almost always colored [sic]

by the exoticism of transgressive sexual aggression" (2). Indeed, Clary describes

Jonathan's attack as terrorizing; although he did not succeed in achieving what he

wanted, the attack still haunts her for a long time. However, unlike the earlier Gothic

heroines who either flee their assailant or surrender to the attack, Clary retaliates, going

as far as stabbing him multiple times with a shard of glass and almost killing him.

Although both Valentine and Sebastian pose a considerable threat to Clary's life,

it is by confronting them that she is able to construct her own individual identity—one

that, like Bella's, is separate from her biological family. By defeating both her father and

her brother, Clary becomes a loved and respected hero of the Shadowhunters. Her initial

purpose, to save her mother and go back to her ordinary life as it formerly was before her

Jocelyn's disappearance, is rendered impossible. Indeed, in Clary's attempt to reclaim her

'normal' life, she discovers her true identity. Renouncing a family name many associate

with chaos and death, Clary chooses to carry her mother's name(s). In the act of naming

herself, Clary asserts dominion over her own identity. Furthermore, her chosen name(s)

signals her reconciliation with her mother and her acceptance of her Shadowhunter status.

So, just as Bella's transformation into a vampire grants her the eternal family she desires

so much, Clary's acceptance of her supernatural nature helps her heal her relationship

with her mother and offers her a new Shadowhunter family and a love-life with Jace.

Clare's books are particularly important here as they engage with themes and issues that

are otherwise problematic in YA literature. Writing in the Gothic genre, however, gives Clare the liberty to explore such taboos and dark themes that are still relevant to a twenty-first-century readership.

There is certainly a level of criticism in the contemporary YA Gothic writers' portrayal of family dynamics within the Gothic, particularly writers who subvert the absent mother trope. Hirsch notes that "[m]aternal absence and silence is too much the condition of the heroine's development, too much the basis of the fiction itself; the form it takes is too akin to repression" (47). There is, of course, still a number of twenty-first-century YA Gothic narratives that employ the absent or dead parent trope, as is the case in *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, and *Verity Duology,* wherein both Tana and Kate are motherless and abandoned by their fathers. However, the unyielding repetition of this pattern that insists upon disposing of the mother—and parents in general—and preventing the Gothic heroine from having a healthy relationship with members of her family to ensure that 'she undergoes growth as a character' is problematic. Earlier Gothic texts' depiction of family dynamics and persistent use of the motif of the absent mother served mainly as a warning to a predominately female readership with regards to issues imbedded within their contemporary socio-political paradigms. It may be argued then that the twenty-first-century YA Gothic text is a fusion of contemporary contexts and earlier literary influences; it is a text haunted by a Gothic past.

Losing the Self: Other Identities in the Embrace of the Supernatural

Hitherto, my reading of the twenty-first-century YA Gothic heroine in the previous section was mainly concerned with how family dynamics function within a Gothic

tradition of abandonment and rebellion, and how through the supernatural, the Gothic heroine is presented with an alternative family. The following section of this chapter is concerned with the empowering role of supernatural Otherness as it is represented in twenty-first-century YA Gothic. More specifically, I consider how the twenty-first-century YA Gothic heroine comes to terms with the supernatural and how in so doing, it allows her to occupy a position of power within the narrative, becoming both a hero and a saviour.

Following from what has been discussed in the previous section, I will start this section with a discussion of another Cassandra Clare series, *The Infernal Devices*—the prequel to *The Mortal Instruments.* Clare's heroine Theresa (Tessa) Gray seems, at first sight, to be largely adhering to the conventions of the Gothic heroines of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As an avid reader of Gothic novels, Tessa often compares herself with her favourite Gothic heroines on several occasions—especially Jane Eyre. She further aligns herself with the Gothic heroine by consciously mimicking the latter's behaviour, especially when in distress: "'[w]here are you taking me?' Tessa demanded. It was always the first thing heroines in Gothic novels asked when they were being kidnapped, and it had always annoyed her, but she sees now that it actually made good sense. In this sort of situation the first thing you want to know was where you were going" (*Princess* 253).

Set in Victorian London in 1878, *The Infernal Device* begins as a relatively traditional Gothic tale, only for the conventions of the Gothic to be challenged as the story progresses. This series, much like *The Mortal Instruments*, is equally concerned with representations of the family within a complex Gothic framework. Indeed, Tessa, an

orphaned teenage girl, sails from New York to London, in search of her brother, Nathanial (Nate). Upon her arrival in London, however, she is kidnapped by two demonic witches known as the Dark Sisters who seem to know more about her than she does about herself. Confined in the Dark Sisters' dungeons, she discovers that she is half Shadowhunter-half warlock with the ability to shape-shift—an ability that is rare even among warlocks. Tessa is soon rescued from the Dark Sisters' prison by William Herondale, a Shadowhunter who takes her to the London Institute. She later learns that Axel Mortmain—Clare's Gothic villain in the trilogy—is the one who orchestrated her kidnapping as he desires to marry her for the powers she possesses. In the beginning of the story, Tessa remains a mystery to herself and the Shadowhunters she now lives with—she does not know what her real name is or who, *or what*, her father is. Much like Clary, as Tessa discovers her real identity, she is forced to learn how to navigate the new world she never knew existed and which she was forcefully introduced to.

Following the Gothic tradition of the absent parents, Tessa's mother is already dead when the narrative begins, and she was raised by her aunt whose rules of conduct mirrored the conventions of the Victorian era *vis à vis* what was deemed appropriate for young girls. For example, Tessa is taught not to call someone—especially of the opposite sex—by their first name "as it implied intimacy between them that did not exist" (*Angel* 55). As such, through Tessa's upbringing, Clare explores the limitations established by Victorian patriarchy. Nevertheless, Tessa's conventional ideals are soon challenged as she enters the world of the Shadowhunters, who—as she comes to learn—"are not so formal as most" (*Angel* 56). In the Institute, she is often perplexed by how every person living there conducts themselves, particularly the young women. Tessa's conservative

Victorian ideals are, in effect, further challenged through the characters of Sophie and

Charlotte. Although Sophie is not a Shadowhunter when Tessa meets her—she becomes

one by the final book as she falls in love and marries Gideon Lightwood, the eldest son of

one of the main Shadowhunters families—her proximity to the supernatural alone allows

her to deviate from not only the roles dictated by her gender but also by her class. Sophie

was born into a poor family and growing up she had to hustle for a living. When

Charlotte finds her in the streets of London and realizes that she is a mundane with the

Sight, she decides to take her under her protection. Through the characters of Sophie and

Charlotte, Clare subverts the depiction of the Victorian woman, by placing her Gothic

heroines in a position of power. Indeed, in one scene, Tessa is astonished at how Sophie

disrupts the class decorum when she speaks to William (Will) in an informal manner:

"Tessa's mouth fell open. How could Sophie talk to Will like that? She was a servant,

and he—even if he *was* younger than she was—was a gentleman" (*Angel* 95; emphasis in

original). However, Sophie explains to Tessa that it was Charlotte who gave her

permission to express herself as she pleases and defend herself when necessary.

