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In this study, latent content analysis was used to identify evidence of female characters' changing perceptions of women and femininity before, during, and after their experiences cross-dressing in sixteen young adult historical fiction and fantasy novels. Results vary considerably, but most characters grow increasingly dissatisfied with their sex role over the course of these three stages. However, most characters ultimately come to better understand the disempowerment of women in their societies as a result of their experiences, and are, by the ends of their stories, better able to relate to and sympathize with other women. Further, in many of these stories, when the characters return to their female roles, they are able to change their lives so that, while more restricted than the male roles they are leaving behind, they are still freer than the female roles they originally escaped. Characters' perceptions of self remained quite confident throughout all of the books examined.

Headings:

Content Analysis

Women in Literature / Evaluation

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FEMALE CROSS-DRESSING IN YOUNG ADULT FICTION:
PROTAGONISTS' CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN AND FEMININITY

by
Emily A. Riley

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Brian Sturm

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I. Introduction

“No one with a choice should ever have to be a girl.” – Bart Simpson in *The Simpsons* episode “Girls Just Want to Have Sums”

For eighteen months, journalist Norah Vincent posed as a man. As Ned, Vincent was able to work, date, join a bowling league, frequent seedy strip clubs, live for several weeks at a Catholic monastery, and join a men’s movement group for weekly meetings and, eventually, an intimate weekend camping retreat. At no point during her project was her sex detected by the men and women she interacted with until she intentionally revealed it.

Vincent is certainly not the first woman to attempt (and succeed) to pass herself off as a man for an extended period of time. She might, however, be the first woman to do so solely for the sake of social experimentation. Historically, women have cross-dressed to transgress the limitations of their sex roles and to access masculine privilege, to obtain educations and pursue careers, to achieve wealth, social power, and independence, and to satisfy and conceal socially unaccepted sexual and gender orientations.

Accounts of historical female cross-dressers make for compelling storytelling, and so it is unsurprising that these women have both inspired and been inspired by a long tradition of female transvestism in fictional spheres. Female to male cross-dressers appear in Chinese folklore, medieval ballads, Renaissance plays, Victorian novels, pulp detective fiction, contemporary film, Japanese graphic novels, and, as will be discussed in this

paper, young adult fiction. In each of these genres, the cross-dressing narrative usually follows a fairly static model: a young heterosexual woman living in a strict patriarchal society employs male dress to temporarily escape her gender-role, often with the intent of achieving some specific goal. At some point her sex is discovered or deliberately revealed and she is forced to return to her female role.

In young adult fiction, female characters who subvert gender by cross-dressing reveal the fragility of socially constructed binary gender codes and force readers to examine their own concepts of gender. But is the impact of these stories negated by the transvestite character's inevitable return to her female sex role? Can there ever truly be a happy ending when a character is thrust back into the position of powerlessness she only temporarily escaped, rather than permanently overcame? And after experiencing freedom in male disguise, is it possible for a female character to make peace with her femininity and the restrictions of her sex role? At the end of *Self-Made Man*, Vincent's memoir of her experience passing, she writes that she is "fortunate, proud, free and glad in every way to be a woman" (287). The end results of female to male cross dressing narratives in young adult fiction are rarely so clear, nor so optimistic. This paper specifically examines how female transvestite characters' perceptions of women and femininity change over and as a result of their experiences cross-dressing in young adult fiction.

II. Literature Review

Sumptuary laws of varying levels of stringency have appeared in countless civilizations across history and all over the world. Ostensibly, sumptuary laws in western society functioned to control trade and limit extravagant spending; more often their actual function was maintenance of a visually coded (and thus easily controllable) class system (Garber 23). In contemporary western society, the cultural significance of clothing is based on highly nuanced, often tacit dress codes that “speak in a number of registers: class, gender, sexuality, erotic style” (Garber 161). The use of clothing to maintain the gender binary has declined somewhat as feminine dress codes have grown more flexible in recent decades, but in periods of fashion when masculine clothes were uniformly functional and feminine clothes frivolous, female cross-dressing was seen as “a willful transgression toward more power and freedom” (Altenburger 171).

That a surface characteristic as superficial as clothing can function as a determinant of sex, and thus a determinant of power, reveals the vulnerability of socially constructed gender structures. As Judith Butler writes in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, “[i]f the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity” (Butler 136). By cross-dressing, women are able to take advantage of society’s reliance on fixed and clearly delineated, outwardly expressed and visually readable gendered dress-codes. They depend on the assumption

that the people they encounter will not look beyond the surface of the gender they project: the cumulative effect of clothing, hair, gestures, and behaviors that are socially perceived as masculine. As Roland Altenburger writes in the article “Is It Clothes that Make the Man? Cross-Dressing, Gender, and Sex in Pre-Twentieth Century Zhu Yingtai Lore”,

The attribution of gender, like any other social category, is not in the person’s own hands, but depends on others’ recognition: it is the reconfirmation by others that ultimately determines what category one belongs to, such as whether one is perceived as male or female. Cross-dressing relies on make-believe, on deception, on the willful manipulation of perception. (Altenburger 172)

There are generally three reasons for cross-dressing cited in the literature: cross-dressing for reasons related to sexuality, cross-dressing as performance, and cross-dressing as escape. (Hawkes 261). It is this third reason that motivates most historically documented cases of female to male cross-dressing. Escape in this context applies to both women who were voluntarily escaping the limitations of their socially fixed sex roles to pursue male freedoms, and to women who were escaping urgent dangers such as poverty and starvation; the numerous options open to a passing woman might well be seen as appealing alternatives to theft and prostitution, the usual last resorts for desperate women (Dekker 32).

The army and navy were common destinations for female-bodied transvestites, and many documented cases come from times of war (Dekker 30). As secrecy is the ultimate determinant of success for passing women, however, the number of women who have cross-dressed throughout history cannot be guessed. In most cases, transvestism was a temporary undertaking, and in ideal circumstances it ended with the woman’s voluntary and discreet return to her true sex role (Wheelwright 97). Female cross-dressers faced

numerous risks for discovery, however, among them “lack of privacy, illness, punishment, [...] an inadvertently bad performance [...] betrayal by others” (Dekker 20). Punishments for discovered cross-dressers could be quite severe and included imprisonment for charges such as libel and prostitution during the Civil War (Young 201).

It was, of course, the women who *were* caught cross-dressing who attracted the public’s interest. In *Amazons and Military Maids: Women Who Dressed as Men in the Pursuit of Life, Liberty, and Happiness*, Julie Wheelwright writes,

Inevitably there were women whose military service and use as a political or patriotic symbol made her a valuable celebrity even after her retirement. Some even managed to exploit their wartime experience, and turn their own adventures into a script for the stage, worked as a publican, published their memoirs or demanded financial and social recognition of her ‘masculine’ exploits. (Wheelwright 102)

Autobiographical accounts by cross-dressing women grew to be extremely popular in the nineteenth century (Heilmann, 84). However, many women, while eager to profit monetarily from any public interest in their adventures, had little influence over the final published versions of their stories (Wheelwright 115).

Romanticized female transvestite biographies led quite naturally to popular, picaresque fictional accounts of passing women in the nineteenth century. In fictional transvestite narratives, “women are hampered only by the demeaning and restricting force of cultural perceptions of gender codes” (Hotchkiss 125). It is not unusual for a transvestite character to perform a masculinity “more authentic than the masculinity of her biologically male compatriots” in these stories, and thus radically challenge accepted notions of femininity and feminine ability (Flanagan “Reframing” 83). But the provocative potential of Victorian cross-dressing narratives wherein a character cross-

dresses to fulfill personal goals is ultimately disempowered by the character's eventual choice to resume her womanly duties and give up whatever ambitions first motivated her transgression. (Heilmann, 86). In cross-dressing narratives within any genre, the cross-dressing heroine's return to her feminine sex role effectively "contains or even quells any threateningly subversive representation" (Brocklebank 273). Post-Civil War tomboy narratives also enjoyed a period of great popularity in the nineteenth century, challenging "the limits of prevailing domestic conventions and principles (in particular, those that teach the necessity of obedience to a male authority)" (Elliott). But here, too, the tomboy character, by choice or not, was usually reformed to conform to an acceptable, and controllable female role by the story's end. In "When Girls Will Be Boys: 'Bad Endings and Subversive Middles in Nineteenth-Century Tomboy Narratives and Twentieth-Century Lesbian Pulp Novels, Mary Elliott writes that "tomboys cannot be allowed to prevail unchecked through the entire narrative, for their purpose is to correct excess or, more precisely, to demonstrate that it can be corrected".

By the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, male impersonators were popular in vaudeville and music halls (Slide 61). On the stage, male and female impersonators tended to function somewhat differently. As Alisa Solomon writes in "It's Never Too Late to Switch", "[i]f men dressed as women often parody gender, women dressed as men, on the other hand, tend to *perform* gender – that is, they can reveal the extent to which gender [...] is a 'regulatory fiction'" (Solomon 145). Of course, in theatrical settings of this kind, male impersonators were still ultimately parodying gender, and when transvestism is employed humorously, it loses its power to reveal this fiction of gender. In "A Woman's Gotta Do...What a Man's Gotta Do? Cross-

Dressing in the Westerns”, Tania Modleski writes that “laughter is precisely what keeps audiences from seriously examining the rules and hierarchies they delight in seeing temporarily subverted” (529).

In young adult fictional female transvestite narratives, humor is usually beside the point; cross-dressing instead functions first and foremost as a means of characterization, indicating characters’ dissatisfaction with their sex roles (Nikolajeva 275). In fantasy and historical fiction, two genres in which female cross-dressing appears often, transvestism also serves to provide female characters access to male spheres that, according to the customs of their cultures, would normally be denied to women. This sort of boundary transgression is an especially powerful tool in children’s and young adult fiction, where girls are “doubly oppressed: as women and as children” (Nikolajeva 47).

In “Disney’s Mulan – the ‘True’ Deconstructed Heroine?” Lisa Brocklebank proposes that the appeal of the female transvestite characters is that she “[conflates], in a single character, all the evocative traits of the [fairytale] genre in general: the subversive power of transformation and shape-shifting, the magical ambiguity of metamorphosis, the transgression of boundaries, and the resistance to classification” (272). It is perhaps, then, unsurprising that the female transvestite appears so frequently in young adult literature -- as a character archetype she has endless storytelling potential. Of more interest, however, is her potential for provoking serious thought in young readers.

In “Me, Myself, and Him – The Changing Face of Cross-Dressing in Contemporary Children’s Literature”, Victoria Flanagan writes that “[f]emale cross-dressing narratives in children’s literature question socially assumed understanding in relation to gender by playfully exposing the redundancies of the two, polarized, gendered

identities. They gently ridicule the limitations that such a system imposes on supposedly autonomous individuals” (61). This is a compelling message for young audiences who are negotiating the complexities of contemporary gender structures. In “Reframing Masculinity: Female to Male Cross-Dressing”, Flanagan suggests that children’s cross-dressing texts further reveal a continuum of possible genders, demanding that

masculinity and femininity, and the supposedly essential behaviors, skills, and attributes associated with these two genders, be reassessed and reconstructed into something new and meaningful – a notion of gender based not on differences and divisions, but on intrinsically interwoven shades of gray where lines can and will be crossed by autonomous individuals who exist beyond the limitations of “male” and “female”. (95)

Notably, however, these radical notions of gender in the context of young adult and children’s fiction are completely disconnected from adult themes of lesbianism and transgender – a disconnect maintained by the “non-sexual and temporary” nature of the cross-dressing experience (Flanagan “Me” 59).

What ultimately keeps these stories safe from controversy, however, is that even as they subvert binary gender constructs, they reinforce them. In fiction as in history, a successfully passing woman rises above the limitations of her sex role only by emulating masculine behaviors -- by assimilating to her society’s standards of maleness. These women may prove that the supposed inherent differences between men and women are in fact culturally, rather than biologically constructed, but they are still proving it within the limitations of the gender binary. In “The Politics of Transgenderism”, Janice Raymond makes a point that translates well to the fictional (and heterosexual) female transvestite. “The idea of transgender is provocative. On a personal level, it allows for a continuum of gendered expression. On a political level, it never moves off this continuum to an existence in which gender is truly ascended. [...] What good is a gender outlaw who is

still abiding by the law of gender?" (223). And further, what use is a gender outlaw whose revolution only exists on an individual scale? As Wheelwright explains, historical female cross-dressers' "exploits challenged existing categories of sexual difference, but the terms of the debate usually remained the same. Was women's real oppression challenged by these heroines who felt only capable of grasping an individual liberation?" (11).

III. Methodology

For this study, latent content analysis was used to collect evidence of female protagonists' attitudes toward women and femininity before, during, and after the experience of cross-dressing in young adult novels. Passages of dialogue, unspoken thoughts, and descriptions of protagonists' interactions with and relationships to other women were particularly examined; from these elements, I was able to draw out what Earl Babbie describes as each novel's underlying meaning (317).

Novels for this study were purposively selected to include books aimed at young adult audiences (approximately ages twelve through eighteen) wherein a female protagonist passes as a male to achieve some purpose that she could not accomplish as a female. Appropriate titles were identified in a number of ways: my own young adult reading history produced several titles; friends and acquaintances were approached for recommendations; the NoveList K-8 database, and the Chapel Hill Public Library, Durham Public Library, and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill online catalogs were searched by subject headings including "sex role", "male impersonators", "gender identity", "disguise – fiction", and "passing"; Amazon.com was scoured for relevant Listmania! and So You'd Like to... guides; and the Morton Grove Public Library's readers' advisory webpage on male impersonators and female cross-dressing was referred to.

When I had collected thirty-seven possible titles, I stopped my search and began to refine my list. I first eliminated any books written before 1980, as I wanted to focus on

fairly contemporary ideas of gender roles; the books in my final sample were published between 1983 and 2006. I also omitted books that I found to be, sometimes ambiguously, oriented toward intermediate or adult audiences rather than toward young adults. I additionally eliminated all books in which only minor female characters cross-dress, in which main characters wear men's clothing without the explicit intent of passing as male, and in which main characters cross-dress only briefly. While the duration of and motivations for cross-dressing vary a great deal for the fourteen characters in the sixteen books ultimately used for this study, the experience of female to male transvestism is a major influence in the overarching development of each book's plot.

Five of the books chosen fall into the fantasy genre and the remaining eleven are historical fiction; one of these is a romance novel, but all sixteen novels involve a romance of some kind. Nine of these books stand alone, and seven are from five series; only sequels wherein the protagonist continues to cross-dress were included in my sample. Summaries of the books examined can be found in Appendix A. The titles of the books examined follow:

Alanna: The First Adventure and *In the Hand of the Goddess*, by Tamora Pierce

Bloody Jack: Being an Account of the Curious Adventures of Mary "Jacky"

Faber, Ship's Boy and *Curse of the Blue Tattoo: Being an Account of the Misadventures of Jacky Faber, Midshipman and Fine Lady*, by L. A. Meyer

Daughter of Venice, by Donna Jo Napoli

Dove and Sword, by Nancy Garden

The Dream Maker's Magic, by Sharon Shinn

Esther, by Sharon E. McKay

Far Traveler, by Rebecca Tingle

The Folk Keeper, by Frannie Billingsley

Freedom Beyond the Sea, by Waldtraut Lewin

Girl in Blue, by Ann Rinaldi

I Rode a Horse of Milk White Jade, by Diana Lee Wilson

Jackaroo, by Cynthia Voigt

Samantha and the Cowboy, by Lorraine Heath

To Race a Dream, by Deborah Savage

After reading the books, I created a simple datasheet, available in Appendix B, to guide me through rereading and analyzing each book. This datasheet includes space for descriptions of straightforward presentations of characters' perceptions of femininity: protagonist's perceptions of self, and protagonist's perceptions of other women. It additionally broadly identifies relationships and situations through which protagonists' perceptions of femininity are likely to become apparent: characteristics of protagonist's relationships with female family members, characteristics of protagonist's relationships with female peers, characteristics of protagonist's romantic relationships, and puberty and body issues. While each category is not relevant to every book, creating these simple guidelines for analysis in this way helped me to better anticipate and organize evidence of characters' attitudes towards femininity as I encountered it. After analyzing each book, I attempted to identify patterns between all of the books.

IV. Individual Analyses

In *Alanna: The First Adventure*, by Tamora Pierce, eleven year-old Alanna of Trebond pretends to be a boy so that she can train to be a knight rather than learn magic at a convent – the usual course of study for noblewomen “until they [are] fifteen or sixteen, at which time they [go] to Court to find husbands.” (Pierce, “Alanna” 9). Alanna is wary of her magical abilities, but is naturally gifted in traditional male endeavors. Although (or perhaps because) she has little experience with women – her mother is dead, and notably, she has no female friends her own age until she is an adult -- she is generally dismissive of feminine behaviors. She certainly sees no happiness in her future as a noblewoman. “D’you think I want to be a lady? [...] “Walk slowly, Alanna”,’ she said primly. “Sit still, Alanna. Shoulders back, Alanna.” As if that’s all I can do with myself!’ (Pierce, “Alanna” 1).

Interestingly, there are some references made to female knights in previous generations; the strict limitations of gender roles in Alanna’s contemporary society seem to be firmly rooted, but relatively new. Alanna does encounter some powerful women on her way to the castle at Tortall, however, in the form of warrior priestesses who guard their temple from men with double-headed axes. Alanna admires them, but thinks “someday she would wear armor too, but she wouldn’t be confined to temple grounds!” (Pierce, “Alanna” 24). Clearly, her ambitions far exceed any options open to her as a female.

While Alanna knows herself to be capable of much more than becoming an accomplished, marriageable gentlewoman, once she has successfully enrolled in the school and training program at the castle in Tortall, she is overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy, and is always concerned that her failures are due to her femininity. Curiously, even when she successfully performs as a male – and as a rule, she does -- her femininity is a nagging concern; after winning her first fistfight against an older boy who has been bullying her since her arrival at the castle, Alanna thinks, “she was still a girl masquerading as a boy, and sometimes she doubted that she would ever believe herself to be as good as the stupidest, clumsiest male” (Pierce, “Alanna” 99).

The guilt she feels for deceiving her friends and fear of discovery seems to compound these feelings of inadequacy. After several years of training, as she prepares to become a squire, Alanna thinks, “she didn’t feel worthy of being someone’s squire. She was a girl, and she was a liar” (Pierce, “Alanna” 212). Still, in spite of whatever shortcomings she perceives in herself, the only criticism she can ever bear is her own; when others doubt her abilities, Alanna consistently rises to every challenge and is always successful. As she explains it, ““you either quit and get picked on all the time, or you stick it out. I have to stick it out.”” (Pierce, “Alanna” 76).

Concealing her sex naturally becomes more difficult for Alanna as she grows up, and consequently her body becomes a source of endless distress. In fact, Alanna does manage to keep her secret from most of her friends for the entire seven years she spends training to become a knight; only twice in the first book is her sex revealed. The first time she confesses it intentionally, if not happily: at menarche, Alanna turns to George, her only friend outside of the castle, to find a healer woman. The second time, while fighting

evil spirits, Alanna is stripped before her friend, Prince Jonathan, because the spirits want him to see her weakness. In response, she proves that her sex is no hindrance by joining her power with Jonathan's to destroy the spirits. Afterward, when Jonathan asks her who she thinks he should choose to be his squire, she confidently lists her many talents and suggests herself. Even so, when Jonathan agrees, she hesitates at first, surprised that he would knowingly choose a girl to be his squire.

In *In the Hand of the Goddess*, the second book in the series, both George and Jonathan present themselves as suitors to Alanna. She is, at first, steadfastly resistant to their advances; when George brings up marriage, she insists that "I don't plan to marry, and I certainly don't plan to fall in love" (Pierce, "Goddess" 89). Alanna is certain that she cannot fulfill her ambitions if she is distracted by romance. Her male friends, however, do not hold themselves to the same standards.

Delia, a beautiful, young noblewoman newly arrived at Court, is Alanna's first female peer in the series. Delia is beautiful, charming, and manipulative, an instant favorite with Alanna's friends, and a constant reminder to Alanna of all the things she has chosen not to be. As Alanna witnesses the mayhem a pretty girl can cause among a group of young men, she "continued to dislike her unreasonably, staying away from her as much as she could" (Pierce, "Goddess" 68). When Jonathan and Delia's relationship turns sexual, Alanna grows jealous.

For the first time, Alanna feels inferior not because she is a female, but because of her lack of femininity. She turns to George's mother for assistance. "I see all the queen's ladies wearing pretty things, and I've been thinking lately that I like pretty things. I'm going to have to be a girl someday. Why shouldn't I start practicing now?" (Pierce,

“Goddess” 156). This is not the first time in the series that she has sought information from George’s mother; she is the same healer who explained puberty to Alanna. This is, however, the first time Alanna seeks a women’s mentorship out of choice rather than necessity. George’s mother helps Alanna to obtain some gowns and a wig, and coaches her in ladylike behavior. Right away, Alanna realizes that “[i]t’s going to be as hard to learn to be a girl as it was to be a boy” (Pierce, “Goddess” 159).

In time Alanna and Jonathan do begin a sexual relationship, but Alanna holds him emotionally at arms length through the remainder of the book. At the end of the story, after she has earned her knight’s shield, and after her sex has been revealed to the entire Court, she leaves Tortall to search for adventure and “sort out being a lady knight” (Pierce, “Goddess” 261).

In *Bloody Jack: Being an Account of the Curious Adventures of Mary “Jacky” Faber, Ship’s Boy*, by L. A. Meyer, Mary Faber disguises herself as a boy to escape life on the streets of London, where she has survived among a gang of orphans since the deaths of her parents and sister. She has seen enough of her fellow female gang members die or be made prostitutes to know she has no future on the streets as a girl, but the boys in her gang fare no better; Mary only finally runs away after Rooster Charlie, her gang’s leader, is murdered. With not just survival, but adventure in mind, Mary heads to sea.

Right away, Mary identifies the advantages of boyhood:

It’s easier bein’ a boy, ‘cause nobody bothers with you. Like, I couldn’t have gone into that tavern yesterday as a girl, ‘cause they would have shouted, “Get out of here, you filthy girl,” while they didn’t say anything when I went in as a filthy boy. My filthy penny was as good as anyone else’s. [...]

It's easier bein' a boy, 'cause when someone needs somethin' done like holdin' a horse, they'll always pick a boy 'cause they think the dumbest boy will be better than the brightest girl, which is stupid, but there you are.

It's easier bein' a boy, 'cause I don't have to look out for no one but me. (Meyer, "Jack" 34)

Her pleasure in her newfound freedom notwithstanding, Mary is generally very secure and comfortable with herself as a girl. She thinks of her success with her deception cheerfully – as a product of her cleverness.

Once Mary – now Jacky – has joined a naval ship as a ship's boy, she encounters women rarely, though she encounters *talk* of them regularly. Most of it she takes in stride, but she is always disappointed by the negative opinions the men have of women. When the ship nears a port-town, the ship's Deacon warns the men "about loose women and vile vessels and evil seductresses" and her tutor "put his two pence in with the [vocabulary] words for yesterday being *debauchery*, *dissipation*, and *wantonness*. I've a feeling that me and my sisters do not have a high standing in the worlds of religion and learning" (Meyer, "Jack" 120). This being some time after she has, to her horror and fear, had her first period, upon reaching shore Jacky seeks out a prostitute for information. Jacky is completely non-judgmental, and views the prostitute as a perfectly legitimate source of information – indeed, whether she would have gotten such a complete education on the matter from any other woman is doubtful. Even years later, after Jacky has returned to her female role and is enrolled in finishing school, she treats prostitutes respectfully and at one point even turns to some prostitutes she knows for protection from the law.

Another time on shore, after having revealed her sex to and fallen in love with Jaimy, another of the ship's boys, Jacky buys a dress and spends the day as a girl. At one

point, Jacky and Jaimy see the other ship's boys some distance away. Secure in her disguise, Jacky affects a Jamaican accent and calls out to them, then, promising Jaimy that she will make him a legend, "I take his face in my hands and kiss him long and slow [...] with my lovely, lovely dress blowing about me" (Meyer 200). The scene is comically overwrought, but it is clear that Jacky is making fun of her mates, not making a sweeping statement about femininity. When the ship's boys find her later, again in her male disguise, and ask her where she was while Jaimy was wooing the natives, she answers "'I had to sit and wait in a bloody tavern while he was off wi' the tart'" (201). Unsurprisingly, no one ever questions Jacky's masculine performance.

The only point at which Jacky ever seems to think negatively of her femininity is when a great deal of bad blood, all involving her, develops on board. She thinks, "I guess the old superstition about girls on board being bad luck wasn't too far from the truth" (Meyer, "Jack" 165). Thinking that her deception must be nearing its end, Jacky prepares for life off-ship by making a dress. Saddened though she is by the ostracism of the crew and her impending departure, she looks forward to, at least, physical freedom from her disguise. "That's something to look forward to, release from the confines of this vest" (Meyer "Jack" 180).

It is actually some time before she is discovered and forced to leave the ship. At this point, the captain arranges for her to attend a girls' school in Boston. *Curse of the Blue Tattoo: Being an Account of the Misadventures of Jacky Faber, Midshipman and Fine Lady* picks up at the beginning of Jacky's attendance at the Lawson Peabody School for Girls. Jacky is annoyed by her powerlessness in this decision, knowing that she is perfectly capable of taking care of herself. "Wisht they had just given me the money and

let me make my own way in the world like I always done, but, no – I’m a girl and too stupid to take care of money. That’s a man’s job, they say” (Meyer, *Curse* 7). This is the first time that Jacky has really felt her powerlessness as a female since her childhood, when her homelessness and destitution were of considerably more pressing concern than her femininity.

It has been years since Jacky has interacted with girls her own age, but no friendship of her childhood has prepared her for the wealthy society ladies Jacky meets at her new school. Coarse as she is, and foreign to boot, she frequently finds herself the target of the students’ devastating cruelty. In a letter to Jaimy, she writes, *“I don’t know if I like the company of girls very much. These girls here, youd think they’d be a bunch of prim pampered little princesses but no, they aint, theyre like any bunch of thirty or so cats thrown into a sack and shaken up good. Theyre mean in ways that boys never thought of being”* (Meyer *“Curse”* 40). Although she is alternately confused and amused by the upper-class ideas of feminine propriety that she is expected to live up to, Jacky works doggedly to learn to behave like a lady, and does gradually win over most of her classmates.

However, after her arrest for “lewd and lascivious behavior”, for dancing and singing in public, Jacky is demoted from student to chambermaid. “I warn’t never meant to be a lady, I know that now. I got streaks of wildness in me that trip me up every time, and just like streaks in clothes, there’s some dirt that just won’t wash out” (Meyer *“Curse”* 133). After her initial disappointment, she takes her demotion cheerfully enough, and quickly becomes a favorite with the other maids. Resigned to her failure as a lady, Jacky disregards some of the rules she at first tried to hard to obey and begins sneaking

out of the school on a regular basis so that she can perform music at a local tavern; with no one to please but herself, Jacky reclaims what independence she can in the more comfortable role of a middle class woman. She also continues her studies independently – she may not be a lady, but she is determined to have an education. Her diligence is eventually noticed by the headmistress (who is hard but fair) and ultimately earns her a second chance as a student. But once again, Jacky fails to live up to the upper class’s feminine ideal. At a party celebrating a horserace Jacky wins disguised as a jockey, she drinks too much and nearly compromises herself with a complete stranger. Ashamed of herself and more certain than ever that she will never become a lady, Jacky runs away to join a whaling ship.

Very few of the books examined deal explicitly with the issue of rape, but once in each *Bloody Jack* novel Jacky must defend herself against sexual assault. Reflecting on her first attack by a sailor, Jacky thinks it likely that her navy uniform helped save her from being raped, and considers how women are made victims by the very clothes they wear.

I’m thinking that dresses are funny things, though, now that I’ve actually worn one. Why would a country like ours, which so prizes the so-called purity of its women so much, have them wear something like a *dress*? [...] Why, you just lift it up and there you are, objective in sight. [...] It’s a nagging thing, and it probably ain’t true, but I’d hate to think that a dress’s lack of protection is the whole point of it. Don’t seem right, somehow.
(Meyer “Jack” 205)

Her second attacker is a preacher who takes special interest in Jacky, certain that she is hopelessly destined for hell after her stint in the navy. After learning that he raped his maid, causing her to kill herself, Jacky begins spying on him. She discovers that he is mad, and to avenge the girl he ruined, she torments him in the guise of the dead girl’s

ghost. Jacky's sense of justice naturally leads her to appoint herself protector and avenger of her sex.

In *Daughter of Venice* by Donna Jo Napoli, Donata's value as a young noblewoman is measured by her wealth, beauty, and purity – that is, by the qualities that will buy her a good marriage. As is customary, Donata and her sisters are uneducated, have virtually no practical skills, and absolutely no freedom; they never leave their home unchaperoned – they rarely leave it at all -- and consequently, their experience of the world is limited to home, church, and whatever information the men in the family might impart. Donata is keenly aware of and frustrated by her ignorance of life. “I know almost nothing from my own experience. I've seen almost nothing with my own eyes” (Napoli 10).