Furthermore, Charlotte Branwell, née Fairchild—Jocelyn's and Clary's

ancestor—manages the London Institute instead of her husband, Henry Branwell. When

Tessa first meets her, she feels intimidated by her strong character and the "air of

authority" (*Angel* 56) she exhibited regardless of her young age or her "almost child-size"

(*Angel* 55) physique. After Tessa learns that Charlotte is the Head of the Institute, she is

unable to fathom the idea of a woman in charge of a position of power that is usually

occupied by men:

It was the husband, wasn't it, who decided what was and was not allowed, and how his home should be run? The wife's duty was simply to carry out [her husband's] wishes, and to provide him with a calm stable refuge from the chaos of the world. A place he might retreat. But the Institute was hardly that. It was part home, part boarding school, and part battle station. And whoever might be in charge of it, it clearly wasn't Henry. (*Angel* 164)

Tessa's surprise at the role of Charlotte, who assumes the role of a leader, wife and later mother all at the same time, is informed and influenced by her mundane upbringing. Clare portrays the Shadowhunter society as built on the premise of equality between the genders—this is also evident in Twilight to which I will return later in this section—as Charlotte reminds Tessa: "you are a Shadowhunter first, and a lady second" (*Angel* 115). In Tessa's eyes, Charlotte and Sophie respectively embody the notion of the New Woman in that "rather than continue under male authority, [they] endeavour to neutralize male power" (Murphy 108). However, within the Shadowhunter society, the ideas that the New Woman embodies do not engender apprehension—quite the contrary. Regardless of the reservations of some members of the older generations, Shadowhunter women occupy positions equal, if not higher, to their male counterparts—as is the case with Charlotte who in the last book assumes the position of Consul, the highest position in the Shadowhunters' government and establishes her maiden name, Fairchild, as the family's name. Thus, through the female characters in the series positioned within a supernatural Gothic space, Clare questions and re-evaluates notions of womanhood that dominate Victorian society, as her heroines disrupt the status quo socially constructed by patriarchal socio-cultural institutions.

By the third—and last—book in the trilogy, Tessa is portrayed as more confident in her role as a female Shadowhunter and warlock; she is equal to her fellow male Shadowhunters and as strong as them—if not more so, given her unique ability to shape-shift and her immortality. She explains: "you would not exist without a woman, would you? However little use you may find us, we are cleverer and more determined and more patient than men. Men may be stronger, but it is women who endure" (*Princess* 118). At first apprehensive of her Otherness, Tessa realizes that being the Other *is* what makes her unique, powerful. She, then, moves from the "delicate female" who required saving as "violence was not in [her] nature" (*Angel* 445) to a powerful warlock and a Shadowhunter who puts an end to the demonic forces threatening the Shadowhunters.

Portrayed in a sharp contrast to Charlotte—and to Tessa when she embraces her Otherness—Jessamine Lovelace despises her Shadowhunter nature. Like Tessa, Jessamine is orphaned when her Shadowhunter parents are killed, and she moves to live with Charlotte and Henry at the Institute. Unlike Tessa who has grown appreciative of the way of the Shadowhunters and admires Charlotte's character and lifestyle in particular, Jessamine is disgusted with the way they live. In *Clockwork Angel*, she confesses to Tessa that she wishes only to leave the Institute and live "an *ordinary life*" (136; emphasis in original). She further explains to Tessa how her mother had warned her about the lifestyle of the Shadowhunters, and how she wanted Jessamine to experience what normal human girls do: "'[s]he wanted other things for me. That I would make my debut, meet the Queen, find a good husband, and have darling little babies'" (*Angel* 136). However, with her mother now dead, Jessamine is denied that life of normality she was

promised. Furthermore, Jessamine wishes to find a husband and get married, but not to a Shadowhunter. When Tessa asks her why, she explains:

> And live like Charlotte, having to dress like a man and fight like a man. It's disgusting. Women aren't meant to behave like that. We are meant to graciously preside over lovely homes. To decorate them in a manner that is pleasing to our husbands. To uplift and comfort them with our gentle and angelic presence.
>
> (*Angel* 136)

Jessamine not only rejects her supernatural status, she also adheres to the conventions of female conduct inscribed by Victorian patriarchy. In her desire to live in a nice house decorated to her husband's taste, she does not want to challenge patriarchal rules as Charlotte does. She goes as far as to criticise Tessa for her love for books: "'[g]irls shouldn't read novels,' said Jessamine, in the tone of someone reciting something she'd heard somewhere else'" (*Angel* 135). Much like earlier Gothic heroines, Jessamine and Tessa—in the beginning of the story—feel bound to conform to the notions and concepts of femininity and exemplary behaviour of their society. Yet, while Tessa recognizes the power in her supernatural status and embraces it, Jessamine is unable to break free from the constraints imposed on her.

Jessamine only wishes to be "gentle and angelic". Ironically, as a Shadowhunter *she is* angelic. Yet, she refuses to be part of the Shadowhunters and fulfil her angelic duty against the demonic forces that threaten humanity. Indeed, by rejecting her Otherness and wanting a life of normality, Jessamine already condemns herself, as in Clare's YA Gothic embracing Otherness is key to her heroines' survival. Here Clare subtly distorts the Gothic tradition prominent in earlier Gothic narratives as it is not the heroine who

embraces the supernatural who perishes; rather it is the one who rejects it. Commenting on her heroines in an interview with 'Enchanted Inkpot', Clare explains how she intended Clary and Tessa to be the embodiment of adolescence:

> In writing about Clary, I am writing about the feeling that a lot of teenagers have that they are different somehow, alienated, unlike others. Only Clary actually very literally is another kind of species of human. In writing about Tessa, I can make literal the experience, which is often strong in adolescence, of feeling that your identity is fluid and shifting, that you're not sure who you are yet—that you're someone different every time you look in the mirror. (Clare 2010)