As might be expected, Donata is very close to her mother and sisters, especially Laura, her identical twin. When her eldest sister Andriana's engagement is announced, Donata knows that, according to Venetian custom, she and the rest of her sisters are most likely destined for the convents. When Donata calls the convent a prison, her mother, a citizen who married into the nobility, reminds her that nuns are allowed to work. Donata's response: “[t]hat's why you don't feel sorry for us now. But look at us, Mother. We're not lucky like you were. We have no trade to pursue. We've never had a chance to know a trade. Noble girls have no chance” (Napoli 50).

Knowing that she will never have any freedom until she has “entered a convent and [is] beyond all scrutiny”, Donata is jealous of her mother's upbringing as a citizen -- free and productive and so unlike her own. As a result, her frustrations often manifest

themselves as hostility toward her mother. Donata's resentment only increases as she begins sneaking out of her palazzo in the disguise of a young fisherman (with Laura at home to cover for her absence). Experiencing freedoms no respectable noble girl would ever be allowed, she cannot comprehend her mother's quiet acceptance of the oppressive traditions she perpetuates. "What's the point of having children and watching the girls go off to convents?" (Napoli 204).

To repay the kindness of Noè, a young Jewish man who helped her on her first day out of the palazzo, Donata works every morning for one month copying handbills, which, of course, she cannot read. She is surprised to learn that Jewish girls study alongside of men – courtesans are the only Venetian women who are usually educated. More certain than ever that girls should have the opportunity to be educated, Donata convinces her father to allow Laura and her to sit in on their brothers' lessons. Laura has little interest in studying, but Donata attends her lessons eagerly, though at a cost; sneaking out of her home in the mornings to work with Noè, and spending her nights in study with her brothers, she sees the women in her family rarely. "I feel almost like they're strangers to me now. I miss them. But, oh, what I'm doing instead is worth the temporary loss" (Napoli 146). Donata, like many of the characters examined, understands and accepts that she must make sacrifices to rise above the limitations of her femininity.

When Donata stops cross-dressing and resumes her usual activities, she works doubly hard at her domestic tasks to make up for Laura's efforts to keep her secret. Her parents notice her dedication to her work at home, and this, combined with her diligence in her studies, convinces them to arrange a marriage for Donata as well. When she learns that she is to be married, she is more frustrated than ever – although she is in love with

Noè (an impossible match) she wants desperately to marry, but knows that it is Laura's hard work that has earned her the engagement, and so in good conscience, cannot. She anonymously accuses herself of converting to Judaism – a crime of heresy – to create a scandal that will effectively free her from her betrothal. “As is custom, when a girl withdraws from a betrothal, a sister takes her place. Laura will marry Roberto Priuli. She will have children. I will have done the right thing” (Napoli 245).

The interchangeability of the twins here recalls a scene in the beginning of the tale, when Donata discovers a print depicting a ducal procession; in it she can make out over a hundred specific Venetian men in the faces of the crowd, but she realizes that all of the women in the print are traced from the same anonymous pattern. Donata literally sees how inconsequential women are in Venice, and eventually she is able to use this to her advantage. It is because she and Laura are physically nearly indistinguishable from one another that she is able to escape the palazzo every morning for a month; it is because one sister is considered to be more or less the same as the next that she is able to repair the betrothal so that it is fair to her sister.

Donata is miserable with the course of action she must take to get out of her betrothal. Thinking of the unhappiness she has caused her mother and sisters, and most of all, herself, she thinks “[t]here is no place in Venice for a girl like me. I might as well run away – banish myself” (Napoli 250). But her story ends optimistically; although Donata knows that she will never marry, her tutor has managed to gain her enrollment in the university. Donata finds hope in the thought of being not only educated, but an educator one day. “Maybe I can even tutor girls. And women. [...] There are women and girls who would want me to tutor them” (Napoli 267).

In *Dove and Sword*, by Nancy Garden, Gabrielle, one of many daughters in a common family, is active and wild, preferring to play with the boys in her village than to stay home and spin and cook. Although Gabrielle does not enjoy women's tasks, she does enjoy the company of her sisters and especially that of her mother, a healer from whom she is learning the arts of midwifery, and who "did not like ordinary woman's work either, though she never complained" (Garden 10). Although Gabrielle and her sisters are loved by their parents, when her mother finally gives birth to her first son, Gabrielle is hurt by the realization that he is more highly valued than she and her sisters.

Was I not happy that at last Papa had an heir, and I a brother? I was, but I [wept] for myself and my sisters, my real sisters and my sisters in-sex, for I saw clearly that no one rejoiced at our births as at the births of sons. That seemed wrong, for without women to bear sons (...) there would be no sons at all. So was not one worth at least as much as the other? (Garden 33)

Gabrielle has no female friends outside of her family, and Jeanne D'Arc, the sister of one of her male friends, is Gabrielle's only significant female peer in the book. When they are young, Gabrielle thinks Jeanne is uninteresting until she hears word that she has refused to marry. "[I]t cheered me to hear of a maid who refused to wed, whatever her reasons. And in court! Perhaps I had misjudged Jeannette; she had never seemed strong to me before. But I admired her now, for I myself had secretly vowed not to wed. (...) Jeannette's refusal gave me courage" (Garden 32). When she learns that Jeanne has been called by God to lead an army against the British, and to crown the dauphin, Gabrielle is at first jealous, thinking herself far better suited to lead an army than Jeanne. "It was I, not Jeannette, who hated to spin and cook; it was I who had played with boys; it was I,

alone among the girls of our village, who had fought the boys of Maxey. But I had not been chosen" (Garden 39).

Gabrielle joins Jeanne and her supporters as they head to Orleans, eventually disguising herself as a boy for safety. During the time that she travels with the army, she and Jeanne become friends, each respecting the strength and bravery of the other. Witnessing Jeanne's unwavering determination, Gabrielle eventually realizes that she could never take Jeanne's place – she finds that she is repulsed by the violence of war, and as she works as a healer, she often questions the rightness of Jeanne's mission. She also disagrees with Jeanne's opinions at times. Jeanne is firmly opposed to any women following her army, seeing them as a blight on her holy cause. Women do follow, however, to be with their husbands and lovers, and Gabrielle is sympathetic to these women; she often serves as healer and midwife to them, and in one instance even tries to protect one from a beating by Jeanne.

Gabrielle's sympathy comes in part from her relationship with one of Jeanne's soldiers, Louis. At one point, Louis tells her she has the makings of a great lady. She responds, "I do not wish to be a great lady [...] for that would be dull. I would rather be a great doctor" (Garden 172). Although Gabrielle's tomboyishness diminishes considerably as she falls in love with Louis, she remains ambitious, and Louis supports her wholeheartedly, promising to help her learn medicine once they are married. Following Louis's death in battle, Gabrielle lives for several months at a convent as a companion to a famous woman poet. There she has access to great medical texts, and although she grieves for Louis, in time she grows "well content with my books and with

Madame, and with giving what aid I could to the nuns and the village women” (Garden 268). Her love for Louis has never affected her ambitions.

However, Gabrielle does become noticeably more accepting of both her femininity and her sex role as the story progresses. Obviously, she gives up her childhood conviction to never marry upon falling in love with Louis, and looks to her future as a wife with pleasure. During some lulls in the army’s travels, Gabrielle is able to resume feminine dress and behavior for extended periods of time. This she does gladly, happy “to see Louis openly as myself” (Garden 170). Later, when she witnesses the dauphin’s coronation, she wishes to be, not just free of her disguise, but dressed in a beautiful gown. “As I stood there watching the lords and ladies and knights, I found myself wishing for a wonderful dress to wear, a velvet gown right to the hips and then flaring in a wide long skirt with tight buttoned sleeves whose streamers would be of soft flowing silk hanging to the ground, rich with embroidery – and I had never wished for this before” (Garden 211).

After Jeanne’s betrayal by the king and capture by the Burgundians, Gabrielle follows Jeanne as she is moved from one town and prison to another. Gabrielle no longer attempts to pass as male, but having been twice discovered and nearly raped in battle, she knows she cannot travel openly as a young woman, and so finds safety in the guise of a leper or madwoman instead. Jeanne cannot protect herself, however, and Gabrielle fears for her safety. “I had seen how some of our French soldiers treated their own countrywomen when they went into a town, and I trembled for Jeanne” (Garden 279). Gabrielle is outraged when she learns that Jeanne has been molested by her guards after finally acquiescing to their demands that she dress as a woman.

When Jeanne is convicted of witchcraft, Gabrielle considers Jeanne's enemies and perceives that Jeanne's sex was her ultimate undoing. "If you are a soldier, and bested in battle by a woman, must you not think the reason is something more than that she is a better soldier than you? If you think God is with her, you must then think he is not with you – and so it would serve your interest better to think she is a creature of the Devil" (Garden 329). Following Jeanne's execution, Gabrielle gladly returns to the convent to serve as a healer and to study medicine. She never marries or has children, but remains there happily fulfilling her ambitions until she is an old woman.

Unlike the other female transvestites examined, Kellen, in *The Dream Maker's Magic* by Sharon Shinn, does not take on the role of masculinity entirely by choice. Because her mother is certain that she gave birth to a boy, not a girl, she thinks Kellen to be a changeling, and raises her between both sexes, always hoping that she will at some point change back to a boy. As a result of her upbringing, Kellen tends to think of herself as somehow existing outside of her society's binary gender structures. "I had not been treated as a girl at any point in my life – I had not been dressed in frilly gowns or showered with gifts of lace and ribbon. And yet, I had not really been treated as a boy, either. [...] I did not really think of myself as a boy or a girl. I considered myself just Kellen. Just me" (Shinn 5). As a child she is able to enjoy male freedoms, in spite of the townspeople's awareness that she is a girl, but she has no negative opinions of women or femininity. As she is trained in both traditional male and female tasks, she observes that "[t]ruthfully, I thought all skills were equally important and wondered why they had been [...] assigned by gender" (Shinn 9).

Kellen has no female friends her own age until her teen years. When Kellen first begins school, she thinks “I would have abandoned the boys’ games except that the girls’ circles were closed to me” (Shinn 15). The boys’ circles, however, are only open to her until the boys determine for certain that she is a girl; both Kellen’s femininity and her lack of it make her an outcast among her peers. Only her friend Gryffin, also something of an outcast, accepts her unconditionally.

As Kellen grows older, she begins to consciously pass in situations where her safety may be in question, or simply for convenience. But while she appreciates the advantages of her sometimes masculine guise, she wishes she could just be ““a girl who could do whatever she wanted”” (Shinn 60). Kellen becomes increasingly uncomfortable with her ambiguous sex role as she enters puberty and begins to display more feminine characteristics.

I had turned thirteen and was starting to look more like a girl, especially if I didn’t dress in disastrously ill-fitting clothes. I had started to spend time thinking about Sarah’s younger brother and two of the boys in class, wondering if they would notice me if I wore frilly dresses and tried to do something about my abysmal hair. I blushed for no reason and laughed at no provocation, at least when I was talking to one of the boys I admired. For the first time in my life, I really, really, *really* wished to be someone other than who I was. (Shinn 76)

Her wish is not to be male, however, but to be an attractive and confident female, secure in her sex role. “I wanted a chance to be seen as a girl. I wanted to wear clothes that were more flattering, cut my hair in a fashionable style” (Shinn 88).

Kellen struggles to become more outwardly feminine; with no guidance from her deluded mother, she turns to Sarah Parmer and Sarah’s mother, her sometimes employers and trusted friends. They agree to employ her as a server in their tavern under the condition that she wear dresses to work. Notably, it is Kellen who suggests this condition,

not the Farmers; she knows that only the financial contribution she will make in her new job will persuade her mother to allow her to dress as a woman. Kellen relishes this opportunity to be feminine. “I rather liked the new Kellen, who was, in many subtle ways, different from the old one. This Kellen was not quite so fierce, so independent, so wary. [...] She always felt like she was on display, vulnerable, pulled out of hiding, a breath or two away from being starkly naked. But she rather liked it” (Shinn 93).

In time, Kellen grows quite comfortable with her femininity, though she sees it is very different from her friends’. “I was never going to be the frilly sort of girl that Emily was, or even a softly feminine sort of woman like Sarah. I was always going to carry around some of the toughness I had acquired in my years masquerading as a boy, and I would never lose the sense of independence I had acquired when I had been free to behave however I liked” (Shinn 148).

When Kellen has come of age, however, she once again adopts a male disguise and moves to the city where Gryffin lives. As a boy, she takes work in a tavern owned and independently run by Leona, a woman a little older than she. Seeing that the tavern’s customers’ flirtations sometimes get out of hand, Kellen gladly becomes “the unofficial protector of the other women under the roof” (Shinn 199). She soon begins to feel uncomfortable in her disguise, however; having at last grown accustomed to her female sex role, masculine performance is no longer as appealing as it was when she was a child. When she and Gryffin are finally reunited, she wishes “to make a graceful transition, from who I was now to who I wanted to be. To change, as Gryffin had asked, from a boy back into a girl. Partly because he has asked – but only partly. I loved him, and I had said so, and I wanted to be able to show the world that I did. And I wanted to be myself as I

did so” (Shinn 249). When she does return to her female role, she learns that Leona is actually her sister, and so gains a female family member she truly likes and respects, and who likes and respects her as well.

At the beginning of *Esther*, by Sharon E. McKay, Esther has no friends of either sex and is an outcast among her peers in the Jewish ghetto; she is beautiful and known to be the product of an unmarried affair, and she is distrusted and alienated for both reasons, aggressively so by girls her age. In the only scene in the book in which she encounters her peers in the ghetto, “[t]hree young girls [...] walked down the road toward her. Their arms were linked and they each bore the expression of having swallowed a secret. They gave Esther a hard stare as they passed, and Esther felt a familiar stab of pain” (McKay 31). Her half-sister, Sarah, is the only girl her age with whom she interacts regularly, but Sarah is no less hostile toward Esther than the other girls in the ghetto. Her grandmother thinks her to be tainted by evil, and says so freely and often. Only Esther’s adoptive mother treats her lovingly.

Esther is spirited in spite of her ill-treatment by her community and most of her family. She desires adventure, and struggles with the confinement of her femininity. “What would it be like to wear trousers? What would it be like to be free of petticoats and corsets and bodices and skirts and dresses and aprons?” (McKay 20). After scandalizing her neighbors by leaving the ghetto without permission and returning home injured and disheveled late at night, Esther’s father hastily arranges for her to marry an old, poor man. She does not want to marry at all, “[n]ot even to a prince. [...] Marriage. Babies. That’s what awaited her. She would never be free. Never, never” (McKay 54).

Sent away until the scandal can be forgotten, Esther's ship is wrecked in a storm off the coast of France. She lets her family assume she has died, and takes work in the house of Catherine, a famous courtesan. Her beauty attracts the notice of her mistress, and Esther is soon taken on as her apprentice. At first Esther luxuriates in the extravagance of her new life, but "beyond giving elaborate parties that seemed to last for days, it was not really clear to Esther just what a courtesan did to achieve such power and wealth" (McKay 114). Soon she comes to realize that she will be no freer here than she was in the ghetto. "[S]he would be sold off like a horse at an auction [...] Hadn't Papa done what Catherine was doing? Didn't the matchmaker do exactly the same thing? Were not all women in some way bartered to men?" (McKay 126).

As Esther begins to understand what will be expected of her as a courtesan, she grows uneasy in the house. She does not trust or like Catherine, and often finds herself the target of her cruel wit. Catherine's mother, a former courtesan, tells her to consider her options carefully before making a decision to stay or leave, reminding her of all she would be escaping by becoming a courtesan, as well as all she would gain.

Didn't she have all that could be expected of this life? And what choices did a woman have? Married women were obliged to produce many children, one every two years at the very least. Death in childbirth was expected. Food, clothing and shelter were provided at the whim of her husband. It was true that a woman might take the veil and join a convent, but that would require a dowry, and Esther had no such thing. (McKay 131)

Esther likes and respects Catherine's mother, knows her to be in earnest, and is nearly convinced to stay. But when she barely avoids an encounter with her father, who has come to the house to sell fabric, she is ashamed and runs away in male disguise.

As a boy Esther moves around freely and frequently, taking employment in a number of fields and enjoying her autonomy. When she has her first period, Esther thinks “[a]fter everything, after all her efforts... It was a betrayal, her own body was betraying her in a way she had never imagined” (McKay 185). Esther does manage to successfully hide her sex for a number of years, but her body is a constant reminder of the vulnerability of her disguise. When she is finally caught and forced to return to feminine dress, she thinks “[i]f there was one consolation it was that, without the cloth strips that had bound her breasts, she could breathe freely. But there was no freedom in being female. She sorely missed wearing trousers. Several times she had taken great strides only to find her legs caught in the trappings of her skirt” (McKay 271).

Esther has two female friends near her own age over the course of her adventures, both “alike in their unquestioning acceptance of their fate”, and both of whom, in the end, Esther is powerless to help (McKay 216). The first is Pearl, a young, ill-treated indentured servant who works in the kitchens of Catherine’s house. Esther sympathizes with Pearl’s powerlessness, but in her efforts to teach her a sense of self-worth, she actually ends up hurting her by drawing the attention of the cook, a violent, hard-hearted woman who is determined to keep Pearl in her place. After Esther runs away it is implied that Pearl eventually dies as a result of one of Cook’s beatings.

Esther’s other female friend is Claire, a young crippled woman who lives at the convent where Esther works for over a year as a messenger and errand boy. Esther tries to befriend her in much the same way she befriended Pearl, with the end result that Claire, never knowing her to be female, falls in love with her. Esther realizes that she is hurting Claire when she witnesses her prostrated in penance, presumably a punishment

assigned by one of the nuns. She leaves the convent after Claire kisses her, knowing that she cannot save Claire from her powerlessness any more than she could save Pearl.

Over the course of her experience cross-dressing, Esther seems to encounter the worst of humanity, and the women she meets give her no reason to embrace her femininity. Catherine eventually discovers Esther's whereabouts and has her imprisoned for a fictional theft. Esther is employed for a while by an anti-Semitic alcoholic baker woman; when Esther reaches Canada and her sex is discovered, Esther is made to live with another anti-Semitic drunk woman, who treats her cruelly. She is eventually moved to live with a woman so worn down by childbirth that she is sure to die with her next delivery. Repelled by the women around her, Esther feels more and more hopelessly trapped by her femininity as the story progresses. In the end of the book, she does take her life into her own hands, but once again she must adopt male dress to do so.

In the beginning of *Far Traveler*, by Rebecca Tingle, Ælfwyn is shy, unassertive, and awkward. Her passivity is surprising, given that she is surrounded by strong women. Most notable of these is her mother, Æthelflæd, a warrior queen who rules Mercia in the name of her brother, King Edward. In her mother's home, Ælfwyn is allowed a good deal of independence; she is also well-educated, and devoted to her studies. Until she is informed that she will be married to one of Edward's allies, Ælfwyn gives no indication that she is dissatisfied with her sex role or her role as a noblewoman, or even fully aware of the inherent limitations of each. She is certainly struck by the unfairness of the intended match, however: "[t]o be taken, or to be given, neither feels just" (Tingle 31).

Although Ælfwyn feels betrayed when she learns that she is to be married off solely for political reasons, she regards her mother with a great deal of respect. When her mother dies suddenly, Ælfwyn remembers that she “had been both just and courageous. She had ridden with her army, sometimes even carrying a sword, which she knew how to use. I could never do what she had done” (Tingle 53). Certain of her own powerlessness, she does not attempt to replace her mother as ruler of Mercia, despite the support of the Mercian people and the urging of another king. Edward soon comes to retrieve her, and despite her miserable outlook on her future, Ælfwyn does not resist.

Although she is so suddenly made aware of her own powerlessness, Ælfwyn is slow to realize that the strong women around her are oppressed as well, if in different ways. In one scene, Ælfwyn demands to know why her companion, Gytha, has been permitted to remain single while she is forced to marry against her will. When Gytha tells her that her birth, as the illegitimate daughter of a Dane, has prevented her from marrying. Ælfwyn is surprised and embarrassed. ““I always thought you had the life you wanted”” (Tingle 78). More important still is the realization that, like she is expected to do, her mother married a man she did not know or love for politics and for loyalty to her country.

Ælfwyn considers this when she reaches her uncle’s court, and is given a choice: to marry, as intended, or to join a convent. She understands that either option will render her powerless, and permanently remove her as a threat to Edward’s reign. Once again, she thinks of her mother. “[M]y mother’s childhood willfulness had disappeared by the time I was born [...] But she had once wanted her freedom, I suddenly understood. Before all her years of loyalty and obedience, before she became the leader of Mercia,

my mother had simply wanted to choose for herself what to do. She had remembered that, and she'd given me a horse" (Tingle 83). Finally understanding that she does have the means to take her life in her own hands, Ælfwyn disguises herself as a boy and flees.

Ælfwyn is unique in that, over the course of her story, she is not attempting to overcome the limitations of her femininity so much as to live up to the examples of womanhood she has grown up with. Her male disguise is ultimately the vehicle that allows this character growth to take place, but safety and the necessity to remain unrecognized after her escape, not a wish for male privilege, is what inspires her to cross-dress. She is concerned with her powerlessness, certainly, but not solely within the terms of her femininity.

Unlike most of the other protagonists examined, Ælfwyn has no natural tomboyish tendencies; she struggles constantly to preserve an authentic male performance, and as she falls in love with Wil, the leader of a camp she eventually joins, she wishes she were free of her disguise. "This performance – being Widsith – never ended. At least when I had been with Wil on the journey with just the two of us together I could sit shivering on a horse with his arms encircling me, or lie still, touching him, and just for a moment be the girl Ælfwyn, comforted, close to Wil" (Tingle 160).

It is not until the end of the book that Ælfwyn, having sacrificed her freedom for loyalty to her country, really lives up to the examples of the women in her life. But in consequence of her actions she has been returned to Edward's now more careful guardianship, and this time she is given no option -- she will become a nun. Reflecting on her imprisonment she thinks, "[a] year and a half ago, wouldn't I have been more than content to live at some distance from my uncle's court, well supplied with books and the

leisure to read them, and free of the threat of marriage to someone chosen by the king? A year and a half ago, that would have felt like an escape, Now it did not” (218). Whereas most of the cross-dressing protagonists in these stories begin to cross-dress because they are dissatisfied with their limitations as women, Ælfwyn has only really learned dissatisfaction from the experience of freedom. Helpless, she is ultimately rescued from her fate by Wil.

Corinna has already been passing as a boy for years by the beginning of *The Folk Keeper*, by Frannie Billingsley. Powerless and ill-treated as a female, she disguised herself as a boy so that she could be educated. She explains that the name of “*Stonewall* was given me one long-ago day, in one of those endless foundling homes, when I refused to boil the soiled linens. Why should I – I who wanted so much to learn to read and write?” (Billingsley 60). As Corin, she has not only learned to read and write, but to tend the Folk, an important and respected post in her world, and one that is never filled by girls. Corinna’s struggle for power is ongoing throughout the narrative, and she is particularly proud of this achievement. “I’d been a powerless foundling, yet hadn’t I managed to escape the endless drudgery of my life? Hadn’t I turned myself inside out, turned Corinna into Corin, to become a Folk Keeper?” (Billingsley 21).

There are few female characters in this book, and aside from Corinna, no significant ones. In the orphanage she is completely isolated from her peers, male and female alike. When Corinna is hired as Folk Keeper to the Merton estate, the only woman she encounters regularly is the Lady Alicia. Corinna has little interest in her, and so her

perceptions of femininity throughout the book are limited almost entirely to her perceptions of self.

Corinna undergoes a number of changes in her new home -- her body is growing, and, more alarming still, her long suppressed emotions are surfacing. She is critical of the changes, considering them both to be dangerously feminine. "I realize how different I sound from the old Corinna. I'm not turning into a sentimental girl, am I? Swooning over the sunset and dabbing lavender water on my wrists? I must be alert to signs of encroaching softness" (Billingsley 75). As Corinna begins to care for Finnian, Lady Alicia's son, she considers revealing her secret, but cannot bear the thought of losing what little power she has obtained as a boy and Folk Keeper. "Sometimes I grow weary of it all, the pretense, the worry about the Folk. Finian once asked what would be so bad about becoming a gentleman. What if I revealed everything and become -- what? A lady, I suppose. [...] No, if I cannot be a Sir Edward, running the estate and doing as I like, I'd best remain a Folk Keeper" (Billingsley 95).

Corinna has always had to work hard to hide her feminine appearance, as her hair grows several inches each night. When Corinna briefly allows her hair to grow, however, she finds that she is more comfortable in her body and more attuned to her surroundings; she does not make this connection at first, and after cutting her hair again, she wonders "[h]ow can it be that my body did what I asked of it for only one night? I miss the skipping freedom of that Midsummer girl. Who can explain it? How did she come? Where did she go?" (Billingsley 93). Later, when she discovers that she is a Sealmaiden, she realizes that her hair extends her senses, and so literally she finds power in her femininity. This discovery and her desire to claim that power eventually leads to her

willingly giving up her male disguise. “I refuse to be trapped inside myself! Why am I still pretending to be a boy?” (Billingsley 121).

After becoming a girl once more, Corinna learns that she is the true heir of the estate – that she truly is “a Lord Edward”, just as she wanted to be. However, Corinna’s return to her female role is only really a halfway point to becoming a Sealmayden. “Mrs. Bains has tried to make me into a proper lady, and for now I have submitted, given in to petticoats and shifts, to velvets and brocades. I was Corin for long enough. I shall see who else I might be” (Billingsley 151). At the story’s end, when Corinna chooses to become a Sealmayden rather than remain a girl and stay with Finnian, she strips off her clothes, thinking “I peeled off Lady Corinna Merton in layers. Now overskirt and petticoat. Now under-petticoat and bodice. It never ends, this business of being a lady” (Billingsley 157).

How readily she gives up her newly reclaimed femininity and her love for Finnian so that she can be a Sealmayden is indicative of her desire to not just finally and fully become herself, but to maintain a position of power. In Corinna’s world, boy trumps girl, Folk Keeper trumps boy, and Sealmayden trumps Folk Keeper. It is at first unclear whether Corinna would ever have willingly revealed herself if all she had had to reveal was a plain, human feminine self. However, she changes her mind in the midst of her transformation from girl to Sealmayden; she does choose her human form and the inconvenience of femininity over the power and magic of her Sealmayden form, knowing that she will not have another opportunity to change her mind.

In *Freedom beyond the Sea*, by Waldtraut Lewin, Esther Marchadi is already passing at the novel's beginning; following the Spanish Inquisition's execution of her father, a famous rabbi, she has disguised herself as a boy in order to join the crew of Cristobal Colón on his expedition to Asia. Esther's cross-dressing is entirely motivated by necessity; for Esther, concealment of her religion is equally important as concealment of her sex.

No female characters appear in this book aside from Esther, as the action of the narrative takes place over the course of about one week almost entirely aboard the *Santa Maria*. There is no indication that Esther had any female friends before her misfortunes began. Neither does she (or did she) have any female family; her mother died when she was a child, and Esther was raised primarily by her Christian governess, whom she loved dearly, and who was also killed because of the Inquisition. She was treasured by her father, and as a result was given a good education and a great deal of freedom for a girl.

There was a single drop of bitterness in the cup of his life: The Lord had given him no sons. But he had a daughter, and on that daughter he bestowed all that a son would otherwise have received. The daughter was allowed to study the writings of the wise with him and read the Talmud with him, and since the famed rabbi was not only a wise man but also a cosmopolitan friend of the sciences, she learned the Latin language so that she could read the books of those of other faiths and understand their ways of thinking. (Lewin 101)

Over the course of her journey Esther reflects often on the loss of her femininity, and how that loss has better prepared her for her deception and for survival. One key example of this is that she has stopped menstruating. "I went from a child to woman and must, as is the custom with us, undertake the monthly purification in the bath. But then, after everything happened and I crept away into the trousers of a little vagabond and his dirty shirt and ran away for my life – then it went away again. (...) I can't betray myself.

(...) I will survive” (Lewin 104). For the sake of her disguise, she is grateful for her appearance, so ravaged by the hardships she has endured. “As a girl I’m a homely thing. As a boy, I might just get away with it. Anyhow, my body won’t betray me. My hands and feet, yes, they are treacherous. My gestures. My speech. So I talk very little and keep to myself” (Lewin 10). The horrors Esther has faced have additionally hardened her against the constant bullying of her fellow ship’s boys, and even to the vermin on the ship.

Rats, spiders, and cockroaches I’m not afraid of. Things like that can no longer make me tremble. When I was still Esther, a well-brought-up young girl, I screamed with disgust like any other girl when my cat caught a mouse or a rat and laid it at my feet. In the meantime I’ve grown another skin, whether I want to or not. What more could a rat do to me? (Lewin 109)

Esther employment aboard the ship as ship’s boy and Colón’s assistant puts her in frequent contact with Colón. As their encounters turn sexual, she wishes she were as desirable to him as a girl as she seems to be as a boy. She also wishes she were better looking, though she is ashamed of that desire. “And after a few days on this floating tub you’re worrying about how much uglier you’ve gotten! You should be truly joyful if no one looks at you. Joyful that nothing indicates who or what you really are” (Lewin 135). But when Esther hears the men talking of one of Colón’s lovers, a famed beauty, she worries again that she is undesirable. “Breasts like Monte Perdu! I sneak my hand under my shirt. I probably can’t ever expect anything like that” (Lewin 197).