Throughout the chronicles, Clare depicts her Gothic heroines as selfless, self-reliant, and heroic. Clary in *The Mortal Instruments* willingly puts herself in immediate bodily and emotional danger as she is compelled to save her mother and makes her mother's safety her priority: "she needed to find her mother first, needed to see that she was alright" (*Bones* 58). She does the same thing later as she saves Jace and ends the horrors of both her father and her brother. Moreover, I have stated previously in my discussion of Clary's position within the power politics of her family, that her father sees her as weakened by her upbringing and unworthy of being his daughter and carrying his name. Conversely, it is his underestimation of her power that brings his demise. Likewise, Tessa shifts from a conventional Gothic heroine, restricted by Victorian ideals, to a liberated heroine in full harmony with her Otherness. As such, it may be suggested that Clare's narratives, both in *The Mortal Instruments* and *The Infernal Devices* form a dialogue with earlier Gothic narratives—especially in terms of the portrayal of archetypes, such as the Gothic heroine, and the supernatural—and function within a reformed Gothic tradition appropriated for a

twenty-first-century readership. Clare's heroines reside both within and outside the conventional characteristics of the Gothic heroine because unlike the heroines of earlier Gothic fiction—notably Walpole's and Radcliffe—her heroines do take initiative and play a decisive role in their own narratives.

Commenting on female heroes in Mythopoeic YA fantasy—a category that is currently rising in popularity and which also includes Gothic elements and conventions—Leah Phillips suggest that in order for the female protagonist to become the hero of the story and perform heroic deeds, she will have to do so by exhibiting a physical prowess that is usually, and traditionally, attributed to the male protagonist of Fantasy literature. Phillips further suggests that this is made possible in the event where the male characters in the narrative do not possess the expected, conventional, masculine traits and attributes associate with the male hero, notably quickness, stamina, a feel for the fighting arts, and stubbornness (136). This however, I argue, does not necessarily apply to YA Gothic supernatural narratives, and Bella and Clare's heroines exemplify this. The YA Gothic heroine, as we have seen earlier, overtly acknowledges the danger presented by the supernatural villains, and in responding to that threat differently from her traditional counterpart by taking a combination of defensive and proactive approaches she drives the plot. Moreover, in my discussion of the supernatural in Chapter Two, I have argued through the examples of mythological supernatural deities, and the vampires of early Gothic fiction, that there is very little to no distinction, between male and female supernatural beings in terms of physical prowess and supernatural abilities. In this sense, placing the twenty-first-century YA Gothic heroines who embrace the supernatural

within a Gothic framework that does not codify performances in gender permits them to occupy a position of power in the narrative—as discussed earlier.

The Twilight Series, for instance, engages with the liberating properties of the supernatural through the portrayal of its female vampires. It does so firstly through Bella's choice to be part of a supernatural family. Although she is in danger from being exposed to the supernatural throughout most of the series, Bella is not presented as a victim, since, as mentioned earlier, she believes herself to be empowered by her relationship with the Cullens. When Edward rescues Bella at the beginning of *Twilight* from the men who assaulted her—and in several other examples throughout the first two books—Bella seems to adhere to the image of the passive, fragile Gothic heroine. However, she is also not afraid of facing the dangers that threaten her alone; for example, Bella is seriously injured as a result of her attempt to rescue her mother from a supernatural villain threatening to kill her. Bella ignores the request of the Cullens, and goes to meet the villain anyway: "I pushed the terror back as well as I could. My decision was made. It did no good to waste time agonizing over the outcome" (*Twilight* 430). Bella's life as a vampire is often dismissed by feminist criticism which focuses solely on her life as a human, and this, I argue, ignores much of her growth as a character throughout the series. The fixation on Bella's role in the kitchen and the house— suggesting that Bella acts as a surrogate wife to her father—and on her seemingly passive behaviour with Edward and his family, ignores the truth that it is Bella who makes all these choices—consciously. In a sense, Bella is in full control of her own agency. Rosalie, Alice, and Esme—Edward's vampire sisters and mother—gained the same agency through their transformation into vampires. In *Eclipse*, Rosalie shares the story of

her transformation with Bella. Human Rosalie, as the embodiment of the traditional, young, beautiful Gothic heroine, has always dreamed of the perfect fairy-tale-like life, and desired the romance and the prosperity that comes with marriage. She comes close to achieving all her dreams, but before her wedding, Rosalie is assaulted, raped, and left for dead by her drunken fiancé and his friends. When Rosalie asks Bella whether Edward has told her story, Bella nods: "he said it was close to what happened to me that time in Port Angeles, only no one was there to save you" (135). Edward's comparison between Bella and Rosalie emphasizes their similarity to Gothic heroines. Rosalie is a haunting, more macabre, version of the persecuted Gothic heroine who does not get rescued by a valiant hero. It is only after her death that she is safe again. As a new born vampire, Rosalie is finally able to exert her own justice, avenging her abuse by killing her murderers one by one. Alice's sinister story is also that of the imprisoned Gothic heroine, as she was institutionalized and confined in an asylum as a human girl, because of her visions. Like Rosalie and Bella, Alice was unable to protect herself from her abusive family while she was still human. After her transformation, she joins the Cullens along with her 'mate', Jasper, and occupies a strong position in the family. Esme, who committed suicide after losing her husband during the war, and later her new-born child, is saved by Carlisle who falls in love with her. Through her transformation Esme is able to create the family she has always wanted. In this sense, the supernatural, in this case vampirism, enables Meyer's Gothic heroines to shed their victim status and to subvert conventional and normative gender roles and expectations.

Female characters are indeed offered a new role within the Gothic space they occupy in twenty-first-century YA Gothic. I have previously argued in my discussion of

the Gothic space as a realm of Otherness in Holly Black's *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*

in Chapter Three, that Coldtowns, although dangerous, are viewed as the epitome of a life

of freedom from societal constraints. The traditional portrayal of the Gothic space in

earlier Gothic narratives is closely linked to ideas of repression and imprisonment. In

Radcliffe's romances, for example, the heroines are always in flight. They move both

towards and away from disturbing worlds of danger and immorality. YA Gothic, on the

other hand, destabilizes the dominant reading of the Gothic space as an allegory of

imprisonment. For while the supernatural often takes the form of oppression,

unwelcomed hauntings, and a feeling of entrapment in early Gothic texts, contemporary

supernatural beings, as demonstrated by the texts discussed in this chapter, can act as

liberating agents. As Bonnie Mann notes, "we discover that Bella wants to be a vampire,

not only to avoid out-aging Edward and live with him in immortal bliss, but because in

the vampire world, all bets are off when it comes to gender" (141).