When Colón rescues Esther from a beating, apparently to conceal her sex, he agrees to her request to be put off the ship when they stop in Gomera. Before she goes, Esther begins menstruating again. “[S]uddenly I feel something trickling down my legs. I’m bleeding again. The moment I see it, the pains are gone. It’s nothing. Nothing special.

God forbid, no omen, nothing important. My body is only showing me that it's there and ready to live" (Lewin 238). While she takes the sudden reappearance of her lost femininity as an optimistic sign, it is unclear how Esther will survive as a solitary woman once she is put off the ship; with only Colón's letter of protection and a few necessities, she is "finally free. One can't get any freer. Free of all possessions, naked and bare like a newly hatched fly on the wall (...). Free of all ties" (Lewin 261).

Sarah, in *Girl in Blue* by Ann Rinaldi, is the only female protagonist of the fourteen examined who runs away to escape a physically abusive home life. Although Sarah toils earnestly to keep her family afloat, her father humiliates and beats her frequently and without cause. She has no female friends and never has had; her only female peer prior to her escape is her younger sister Betsy, who "was as strong in the limbs as Sarah, but more given to courting boys and worrying about how she looked than to caring if the family lived or died" (Rinaldi 5). Sarah has no patience for Betsy. She herself takes "pride in her accomplishments, in being the best shot in the county, in knowing she could ride and swim better than the Bronson brothers in her town" (Rinaldi 6).

When Sarah's father arranges for her to marry a violent widower to secure the family farm, she sees that she must leave home or end up like her mother, "so downtrodden she couldn't even name pride in her accomplishments" (Rinaldi 6). Briefly, Sarah stays with her aunt, a widow who enjoys independence and a lucrative business in millinery. Sarah is impressed by her aunt's autonomy, though uninterested in her profession. Determined to find her own freedom, she takes her cue from *Fanny*

Campbell, the Female Pirate Captain and disguises herself as a boy so that she can run away to join the Union Army.

As a soldier, Sarah is sensitive to the powerlessness of the women she meets who have, in so many ways, been hurt by the war. When her identity is betrayed by a Confederate woman she is forced to take captive, Sarah calmly accepts that she must return to her female role once she knows that she will not be forced to return to her family, and further, that she will be allowed to continue to work and otherwise maintain her independence.

Sarah begins her career in espionage working with Kate, a young widow and reputable spy, and Sarah's first female friend. Kate is knowledgeable and self-sufficient, and Sarah respects her immensely. Sarah is then posted at the home of Confederate spy Rose Greenhow, under house arrest for smuggling sensitive information to the Confederates. In Rose Sarah finds more power than she has ever before witnessed in a woman. Sarah is both amazed and appalled by Rose throughout the time she lives in the Greenhow home. When she is asked to sympathize with Rose, asked to imagine how she would feel if her mother were a prisoner, she thinks "But she is [...] In her own way. No, she could not conjure up sympathy for Rose Greenhow, if only because she'd had the benefit of all life's fripperies, when her mama was lucky to have on new calico dress a year and never saw people except once a week at church" (Rinaldi 153).

Sarah, like Alanna, perceives weakness in romantic attachments. Even before leaving home, Sarah has been "fond of saying she would never wed, would never become a lovesick calf, running after some man [...] She wanted to be independent, earn her own way, be free of all bonds" (Rinaldi 33). However, in Rose Greenhow's home, Sarah

meets Sheldon, a young, attractive man who may or may not be a spy, and whose loyalties are unknown. As Sarah develops feelings for him, she is as much surprised by as ashamed of the weakness that comes of her affection for him – a weakness that actually interferes with her work. “Sarah had never wanted to be one of those young women who anguished over a man, who made him the whole center of the world, whose every thought was aimed to please him. Even at home in Michigan she’d considered such girls foolish” (221). Out of loyalty to her country, Sarah is eventually forced to report on Sheldon to her superiors. He cannot forgive her betrayal, even when it becomes apparent that they are in fact working for the same side.

In an interesting twist, the lovers are not reconciled. Sarah is broken-hearted, but eventually rises above her desolation, realizing that Sheldon’s refusal to forgive what her country required of her is indicative of the double-standard he holds her to as a woman; she knows he would have forgiven a male spy for doing the same thing. Sarah has never doubted her worth at any point in the story, and so it is unsurprising that she finally overcomes her broken heart when she realizes that her lover does not truly see her as an equal.

Sarah’s story ends with a visit home, once again in disguise as a man. She finds that her father has died, and her sister has replaced her in her engagement to the widower who finally inspired Sarah’s escape. Sarah remembers that “her mother had always said that there was a price for everything. Would things be different if her mother had been willing to pay that price?” (Rinaldi 300). She realizes the cost of her own freedom when she understands that she cannot reveal her identity to her family, for fear that she might be convinced to stay and surrender her hard-won independence.

I Rode a Horse of Milk White Jade, by Diane Lee Wilson, is the only book examined that is not set in a Western (or Western-based fantasy) society. The women in Oyuna's community of nomadic horse breeders on the Mongolian steppe share many responsibilities with the men, and it is a physical handicap, not her sex, that holds Oyuna back from her ambitions; as a child her foot was crushed by a horse, and although she adapts very well to her handicap, she is unable to escape her people's perception that she is irrevocably tainted by bad luck. Following her mother's death by lightning, also considered very unlucky, Oyuna is almost completely isolated from her community.

Oyuna has no friends of either sex, and following her mother's death, no significant female characters appear in the book until her father decides to remarry; intending also to find a husband and a horse for Oyuna, he takes her to a large festival. Although she does not wish to marry, knowing that she will have no say in the arrangement, and that with her handicap "no young, good-looking boy would choose [her]," she is thrilled by the prospect of owning her own horse (Wilson 45). This is especially true when, at the festival, "I had watched with envy as a young girl upon her prancing Bay horse was showered with silk scarves, surrounded by an approving crowd. She had won this year's long race, even beating the older boys. [...] How I longed to place my feet in those stirrups" (Wilson 53).

Shortly after her return from the festival (still single but with a horse of her own) her grandmother, Echenkorlo, an eccentric shamaness who travels independently of the tribe, sets up camp near Oyuna's home. Although her father warns her that Echenkorlo is dangerous, Oyuna seeks her out. Oyuna's grandmother is the only woman in the story

who is not impressed by her damaged foot – she actually perceives it to be somehow tied to Oyuna’s fate, and she knows Oyuna is capable of and will do great things. The old woman frightens her, but Oyuna is respectful of her grandmother’s power, and trusts her prediction that she will soon set out on a journey. Echenkorlo challenges Oyuna to take control of her life, asking her if she cannot “reach out [...] and take either good luck or bad luck into your hand” (Wilson 70).

Her new stepmother, on the other hand, is kind to her, but pitying; she sees Oyuna only as an invalid, and smothers her with her well-meant, but insulting fussing. “She tried to include me in her coddling. Placing her hands on my waist, she would steer me onto a cushion the way one helps an old person with weak bones. Into my hands she would push the easiest of work – sewing or stirring. ‘So as not to risk further injury to your poor, poor foot’” (Wilson 79). When soldiers come to her tribe to recruit men and change horses, a soldier demands that Oyuna’s stepbrother join them. When his mother tells the soldier that he is crippled, he tells the boy that “[y]ou may limp in the dirt, soldier, but you won’t limp in the saddle” (Wilson 88). Realizing that the soldiers are going to take her horse, Oyuna quickly exchanges clothes with her brother and joins the soldiers in his place. For the first time in her life, her injury is of no consequence, but even as she leaves, her stepmother tries to stop her, saying “[n]o! You can’t! [...] You are just a girl. You’re weak, crippled” (Wilson 89).

Oyuna is sent by her captain to replace an arrow rider delivering a package to the khan. On her journey she stops at an arrow station owned by Genma, a powerful, strong-willed, rich woman. When she meets Genma’s two daughters, she wishes she could reveal her disguise. “[T]hey whispered gaily, bursting forth in the high, tinkling laughter

of brass bells. Although I knew I was the source of their amusement, a part of me longed to throw off my heavy coverings and kneel, giggling, beside them” (Wilson 132). Genma is suspicious of Oyuna at once, and Oyuna perceives the woman to be a threat. “I had never felt so vulnerable, even when I was riding with the soldiers” (Wilson 146). While she sleeps, Genma discovers her sex. Reminding Oyuna of her weaknesses, she tries to trap her into staying to marry her son. Although Oyuna thinks that “[t]o marry such as him would be any girl’s dream”, she runs away, determined to fulfill her duty and pursue her dreams (Wilson 156).

As she continues her journey, Oyuna considers that Genma “was partly right [...] I, a girl – and yes, a cripple – had no business riding to the royal city of Khanbaliq. I did not even know how far it was, or exactly where” (Wilson 157). But Oyuna persists; she has always known herself to be capable and strong, and at last she can prove it.

She soon abandons her disguise. “I rode openly as a girl now and, although this was quite uncommon, I felt fairly safe. My people always welcome strangers and it was widely boasted at that time that a young woman – if she wanted – could walk across the lands of Kublai Khan carrying a pot of gold on her head and not be bothered” (Wilson 198). While she never fears for her safety, the people she encounters are uniformly surprised by, and often jealous of her audacity. “‘You should stay within your [community] with a husband,’ the fathers scolded. ‘Or at least with your family,’ the women chided. But in the dust-filled eyes of some of the women, especially the girls, I saw a small spark of envy” (Wilson 198). Oyuna does eventually reach the Khan, and soon distinguishes herself in his service. After several fulfilling years in his employ, she marries for love, returns to the steppes, and proves that she has power over her own luck

and life by winning the same festival race she watched enviously so many years before. As an old woman, she tells her story to her granddaughter, hoping to teach the girl the same strength she learned on her journey.

According to custom, in *Jackaroo*, by Cynthia Voigt, when Gwyn comes of age she will have to declare once and for all whether or not she intends to marry. Gwyn struggles with this decision. As the daughter of an innkeeper, she has a dowry that will buy her a good marriage – a luxury in the hard times of the Kingdom – but even so, she is unsatisfied with the options available to her.

It was a hard thing to be a woman, her mother had often told her. Looking around her, Gwyn could agree. Why then should she marry? Because, her mother would say, there was nothing else for her. “Would you live always at the Inn, serving in another woman’s house? Would you go with a widower and raise another woman’s children, and your own disinherited? Or live alone, like Old Megg? Or maybe you’ll go to serve a Lord, perhaps, you with your proud tongue.” (Voigt 4)

Gwyn has the opportunity to observe a number of women over the course of the narrative, and sees in them her possible futures. Her own parents’ marriage is generally very tense, and her mother’s unhappiness always evident. Her sister Blithe is recently married and inconsolable after the loss of her first child. Old Megg, an elderly spinster neighbor is barely able to provide for herself financially, less and less able to care for herself physically, and has no one to rely on for help. A widowed neighbor has struggled bitterly to provide for her children since her husband’s death. Gwyn sees that marriage and children can trap a woman, and that even single women are not free, but she also knows that women in the Kingdom can find happiness. Nell, an old woman, though poor,

has lived happily with a husband she loves for many years, and Gwyn's other sister, Rose, is soon to be married, very much in love, and optimistic for her future.

Gwyn ultimately realizes that she cannot settle for less than a man who loves and respects her, and whom she loves and respects in turn. "That there was no choice she cared to make from among those offered her was an irritation to her [...] Since she could not have her heart's desire, and she knew she could not, then she would not. But it was hard for a woman" (Voigt 98). Unhappy with her decision, but resolute, she has her father make the announcement that she will not marry.

Gwyn is hardworking and strong in both body and personality. She is in general very confident and self-assured: proud of her wit, although she knows it can be abrasive, and of her strength, although she knows it is considered unfeminine. Comparing herself to her sister, she thinks "[w]hatever Rose did, whatever gesture she used, there was something dainty to it. Gwyn [...] felt inside herself a strength that flowed down her arms and legs, she could feel it especially in her shoulders" (Voigt 45). Her strength gives her independence and safety -- "[s]he carried a dagger and knew how to use it" -- and her competence as a fighter is such that in various instances in the story, she is able to instruct boys in the fighting arts (Voigt 28).

When Gwyn begins cross-dressing, she does so sporadically and for short periods of time. Her goal is not only to pass as male, but to pass as a hero, in the guise of Jackaroo, a local Robin Hood figure. Elevated from the status of girl to hero, she is free to make a real difference to the people in her village who are most in need.

Gwyn was, she realized, more at ease when she wandered about the countryside as Jackaroo than at any other time. It was odd that dressed up like Jackaroo she felt much more like herself. Odd, and pleasant. She liked

herself. And in the disguise, she was free to do what she really wanted to do. Much freer than was Gwyn, the Innkeeper's daughter. (Voigt 198)

Gwyn's strength of character eventually inspires her father to name her heir, an unusual occurrence for a girl in her society, and especially for one who has declared her intent not to marry. It is notable that even as a woman she so well regarded to receive such an honor. However, it is also notable that she is named heir over Tad, her little brother, spoiled by their mother's coddling and thought incompetent by their father. Gwyn is often annoyed by Tad's weakness, and at one point tells him "'You might as well be wearing skirts'" (Voigt 175). This, is the ultimate insult, and while at no point in the story does she appear to have any difficulty relating to the women around her, this implies that she at least does see herself as being somehow above the women she knows.

As Gwyn grows more comfortable in her occasional male role, she becomes decreasingly comfortable in her female role, and begins to feel like an outcast at home and in her community: "she felt how different she was from – everybody else. She didn't fit into this world, and even at home, at the Inn, she didn't fit in any longer in the way she was supposed to" (Voigt 175). The pleasure she takes in the freedom afforded by her heroic disguise soon convinces her that she will never be able to find her place in that world again, and further, that she will never be able to sacrifice her independence to do so. "There was no one but herself, now, that she would follow. Others might try to impose their ways on her, but they could not now move her, any more than the winds could move the mountains" (Voigt 218). After Gwyn is finally forced to leave her village, having attracted the attention of the law, she marries for love. "It was... more than she had hoped for of her life, that such a man as Burl would ask for her" (Voigt 290).

Samantha, from *Samantha and the Cowboy*, an Avon True Romance by Lorraine Heath, has had a great deal of responsibility thrust upon her in the aftermath of the Civil War; with her father dead and her brother having lost an arm, much of the heavy labor required to run the family farm has fallen to her. “Samantha had stepped into [her brother’s] boots, taking on the role of the eldest. Doing what had to be done without being asked. Plowing the fields, harvesting the crops, mending fences, caring for sick livestock. [...] Samantha was accustomed to being independent, making decisions” (Heath 12). In spite of her strength and skill, as a girl she is not eligible to participate in a cattle drive that would earn her family a badly needed income. Samantha is frustrated that she cannot provide for her family in this way -- after all, as she puts it, she’s “just as capable as any fella” (Heath 6).

Samantha’s tomboyish leanings are fairly mild; she has close relationships with her mother and female friends, she enjoys feminine clothing, and it is made very clear that she disguises herself as a boy only so that she can help her family. Her transformation from female to male is an unusual one. While most of the characters in these books experience a feeling of liberation when they first disguise themselves as boys, Samantha is proud of her good looks as a girl, and when she cuts her hair – her “crowning glory” – she is instantly regretful. When she applies to go on the drive and is at first turned away, she is upset to realize that she has cut her hair for no reason.

Once she is hired, Samantha makes it clear that she is doing this only for duty, and that despite her appearance, she is still very much the girl she ever was. Heath takes great pains to remind readers of this, writing “[s]he was confident that on the outside she resembled a boy, but on the inside she still felt like a girl. She didn’t want to actually be a

boy, but she needed to make sure she didn't act like a girl" (43). As Samantha interacts with Matt, a handsome cowboy close to her in age, she laments her masculine disguise: "For a minute, Sam wished she wasn't wearing her brother's old shirt and britches. She wished she were wearing a pretty dress." (Heath 61). This sentiment is repeated frequently throughout the novel, and as Samantha develops romantic feelings for Matt, she has an increasingly difficult time maintaining her masculine façade. "Sam ran her fingers through her shorn curls. She stilled once she realized she was primping. Why did she feel the need to look presentable? She was supposed to be a boy, not a girl vying for Matt's attention" (Heath 79).

When the cowboys stop overnight near a large town, the drive hands attend the town dance. Samantha is once again regretful of her appearance, and jealous of the girls at the dance. "Girls were batting their eyelashes at [Matt] and smiling with their lips pulled back so far that Sam wondered if they wanted to make sure he knew they possessed all their teeth. [...] [W]atching all that flirting made her downright miserable. Dressed in her boy's clothing, Sam had never felt so dowdy, or longed so intensely for a dress" (Heath 116). Samantha's catty observation is attributed to her frustration with being forced to stifle her own femininity (Heath 116).

In spite of her ongoing discomfort in her male role, over the course of the drive, Samantha performs her work well, thinking "[a]s long as she could to the tasks assigned to her, it shouldn't matter at all that she was female." (157) Toward the end of her journey, however Samantha reflects "[f]or much of her life, she'd resented the fact that she couldn't do all the things her brothers could. Couldn't go to war, couldn't go on a cattle drive. Wasn't supposed to climb trees or spit. Now that she was pretending to be a

boy, she missed being a girl. She missed wearing a dress, plaiting long hair, smelling sweet.” (Heath 178). By the end of her adventure Samantha has more fully embraced the patriarchal expectations of her sex, and at the end of the cattle drive she readily gives up the freedoms she has accessed in her male disguise and returns to her female role. When Samantha finally returns home, she brushes off inquiries of her adventure and tells her mother “I’m looking forward to putting on a dress again. Looking like a girl” (Heath 232).

To Race a Dream, by Deborah Savage, takes place in the midst of the American women’s suffrage movement. Theo is the daughter of Maud, an influential suffragette, the sister of Claudia, the first female musician in the Minneapolis orchestra, and a niece of Harriet, one of only a small number of female doctors in the United States. Although Theo has been raised to believe that she is capable of anything, she finds her parents to be unsupportive of her ambitions; they refuse to accept that her love for horses is anything but childish fancy, and her mother actively discourages her ambitions to work as a harness racer as an adult.

Theo is confused and frustrated by her mother’s opposition to her goals; she thinks it hypocritical that Maud purports to believe in equality between the sexes and yet objects to her desire to do work that is traditionally considered to be masculine. Again and again throughout the novel, Theo finds herself thinking that “Maud had fine high ideas when it suited her” (Savage 2). Considering the women in her family, she wonders what progress Maud has made in the women’s movement she so strongly advocates.

Claudia had always wanted to play the violin, and it never occurred to her not to be the best. No one had ever told her she couldn’t. And what about Aunt Harriet, whom Maud always talked about? Maud’s older sister

had always wanted to be a doctor, and she was a good one -- very good, well respected. [...] And what about Maud? Her mother always said that women should do more than marry and have children – but wasn't that what she had done? (Savage 31)

Theo's feelings of being misunderstood by her mother are compounded by Maud's apparent favoritism of Claudia. When Claudia's first performance in the orchestra causes Theo to miss her junior high school graduation (at which she is slated to win a writing award) she is jealous, but unsurprised; she can never seem to live up to Claudia's accomplishments in her mother's eyes. "No wonder Maud was proud! Claudia filled every personal and political dream Maud Harris had ever had" (Savage 14). As she later explains to Harriet, "Claudia does everything Mama talks about (...) It's like she *lives* Mama's ideas for her" (Savage 110). When Claudia moves home after being diagnosed with polio, Theo is both more jealous than ever of the attention Claudia receives, and deeply ashamed of her hostile feelings.

Her family's occupation with Claudia makes it possible for Theo to disguise herself as a boy and take work at a local farm famous for its race horses. While cross-dressing, Theo becomes increasingly belligerent toward her mother. When her parents discover what she's been doing, Maud is furious. Theo insists that women should be able to do anything, including horse racing. Maud replies, "How could you possibly want to waste your intelligence on that? What can you hope to contribute to the world by driving racehorses? [...] You aren't doing anything to further the cause of women's rights if you go around pretending to be a boy." Theo responds, "I don't *care* about women's rights!" (Savage 131). The suffrage movement has become repellent to Theo because of its associations with Maud and her unrelenting criticism of Theo's dreams. Further, Theo values action over theory – she does not see how the women's rights movement is

beneficial to her, as an individual, when she has found ways to take her life into her own hands and to pursue her dreams. Her attitude throughout the book seems to follow her comment that “‘I’m going to do whatever I want, and it doesn’t matter if I’m a girl!’” (Savage 45)

. Even before she begins cross-dressing, Theo is very active, and feels restricted by her long hair and feminine clothes. She does not look forward to the women’s clothing she will have to adopt in the fall when she begins high school, and after enjoying the freedom of male dress for several months, she can hardly bear her girls’ clothes at all. Dressed up for an Independence Day celebration, “everything seemed to bind and tug at her” (Savage 155). When she is complimented on her appearance by her friend Carl, she says “[i]t feels awful (...) You should be grateful you don’t have to wear anything so stupid. You have no idea how much easier it is to do things in *your* clothes” (Savage 155).

Toward the end of the summer, when Theo realizes she will have to give up her deception, she looks back, wondering “[w]hat had she been doing, all these long weeks of summer? What had she been thinking of? All her restless longing would come to nothing (...) School would start – high school, with all the studying, and the strange new role she’d have to play...young *woman*. Long skirts, hair up.” (Savage 195). Theo realizes also that her return to her female role will be all the more painful because, as a boy, she has fulfilled ambitions so completely. “How was it possible to come so close...no, to actually *have* the dream in her grasp, and then for the stupidest reason imaginable, have to let it slip away as if it had never been? Because she was a *girl*” (Savage 197). Before leaving the farm, Theo lets down her hair while racing a horse, revealing her sex to all.

Although she is effectively saying goodbye, she takes pleasure in finally showing the men on the farm that she, a girl, is capable of so much.

By the end of the story, Theo better understands the sacrifices her mother has made to give her and Claudia so many options, and the sacrifices Harriet has made to follow her dreams. Her jealousy of Claudia gives way to respect and friendship when she learns how much Claudia admires her, and her relentless pursuit of self-fulfillment. However, Theo does not settle into her feminine role; it is evident that, while she may tolerate it until she finishes high school, her ambitions have not decreased at all. Months after she's been forced to give up cross-dressing and begin high school, she says "Women shouldn't have to wear such stupid clothes (...) Mama is right. I hope they change that along with voting and all those other things" (Savage 229). She is still focused on her own desires (and discomforts), but she is more aware of those "other things", and beginning to care about them. Although she has accepted that she must return to her female role until she is finished with high school, she knows what she is capable of, and is more determined than ever not to let her femininity stand in the way of her goals.

V. Conclusions

Based on the sixteen books examined in this study, there is clearly no single reliable pattern for characters' changing perceptions of women and femininity before, during, and after cross-dressing. Generalizations can be made, however, on a smaller scale.

Girls who choose to cross-dress for self-fulfillment or to achieve a personal goal tend to be the most intensely dissatisfied with the limitations of their sex role. Alanna, Theo, Gwyn, Donata, Sarah, Gabrielle, Esther Brandeau, Corinna, and Kellen (at times) exemplify this. Seven of these characters display stereotypical tomboyish characteristics, and several of these have hostile attitudes toward the feminine ideals of their societies, and even sometimes toward individual girls and women. Six of these ten characters particularly have strained relationships with their mothers, either seeing them as examples of an undesirable possible future, or, more problematically, as obstacles in their pursuits of their dreams. Notably, Alanna, Corinna, and Oyuna, three of the characters that do not have these issues, lost their mothers as children or have never known their mothers at all.

Characters who begin to cross-dress by necessity, to escape a pressing danger or to meet a basic need rather than to fulfill a personal interest – Esther Marchadi, Jacky, Samantha, and Ælfwyn -- generally tend to view femininity less negatively. However, these characters are clearly still aware of the oppression of women in their societies, at the very least in terms of the physical vulnerability they would face working or otherwise

attempting to survive as women, and the limited options that would be available to them in their given sex role.

While cross-dressing, ten of the fourteen characters enjoy masculine privilege and freedoms, and this liberation awakens in them new or further indignation for their own oppression and that of women in general. Oyuna, Samantha, Kellen, and Esther Marchadi do not experience this. Oyuna's society is considerably less restrictive of women than those of the other thirteen characters; her main oppressor is her community's suspicion of her physical handicap, and so her adopted masculinity provides her with little freedom beyond the initial freedom of her escape from home. Although before cross-dressing Samantha is a fairly tomboyish supporter of equality between the sexes, once she has adopted a male disguise she endlessly mourns the loss of her femininity, and takes no pleasure in male freedoms. Kellen's situation is far more complex; she often does enjoy male freedoms, and passes intentionally at several points over the course of her story. However, she is the only character, aside from Oyuna, who has not been severely restricted by her sex role, and so does not rebel against it in quite the same way as the other characters. Instead, she wishes to be free to be more feminine, and so is often uncomfortable while passing. Esther Marchadi experiences no freedom in her male disguise. She is in constant fear for her life as she escapes from Spain and the Inquisition, and may in fact be safer and freer when she returns to her female role, penniless, and homeless in an unfamiliar land.

Eleven characters, excluding Donata, Sarah, and Theo, in spite of increasing feelings of discontent with their assigned feminine roles, wish to be free of their disguises at some point during their periods of transvestism. Various circumstances inspire these

feelings, a common one of these being the anxiety many characters feel about the possibility of discovery, and the inevitable consequences that would follow – a forced return to their feminine role at best, and violence at the worst.

Increasing feelings of femininity also cause characters discomfort while in disguise. A relationship definitely exists between romance and feminine feelings in these stories, although it is not always clear whether romance awakens feminine sensibilities in characters or whether new feminine feelings open characters up to the possibilities of romance. Only five of the examined characters do not fall in love while cross-dressing. Of the remaining nine, seven are romantically involved with young men who are aware of their disguise and two are secretly in love with men who are not aware of the deception. All nine wish for the chance to be not just attractive to, but open and honest with their lovers. Samantha is by far the most extreme example of this desire, but Gabrielle, Alanna, and Kellen are the only characters who actually return to feminine dress to be with their lovers as their female selves. The remaining six do, in time, return to their feminine roles, and a few do so by choice, but not for that purpose.

Characters' frustration with (and sometimes hostility toward) other women often increases noticeably while cross-dressing. As characters experience freedom and pursue their goals, they find it difficult to relate to women who seem to so readily accept their own oppressions. As mentioned, mothers are often a target of such feelings, but friends and foes alike produce the same attitudes in some books. Esther Brandeau's friends, Pearl and Claire, Alanna's rival in love, Delia, and the sisters of Sarah, Gwyn, and Donata are prime examples.

In each book, the end of the deception is bittersweet at best. With the exception of Alanna (who notably exists in a fantasy realm) and Esther Brandeau (who resumes cross-dressing at the end of her story) none of the characters are able to remain in the exact positions of power they have obtained by cross-dressing. However, many characters do find ways to rise above the position of feminine powerlessness they originally escaped. For Donata, this is enrollment in a university; for Gabrielle it is the study of medicine; in her female form, Corinna is an heiress; Sarah is employed as a spy; Oyuna is hired to work in the royal stud.

At some point in each book all fourteen characters note feelings of being somehow different than other girls, or of being outcasts in their families or communities. Interestingly, most characters ultimately come to better relate to the women they initially feel so detached from as a result of cross-dressing; they better comprehend the oppression women in their societies face, and so learn to sympathize with them. However, in the ends of these books, with the exception of Samantha, who writes off equality for feminine dress, and Oyuna, whose non-western society is not so much based on patriarchal ideology, the characters are no less indignant for the sexual inequality that exists in their societies. If anything, the experience of freedom seems to underscore the injustice of unfounded hierarchies of gender.

Still, while there is certainly reason for concern that the subversive power of these stories is lost in the cross-dressing protagonists' eventual returns to their female sex roles, most of the books examined here nonetheless sustain a positive view of femininity. Throughout these stories, most female transvestite characters maintain (or learn) a sense

of self-possession and confidence in their abilities to succeed, not in spite of their femininity, but rather because of their intelligence, strength, and determination.

VI. Future Research

Considering how frequently the female transvestite appears in literature, surprisingly little research has been produced on this topic. This is particularly true of research on young adult cross-dressing narratives. There are myriad topics worthy of further examination within this genre.

Tomboy stereotypes abound in young adult cross-dressing fiction, with arguable results. Romantic resolutions often overshadow characters' unsatisfying returns to their female roles, making love a sort of consolation prize for inescapable sexual inequality. The affectations of masculinity that characters adopt in order to successfully pass are deceptively simple. The homoerotic implications of heterosexual relationships that arise in the midst of female cross-dressing are intriguing to say the least. The parallels between contemporary transgender theory and cross-dressing in fiction are fascinating, especially as young adult cross-dressers are so carefully cut off from the sexual implications of transvestism. And how do actual young adult readers respond to these stories and the messages they hold? The implications of these topics and countless others demand further investigation of this subject

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Appendix A: Book Summaries

Billingsley, Frannie. *Folk Keeper*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1999.

Unnoticed in the confusion of a move to a new orphanage, Corinna is reborn Corin. As a boy, Corinna becomes a Folk Keeper, quelling the magical underground creatures who would otherwise destroy human crops. When she is fifteen, Corinna is taken to meet the Lady Alicia's dying husband, Lord Merton. He claims to know her, and moments before his death, demands that she tend the Folk at his seaside estate.