Bella's desire—one that intensifies as the story progresses—to become a vampire

herself is less about wanting to be with the person she loves and more about wanting to

be *like him.* What Bella is looking for is indeed not the promise of romance, as Edward

has repeatedly told her that she didn't need to change as he would stay with her as a

human. No, Bella strives for the power and agency that the supernatural status of the

Cullens, especially the power the female vampires of the family, enjoy. She sees Rosalie,

Alice and Esme as equals to the male vampires of the story and craves that same equality.

In the second part of the last book of the series, Bella manages to achieve her desire and

we finally witness the liberating and empowering effects of embracing supernatural

Otherness. The moment that Bella wakes up as a new born vampire, she is transformed

physically and psychologically. Her transformation, much like Rosalie's, Esme's and Alice's, puts an end to her struggle to assert agency. She is now Edward's equal. Auerbach notes that "[v]ampires were supposed to menace women, but to me at least, they promised protection against a destiny of girdles, spike heels and approval" (4). This is certainly evident in Bella's new life as a vampire, as it allows her to frame her own destiny, one that is defined by strength and prowess and freed from conventional gender roles.

Embracing supernatural Otherness is not always seen as empowering at first. This is evidenced in Michelle Hodkin's series of three books (*The Unbecoming of Mara Dyer*, *The Evolution of Mara Dyer*, and *The Retribution of Mara Dyer*) published between 2011- 2014. Throughout the three books in the series, Hodkin employs some conventional Gothic tropes such as the doppelganger, the monstrous, and the uncanny, to capture her protagonist's identity construction and ultimately her empowerment through the supernatural. The series follows Mara Dyer, the sole survivor of an accident that killed her best friend, her boyfriend and her boyfriend's sister. Mara wakes up with no recollection of what has happened, and suffering from severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder that causes her to suffer hallucinations as she struggles to differentiate between what is real and what is not. Hodkin's use of the supernatural is unconventional compared to the array of YA Gothic texts published during the same period, and which put great emphasis on the portrayal of supernatural beings. The Mara Dyer series does not feature any vampires, werewolves, or angels; instead, Mara, the protagonist, and her companions, Noah and Jamie, possess supernatural abilities triggered by genetic abnormalities. They all have a modified gene that grants them different supernatural

powers: Mara, in addition to having visions of past lives, can cause death telepathically, Noah is a healer, and Jamie has the gift of persuasiveness.

Mara's experience with the supernatural is at first defined by conflict. After the death of her friends, Mara struggles to readjust to her life: "What I got was a diagnosis. Post-traumatic stress disorder, the psychologist said. Nightmares and visual hallucinations were my new normal, apparently, and something about my behavior [*sic*] in the psychologist's office made him recommend a long-term care facility" (Hodkin, *Unbecoming* 15). Mara's language as she relates her diagnosis suggests her discontent with it, yet she accepts it because the alternative would be to accept that the visions she is seeing are real. Mara has no prior knowledge of the existence of the supernatural, and no one to explain it to her—as the Gothic heroines discussed earlier did. Faced with the risk of being 'imprisoned', Mara chooses to recommend to her parents moving to a new house instead because "the psychologist was overreacting", she argues, "just like my mother" (*Unbecoming* 15). Indeed, what complicates Mara's process of accepting her Otherness is in fact her family. Her mother, in particular, is convinced that Mara's changing behaviour is due to her PTSD. More importantly Mara finds it impossible to explain to her "psychologist mother" (*Evolution* 5) what really happened the night of the incident as she herself cannot remember all the details. When she finally does in the second book, she is involuntarily committed at the Lillian and Alfred Rice Psychiatric Unit where she remains for most of the second book. The doctors explain: "you were brought here because your mother thought you may be a danger to yourself and others" (*Evolution* 7); her mother's dismissal of her concerns further strengthens the distance between them. Fearing further judgement from her mother, Mara learns to dismiss her visions as

paranoia: "I was paranoid" (*Unbecoming* 364) she reminds herself every time something supernatural happens to her. Throughout the series—particularly the first book—Mara is convinced that she is "full on delusional. Abnormal. Psychotic" (*Unbecoming* 103).

Unable to confide in her family, Mara undergoes an internal conflict in her attempt to make sense of the unexplained events occurring around her. In one particular scene, Mara confronts the owner of a malnourished and beaten dog, and wishes he would die for the pain he was causing the dog. She imagines his death in great details and to her surprise, when she comes back to visit the dog she finds the owner dead just as she imagined it. Afraid of the possibility that she may have caused his death, she reasons: "[t]he man died before I met him this morning. Wait, no—I never met him. I invented the conversation between us to give me a feeling of power over the situation in which I felt powerless; my mother's words, but they sounded about right" (*Unbecoming* 103). Yet in Mara's reasoning, particularly the reason she gives for why she may have imagined a discussion that never occurred—which she recognizes as her mother's, not hers— suggests an unconscious recognition of the empowering properties of her Otherness.

As the story progresses, the world in which Mara lives becomes increasingly uncanny; at once familiar and unfamiliar. When Mara begins to see a different reflection of herself in the mirror, she experiences an "ongoing battle with a mirror image who is both self and other" (Kahane 337). She relates through her internal monologue how the reflected face in the mirror did not look like her face: "the contours of [her] face seemed strange. Subtly unfamiliar" (Hodkin, *Evolution* 25). The uncanny Other reflected in the mirror is, as Mara later realizes, a reflexion of her repressed true self, whereby the Other, as I have argued in Chapter Three, acts as a mirror reflecting the darkest parts of the Self.

The reflected Other also threatens the carefully established sense of the individual's identity. Mara's identity disintegrates as her Otherness is further exposed and she is reduced to an unfamiliar presence. The initial non-recognition of the reflected girl in the mirror is not exactly what engenders the most fear in Mara; instead, I argue that it is because *she recognises* her face in the mirror that she is terrified. Jenijoy La Belle in her study of mirrors in literature argues: "[a]t those times in the lives of female characters when they are most concerned with their self-identities, or when crises in their lives throw them back on their sole selves, they turn with remarkable frequency to the contemplation of their images in the glass" (2). The mirror image, in a sense, externalizes Mara's deepest secrets which evokes apprehension in regards to how she is changing, specifically how she views her change and how her family and the world views it.

The struggles with her Otherness, however, becomes distinctively diminished as Mara unravels the events of what happened to her the night her friends died. Much to her horror she remembers that Jude, her ex-boyfriend, had sexually assaulted her the night of the incident:

> One second, he had pressed me so deeply into the wall that I thought I would dissolve into it. The next, he was the trapped one, inside the patient room, inside with me. But I was no longer the victim.
>
> He was.
>
> I laughed at him in my crazed fury, which shook the asylum's foundation and crushed it. With Jude and Claire and Rachel inside. (*Unbecoming* 378)

Indeed, Mara recognizes that her Otherness had saved her life and she also realizes how her powers made her feel; how much she enjoyed killing Jude. "I wanted him punished,

to feel *my* terror of being trapped, of being crushed. So I made him feel it" (*Unbecoming*

380). Much like Meyer's Rosalie, Mara uses her supernatural Otherness to shield herself

from her assailant, free herself of the victim-heroine status, and enact her own justice.

However, as Mara remembers that her friends, Claire and Rachel, were also in the asylum

and that they too died that night, she comes to the realization that "[she] was not crazy",

rather "[she] was lethal" (*Unbecoming* 381). The realization hinders Mara's

reconciliation with her supernatural Otherness as she now sees herself as a danger to the

people she cares about.

When Noah confesses to her that he too possesses supernatural abilities and is

able to heal people, Mara asks him to heal her: "'[f]ix me,' I commended him. 'This

thing, what I've done—there's something wrong with me, Noah. Fix it'" (*Unbecoming*

394). However, Noah declines as he tells her that he cannot fix her because she is not

"broken" (*Unbecoming* 394). Still, throughout the first three books of the series, although

Mara embraces her Otherness and reconciles her Self with her Other, she struggles with

the nature of her abilities, for while Noah can give life, Mara brings only death. Thus,

Mara's story is not a story of becoming Other. Rather, it is a story about how she comes

to the realisation that she is indeed *already* Other. In effect, at the core of the Mara's

story is the story of reconciliation between the Self and Other that exist within her.

Indeed, Hodkin's portrayal of Mara is quite unique in YA Gothic literature,

considering other books published during and around the same period as her series, for

Mara is neither the romantic Gothic heroine that Bella embodies, nor heroic like Clary

and Tessa. Because of her abilities, Mara vacillates between the femme fatale and the

hero. As Mara reasons in the last chapter of the series, now that she has fully embraced her Otherness:

> I was myself again. Thinking something can make it true. Wanting something can make it real. And I didn't regret it anymore. I'd wasted so much time wishing I could be different, wishing I could change things, change myself. If given the chance, I would've shed myself and become a different girl. Slipped on a name like Clara or Mary, docile and gentle and smiling and kind. I thought it would be easier to be someone else than to be who I was becoming, but I didn't think that anymore. The girl who wanted those things had died with Rachel, buried under the asylum I brought down. And I realized now, for the first time, really, that I didn't miss her. (*Retribution* 318)

Mara's reconciliation with her supernatural powers and her acceptance of her difference marks a defining moment in the formation of her identity, and, more importantly, she is finally able to exert her agency.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how YA Gothic narratives are fraught with anxieties pertaining to female identity and place in society. While the texts I have looked at in this chapter demonstrate certain similarities to the earlier Gothic narratives, especially in their portrayal of the Gothic family, they also offer alternatives by either restoring the Gothic heroine's relationship with her parent/parent-figures or alternatively by offering her a

new—non-blood-related—supernatural 'family'. In so doing, twenty-first-century YA gothic allows for healthier representations of family dynamics within a Gothic context.

Furthermore, freed from the limitations imposed on the female protagonists of earlier Gothic texts who, as I have stated earlier in this chapter, had two main roles that could not be reconciled: the 'virtuous victim' and the 'femme fatal/predator'—"to be either victims or pursuers, extreme sufferers or equally extreme villains" (Aguirre 59)—the twenty-first-century YA Gothic offers an array of roles its heroines can assume. As these young adult Gothic heroines search for their identity, they resist simple categorisation and they embody diverse new roles: the enamoured lover, the mother, the supernatural Other, and the saviour. The notion that the Gothic heroine of the twenty-first-century embraces Otherness is integral both here in this chapter and to the overall argument of this thesis: through an engagement with the supernatural Other, these contemporary YA Gothic narratives offer an alternative framework for the understanding of Otherness. Moreover, throughout this chapter, I have argued that twenty-first-century YA Gothic, as exemplified by the texts I have analysed, provides, through the use of the supernatural, an imaginative venue in which multiple and diverse versions of the Gothic heroine can be imagined. Bella, Clary, Tessa, and Mara reveal that heroines can display a wide range of behaviours, and as such, the critical response to the contemporary Gothic heroine should be flexible enough to allow for the expression of diversity in the representation of adolescence, and more specifically, female adolescence.

Indeed, most of the criticism that YA Gothic has received in regard to its portrayal of female characters arises from the assumption that such characters should provide an ideal role model for teenage readers to follow, whereas to fully understand

twenty-first century YA Gothic and what it offers in terms of its portrayal of female characters, there needs to be a broader understanding of how these characters represent various versions of adolescence. The YA Gothic texts examined in this thesis—specifically this chapter—present female characters who go through different scenarios and experiences and who learn from their mistakes, only to make more mistakes as they continuously learn to embrace their complex and individual identity. YA Gothic female characters are not meant to be perfect, and instead of being role models they become figures of reassurance and encouragement, as I have discussed in this chapter. Young women and teenagers are constantly exposed to images of the 'perfect woman' dictated by modern society and cultures, through various forms of mass communication, and especially through social media platforms such as Instagram. The message twenty-first century YA Gothic conveys to the reader is that there is no such a thing as the perfect adolescent because there is no ideal construct of adolescence. More importantly, YA Gothic recognises the importance of resisting conformity to restricting behaviours which are considered appropriate for young women, and instead encourages individual choice by offering diverse incarnations of female characters, as the examples discussed in this chapter illustrate. This focus on the multiple role choices that young adult women can embody is certainly one of the most defining contributions of twenty-first century YA Gothic.

Moreover, in their portrayal of young adult female characters, YA Gothic texts of the twenty-first century move beyond the hyper-sexualisation of supernatural female characters, in particular vampires, which has been a constant aspect of earlier Gothic narratives from Le Fanu's Carmilla, Gautier's Clarimonde, Lewis's Matilda and the

brides and Lucy in *Dracula*, to Angela Carter and Anne Rice's alluring supernatural females. There has always been an attempt to eroticise the female supernatural Other in Gothic texts, and to read her primarily in the light of her sexuality. Further, recent critical readings of female characters in Gothic literature and popular culture tend to focus on the relationship between the female protagonist and the male supernatural Other, raising the question which Chapter Four considers: what does the supernatural offer to the female characters of twenty-first century YA Gothic besides a romantic relationship with the Other, especially in texts where romance is not the only driving force in the narrative? So, instead of casting its female characters in the stereotype of the female supernatural Other as the sexual temptress, and limiting the potential of its characters regarding their sexual agency, or lack thereof, YA Gothic, looks at *and* beyond the sexual experiences and romantic relationships of its female characters. Although sexual agency is important to the adolescent reader, YA Gothic of the twenty-first century widens its perception of adolescence to deal with other themes which are relevant to its target audience, such as individual identity formation, family dynamics, personal and social power, boundaries, and accepting one's otherness, as I have demonstrated in my detailed discussion of YA Gothic heroines: embracing Otherness allows them to breach the constraints imposed on earlier Gothic female characters. The central position of the heroine of twenty-first-century YA Gothic has, indeed, marked a significant shift in comparison to its earlier incarnations. The young adult heroines of the narratives that this thesis discusses occupy a position of power within their respective societies that is equal, if not superior, to the male supernatural Others who have always traditionally been portrayed as dominant.

Conclusion

Embracing Otherness

YA literature in the twenty-first century is a rapidly-evolving field, and likewise, the popularity of the supernatural in general and the Gothic specifically, is ever growing. As I have explained in the introduction to this thesis, as of yet there is a significant dearth of critical material regarding not only the representation of the supernatural in Gothic literature, but also of studies focusing primarily on YA Gothic itself. However, twenty-first-century YA engagement with the Gothic is much more intimate and complex than scholars have been willing to admit. YA Gothic is in a sense "othered" among broader studies of the Gothic. Hence it has been my aim in this thesis to contribute to the study of YA Gothic and also to encourage wider scrutiny of the numerous YA texts that deal with various themes and issues ranging from questions of individual identity, female agency and Otherness, that are relevant to today's society. My research has set out to investigate the supernatural and focused on supernatural beings and supernatural Otherness. More specifically, the study has shown that twenty-first-century YA gothic has embraced the supernatural Other, and has altered its features and characteristics to suit the very specific needs of the contexts in which it is written.

As established throughout the thesis, YA Gothic literature of the twenty-first century has proved to be the ideal medium for the exploration of issues of agency and identity, issues that Chapters Three and Four specifically engage with. Indeed, at the heart of the YA Gothic texts examined in this thesis, there is a constant desire for

characters to find their place in the world without having to forcefully adhere to socially prescribed boundaries. Instead, as the examples chosen for this thesis reveal, the characters' individual and complex identities are allowed full expression through an identification with the supernatural Other, and their agency is attained by embracing their own Otherness.

Specifically, I have been concerned with how YA Gothic presents supernatural Others whom adolescent readers, seeking alternatives to the conventions imposed on them by modern culture, can relate to. The supernatural Other's liminal position between and beyond boundaries, mirrors the adolescent's struggle to navigate the space in which s/he exists, in-between childhood and adulthood. Engaging with the marginalized voices (either because of gender and\or supernatural status which casts the characters as Others) of the fictional characters in YA Gothic, adolescent readers can recognize their own concerns relating to marginalization. Moreover, in their preoccupation with their perceived abnormality—with what marks them as Other—the characters discussed in this thesis almost become figures of reassurance, encouraging the adolescent reader to view their Otherness as a medium of power, a way to break free of the constraints imposed by a society that demands conformity and condemns alterity. Through the supernatural Other, then, twenty-first-century YA Gothic presents its readers with comforting and optimistic approaches to their own struggles.

In addition to its engagement with socio-cultural issues relevant to a contemporary readership (young adults and adults), twenty-first-century YA Gothic explores, to a certain extent, how exposure to contemporary media tends to not only define the dominant cultural mainstream, but also to inform the perception we have of the

Other. Through their portrayal of the Supernatural Other, the YA Gothic narratives discussed in Chapter Three, in particular, engage with the power that the media, in its various forms, has to create images of the Other which seep into the minds of its audience, thus affecting society's attitude and tolerance towards Otherness.

The Other is often rejected out of fear; a fear fuelled by the way in which the media manipulates the common understanding of Otherness, often emphasising the differences of the Other and encouraging discrimination against individuals deemed as such in the eyes of society. This is sharply reflected in Black's *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* which reads as a critique and a direct comment on the effects of the media, especially television and social media, on prejudice against the Other. Black's narrative also engages with the dangers of biased media by presenting two radically different visions of vampirism. On the one hand, television channels run by humans who identify as vampire hunters not only revive but also enforce stereotypes about the monstrousness of vampires, linking any act of violence to the vampires and depicting them as the enemy that must be eradicated. Vampire-run channels broadcasting from inside Coldtown, on the other hand, offer a glorified, romanticized vision of vampirism by highlighting its alluring characteristics, such as power, immortality, and eternal beauty—all of which are desired by a great number of humans in the narrative, as already discussed. Both sets of media offer distorted and heavily subjective images, misleading their audiences' understanding of vampirism, with neither quite showing its reality.

Television programmes and social media reporting thus become a key source for the public's visual consumption of Otherness and cognitive understanding of it. Schwab's *Monsters of Verity* also engages with the subjective representation of the Other, as all

reports of monsters' activity are done through a controlled and selective process that serves the vendetta against the Other. This in turn could be read as a commentary on how impressions that ingroup members may have of other social groups are informed by media representation. The texts also reflect on how contemporary media's ability to spread deliberate misrepresentation and disinformation may indeed aggravate the Othering process.

Twenty-first-century YA Gothic, then, critiques how views on Otherness are formed. Monsters in Gothic literature—vampires, in particular—have traditionally been read and understood as commentaries on various socio-cultural issues, personifying the fear of the racially different and the invading Other. YA Gothic certainly continues this tradition by casting the monster as the Other. However, by not condemning the supernatural Other as an evil that must be rejected and/or destroyed, YA Gothic provides a more tolerant approach to Otherness and encourages its readers to look past pre-conceived stereotypes. This marks an important development not only in the ways in which Otherness is perceived in Gothic literature, but also in the attitudes towards the Other in current socio-political contexts, especially as we are constantly exposed to narratives about groups and individuals deemed as Other—particularly migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Twenty-first-century YA Gothic, although dealing with fictional characters, reflects society's move—or the possibility of movement—towards a more tolerant approach to individuals and groups marked as Other.

This study has in turn raised a number of questions that can potentially be investigated in future research, given the restricted scope of this thesis. First, the Gothic has always been something of a hybrid mode, blurring the boundaries between different

genres and media, and taking into account the popularity of YA Gothic literature, it is

hardly surprising that film and television have adapted some of the most successful

novels for the screen. However, as I have noted in Chapters Three and Four regarding the

adaptation of YA Gothic series such as Cassandra Clare's *The Mortal Instruments*, with

the exception of *Twilight*, (the second highest grossing YA film adaptation after the

Harry Potter movies, and which went on to become a global phenomenon that spawned

four sequels covering all the books in the series), adaptations of YA Gothic have not been

successful in reproducing the same appeal of the original texts. Indeed, several YA

Gothic adaptations, including *Beautiful Creatures* (2015) adapted from a novel by the

same title written by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl and published in 2009, as well the

adaptation of Lauren Kate's *Fallen* in 2017, failed to reach the same success as the YA

Gothic texts from which they were adapted. On the other hand, Gothic films featuring

young adult protagonists, including 2010's *Let Me In*, *Byzantium* (2012), and Ana Lily

Armipour's Iranian-American *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014), received

generally positive reviews from viewers and film critics. This may in part be due to the

fact that the act of reading YA Gothic is an intimate experience that allows the reader a

certain level of freedom in interpreting and visualising the stories, and as a result, the

visual adaptations of such narratives may not always meet the expectations of the reader

now turned viewer. Additionally, while certain modifications are inevitable in the process

of adapting literature to film/TV, audiences are not always satisfied with major changes

which disrupt the narratives that they are familiar with. Readers'/audiences' opinions on

film adaptations are often centred on how loyal they are to the original text. Part of the

Twilight movies success, for instance, is due to their closeness to the books. Some

divergences are even seen as problematic, as discussed in Chapter Four in relation to the emphasis on the romantic relationships of different characters—as they are seen to be more appealing to viewers—and the dismissal of other issues in the adaptation of Cassandra Clare's YA Gothic book series, such as the disruption of the mother-daughter relationship between Clary and her mother, Jocelyn, when the latter is killed off in the TV adaptation of the book series. So, whether it is because of their failure to capture the more complex and nuanced aspects of the novels, or their significant departures from the original texts, YA Gothic film adaptations are yet to meet the success of the literature they adapt.

Another issue raised by this research is the notable lack of diverse representation in YA Gothic literature. Indeed, although some of the texts I have looked at in this thesis feature characters of colour and different ethnic groups, as is the case in *The Mortal Instruments* for example, the protagonists mostly derive from a white, Caucasian background. Moreover, the setting of the stories is exclusively either Western-centric—invariably European or American. This is certainly problematic in a literature written for and about young adults, and where it is necessary to offer a diverse range of characters and stories that the reader can relate to. The lack of critical studies of non-Western YA Gothic reflects the lack of such stories in the publishing industry as a whole. Nevertheless, as more YA authors are now engaging with the issue of diversity, there has been an increasing interest in stories with diverse settings and characters over the last two years. Stories such as S. A. Chakraborty's *The Daevabad Trilogy* (2017-present), a story featuring the Jinn and inspired by Islamic, North-African and Middle Eastern mythology,

and Tomi Adeyemi's *Children of Blood and Bone* (2018), inspired by African folklore, to name just two examples, are indeed worthy of future critical examination.

YA literature has become a site within which the Gothic has enjoyed an impressive renaissance, and the novels examined over the course of this thesis assert to this and provide a valuable insight into the supernatural in YA Gothic literature. This thesis has charted the evolution of the representation of the supernatural in Gothic literature all while referencing various myths, folklore and fairy tales. In examining the specific texts selected for this study, I have revealed not only the extent to which twenty-first-century YA Gothic literature may be seen as a reaffirmation of the shifting, mutating nature of the Gothic and its ability to adapt to the different periods in which it is generated, but also the skill of each author in ensuring the survival of the Gothic by reinforcing such potential through a continuous imagining and reworking of Gothic characteristics.

To understand the nature of the supernatural Other in twenty-first-century YA Gothic, this thesis has explored the general history of Gothic literature in Chapter One by focusing primarily on the rise of the supernatural in the genre. Moreover, the chapter has explored the process of writing the supernatural and has shown how contemporary writers of the genre experimented with the form and nature of the supernatural. Despite extensive research into the history of the supernatural in Gothic literature, because of the confines of this chapter, I had to be selective in my choice of texts, choosing only key works which reflect the shifts in the writing of the supernatural. Ultimately, this consideration of the supernatural in earlier Gothic fiction demonstrates that the

supernatural is, as ever, the product of a number of traits, some more successful than others.

Chapter Two started with a journey in time back to the earliest accounts of supernatural entities that we now associate with vampires and shapeshifters. I examined the characteristics of vampires in early Gothic novels, before exploring the relationship between the Gothic and the fairy tale in their portrayal of the supernatural. My findings in this chapter showed that the image of the supernatural beings studied here is one that is defined by change and mutation; much like the Gothic. YA Gothic writers draw from various literary and cultural sources to create their narratives. This sourcing method is, as I have demonstrated, not entirely new in, or exclusive to twenty-first-century YA Gothic, since it was used in earlier Gothic fiction by prominent authors of the genre. In this sense, twenty-first-century YA Gothic actively bridges myths, folklore and fairy tales, as well as the Gothic. Had the scope of this thesis allowed it, the chapter would have examined the representation of the supernatural more closely in twenty-first-century YA retellings of fairy tales. Nevertheless, this chapter has provided an insight into how the characteristics of the vampire, as well as the array of supernatural Others, are certainly not set in stone. Instead they possess the ability to morph and change and take on new characteristics, for that is how the supernatural will continue to survive.

At the heart of all the tales examined in this thesis lies a persistent concern with the figure of the Other. The texts selected in this thesis, earlier Gothic narratives as well as twenty-first-century's YA Gothic, reveal cultural anxieties surrounding the Other. In Chapter Three, I have focused on an analysis of the supernatural Other in a selection of twenty-first-century YA Gothic texts and argued that the supernatural Other in YA

Gothic is both uncanny and sublime, feared and venerated. Indeed, the supernatural Other

of YA Gothic has been endowed with characteristics that not only bring the figure back

to its different sublime incarnations in mythology, but also as an ambiguous liminal

character, one who has the capacity to offer the human characters in the examples

examined in this thesis a chance to construct new identities. The chapter considered the

ways in which the transgression of spatial boundaries by the supernatural Other creates a

Gothic space in which the human Self is forced to navigate a world of Otherness. The

creation of such a space, I argue, results in conflicting feelings of attraction and repulsion

to, acceptance and rejection of the Supernatural Other. The reaction of the human

characters in the stories is, as I have shown, subject to what the supernatural Other may

offer. This has been demonstrated through my analysis of *Verity Duology* and *Penryn &*

the End of Days, wherein the supernatural Other is met with violence and rejection, while

in *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* and in *The Twilight Saga*, the supernatural Other is

embraced, desired and celebrated.

My discussion on the role of the supernatural Other and the response of human

characters in the stories to Otherness leads neatly into Chapter Four of my thesis. This

final chapter focused exclusively on the supernatural Gothic heroine, and through an

analysis of YA Gothic texts, it showed that twenty-first-century YA Gothic allows its

heroines to assume diverse roles within the narrative, instead of the traditional roles

imposed on the heroines of early Gothic fiction. However, as I have noted elsewhere, we

should not be quick to condemn earlier depictions of the Gothic heroine as passive when

discussing the more recent incarnations of the latter. Instead I suggest we view the

heroines of Gothic literature, much like the supernatural, as ever-evolving, and changing

to reflect the shifting political and socio-cultural context of the twenty-first-century. The portrayal of the heroines of YA Gothic is defined by the latter's quest and ultimate reconciliation with their newly-constructed identities within a space invaded by Otherness. These identities are, as I have demonstrated, informed by the heroines' exposure to the supernatural and their subsequent exploration of Otherness. Clary and Tessa manage to reconcile with their supernatural Otherness and become heroes who save the world. Likewise, Mara's ultimate acceptance of her supernatural identity allows her to free herself of her fears, and through Bella's transformation into a vampire—the Other—she and her vampire family become equals. These YA Gothic heroines challenge the confining and often restrictive social and cultural paradigm often associated with the Gothic. The heroines in the texts I have examined take a position of power through the embrace of the supernatural, and thus the supernatural can best be read as an agent of female empowerment.

Cumulatively, the chapters of this thesis demonstrate the complexity of the role of the supernatural in Gothic literature as well as YA Gothic's commitment to providing alternative venues of portraying the Other who has been an especially prominent feature of Gothic literature. Collectively, the cast of characters that figure in this study represent issues of Otherness and of the desire to break set boundaries. Gothic writers' appropriation of myths, legends, folklore and fairy tales in their work constitute an integral part of the portrayal and reworking of the supernatural Other in Gothic literature; the old and the new. I believe that this method of writing the supernatural subverts our understanding and expectations of the genre; thus, we are always surprised by the features a vampire, shapeshifter, or a newly-imagined supernatural being may take. In the

place of conventional depictions of supernatural beings in earlier Gothic texts as amoral, monstrous or demonic creatures, YA Gothic texts depict such beings as sophisticated, beautiful, endowed with powers that surpass human comprehension, varying from graceful immortals to dark angels. These depictions are, as I have argued, reminiscent of the deities of mythology and the princes and heroes of fairy tales. The best example of this is observed clearly in the figure of the vampire, who witnessed, and still witnesses, the most significant changes over the recent years both in literature and popular culture. All these changes are, I argue, necessary for the survival of the vampire, for there would have been no Dracula, or legacy of the vampire as we know it today if the image of folkloric vampire has not been re-appropriated, altered and reworked with every vampire tale.

In contrast to critics who find that the supernatural Other's Otherness is repressed and that the vampire in particular is humanized, this study has argued that YA Gothic does not humanize the supernatural Other by stripping it of all that makes it different. If anything, it demonstrates quite the reverse, as all the YA Gothic texts looked at reinforce the Otherness of their supernatural characters. In other words, these texts demonstrate, exceedingly well the YA Gothic's ability to create a space wherein the boundaries between the Self and the Other are renegotiated and often abolished. In so doing these texts reject the idea of assimilation as being based on the individual's relinquishment of all that makes him/her different and instead call for an acceptance of the Other. Additionally, while some supernatural characters possess certain human qualities, and this is particularly true to vampires such as Meyer's Twilight Series and Black's *The Coldest Girl In Coldtown,* wherein the vampires were once humans before being

transformed. The same cannot be said about the rest of the supernatural beings explored in this thesis; no, the angels, the Shadowhunters, the Sunnai and the Malchai for example, have always been not-human.

One of my goals in writing this thesis was to offer an alternative to the critical and general assumption that the supernatural Other in twenty-first-century YA Gothic exists solely to occupy the role of the humanized, tamed lover, and as such is read. Instead, my analysis of the selected texts has shown that the supernatural Other has much more to offer to the human characters in the narrative—especially the female characters with whom they may develop a romantic bond—and thus they occupy a central and vital role in the stories.

Furthermore, the supernatural Other of YA Gothic is depicted as morally ambiguous, capable of both evil and good. This focus on the ambiguity of such beings allows for a significant break from the conventional portrayal of supernatural creatures as inherently evil. These supernatural Others are given a voice of their own in the narrative. In contrast to the majority of earlier Gothic narratives where the supernatural character's viewpoint is not conveyed, twenty-first-century YA Gothic allows its supernatural characters to have a voice in their own stories. This is particularly true in the texts discussed in Chapter Four, where the main character is also of supernatural nature. This in turn influences our interpretation of Otherness by providing a new perspective of viewing and understanding supernatural beings that have been labelled as 'monsters' for so long in Gothic literature and as such YA Gothic invokes not only a sympathy for the Other, but also a certain degree of identification felt towards it. In this respect, YA Gothic, although still thematically and aesthetically dark, is also hopeful.

My approach offers a different way of reading the supernatural Other so that the new attributes twenty-first-century YA Gothic inscribes to it can be reconciled successfully both with and within Gothic literature. The selected texts in this work verify the importance and the ever-lasting significance of the supernatural in Gothic literature, regardless of the epoch or socio-cultural context in which they are written. This thesis contributes to a critical study of the Gothic that should help take the contemporary critical debate forward as stories about the supernatural continue to be written in ever new ways within YA literature, while engaging with themes and concerns that continues to prove relevant to the reader's socio-cultural environment. It is to be hoped that more researchers will pay YA Gothic literature the attention it deserves, and equally that YA Gothic authors prove increasingly able to encompass the widest diversity of racial, ethnic, class, gender, and sexual representations too.

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