There, Corinna meets Finnian, Alicia's son and Merton's heir, and Sir Edward, Lord Merton's brother. Corinna isolates herself as best she can, and when dealing with the family, she is hostile, instigating conflict and lying constantly. Most significantly, she exaggerates her skill with the Folk; Corinna struggles in her new position, finding the Folk much stronger here than they were inland.

Slowly, Finnian draws Corinna out. They become friends, but when he slights her, Corinna curses him with the fury of the Seafolk, and he is nearly killed sailing. Sir Edward sees this and takes a new interest in Corinna. When Edward pushes Finnian from a cliff on Midsummer's Eve, Corinna saves him from drowning -- a rescue that should have killed her. Edward realizes then that Corinna is the daughter of the Lady Rona, Lord Merton's first wife, a Sealmayden who was trapped in her human form when Lord Merton stole her sealskin. She is also, he realizes, the true heir to Merton's estate. To get rid of Corinna, Edward locks her underground with the Folk. Knowing herself at last to be a Sealmayden, and free of her male disguise, Corinna finds she has the power to fend them off easily.

Corinna escapes, sneaks back into the castle, and attempts to steal back her sealskin, taken from her by Merton at her birth. Edward comes to stop her; they struggle, and finally Edward is destroyed by the Folk. Finnian proposes to Corinna, and although she loves him, she chooses to join the Seafolk. However, when she puts on her sealskin, she realizes that her transformation will be a permanent one, and returns to Finnian.

Garden, Nancy. *Dove and Sword*. New York: Scholastic, 1995.

One of many daughters in a poor family in Domremy, tomboyish Gabrielle learns the arts of midwifery from her mother and wishes to be a doctor. When another girl in her village, Jeanne D'Arc sets off to fight the English and crown the dauphin, as she is directed by God, Gabrielle and a number of her other supporters go with her.

At a monastery on the way, Gabrielle meets Louis, a young noble-born novice who wants to be a soldier. Gabrielle convinces him to join Jeanne's party, which is growing larger, stronger, and more like an army as the journey progresses. Jeanne sends the female travelers away and tells Gabrielle that she can go no further unless she

disguises herself as a boy; Jeanne will not tolerate women following her holy army, and she knows that Gabrielle will be in danger unless she is disguised. Gabrielle agrees, and becomes a page to Jeanne's brother, Pierre. Only the D'Arcs and Louis know her true identity. She and Louis soon fall in love, and he teaches her to read.

During her first battle, Gabrielle occupies herself primarily with healing wounded men. Impressed with her skill, the dauphin's surgeon takes her on as an unofficial apprentice. The fighting continues even after the dauphin is crowned, and the unrelenting battles are hard on the army -- even Jeanne is wounded several times. Louis is also wounded, and shortly after he and Gabrielle agree to marry, he is killed in battle.

Devastated, Gabrielle leaves for Poissy to stay at the convent where the poet Madame de Pisan lives. While there, Gabrielle has access to sophisticated medical texts. She finds contentment in her studies, but eventually Pierre comes to tell her that her services are needed by the army once more. Shortly after her return, Jeanne is captured by the Burgundians. Gabrielle follows Jeanne as she is moved from prison to prison, abused, humiliated, and molested by her captors. Gabrielle finds ways to send her messages of comfort and finally is able to meet with Jeanne, just before she is tried for witchcraft. She witnesses Jeanne's execution by fire, and then returns to Poissy, where she spends the rest of her life as a healer to the nuns and townspeople.

Heath, Lorraine. *Samantha and the Cowboy*. New York: Avon, 2002.

After her father's death, Samantha readily undertakes the responsibility of running her family's farm, but by the end of the Civil War, her family has become dangerously impoverished. Deciding it is up to her to save her family, Samantha disguises herself as a boy and joins a cattle drive from Texas to Missouri, for one hundred dollars pay. On the drive, Sam is put under the supervision of Matt, a handsome, experienced cowboy who is alternately highly protective of her and annoyed by the responsibility.

While herding the cattle across a river one day, Sam falls from her horse and nearly drowns. The other men on the drive are already far ahead, but Matt sees her fall and rescues her. Unfortunately for Sam, her clinging wet clothes reveal her figure. Matt is astonished and furious when he realizes Sam is female, but she persuades him to keep her secret at least until they reach their destination. Matt's anger eventually gives way to affection, and the two fall in love.

As the drive nears Oklahoma, the cattle stampede. To prevent Sam from endangering herself, Matt reveals that Sam is a girl, and she is held behind while the other cowboys attempt to round up the cattle. Matt is wounded by a stray steer; noting his absence, Sam sets out to find him. Once Matt is rescued and cared for, attention returns to Sam's deception. The head of the drive wants to send her home immediately, but the men threaten to quit if she is not permitted to finish the drive. The boss submits. Weeks later, Samantha returns home with her hundred dollars, happy to be a girl once again, but sad to see the end of her romance with Matt. Just when she has accepted its end, however, Matt appears at the town dance.

Lewin, Waldtraut. *Freedom Beyond the Sea*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1997.

Following the trial and execution of her rabbi father by the Inquisition, Esther Marchadi disguises herself as a boy and joins the crew of Cristobal Colón's *Santa Maria* to escape Spain. Although she keeps to herself, Esther (now Pedro) is bullied by the other ship's boys; she has been hired particularly to assist the admiral as a scribe, and they are jealous of the perceived favoritism. Esther quickly becomes entangled in various conflicts on board: she accidentally discovers another Jewish passenger and hears rumors of others; she is caught up in the antagonism between the Andalusian and Basque sailors; and Colón admits to her that he is lying to the ships' owner about their route and destination.

Colón quickly realizes Esther is a Jew. He warns her to be careful, but also warns her that he will not protect her should trouble arise. The ship's boys and courtier passengers begin to blackmail Esther, the boys wanting her to commit a theft, and the courtiers wanting her to betray Colón's secrets. Meanwhile, her dealings with Colón take a decidedly sexual turn. Esther discovers that Colón is circumcised; he tells her that he was raised in both the Catholic and Jewish religions, and that the true purpose of his voyage is to search for the lost Jewish lands.

Esther's enemies strike in quick succession: Esther is pushed overboard at night by an unknown sailor, but saves herself and tells no one. Shortly after this, the discovered Jewish passenger accuses Esther of being a Jew to redirect suspicion and prevent her from accusing him. She is then attacked by the other ship's boys, and although the fight is quickly stopped, the boys are all to be whipped. Before Esther receives her punishment -- which will reveal her sex to all -- Colón intercedes. In his cabin she realizes her shirt was torn in the fight, revealing her breasts. Colón implies that he knew she was a girl all along. Esther asks to be let off the ship in Gomera, but before she goes, she offers herself to Colón. He refuses, reluctantly. With a letter of protection and little else, she is let off the ship.

McKay, Sharon E. *Esther*. Toronto: Penguin, 2004.

After disgracing herself by leaving the Jewish Ghetto without permission and returning home injured late at night, Esther Brandeau has no hope of making a good marriage. Her father hastily arranges for her to marry an old, poor man, and plans to send her to Amsterdam until the scandal is forgotten and she can be married. However, Esther's ship is destroyed in a storm. The only other survivor, a young sailor named Philippe, takes her to stay with his aunt, a cook in the home of a famous courtesan. Esther earns her keep baking bread, but her beauty soon draws the attention of the courtesan, Catherine, and it is decided that Esther will be trained to become a courtesan herself. Esther's father, a cloth merchant, comes to the house to sell fabric. He does not see Esther, but she nonetheless is ashamed, and decides to run away disguised as a boy.

For weeks, Esther makes her way performing odd jobs around the city. She finds Philippe when he returns from sea, and joins him when his ship leaves next. She works happily as a sailor until she has her first period -- panicked, she leaves the ship. Esther soon joins another ship's crew, but is discovered to be female at port, and must flee. She returns home, but chooses not to make her presence known to her family; they think she is dead, and she knows she can never return. She leaves the Jewish quarter and wanders

through France, eventually arriving at a convent where she is employed as a messenger boy until a novice falls in love with her.

Esther again wanders, doing odd jobs for food and money. She eventually becomes a baker's assistant, but is dismayed by the anti-Semitic opinions she constantly encounters. She leaves to become a man-servant to a former soldier. When she runs into Catherine in the street, Catherine recognizes her at once and has her arrested for theft. Catherine's mother clears Esther of the charge, and Esther books passage to the Americas. In New France, it is discovered that Esther is not only a girl, but a Jew -- Jews not are allowed in New France. Refusing to convert, she is placed with various chaperones until the officials can decide what to do with her. It is finally decided that she must be sent back to France, but the man who makes the arrangements gives her an opportunity to escape to Louisiana, where Philippe now lives.

Meyer, L. A. *Bloody Jack: Being an Account of the Curious Adventures of Mary "Jacky" Faber, Ship's Boy*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2002.

Orphaned by pestilence, seven-year old Mary Faber joins a gang of street urchins and for five years survives the brutality of the London streets by scavenging and stealing. When Mary finds her gang's leader murdered in an alley, she sees she has no future; with his clothes and knife, Mary -- now Jack -- leaves the city and heads for the sea where she is taken aboard *The Dolphin*, a naval ship, as a ship's boy.

Jacky adjusts easily to life on the ship; she does good work, makes fast friends with the other ship's boys (especially the handsome Jaimy), and is popular among most of the sailors. Unfortunately, Jacky finds herself singled out by the cruel Midshipman Bliffil, who beats her badly without provocation, and then by Sloat, a sailor who preys on young boys. When Jacky's "sea dad" Liam catches Sloat harassing her, he threatens him. Sloat, in turn, accuses Liam of having more than a fatherly interest in Jacky. Ironically, the ship's boys spurn Jacky for being a "fairy". Abandoned by her friends, Jacky isolates herself. Sloat finds Jacky alone and attempts to rape her, but she struggles and stabs him; he falls overboard, but not before his screams alert the entire crew of foul play. When blood is found on deck, Liam is accused of murdering Sloat. Jacky confesses and it is decided that she acted in self defense.

Although her friends attempt to make peace, Jacky sees that her deception must be approaching its end, and prepares to leave the ship. Jaimy confesses that he has feelings for her, and that that's why he'd been so cold to her. Jacky tells him that she is actually a girl (to his relief), and decides to stay aboard as long as she can maintain her disguise.

A failed experiment separates Jacky from the crew on an uninhabited island, where she lives by her wits until she is able to create a signal fire. Unwittingly, she alerts a French pirate ship, as well as her own, of her location. Jacky barely manages to warn her crew in time to prevent a massacre, but she herself is taken prisoner. The French captain reveals that Jacky is a girl when making ransom demands. She is saved, but she is kept safely away from the boys for the remainder of the voyage. With her share of the pirate's wealth, the captain arranges for Jacky to attend a girls' school in Boston.

---. *Curse of the Blue Tattoo: Being an Account of the Misadventures of Jacky Faber, Midshipman and Fine Lady*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2004.

Upon reaching Boston, Jacky leaves *The HMS Dolphin* for the Lawson Peabody School for Girls. Her complete ignorance of social propriety makes her an outcast at once, but she attaches herself to the reluctant Amy Trevelyne, another misfit. Slowly she charms most of the other girls and teachers at the school, but the rich and beautiful Clarissa Howe and Headmistress Pimm seem immune. Jacky also catches the special interest of a sinister reverend, who decides only private instruction can save her from an eternity in Hell.

Jacky sneaks off school grounds to send a letter to Jaimy by way of a British ship at the harbor. Feeling nostalgic, Jacky plays some sailor tunes on her pennywhistle. When some sailors join in, she begins to dance, attracting the attention of a policeman. Jacky is arrested for disrupting the peace and spends the night in jail with a drunk and some prostitutes. After being escorted back to the school, Mistress Pimm demotes her from student to chambermaid. Jacky continues to sneak out, now performing music in local taverns with Gully, the drunk she met in jail.

When Jacky learns that the reverend has petitioned to become her guardian, the other maids tell her it is thought that he raped a girl; it is certain that she killed herself after living in his house. Jacky begins to spy on the reverend, and discovers that he is mad. Meanwhile, having noticed that Jacky has continued her studies despite her reduced circumstances, Mistress Pimm allows Jacky to become a student again.

Jacky goes home with Amy at Christmas, and learns that Mr. Trevelyne has bet all of his property on a horse race. The day of the race, the jockey falls ill; Jacky replaces him without anyone realizing, and wins the race. After a night of celebration with the Trevelynes, Jacky nearly compromises her virginity, then passes out drunk. The next day, ashamed, she leaves, but is captured by the reverend. He tries to rape her, but she escapes in the chaos of a fire and runs away to join a whaling vessel.

Napoli, Donna Jo. *Daughter of Venice*. New York: Dell Laurel-Leaf, 2002.

In sixteenth century Venice, only one daughter of a noble family is usually allowed to marry; the rest are sent to convents. When Adriana's marriage is announced, Donata, the second daughter of her family, decides that if she will be forced to spend the rest of her life in a convent, she must see the city first, and with the freedom of a boy. Donata acquires the clothes of a young fisherman, convinces her identical twin, Laura, to cover for her absence, and sneaks out of her palazzo.

Donata finds work with a Jewish scribe, Noè, and every morning for a month, she escapes to the streets undetected. Emboldened by her secret life, and more curious about the world than ever, Donata convinces her father to let her sit in on her brothers' afternoon lessons, even though Venetian women are almost never educated unless they are courtesans. At the month's end, Donata stops her masquerade and works doubly hard in both her chores - to make up for Laura's hard work and patience during her absences - and in her lessons, where she excels naturally. Her parents notice her diligence at home

and in her studies and are impressed. When her father announces that he has found Donata a husband, she knows that it is Laura who should marry, not her. Donata cannot convince her parents that she does not deserve to marry as a reward for Laura's work without revealing her deception, and what's more, she knows now she could never marry without love, having fallen in love with Noè -- an impossible match.

Once again, Donata leaves the palazzo, and delivers an anonymous note to the Venetian council accusing herself of conversion to Judaism. Because the note is anonymous, she does not have to stand trial, but rumor of the note spreads and the scandal releases her from her engagement, allowing Laura to take her place. Donata tells her father that she wants to continue her education and become a tutor. Her own tutor manages to persuade the university in Padua to admit her for a degree in philosophy.

Pierce, Tamora. *Alanna: The First Adventure*. New York: Simon Pulse, 1983.

When the twins Allana and Thom of Trebond are ten years old and about to be sent away for school, they decide to swap places in order to pursue their unique interests. Thom will go to the convents and cloisters to learn religion and magic, and Alanna will go to court to become a knight. While boys are free to study magic, girls cannot be knights. Alanna cuts her hair, shortens her name to Alan, and goes to the city, where she is enlisted as a page. Soon after her arrival, Alanna makes an enemy of Ralon, and befriends Prince Jonathan and his friends. When classes and training begin, Alanna's struggles seem endless, but she persists, often outperforming her male peers. With training by her friend George, the King of Thieves, Alanna eventually defeats Ralon in a fistfight and gains the respect of all of the boys at court.

When Prince Jonathan suddenly takes ill, Alanna uses her magic to save him from death. The king and queen are grateful, and promise to have all of the court boys with magical abilities trained appropriately. When Jonathan's cousin, Duke Roger, arrives to instruct the magically-able boys, Alanna is suspicious of him at once; it is rumored that the prince's illness was caused by magic, and Roger is powerful -- and next in line for the throne.

As Alanna begins to mature, she becomes increasingly frustrated with her femininity. At the onset of her menstrual cycle, she turns to her only friend outside the court, George, for help. George's mother, a healer, helps her understand her changing body. George, now aware that Alanna is a girl, assures her that her friends love her, and will not care that she is a woman when her secret comes to light.

When Alanna is fourteen, she joins Jonathan and a small party of squires and knights on a short journey into the desert country of the Bazhir. There, she and Jonathan slip away to the cursed Black City and fight an ancient evil that has fed on the Bazhir land and people for generations. The evil spirits reveal Alanna's deception to Jonathan. Together, Jonathan and Alanna defeat the spirits. Jonathan agrees to keep Alanna's sex a secret, and asks her to be his squire when he becomes a knight.

---. *In the Hand of the Goddess*. New York: Simon Pulse, 1984.

On a training assignment in the forest, Alanna is approached by the Goddess, who warns her of the challenges she will soon have to face. When a group of nobles from Tusaine visit Tortall, a bet is made that the smallest squire in court can beat the fiercest Tusaine swordsman in a duel. Alanna is chosen to fight, and wins. Shortly after, she engages in a casual swordfight with a friend, Alex. Alex, who has lately become a good friend of Duke Roger, seems possessed, and nearly kills her. Alarmed, Alanna turns to her brother Thom, now a great sorcerer, for advice, and learns that they are both being watched by the Duke. However, because Jonathan is so close to Roger, she cannot voice her suspicions.

Unrest in the kingdom takes Alanna to war for the first time. She fights bravely, but begins to understand that there will be more to her life of knighthood than heroics. Alanna uses her magic to heal whenever she is not fighting. Between battles, Duke Roger finds Alanna alone and offers her his friendship. Alanna declines, and during the following battle is taken hostage by the enemy; she is certain this is no coincidence. Jonathan rescues her soon after her capture, against Roger's orders. Eventually, Tortall wins the war and everyone returns to court.

Alanna, jealous of Jonathan's numerous affairs at court, asks George's mother for help once again - Alanna wants to learn to be a woman, and begins occasionally sneaking out of the castle dressed as a lady. George is heartbroken when she and Jonathan become lovers.

A wasting sickness strikes Tortall right before Alanna must face The Ordeal, the final test to become a knight. She worries that Roger will interfere somehow, but she survives The Ordeal, and during the feast that follows, sneaks into Roger's chambers and finds dolls resembling the royal family and herself, under spells to make the people they represent weak or ill. Alanna returns to the feast and accuses Roger of treason. They duel, and Roger manages to cut open Alanna's clothing and bindings, revealing her sex to the entire court. Alanna wins the duel, but the court is shocked by her secret. Lady Alanna leaves court to roam the kingdom as the first woman knight in hundreds of years.

Rinaldi, Ann. *Girl in Blue*. New York: Scholastic, 2001.

Sarah has quietly endured her father's cruelty all her life, but when he promises her hand to a violent, vulgar widower for the sake of the family farm, Sarah knows she must leave her home or be trapped and abused there forever. Equally compelled by her need to escape and her love for her country, Sarah, now Neddy, volunteers to join the Union Army. When delivering a message across enemy lines for a doctor, Sarah is forced to take a female hostage. The hostage, riding behind Sarah on horseback, realizes Sarah is a female and reveals her secret.

The doctor and Sarah's commanding officer are both more disappointed to lose a good soldier and worker than to find out that she is a female. Impressed by her gift for deception, they arrange for Sarah to work for Pinkerton's espionage organization. Sarah is placed in the home of Confederate spy Rose Greenhow as a maid. Sarah falls in love with another spy, Sheldon, while there, but unsure of his loyalties, she must frequently work against him. Sarah gives word to her boss that Sheldon has been smuggling letters from Rose out of the house. Rose is eventually imprisoned. Sheldon, now known to be

working for the Union, forsakes Sarah for her betrayal.

Sarah falls ill, but in time recovers from both the illness and heartbreak, knowing that Sheldon should have understood her duty to her country, and would have, had she been male. Pinkerton wants her to continue working for the Union as a spy, but gives Sarah a period of leave before her next assignment. Sarah returns home, again disguised as a boy, and learns that her father has died and her sister has taken her place in the engagement to the contemptible widower. Sarah sees that she is needed at home, but does not reveal herself to her mother, knowing that she can do nothing to help her now, and further, that if her mother asked it of her, she could not possibly leave. Once again, Sarah leaves home for freedom and for love of her country.

Savage, Deborah. *To Race a Dream*. New York: HarperTrophy, 1994.

Theo is angry when her sister Claudia's debut in the Minneapolis Orchestra causes her to miss her ninth grade graduation. Claudia seems to be everything her suffragette mother, Maude, and radical father, Stevenson, ever hoped for, and Theo feels inconsequential and misunderstood; all she wants to do is work with horses and write stories about them -- childish ambitions in her parents' eyes. Theo feels guilty when Claudia falls ill immediately after her performance; she is diagnosed with polio, and must move home.

Theo's Aunt Harriet, one of a handful of women doctors in the country, comes to tend to Claudia. Theo finds a friend in her aunt, and at the same time begins a tentative friendship with Carl, a studious Swedish boy in her class. Carl's father, a farmer, wants his son to give up his education to become a blacksmith. Sympathetic, Theo secretly lends Carl books, and in return, Carl helps Theo -- dressed as a boy -- to get a job at the International Stock Feed Farm, home of the famous harness racehorse, Dan Patch.

Theo's parents discover her deception, but despite their frustration with the situation, eventually they are convinced to let her continue working on the farm as a boy. Meanwhile, Claudia's health begins to improve. Theo becomes jealous of Carl's attention to her sister, but Carl makes it clear that he only likes Theo. She discovers later that Stevenson and Harriet were once in love and that Harriet gave him up to pursue her dreams -- that Maude was his second choice. Slowly, Theo begins to work through her jealousy, and she and Claudia become friends.

At the farm, Theo is finally taught to drive horses, but as the summer draws to a close, she realizes she will have to give up her dream. On her last day at the farm, when the other farmhands are distracted by a loose horse, she has the opportunity to drive Dan Patch. She lets her hair down as she drives, shocking everyone but Mr. Savage, the farm's owner, who admits that he has known who she was for some time. Months later Claudia is completely healed, Carl and Theo have begun high school, and Carl has submitted one of Theo's stories to a magazine, which has agreed to publish it.

Shinn, Sharon. *The Dream Maker's Magic*. New York: Viking, 2006.

Certain that she gave birth to a boy, Kellen's mother refuses to admit that Kellen

is a girl. As a result, Kellen grows up with quite a bit of freedom, and is taught the skills of both sexes. Unable to cope with his wife's madness and the constant hurt she inflicts on their daughter, Kellen's father leaves.

Although it is known that Kellen is a girl, when she begins school, she is rejected by the girls in her class and bullied by the boys. She eventually befriends Gryffin, a boy handicapped by weak, deformed legs. The two begin doing odd jobs at the Parmer family farm and inn, and when Kellen gets her first period, it is Mrs. Parmer who teaches her about her body. When Kellen's mother begins renting out rooms to make some extra money, Kellen begins to consciously pass as a boy when dealing with renters; at the same time, she takes part-time work as a server in the Parmers' inn, and so for the first time in her life is allowed to dress as a girl.

When the dream maker, a woman whose presence randomly makes people's dreams come true, comes to town, Kellen searches for Gryffin, hoping that if he meets the dream maker his legs will be healed. She does not find him, but that night he appears at her house, so badly beaten by his uncle that his legs are now completely useless. Gryffin moves to the Parmers' house. One day, all at once, the Parmers' customers' various dramas are reconciled; another customer realizes that Gryffin must have become a dream maker.

Gryffin moves to the royal city to be more accessible to the people, and for a year Kellen remains at home. When her mother takes in a foundling boy, happy to at last have the son she always wanted, Kellen leaves for the city as well. Again passing as a boy, she takes work at a tavern. In time she is reunited with Gryffin, who tells her he loves her and urges her to be herself. Her sex is eventually revealed by a customer. When Leona, the tavern owner, learns the truth, she realizes that Kellen is in fact her long lost sister, switched at birth because her mother, like Kellen's, so desperately wanted a son.

Tingle, Rebecca. *Far Traveler*. New York: Speak, 2005.

Shy and studious Ælfwyn is daughter to the Mercian warrior queen Æthelflæd, who rules in the name of her brother, Edward, King of Wessex. When Æthelflæd suddenly dies, Edward siezes power in Mercia. Wilfrid the young Northumbrian king begs Ælfwyn to stand up in her mother's place -- he too is in danger of losing power to Edward -- but she refuses, feeling herself to be powerless. Edward takes Ælfwyn to Wessex, where she is given the choice of marrying an ally or joining a convent. Realizing that either choice will effectively make her a prisoner, she disguises herself as a boy and flees.

Immediately Ælfwyn encounters trouble on the road. Adopting the name Widsith, she survives by performing songs and poems for the travelers she meets in exchange for food and the protection of their company. When she reaches Mercia, Ælfwyn fails to find a patron, but is invited to join the camp of Wil, who she immediately recognizes as Wilfrid, former king of Northumbria. Wil offers her his friendship, teaches her to defend herself, and coaches her in performing.

When it is announced that Edward will be coming to Mercia, Wil and his men plan to attack. Despite her fear of discovery, Ælfwyn agrees to perform for Edward while Wil's men ready the attack. When the time comes she is too afraid to face her uncle, and

decides to run away instead. As she is slipping away, however, Ælfwyn learns that Northumbria is truly lost, and Wil will only destroy himself if he attacks Edward. She returns as Wilfred's men attack, and amid the chaos, reveals herself as both a woman and as daughter of the queen to all. She swears fealty to Edward, giving Wil and his men a chance to escape. This time Ælfwyn is sent to a convent without choice, but Wilfred finds her there, tells her he loves her, and together they escape to Wales.

Voigt, Cynthia. *Jackaroo*. New York: Scholastic, 1985.

Business at the inn keeps Gwyn's family well-fed and able to pay their taxes while poverty devastates the kingdom; Gwyn even has the luxury of a dowry large enough to buy a good marriage. However, she isn't certain she wants to marry, and when she comes of age she must declare her intent to marry or not. Frustrated by her limitations in life, Gwyn becomes aware of the helplessness of the people in the kingdom. Equally motivated by altruism and guilt, she finds ways to do anonymous good deeds for the people around her who are most in need.

In the midst of a winter storm, Gwyn and her family's servant, Burl, are asked to wait on a lord and his son as they travel the countryside for a week. A blizzard separates the group, and Gwyn and the lord's son take refuge in an abandoned hut. There she discovers clothing, a sword, and a mask that match the description of Jackaroo, a local Robin Hood figure who's sporadically appeared and provided for the people of the kingdom for generations. When the weather permits, Gwyn and the young lord return to the inn. The lord's grateful father rewards her with twelve gold coins.

Now quite wealthy and with the disguise of Jackaroo in her possession, Gwyn is in a position to better help the people; when her family is diverted, she becomes Jackaroo and gives to the poor. Eventually, word of Jackaroo's return spreads, and her heroism draws the attention of the law. Seeing no way out of her deception, she prepares to sacrifice herself for one final act of good. By dressing as Jackaroo, Burl manages to save her, but not before she is seriously wounded. Gwyn must hide until she is healed. Meanwhile, yet another Jackaroo arrives in the village and offers the people a more permanent solution to their problems. Gwyn and Burl realize that he is the lord from the winter, and ask if they can accompany him on his travels. The lord permits them to follow, marries them, and sets them up in a lodge far from Gwyn's dangerous past.

Wilson, Diana Lee. *I Rode a Horse of Milk White Jade*. New York: HarperTrophy, 1998.

When Oyuna is a baby, her foot is crushed by a horse. Irreparably crippled, Oyuna is thought unlucky by her tribe of fiercely superstitious, nomadic horse breeders. Her parents are overly protective of her as she grows up, but Oyuna only wants to be with the horses, and she sneaks away to ride them whenever she can. Some time after her mother's death -- also blamed on Oyuna's bad luck -- her father takes her to a festival, where he will find himself a wife, and a husband and a horse for Oyuna. No man chooses Oyuna, to her relief, and she chooses Bayan, an old, infertile, crippled mare, to her father's dismay.

Oyuna's shameness grandmother, who travels independently of the tribe, predicts a journey for Oyuna. Months later, soldiers come to her camp to recruit soldiers and take horses. Bayan -- much improved since the festival -- is among those to be taken, and when Oyuna's new stepbrother is made an unwilling recruit, she goes in his place to be with her horse. The army captain discovers she is female, and when one of the khan's messengers, too injured to continue his ride to the imperial city, meets the army on the road, the captain sends Oyuna to replace him, both to get rid of her and because he knows her to be a capable rider.

When she stops at a messenger station for rest, Genma, the woman in charge, hides Bayan, hoping to make Oyuna stay and marry her son. Oyuna finds the horse and escapes. During a storm, she takes cover in a cave where she discovers her grandmother's body. She buries her and continues her journey, now openly as a girl. When she finally reaches the khan, he invites her to work in the imperial stud, with thousands of white horses. Months later, the horses begin to fall ill and die. When Bayan, now pregnant, becomes ill, Oyuna intuits that a plant she saw near her grandmother's grave will cure the horses; she goes to collect some with a party of the khan's soldiers. When she returns, Bayan has died, but her foal is alive. Oyuna eventually marries one of the khan's soldiers and returns to the steppe. Years later, she rides Bayan's filly in a festival race, wins, and is reunited with her father.

Appendix B: Content Analysis Form

Setting:

Age of protagonist:

Motivation(s) for cross-dressing:

Protagonist's perceptions of self:

Protagonist's perceptions of other girls and women:

Characteristics of protagonist's relationships with female family members:

Characteristics of protagonist's relationships with female peers:

Characteristics of protagonist's romantic relationships:

Puberty and body issues: