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This study addresses a difference in settings in fantasy novels with female protagonists, written with teenage girls as their target readership. The two sets of novels – novels set completely in other worlds and novels set in both the real world and a fantasy world – are analyzed through latent content analysis by five aspects of portrayal of their female protagonists. The protagonists are discussed through their feelings on their worlds' gender roles, feelings of isolation and belonging, close relationships, body image, and personal growth. The implications of the differences between the two categories of novels are discussed in the context of the developmental needs of teenage girls. The generalized strengths and weaknesses of each category are explored in relation to how librarians might make collection development decisions.

Headings:

Fantasy fiction, American – History and criticism – juvenile literature
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Content analysis

FINDING HER PLACE IN HER WORLD: FEMALE EMPOWERMENT THROUGH
SETTING IN YOUNG ADULT FANTASY NOVELS

by
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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
The Readers: Young Adult Girls	3
The Protagonists: Young Women	4
The Genre: Fantasy	6
The Context: Place	9
Methodology	13
Characteristics of Portrayal	14
Gender Roles and Behaviors	15
Belonging and Isolation	27
Close Relationships	36
Body and Self Image	46
Inner Quest	57
Analysis of the Five Aspects of Portrayal	66
Otherworld Novels vs. Gateway Novels: Implications	70
Conclusions	74
Works Cited	75

Introduction

The shaping and growth of the psychological selves of teenage girls fascinates doctors, educators, and the media in our culture, with good reason. Parents and educators have much to fight: eating disorders, abusive relationships, test scores lagging behind those of boys in math and science. At a time when mass media stereotypes of what girls should be can reach their demographic on cell phones at any time of day, in any location, some educators and librarians are championing the selling power of a popular genre of media to challenge images of girls as shallow, weak, and valuable only for their attractiveness. Fantasy stories in movies and novels have been popular teen picks for decades; however, as a number of fantasy stories have reached levels of popularity that seem to have shocked businesspeople in the movie and publication industries, more fantasy books are being published and promoted now than ever before. Set in worlds limited only by authors' imaginations, these books offer new possibilities of portrayals of strong, inspiring young women, and with the genre's boom in popularity, these empowering role models have the potential to reach more young women than ever before.

With the growth taking place in the fantasy genre, there are more distinctions that can be made between the sub-genres within it. The fact that much of the freedom of authors to create empowering protagonists rests in the rules he or she writes for the created world makes place and setting one of the most important factors in determining how a female character is portrayed. Generally, the settings of fantasy novels can be

broken down into two very large categories: novels that take place entirely in worlds different from our own and novels that take place in this world and another world, with action moving between the two. Do these two categories of novels tend to portray female characters in different ways from one another? If there are differences, what are they and what different roles do they depict for young women to follow?

The Readers: Young Adult Girls

The years of middle adolescence which, for girls, fall between age thirteen and age sixteen, are when the characteristic upheavals of young adulthood begin to take place. Cognitively, teens begin to embark upon a journey of discovering who they want to be as they become more intellectually capable to think abstractly and comprehensively, as well as being able to better understand points of view different from their own (Mitchell, 1979, p. 43-45). However, as teens' capabilities to think and feel mature, young adults often turn those thoughts and feelings on themselves with troubling effects as they begin to develop their senses of identity.

Girls in particular face psychological challenges brought on by a barrage of messages about who they should be and what they should want. Though the current state of the psychology of gender has come to value traits and roles formerly thought of as “feminine” along with “masculine,” as well as moving away from the practice of viewing these traits and the two genders as being at opposite ends of a spectrum, present-day American culture does not reflect this thought (Reid, Cooper, and Banks, 2008, pg. 240). Most portrayals of girls and women in the media still promote the stereotypes of femininity in appearance and action; furthermore, teens are usually heavily immersed in

mass media, viewing an average of eight hours of media per day (Reid et. al., 2008, pg. 246-7). Girls internalize and reflect upon the images of womanhood that they are shown, and it is unsurprising that the differences they see between themselves and the images presented or between their inner selves and the roles portrayed can cause them to suffer a loss of self-esteem (Reid et. al., 2008, pg. 249). With the years of adolescence being a crucial time for the formation of self-esteem and building one's identity, it seems crucial that librarians who serve young adults be aware of the messages that the media on their shelves portray (Impett, Sorsoli, Schooler, Henson, and Tolman, 2008, p. 722).

Just two decades ago, librarians clamored for more books for young adults that portrayed women in non-stereotypical ways. While the past fifteen years have seen many developments in the world of young adult literature, from the relative disappearance of the teenage problem novel to the overwhelming popularity of hit book series such as the *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* series, Linda Forrest identified in 1993 that “fantasy is one area of young adult literature that offers a rich source of gender-fair fiction.” The freedoms that the fantasy genre allows permit writers to create dynamic female characters whose roles are not limited by the realities of this world's modern-day culture.

The Protagonists: Young Women

The world of young adult fiction of which fantasy novels are only a segment can sometimes seem to be a polarized battlefield for cultural debate. Many studies and literary analyses address the ways that gender roles and stereotypes are both promoted and fought, in both wide perspectives and in detailed examinations of individual books and the works of individual authors. Notably, many of these studies focus on sexuality

and body image in novels for teenage girls; the frequent focus of the novels themselves on these issues and the prolific discussion about the way they are portrayed indicates, as Beth Younger says, that “these texts ... are important sites of cultural contestation” (2003). However, still, many novels for this group of readers promote images of young women who are not sexually liberated; frequently, female protagonists' nurturing, friendly, self-sacrificing natures were emphasized (Benjamin and Irvin-DeVitis, 1998). Perhaps the protagonists who fall between the two poles of “sugar, spice, and everything nice” and shocking have not been the subject of study, but the emphasis of these many studies on these two types of portrayal of teenage girls may show that few protagonists fit other roles.

Even as the number of young adult novels that have strong, empowering female protagonists grows, some researchers wonder if readers can take inspiration from those characters or if readers have been conditioned to value characters for certain traits based on gender stereotypes. Benjamin and De-Vitis surveyed both male and female teenagers about their thoughts on female characters in books; the responses of the young adults emphasized that attractiveness was what made them like female characters most (compared with adjectives they applied to their favorite male characters, such as “strong” and “independent”) (1998). While a number of the girls who responded to the survey said that they read books with both male and female protagonists (and would like to read more books with female protagonists), some boys responded that they would never read books with a girl or woman as the main character. Though the portrayals of girls and women in young adult literature are growing to include more variety, the emphasis on sexuality, body image, and gender roles reflects the fact that these issues are relevant to

the novels' target readers and on a wider scale in our culture. Yet, teenagers may not be choosing to read the novels that do explore these issues well, and when these novels are selected, readers may not choose to take the same empowerment and inspiration from them that their adult critics seek to promote. However, what librarians and educators who advocate the power of fantasy novels to promote these messages believe is that setting novels in a whole new world with its own rules can help readers to think outside the boxes of our own culture.

The Genre: Fantasy

The rise of the fantasy genre to a level of relevance in popular culture beyond that of other genres of fiction such as westerns and science fiction can be seen through looking at recent movies released targeting teenagers: *Twilight*, the *Harry Potter* movies, *Narnia* and *Prince Caspian*, and *The Golden Compass* are among the past few years' releases which are all dramatizations of works of fantasy fiction written for young people. Few cultural phenomena have been followed with the same dedicated fervor that has been given to J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (which, in 2005, had sold enough copies of the books to circle the globe 1.4 times) and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series (Oatman, 2005). And many of these young fantasy readers are female; a 2000 survey by Smartgirl.com revealed that fantasy is the second-most popular genre among the female respondents (Chance, 2000). A number of scholars have observed the potential in this trend, positing that fantasy fiction can provide varied and new portrayals of female identity for girls to observe:

Fantasy is one area of young adult literature that offers a rich source of gender-fair fiction. It is popular with both male and female adolescents

and has traditionally been a genre in which women escape the standard cultural roles. Portrayals of passive females can certainly be found; nevertheless, readers are often offered a chance to experience what females *could be* instead of what they *are*. (Forrest, 1993, pg. 38)

Fantasy has not always been a haven for prominent female characters; in her content analysis of twenty-six award-winning fantasy novels published between 1953 and 1979, Carol Whitehurst found that the majority of female characters still played mainly supporting roles, rarely featuring as protagonists in fantasy novels over the span of thirty years (Du Mont, 1993, pg. 12). However, female characters began to come into more prominence in young adult fantasy novels in the 1980s; Du Mont concluded in her own study that this change was due to the increasing number of female fantasy authors, as well as increasing opportunities for women in the real world, which were being reflected in popular literature (pg. 15). “This reason is somewhat depressing,” Du Mont writes, “because science fiction and fantasy, as literature of change *should* be more than one step ahead of real-world society” (pg. 15). The final decade of the twentieth century saw the true rise of the female heroine in young adult fantasy, and with the genre's commercial success, especially among female readers, it shows promise of becoming the genre of equality that Du Mont, Whitehurst, and others anticipated (Forrest, 1993, pg. 39).

Fantasy has been defined by critics, fans, and authors with a multitude of definitions that span from simple literature of escapism to complex “quest[s] of understanding of the human condition” (Baker, 2006, pg. 621). These internal quests are what many scholars analyze when studying fantasy novels. Holly Virginia Blackford attributes the prevailing method of analyzing literature through proposing how the ideas novels portray may shape readers' identities to the theories of Michael Foucault, who argued that “ideas, imported through discourse shape people's self-understandings”

(Blackford, 2004, pg. 17).

Blackford approached her own study of adolescent female readers of fantasy with the expectation that the inner journeys of the female characters would provide girl readers with memorable, valuable opportunities to identify with role models in literature.

However, Blackford found that the girls in her study rebelled against the idea that they were supposed to identify with the female character or see through her eyes; instead, the girls expressed that they enjoyed fantasy novels (with either male or female protagonists) for the feeling of becoming immersed in the unfamiliar and different worlds of the novels (pg. 19). For the study participants, the experience of ludic reading was the most salient reason for opening a fantasy book: Blackford's study suggests that, perhaps, “escapism” is not such a simple definition after all (p. 7).

Blackford's readers were drawn in by the idea of the *other*, and *otherness* is at the heart of fantasy literature. Anita Silvey proposes that the current popularity of fantasy novels is a backlash against the overwhelming number of young adult problem novels that crowded library shelves between the 1960s and 1990s; these problem novels “served as bibliotherapy for troubled teens, helping them sort out a variety of issues – everything from angst to alienation. And as young adult novels became more and more predictable, they grew moribund and lost readers” (2006, pg. 46). Though realistic fiction is still popular among teens, speculative fiction provides readers with worlds where the emotions and issues they face internally can be played out in epic scale. Sharyn November emphasizes that the grand nature of fantasy – the clear picture of good and evil, the theatrical battles, the scope that often involves the fates of nations and peoples – allows readers to both escape and identify with a world where the quintessential moral

challenges of life are dramatized with overt grandeur (2004, pg. 33). Chase M. Will, a teen writer for *Young Adult Library Services*, provides a more concrete example: “in *Harry Potter*, readers [...] see everything through the spectaclered eyes of an orphan who goes from thinking he's nobody to finding out that he has a purpose of dire importance to the entire world, something that all teens hope to discover about themselves on some level” (2008, pg. 17). The allure of the *other* (a world of witchcraft and wizardry, in the case of *Harry Potter*) is combined with the reflection of self provided by the human emotions and motivations expressed by the characters. While Blackford's readers appreciate *otherness* most and Will appreciates human connection, both elements are important parts of the fantasy fiction genre.

The Context: Place

Fantasy unites both these impulses – the impulse to escape and the impulse to connect – through setting stories that speak to readers' hearts and minds in settings bounded only by the imagination. The worlds of fantasy fiction are an essential part of their genre. John Timmerman defines fantasy world by three particular characteristics that address the importance of *otherness*. First, he emphasizes that fantasy “matches our world in reality, [...] a world in which characters confront the same terrors, choices, and dilemmas we confront in our world” (1983, p. 49). Second, he qualifies his first statement, adding that these stages on which characters play out human conflicts and emotions are distinctly different from the stage of the real world and that we must make the mental step up onto them to accept these created worlds for what they are (p. 50). Third, Timmerman takes a stance that many readers of fantasy take against the use of the

word “escapist” that some critics of the genre use to denigrate it (p. 50). However, Timmerman's reference to this use of “escapism” seems to refer to the simplification of the genre into the idea of simple fancifulness; the girls in Blackford's study “escape” into fantasy literature in a way that seems more complex than either Timmerman or the critics he refers to mean. Timmerman gives a definition of fantasy as a genre based on place and rooting the genre in its connection to the inner reality of the experience of life, but narrower terms are needed to examine place in fantasy in more depth.

The fantasy genre covers a wide variety of stories set in a variety of different worlds. Trying to examine the role of place in fantasy requires this variety to be narrowed down and categorized in a meaningful way; however, surprisingly, few categorical systems for approaching fantasy this way exist. Farah Mendlesohn's groundbreaking Rhetorics of Fantasy, published in 2008, outlines a language for discussing place in fantasy through observing the ways that the *other* and the everyday intersect (or do not intersect). She provides four distinct categories: immersive fantasy, portal-quest fantasy, intrusive fantasy, and liminal fantasy.

Immersive fantasy includes the stories thought of as the most obvious examples of the genre: stories set completely in worlds unlike our own which purport no relationship to our own world (though many have a strong elements of medievalism or may be set in antiquated times and periods similar to those in history (p. xx). Immersive fantasy worlds function as comprehensive wholes, and readers must take all their cues about the nature of each particular world from what the author reveals; the craft of revealing the details of a world without seeming heavy-handed (a process Mendlesohn calls “the infodump”) is one of the immersive fantasy author's greatest challenges (p. 69-70). However, being set

entirely in another world does not automatically situate a story in the immersive category; many quest fantasies, such as *The Lord of the Rings* or Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series begin in another world familiar to the protagonists, yet the protagonists themselves are plunged into a world unfamiliar to them (p. 2). It is the characters' familiarity with the world, not the readers', that is the essential defining characteristic of each category.

The language of the label “portal-quest fantasy” points to the dual nature of this category. Mendlesohn explains: “Modern quest and portal fantasies rely upon very similar narrative strategies because each assumes the same two movements: transition and exploration” (pg. 2). In portal fantasies, the protagonist begins the story in this world and moves into the otherworld; quest fantasies echo this structure, taking the protagonist from the known (though his or her “known” may be a new world for the reader) to the unknown, with some event as the point of entry to the action (pg. xix). This category, in particular, emphasizes that place is more than setting – the idea of *place* also includes how the protagonist knows and understands that setting, with emphasis on the *transition* of setting.

Intrusive fantasy can be said to be portal-quest fantasy's opposite. Instead of entering into a different world, the protagonist of the intrusive fantasy finds the otherworld entering the world that is known and familiar (p. xxii). Intrusive fantasies are often about tension and balance; the otherworld must be put back into its proper place or the protagonist must somehow come to accept its existence (which can be understood as entering into the otherworld) (p. 137). Intrusive fantasies have a visceral nature to them; horror and crime fiction often follow the same pattern of wrongness appearing and needing to be set right (p. 142). Usually, the protagonist stands in a position between his

or her own world and the otherworld, an outsider to both, and much of the tension in intrusive fantasy comes from the drawing, seductive pull of the otherworld presented before the protagonist (p. 115). At the same time, intrusive fantasy novels build around the push of escalation; the situation gets more and more dire, pressing the protagonist toward action (p. 153). In intrusive fantasies, the balance and tension of *place* moves the plot and the growth and change of characters.

Mendlesohn also addresses liminal fantasies (which present fantasy worlds entirely separate from the realities of the protagonist and which the protagonist does not interact with) and fantasy stories that cannot be categorized within her system; however, liminal fantasies are few and obscure (especially within the realm of young adult fantasy), and these three categories provide the main substance of her system.

Mendlesohn provides a language for discussing place in fantasy, Timmerman provides context for place's importance to the genre, Blackford and others provide expression of the value of fantasy for young female readers. However, place within fantasy, the genre itself, and adolescent female readers have not been examined together.

Methodology

I chose to combine Mendlesohn's categories of portal-quest fantasy and intrusive fantasy into a single category which I have termed gateway world fantasy: stories with a protagonist who crosses back and forth between her own world and another. I termed Mendlesohn's immersive fantasies *otherworld fantasies* to clarify the distinction between the two categories. With these two categories in mind, I used selection sources for young adult literature to find six books to fit each category; I felt that six books of each would provide enough variety to allow me to see patterns and draw conclusions without being beyond the scope of a masters paper.

I did not want to examine the books with foregone conclusions, so I read through each and took notes about the various ways the protagonists were portrayed, looking for different techniques the authors used to tell readers about the protagonist. After I had finished all twelve books, I compared my notes to various developmental tasks defined by psychologists. There were five distinct developmental tasks portrayed in all twelve books, and with these tasks in mind, I analyzed each book to see how the protagonists engaged in each task. Again, distinct patterns emerged. From my analysis of all the books through the developmental tasks, I charted out the differences between the otherworld novels and the gateway novels to come to my conclusions.

Characteristics of Portrayal

From the twelve books I selected for this analysis, I selected six elements of narrative that characterize the portrayal of the protagonists and their worlds. These elements of narrative are part of a set of tools and signposts that authors use to drive plots, craft worlds, and create conflicts and tensions. These six elements – gender roles and behaviors, inclusion and isolation, magic and power, inner quests, close relationships, and physical traits and self-image – were selected because they related most closely to the books' themes and allowed for the most connections to be made between the books. The categories provide ways to discuss the ways that these young women are portrayed externally in the context of their worlds and internally in their relationships with themselves.

Gender roles and behaviors

Table 1. Gender roles and behaviors

		Open and varied roles for protagonist to choose from	Roles are strict: protagonist accepts them	Roles are strict: protagonist struggles against
Otherworld	Chalice		x	
	Fairest		x	
	Graceling			x
	The Naming	x		
	Singer of All Songs			x
	Terrier	x		
Gateway	East			x
	A Great and Terrible Beauty			x
	Marked		x	
	Tithe	x		
	Wicked Lovely			x
	Wildwood Dancing			x

Most novels ground characters in the larger context of a society, and the fantasy genre gives authors freedom to create societies much different from our own. Characters within those worlds may fit into their society or struggle against it; either way, their positioning within the larger framework of expected behavior and roles tells readers much about the characters themselves. Female protagonists may have more opportunities

to speak out, to hold positions of power and influence, to make their own decisions, and to choose their own destinies, depending on the type of world the author creates and how the protagonist is situated in that world. All the different portrayals of female characters and how they embody their world's concepts of what a woman should be provide a variety of models for readers to observe and provide new perspectives through which they can explore their own lives and worlds.

Otherworld novels usually include the building of societies as part of larger world-crafting, and authors of stories set in these worlds must make decisions regarding how women are expected to act and whether their protagonists will follow those expectations. Gateway novels provide opportunities for protagonists to experience two sets of societal expectations, and the way that protagonists fit and react to the conventions of new worlds allow authors to challenge the societal expectations of protagonists' own worlds.

Though the fantasy genre gives authors many freedoms that writers of other genres popular with teens (such as realistic fiction and historical fiction) do not have, not all fantasy books are set in worlds where women are free, equal, and without limits. On the contrary, many of the stories in the selected novels are propelled by tensions between the protagonist and her society. At the same time, not all of the novels in this study included gender role issues at the centers of their stories; though all the worlds made some sort of statement about what was expected of women, these expectations affected the stories and the characters with varying degrees of intensity.

I drew an initial distinction between novels with primary worlds which allowed female characters a wide range of freedoms in behavior and self-expression and worlds

which had strict, rigid social expectations. I had anticipated that more of the otherworld novels would provide female characters with more freedoms than characters in gateway worlds had; I came to find that few of the books chosen in either category had worlds that provided these freedoms. Perhaps this is because the tensions between characters' actions and the expectations of their world are powerful tools for characterization and moving the plot along, and teen girl readers may identify more readily with characters who experience limitations similar to the ones they face in the real world. The books that did not center on that tension had other issues that drove their plots. Notably, the two otherworld books that contained the least tension between their protagonists' actions and societal gender roles were the two books that fit certain narrative patterns most closely, namely the patterns of the police procedural novel and the epic quest.

Tamora Pierce's city of Tortall is modeled on the traditional fantasy setting of a medieval city blended with cultural expectations that may be more familiar to readers in the modern world. Pierce's first series, the Song of the Lioness quartet, explored gender expectations in the society of Tortall in depth; her later books set in Tortall seem to both build from the first quartet's foundations as well as purposefully branching off to explore new and different themes from her earlier writing. In Terrier, police-officer-in-training Beka Cooper (a "puppy") is shown the ropes by two more experienced "dogs." Beka breaks no new ground by being a female puppy; one of her own dogs, Clary Goodwin, is a woman, as is the chief of their precinct. Readers familiar with the Tortall books will already know that Beka Cooper will grow up to be the most famous Provost's Dog in the country's history. Her allies and enemies are men and women alike; among her strong female friends are a skilled mage, a swordswoman on the rise in the Court of the Rogue,

and a lady knight. Other women choose more traditional ways of life (though, in Tortall, all the roles mentioned so far are in some way traditional) as housewives, seamstresses, waitresses, and market vendors. However, Pierce displays the variety of occupations and roles women can hold without fanfare; Beka's story is about her training as a police officer, the solving of a mystery, and the meting out of justice, none of which are related to Beka's gender.

The epic quest form of Alison Croggon's The Naming does not necessarily push the novel away from focusing on gender issues (there are a number of epic quest fantasies that do focus on these issues); however, there is so much more going on that there is little reason to include exploring gender roles when they are not central to the story. Maerad, Croggon's heroine, grows up as she begins learning about her past and discovering her latent magical powers that come with being born a Bard. It is her growth as a Bard and as an individual that take precedence in this book, and her gender plays little part in that role. Both men and women may be Bards; some have the power in their genetic heritage while others develop the power without genetic predisposition, but the power comes to both genders alike. Within the Bard schools and society, men and women both participate in the same kinds of learning and the same types of magic, and all learn riding and swordfighting. The first school Maerad visits, Innail, is overseen by Oron, a woman. Differentiation of Bards by gender is an exception rather than a rule. Norloch, a school which is overseen by a corrupted Bard who has been working for the forces of the Dark, is characterized as fallen, in part, by the fact that the leader has ruled that Norloch will no longer accept female students. The other schools see this as a bad sign and a cause of worry; the larger standards of the world's society view women as equals to men in all

ways.

Gender roles and behavior were emphasized in most of the gateway world novels; however, Holly Black's Tithe is not a story that uses these societal expectations as a framework for the protagonist's actions. The protagonist, Kaye, has always felt out of place in her world, but this is due to the fact that she is a changeling, a fact unrelated to her gender. Between the worlds of the Seelie and Unseelie courts and the gritty urban atmosphere of New Jersey, it is easy for both readers and the main characters of the story to lose track of what is expected gender behavior. Early on in the book, Kaye is involved in a sexual encounter that leaves her feeling confused about why it happened; however, as she and her friend Corny cross over into the fairie realms and all expected limits on behavior fall away, Kaye discovers that her latent powers of enchantment had taken hold over the boy who had previously made advances on her. Kaye is both enamored of her own seductive power and under the sway of the same power of a fairie knight, while Corny, who had been spending his everyday life as a frustrated gay teenager, gladly becomes the plaything of a sadistic fairy knight from the other court. The otherworldly nature of the fairie kingdoms strips away the conventions of the human world, a world which had few limits (at least in Kaye's life) in the first place, and this world without rules is both freeing and dangerous.

The other nine books in the study included societal expectations for both women and men, though not all of the protagonists felt the need to challenge those expectations. In P. C. and Kristin Cast's novel Marked, the protagonist's acceptance of the gender roles of both human society and vampyre society seemed to deny her of the opportunity to grow through reflection on those roles. Zoey Redbird goes from her everyday life as a

highschooler with family problems to becoming the newest student at the House of Night, described by the authors as “vampyre finishing school” (as the Casts describe in the book's dedication). Zoey had been comfortable being the “typical” teenage girl the Casts describe, interested in makeup and shopping, and though moving to the House of Night makes her worry about how she will fit in and what it means to be a vampyre, she is very much at home with vampyre society's matriarchal structure and goddess-centered religion. The contrast between the two societies is drawn by the juxtaposition of Zoey's new school life with her former home life, where her shallow mother is bullied around by Zoey's stepfather, who wants to control his whole family and have them all live by the strict (and vaguely described) patriarchal religion he believes in. The common beliefs of the human world are portrayed negatively through the emphasis on Zoey's father's strict rules and conservative beliefs, while the vampyre world looks positive and good in comparison; however, because Zoey herself does not react to these societal expectations, they serve as little more than social commentary.

The other two books which feature women who embrace their society's gender roles use this portrayal to develop their protagonists in a way that the Casts do not. Gail Carson-Levine's Fairest is built around the story of a young woman who wants nothing more than to be pretty by the standards of her own society. Aza is not, as many other female protagonists seem to be, simply plain – she is ugly, and she deeply desires to be pretty in order to fit into society better. However, as Aza gets into a perilous situation that began because she made a deal with the queen to be part of court society, she faces situations that challenge her own desire to be beautiful. She discovers that the friendly, kind gnomes she loves are her relatives, which gives her new reasons to appreciate her

unusual features, and she discovers that the queen's beauty potion comes with a terrible cost – spending one's afterlife trapped in a magic mirror. Through her journey, Aza learns that she should have been valuing herself more than the opinions of the people around her, and her new confidence brings a happy conclusion to her story. In the case of Fairest, Levine makes statements against ideas the idea that women should be valued by their appearance by exploring the cost of measuring one's worth through the eyes of others.

Mirasol, the protagonist in Robin McKinley's Chalice, uses the role she must fill in her society to work against a corrupt government in order to save the land on which she and her people live. Mirasol is the Chalice, the second-highest head of local government in the demesne of the Willowlands. The Chalice has power in politics, religion, and in the actual prosperity of the land, and the rules about how to be a proper Chalice are strict and prolific; Mirasol must follow ritual structures, prepare her Chalice mixtures according to ancient recipes, and even stand in traditional postures. However, Mirasol discovers the heart of what it means to be Chalice when she learns that there is a plot to overthrow the Master, the man who governs the land at the Chalice's side. The Chalice is vitally connected to the land and responsible for its care; Mirasol uses her connection to the earth to help it heal, and it, in turn, helps her fight to keep the right Master. Though the rules of how to be a Chalice are confining and are used by other Circle members in sexist ways to keep Mirasol from interfering with their plot, she uses those rules for empowerment instead, in order to do what the rules were designed for – protecting and caring for the land.

Struggling against the gender roles of one's society was a prevalent theme in half

of the books in the study. While two of the otherworld books, Graceling and The Singer of All Songs explored gender roles in the context of an entirely author-built society, four of the six gateway world novels used this tension in depth, a high number from this subset of novels selected.

The Singer of All Songs is written for a slightly younger audience than most of the other novels in the study, and most of its heroine's story is focused on adventure and quest. However, Singer is different from The Naming in that Calwyn's world has many more strict rules about gender roles and behavior than Maerad's world has. Calwyn herself comes from a country where only women can learn the magic of chantment that creates ice and cold; as she travels with the sorcerer Darrow to different lands, she finds that she is thought of as a witch for being a female priestess, is deemed to be bad luck on ships because of her gender, and even sneaks into a city where women are forbidden to learn in the schools of metal chantment. Calwyn never simply accepts being told that she cannot or should not do something because she is a girl; though she runs across many limitations in her journeys, she follows her own decisions and usually breaks the limitations in the process.

The protagonist of Graceling, Katsa, defies gender stereotypes of her world in many ways. She possesses a Grace, the ability to do something with near-perfect skill, that is rare and threatening (and not at all proper for a lady of high birth like herself) – the grace of killing. When Katsa's story begins, she lives in fear of her own power, and that fear keeps her under the control of her tyrannic uncle, who uses her as his assassin. Katsa's greatest desire is for her own freedom, to not be controlled by any man, whether it be her uncle or the men who want to marry her, and she feels isolated because of her

Grace even as she uses the threat of it to keep others away to preserve her freedom. However, as Katsa's story progresses, she begins to find true freedom in learning to trust others and learning to understand herself; as she begins to work through the layers of protection she has built up around her heart, she begins to understand that her Grace is not of killing, but of survival. When Katsa stops letting others' distaste and fear of her change the way she feels about herself, she finds a way to forgive and understand herself, and this leaves her more free from being limited by society than before. She learns to value her Grace rather than fear it, and through that, she learns to value rather than fear herself. Katsa never marries or has children the way women in her culture are expected to do, but she is able to appreciate her own choices after coming to accept herself.

It is notable that three of the four gateway world novels that use societal gender roles heavily are set in historical periods distant from modern times: Northern Europe in the 16th century, 19th century Transylvania, and London and India during the late Victorian period. Edith Pattou's East seems to use the gender roles for the world of Rose, her protagonist, least of these three works. Though Rose dreams of being an explorer as a small child and does, in fact, go on to travel to many different lands with her White Bear and in search of him after he is taken away to the Troll lands, it is clear that her family and most of the people she encounters find it strange that a young woman would want to travel the frozen Northern wastelands. Rose defies the clear societal expectations for women in her own culture, but she encounters a number of other strong, unconventional women in her travels, from the Esquimo shaman Malmo, who helps her learn how to survive at the top of the world, to the misguided, obsessed Troll Queen who wishes to force the White Bear to be her husband. The roles for women in Rose's own

society do not seem to limit her; she focuses on her own goals, whether they be exploring or saving the man she loves from a life of enslavement under the name of marriage.

Rose defies her society's limits not out of rebellion, but out of love.

Jena, the protagonist of Juliet Marillier's Wildwood Dancing, faces threatening pressure to conform to gender roles as her cousin, Cezar, grows more and more hungry for power over Jena's family, their family trade business, and the land on which the family lives. Jena is trusted with the family finances when her father goes to a warmer climate so that he might live through the winter despite his illness, and she is used to the freedom of being able to go back and forth between the human world and the fairy realm that lies beneath the human reality of the estate lands. Cezar feels that the fairy realm robbed him of his brother and gave him nothing in return, and his grief turned to a maniacal need for control; he tries to force Jena and her sisters into “proper” womanly behavior (which means giving all their freedom and assets over to him) through threats and brute force. Jena stops his plan to control her sisters, the land, and herself by using her intellect and bravery to seek aid from the fairy queen of the forest, and order is restored once more, including Jena's freedom to determine her own life choices – a freedom which she asserted to set the situation to rights.

The Victorian world of Libba Bray's A Great and Terrible Beauty is a prison for Gemma and the other girls who come to be her friends at the boarding school she attends after the mysterious and tragic death of her mother. Each of the four girls who come together to reawaken the magic of the ancient society of women called the Order struggle against their society's gender expectations in one way or another. Pippa is forced to marry an older man she has no feelings for because her parents want to marry her off

before a suitor discovers she has epilepsy. Felicity wants to wield power and influence in a world where women are expected to be domestic and subservient. Anne has no other options for her life than to become a governess because she is too plain to marry well and too poor to have any other recourse. Gemma herself is the group's key to the magical realm they enter, and Gemma goes there to seek answers from her mother's spirit; she is limited herself in her quest to understand herself and the magic she is capable of by the fact that the Order has disbanded and gone underground, too powerful and dangerous in a society where women are to be kept down. Though the group discovers that the price of using magic for one's own desires can be steep, Gemma does not let go of her desire to unearth the secrets of the Order and learn who she truly is.

The fairy realm in Melissa Marr's Wicked Lovely is a mixture of modernity and ancient rules, making it similar to the historical worlds featured in the three other gateway novels with strict gender roles. The rulers of the Summer and Winter Courts may wear modern clothes and live in modern housing, but their roles are strict and unyielding. Aislinn, who has been able to see fairies all her life, finds herself at the center of the Courts' drama when Kenan, the Summer King, believes that she is the girl destined to be the Summer Queen. He must convince her to take up the staff belonging to his mother, the Winter Queen; if she is not the right girl, she will instead become the Winter Girl, a fairie being of ice and cold who must suffer until the next Winter Girl comes along or until the rightful Queen is found. If Aislinn refuses the test of taking up the staff, she will become a Summer Girl, a fairie in Kenan's court who will no longer be mortal, but will never have Kenan's love. Aislinn has few choices, and neither fate as a Winter Girl (suffering for love she can never have), Summer Girl (immortality with no

true emotional connection to anyone) or Summer Queen (a life with Kenan but without her lover Sean) is a good one. However, Aislinn uses the knowledge of how fairies think and what rules they must live by in order to bargain for a compromise, breaking the rules of the Court roles – and, by breaking those rules, she proves her power as the true Summer Queen.

Belonging and Isolation

Table 2. Belonging and Isolation

		Belonging	Isolation	Journey from isolation to belonging
Otherworld	Chalice			x
	Fairest			x
	Graceling		x	
	The Naming			x
	Singer of All Songs			x
	Terrier	x		
Gateway	East	x		
	A Great and Terrible Beauty		x	
	Marked	x		
	Tithe		x	
	Wicked Lovely			x
	Wildwood Dancing	x		

The ways that characters accept or reject gender roles may play into a larger sense of belonging in or isolation from their society, though this larger sense includes many other factors as well. Character's pasts, secrets, desires, and choices may lead them to feel grounded in the society around them or separated from it. The books chosen for this survey included protagonists who felt both ways about their relationships to the rest of their worlds. Many of the books focused on the tension between separation and

integration into society, with this journey forming a central theme of their stories. Group identity and social integration are important parts of the development of teenage girls, and it is no surprise that this theme would appeal to teenagers, male and female alike. Interestingly, four of the six otherworld novels included the journey from separation to integration as a central theme. I had expected the gateway world novels to include heroines who felt isolated from their own worlds, making the otherworlds more tempting; however, instead, I noticed that half of the books I selected had protagonists who felt grounded and comfortable in their own societies and, to a large extent, comfortable in the otherworlds they travel as well.

Two of the books with protagonists who felt isolated from their worlds through the course of their novels were, notably, two protagonists most ill at ease with the behavior expected of them and gender roles they were expected to fill. Katsa of Graceling is one of the few heroines who does not feel choose to integrate with the larger society of her world by the end of her story. Katsa forms stronger relationships with her friends, takes responsibility for a young queen, and learns love and trust through a relationship with a compassionate man who is her equal; however, though her relationships with this small group grow stronger and she finds a place for herself as a teacher of fighting skills, she never chooses to integrate back into society. All the things Katsa wants in life are not things she can have if she chose to fit in; she enjoys using her Grace to teach others, living with Po as a lover rather than as a husband, and having space and independence. Though Katsa is isolated, she gains the inner integration and strong friendships she desires, proving that choosing to be different does not have to mean being lonely.

Gemma of A Great and Terrible Beauty also does not find integration through her story. While Gemma, like Katsa, develops deeper relationships with her friends, helping her feel more integrated with a small group, the girls' use of magic and journeys to the other realm set them apart from their own world. They work hard to keep their otherworld a secret, and the act of keeping the secret separates them from the other girls in the school, including the former friends that used to be a part of Felicity and Pippa's clique. Pippa chooses the otherworld over her own world, choosing to stay behind in the magic realm rather than return to her epilepsy and her arranged marriage, the clearest break from human society in the book. Gemma herself came to boarding school feeling guilty for her mother's death and strange for her eerie visions; by the end of her story, she has a better understanding of the magic she and her mother have accessed, but she is almost more alone than before, her knowledge separating her out. However, the three girls choose freely to pursue something that separates them from the rest of their world because of the lure of what magic can bring, and separation is a part of that bargain.

Tithe's Kaye is a character caught between worlds. She has always felt ill at ease, “weird” in the human world, a fact she attributes to her mother's nomadic lifestyle and her odd appearance, but she comes to find out that she is a changeling – a fairy raised as a human, disguised under a powerful glamour. Yet Kaye has known only the human world for her whole life; the world of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts is alien to her, both alluring and dangerous. However, as Kaye comes to learn that she was traded as a baby and that the fairies had little concern for her wellbeing when they offer her up as a tithe, a sacrifice to seal an agreement for the independent fairies to give their service to the Unseelie court for seven years, she knows she cannot trust the beings of her own kind.

Kaye comes to feel most at home with others who fit into neither world yet come to know both, including her friend Corny and Roiben, the silver-haired knight who has been trapped in the political power-play between the two Courts.

Two of the protagonists who feel comfortable and integrated into their own worlds have a deep desire to protect them; to them, their worlds are under their care, and they are in the position of fighting off the forces that threaten their worlds' stability. Beka Cooper expresses this feeling the most; she is bound to protect her district by her profession, but she also feels a great loyalty to the people there, who helped her grow up into the young woman she has become. When children begin to be kidnapped, held for ransom, and murdered in the Lower City and when grown men and women begin to go missing, Beka is determined to see the criminals uncovered and justice served. Beka's feelings of kinship for the Lower City district are shown not only in her dedication to her cases, but also in the company she keeps. Beka understands that some who would be considered criminals – for instance, members of the Court of the Rogue – play a part in keeping the Lower City running. To catch the killers, Beka works with the people of the Lower City (savory and unsavory alike), to defeat the criminals who threaten them all.

Jena of Wildwood Dancing, too, has the desire to protect both her worlds: the home and family she loves and the fairy realm which holds many good, innocent creatures, even though parts of it are dark and dangerous. Though Jena fears and works against Cezar in her own world and the vampiric Night People led by Tadeusz in the Other Kingdom, she has allies in both realms – members of her household, her pet frog Gogu, the leader of the fairies of the moonlit glade, Illeana, and even the forest's witch-queen herself, Draguta. Jena wants both realms to coexist in peace and is prepared to

stand against the forces on either side that wish to control the other, whether that is Cezar wanting to cut down the forest or Tadeusz killing animals and young women in the night. Jena is a protector of both worlds, and has found a place for herself in each.

In East, Rose's comfort in the worlds around her is surprising. Much of her story is spent in the large, empty palace given to the White Bear for the duration of his time to end his curse, journeying alone or in strange company, or hiding among the Troll people while pretending to be a mindless softskin slave, placated by the drugged effects of a hot drink called slank. However, Rose's story is not about a need for belonging; in the same way that she pays little heed to what good young women are supposed to be like, she has little concern for connections with society at large. Rose's desire is to save the White Bear because she loves him, and this requires her to make choices that send her away from her family and into new territories. Even at the end of the story, Rose and Charles (formerly the White Bear) go to live on their own at a secluded estate, away from the rest of the world. In many ways, Rose's story resembles Katsa's; Rose, too, chooses what makes her happy and does not feel the loss of connection with society. However, unlike Katsa, Rose is able to make friends and fit in wherever she goes. In the White Bear's palace, she befriends a young Troll named Tuki, who helps her learn Troll language. She manages to win over the fierce wanna-be Viking sailor, Thor, to gain passage north. She and Malmo make good companions, and she even finds Tuki once more in the Troll lands while she plans her rescue of the White Bear. Unlike Katsa, Rose seeks out connection and finds it naturally, and even in lonely lands, she finds belonging as much as she can wherever she goes.

Zoey of Marked also seems to fit in easily, both in her high school as a human and

in the House of Night as a vampyre. She worries about fitting in when she first comes to the school, but she quickly makes friends – and enemies. The queen bee of the school, Aphrodite, leads the prestigious school club, the Dark Daughters, which prepares its leader for the eventual role of high priestess in the school. Aphrodite and Zoey are continually at odds, and Zoey must navigate Aphrodite's manipulative, cruel games; however, Zoey still enjoys having a close circle of friends and a budding relationship with Aphrodite's old boyfriend and the hottest vampyre in the school, Erik. As she begins to discover her affinity with the elements, a gift that indicates she may be destined to be the future high priestess, it becomes even clearer that Zoey fits in well in vampyre society. This makes Aphrodite's scheming seem to be only the whining of a jealous teen, with no lasting effect on Zoey's feelings about how she fits in. Though the Casts may have decreased Zoey's potential to show depth and growth as a character through this choice, her comfort in both worlds gives her confidence and spunk that may make her feel buoyant to readers.

Zoey's physical body changes from that of a human girl to that of a vampyre over the course of her novel; Wicked Lovely's Aislinn, too, changes from a human to a creature belonging to her otherworld, the Courts of the fae. However, unlike Zoey, Aislinn faces unavoidable and harsh consequences of her changing nature; she has no other choice than to become fae in some fashion, but no matter what, she will be a type of creature that her human friend and lover Seth is not. Though Aislinn feels caught between disparate worlds, she asserts herself because of her desire to keep the love she wants. In the end, Zoey finds a way to integrate her love for Seth with her role as the Summer Queen, a position that she has already begun to feel at home in by the end of the

novel. Aislinn goes from risking all for the possibility of nothing to having the best of both worlds, which includes having a place in both. Of all the protagonists in the gateway world novels, Aislinn is the only one who journeys through this process of being isolated to finding a place to belong. Though Kaye of Tithe goes through a similar process of trying to understand the implications of her fae nature, Kaye rejects the fairy world while Aislinn finds a way to accept her place within it.

Four otherworld books explore the theme of finding a place to belong from a past of being isolated in one sense or another. Aza of Fairest seems to feel her isolation in her society most keenly, with her burning desire to change her appearance. However, Aza possesses an amazing singing voice and a talent for ventriloquism, which give her strengths in Ayorthan society, where singing is valued more highly than almost anything else. When Queen Ivi discovers Aza's talents, she manipulates Aza into throwing her voice and singing for the Queen at all necessary occasions. Though helping the Queen gives Aza a chance to live at court and meet other nobles (including Prince Ijori, who falls in love with her), Aza remains isolated both because of her appearance and because she knows that she is supporting a lie. However, once Aza begins to come to terms with her feelings and works to set the situation to rights, Ijori forgives her for her participation in the Queen's deception. She and Ijori are married, and now that Aza feels comfortable with herself, she is able to feel comfortable with her people as well.

Calwyn's journey toward belonging begins in an atmosphere of sameness; the ice priestesses of Singer of All Songs live together, dress in the same yellow robes, and participate in the patterns of monastic life that discourage individuality. Though Calwyn loves her home with the priestesses with part of her heart, she finds her true family in the

group of people that form around her and Darrow as they journey to stop the sorcerer Samis from mastering all the forms of chantment magic known in the lands of Tremaris. Her friends come to include a young engineer who believes in science rather than magic, a former slave girl on a pirate ship who possesses a talent for wind chantment, and a young boy from a forest that grew over an ancient civilization's city who knows chantments of healing. Calwyn is more at home with others who have shared her adventures and have seen as much of the world as she has than with the priestesses who never leave their city ringed with ice walls.

Maerad's journey, too, takes the form of a quest which introduces her to new friends and allies along her way; however, Maerad's experience of finding belonging in a community is even stronger than Calwyn's because of the stark difference between her former life and her life as a Bard. Maerad has few memories of her early childhood, when she lived with her parents (both Bards) at the now-destroyed school of Pellinor. When the school was attacked, Maerad's mother fled with her, and they were kidnapped and sold into slavery. After Maerad's mother died, Maerad had no one, until the fateful day when she found the Bard Cadvan hiding in the cow byre. Upon taking up her role as a young Bard, Maerad discovers a whole society of people who are like her, who knew her family, and even respect that she has great power, a power she's still coming to understand. Along with finding a home among the Bardic society, she also finds her younger brother, Hem, and the two are reunited. The first Book of Pellinor introduces readers to Maerad by taking them along as she becomes a part of the society she is destined to save.

Discussing separation and integration as the terms apply to Mirasol of Chalice is

difficult; Mirasol's role necessarily separates her out from the woodskeepers she used to live among, while her gender separates her from the rest of the governing Circle. At the same time, being Chalice means that Mirasol is intimately connected with the earth and its creatures, particularly with the bees she has kept all her life and the leylines of energy beneath the soil, which she has always been able to feel. In one way, being Chalice separates her out, while, in another, it emphasizes her connection to the world more strongly than before. Mirasol's role as Chalice does not change through the course of the story; however, the way she uses the role does, and it is within the context of her understanding of her role that she moves from isolation to belonging. At first, Mirasol feels that she does a poor job as Chalice, despite her innate connection to the land, but through her work to protect the Master she comes to feel comfortable in her role and to feel that she is able to perform it well. This sense of belonging in her role corresponds, by definition of what it means to be Chalice, with her sense of belonging to the land and in the new, stronger government that will care for it.

Close Relationships

Table 3. Close Relationships

		Draw protagonist out into world or into action	Compel protagonist to voluntary action	Have little or no role in determining protagonist's actions
Otherworld	Chalice		x	
	Fairest		x	
	Graceling	x		
	The Naming	x		
	Singer of All Songs	x		
	Terrier			x
Gateway	East	x	x	
	A Great and Terrible Beauty		x	
	Marked			x
	Tithe			x
	Wicked Lovely		x	
	Wildwood Dancing		x	

Examining the ways that these young women fit the gender roles accepted by their societies and how they integrate themselves within their worlds help readers understand the external forces at work in shaping the characters. Another external force used to portray characters is the close relationships she forms with others. Though characters tend to relate to many characters in their stories, usually a primary relationship comes

forward, often one that is romantic. Teenage readers may look to relationships in books for modeling, especially during this period of their lives, when they are learning to develop positive relationships with romantic partners. Though many of the books in this study included a primary romantic relationship (or begin setting up such a relationship for sequel novels), some of the protagonists were most influenced by their friends or family members. I will discuss characters' relationships in the context of the relationships that matter most to them, whether they be romantic or not.

There are many ways to discuss how relationships shape characters; however, for the purposes of examining the differences between books set in otherworlds and gateway worlds, I looked at how each protagonist's relationships led her to interact with or act in her world. For these characters, as well as for the teenagers who read about them, relationships are a powerful motivation for action, and most of the books studied reflected that in their plots. Notably, there was a significant split in the ways protagonists' relationships led them to action between the otherworld novels and the gateway novels. In half of the otherworld novels, protagonists were usually drawn out into the larger world and into action by another character, to whom they become close over the course of the story. The majority of gateway world novels featured characters who transgress boundaries or set out on their own on behalf of the characters they hold dear. Though three of the books did not feature relationships that led the protagonist straightforwardly into action, there was no other commonality between these three; the protagonists of each have a variety of motivations other than relationships that lead them to act.

It makes sense that the four books which include relationships that draw the

protagonists out into their worlds to explore and grow are books that include quest plots. Katsa and Po in Graceling have a quest that must be undertaken in secrecy, though they have the support of Katsa's underground network; they pair their powerful Graces to dethrone a powerful king who has been using his own Grace – the ability to change how people think of him – to usurp power and treat his country poorly. Katsa stumbles onto Po's quest when she rescues his grandfather from imprisonment; as the two get to know each other and as Katsa learns the truth about this political situation, she decides that working with Po to dethrone the king is a just use of her Grace. Though Katsa joins Po because she feels it is the right thing to do, her feelings for Po are intertwined with her reasoning. Po is the first person she has ever trusted with her whole heart, the first person she believes has ever understood her. However, she feels betrayed when she learns that Po has been keeping his true Grace a secret from her; he uses the true Grace, the ability to know what others think about him, to excel in hand-to-hand combat. Feeling that Po has violated her thoughts and her trust, she agrees to accompany him on his mission because she believes in the mission itself. Yet her relationship with Po, which they heal over time, played a major part in giving her both the opportunity to use her Grace for something good and to change the ways in which she thought about herself, healing in ways that help her in their quest.

Calwyn of The Singer of All Songs is drawn from her ice-walled world of priestesshood by the mysterious Darrow, whom she finds on her side of the wall, injured, claiming to have flown over. As Darrow heals in the houses of the priestesses, Calwyn is awed and inspired by his stories of the wide world beyond. When Calwyn learns of a plot by one of the elder priestesses to offer Darrow as a sacrifice, she helps him escape,

following him out into the lands beyond the walls of Antaris and joining him in his quest to defeat Samis. However, it is not Calwyn's desire to adventure or any effort by Darrow that initially brings her along; she is swept away by the rushing river of melting water that carries Darrow beyond the ice-bound lands. Darrow and Calwyn have a tension in their friendship, with friction between Darrow's feeling that his experience entitles him to make all the decisions and Calwyn's headstrong nature. When Darrow begins to seem unreasonably controlling, Calwyn wonders if he himself wishes to master all chantments to become the singer of all songs, but she still trusts in him by the end of the novel. Also, over the course of their travels, it becomes clear that Calwyn's feelings for Darrow are deeper than friendship, though the possibility of a romantic relationship between the two is only touched upon in this book (the later books in the series explore this more). Though Calwyn comes to be a central part of the effort to defeat Samis, she began her part of the quest with the desire to follow Darrow, who comes to her as a refugee and becomes a dear friend.

Like Calwyn, Maerad also finds herself drawn forward into a great quest when a man mysteriously shows up in a place she calls home. The quest of The Naming is painted as a much grander, sweeping picture than that of Singer, and the details help readers feel more drawn into both the quest and Maerad's relationship with Cadvan, her Bard mentor. Unlike Calwyn, Maerad would be happy enough to stay at the school of Innail and learn from the people she comes to love as a second family there; however, Cadvan continues to convince her that she is important in the fight against the dark. Though he has persuasive arguments in favor of his case, Maerad chooses him to be her sole teacher because she is fond of him as a friend and trusts him as the older adult who

rescued her from her life of slavery. Though Maerad relates to him as a teacher and as a friend for the most part, it is clear that the chemistry between them hints at something more to come in later novels in the series. Cadvan is instrumental in helping Maerad learn to trust others, face her past, and understand her own potential as a Bard; since she sees him as the facilitator of this growth, she follows him through woods and wastelands and into danger.

It would be a misrepresentation of East to place it solely in either category of action I use to discuss relationships, for Rose makes two journeys out into the world. First, she agrees to go with the White Bear in exchange for prosperity for her family, and the White Bear takes her out of her familiar home world and to the edges of the strange, magical world in which he lives. Rose gets her first understanding of the White Bear's situation while she lives in his castle, though the White Bear must keep her from learning the nature of his curse if she is to have any chance of breaking it. In this part of the story, the White Bear has drawn her out into action that has been taking place ever since he was captured by the Troll Queen. However, when Rose accidentally crosses the terms of the curse and the White Bear is taken away to be with the Troll Queen forever, Rose's love for him compels her to seek him out, traveling to the Arctic Circle and into the kingdom of the Trolls to rescue him. Rose could not have saved the White Bear without knowing the information she learned while she stayed in his house, and she never would have come to know him in the first place had he not taken her from her home. The love story of East is strengthened by both types of relationship-related action, which is part of what makes it one of the most complete romance stories in this study.

A commonality between the two otherworld stories in which the protagonist feels

compelled to act because of someone she feels close to is that the protagonists of both stories have worlds to set right rather than quests to complete. Aza of Fairest is compelled to tell the truth to the court and the king because she knows that she is responsible for a portion of Queen Ivi's deception. But along with her desire to do the right thing, Aza holds hope that Prince Ijori will be able to forgive her, even if he can no longer love her. The fact that Ijori believed in her and supported her while she was still at court was part of what began to help her value herself instead of judging herself by her appearance. This new strength she begins to find, the strength fostered by her former relationship with Ijori, helps her stand up to do the right thing, tell the truth, and restore the land to a good ruler.

Chalice's Mirasol must set her world to rights by helping the Master hold his claim to his role. At first, Mirasol herself doubts his suitability for the position; he is barely human after his years in training as a priest of fire, with skin that is black from char rather than melanin and so hot that he burns others when he touches them without being prepared for it. But as she begins to spend time with him, Mirasol sees that the Master is good for the land and connected to it in his own special way, a connection which forms strong bonds between them, and Mirasol finds herself desperate to help him navigate the political intrigue and survive the duel that is engineered to remove him from power. It is this relationship, based on a gentle understanding of one another and a common love for their land, that compels Marisol to take extreme measures to heal the land. Knowing that her efforts may be futile, she journeys the borders of the Willowlands, performing healing rituals for the earth as she goes, finishing with the hill where the former Master and Chalice perished in a fire that scarred the land. Her belief

in the Master and support of him is what helps her heal the land, grow into her role as Chalice, and come to marry the Master in the end.

Along with East, three other gateway world books had action spurred on by characters in the protagonists' lives. In Wicked Lovely, the relationship that compels Aislinn to action is her love for Seth. Seth is the only person with whom Aislinn feels comfortable sharing her confusion and fear about the fairies' interest in her. Their friendship turns to a relationship as Seth does everything he can to support Aislinn and help her figure out what is happening, and the more Aislinn learns about how she will be torn from the human world, the stronger her feelings for Seth become. Her desire to keep her relationship with Seth is what drives her to fight the Winter Queen and bargain with Keenan; she is fighting not only for herself, but for Seth as well. The solid foundation of their relationship helps her find strength and serves as a resource for her that none of the fairies have – support without betrayal. Though the Winter Girl, Donia, and Keenan still love one another, they both know that they can never be together, and Donia will always feel the pain of loving someone who cannot give himself to her in return. Though they work together to get Aislinn instated as the Summer Queen, their constricted relationship causes hurt rather than comfort because they cannot give each other what Aislinn and Seth share.

Jena of Wildwood Dancing is motivated to act in different ways for the sake of her family member and for the sake of the man she discovers she loves – Costi, whom she discovers had spent the past decade as her pet frog, Gogu. Though Jena is the second-oldest daughter, after her father leaves, her older sister Tatiana begins to pine away for the love of one of the Night People she met in the Other World, a quiet man

named Sorrow. Jena stands up against the Cezar's efforts to harass her sisters, and she travels into the Other Realm at the dark of the moon, facing the dark creatures that come out at that time, to find seek answers for how to help her sister stop pursuing Sorrow. Eventually, Jena comes to see that Sorrow is not evil, and she begins to understand that the helping Tati and Sorrow do what they need to do to be together is the most loving thing she can do for her sister. When Gogu first turns back into a man, Jena feels that he broke her trust by not telling her what he was, and the Night People planted false visions in her head of Costi as a being of evil. When Jena reflects upon how she has rejected Costi, she sets out to win back his heart and his forgiveness. Jena's love for those who are close to her is at the heart of most of her actions and decisions.

Gemma Doyle's family has fallen apart and living within the confines of a young ladies' boarding school gives her little opportunity to develop romantic relationships (though she does begin to develop a relationship of a kind with Kartik, the young Indian man who followed her to England and is part of the Rakshana, a group dedicated to erasing all traces of the Order). In *A Great and Terrible Beauty*, Gemma is motivated most by her relationships with the three friends who come to share her secret. Though Gemma herself is tempted to return to other world time and time again by the opportunity to be with the spirit of her mother, she discovers the other world in the first place on her own. The more Gemma senses the dangers of traveling to the other world after hearing the cautionary tales from Mary Dowd's diary the less she wants to go, but her three friends press her to take them there, as they are unable to connect with it on their own. Gemma wants to help her friends change their lives to avoid the disappointing prospects in store for them, and her commitment to their friendship drives her to dare to use her

powers even as she becomes aware of just how dangerous they may be.

Though three of the books selected for this study did not emphasize relationships as motivation for protagonists' actions, relationships still played important roles in their stories. For Beka of Terrier, relationships with her friends, both from the streets and from the police force, help her see situations from many perspectives, which helps her solve the crimes, and her friends contribute their skills, coming together because of Beka's vision to catch the criminals. Beka's wide group of friends extends beyond the society of humans; she has a pet cat who converses with her, can hear the ghosts of the dead who ride on the wings of pigeons that inhabit the Lower City, and can speak with the whirlwinds of dust that form at the corners of streets. Beka's gift for magic, which allows her to communicate with other creatures in these ways, gives her the opportunity to form useful friendships and alliances which give her access to information outside of the human realm. Beka's friendships with all manner of creatures and people in many parts of society are a vital asset to her career as a future Provost's Dog.

The relationships that Kaye has in Tithe are fragile and tenuous; it is the uneasy nature of her alliances that keep them from solidifying into meaningful relationships. Kaye does care for her friends and works to save them, particularly when Corny gets left behind in the fairy mound and when Janet is lured into a lake to her doom by a kelpie. However, Kaye seems to remain guarded in all her friendships, and though she has to trust Corny and Roiben, she never seems to feel a strengthened bond with them through that forced trust. She and Roiben share an intense attraction to one another, and they work together to save each other from the perilous world of sacrifice and fairy court politics, but there seems to be a want of emotional connection between them. Kaye's

relationship with her family is even more distant; she has spent her life taking care of her drunken rock-star-wannabe mother as they go from club to club, and when they come to live with Kaye's grandmother in New Jersey, Kaye's only seems to want to escape her grandmother's rules. The atmosphere of mistrust in people and the lack of loving relationships in the novel help built its dark and gritty urban feel; the negative space left where meaningful relationships should be can portray characters and their actions effectively to readers as well.

The relationships that Zoey forms in Marked have little impact on her actions because those relationships are shallow. The only deep relationship Zoey shows evidence of having is her relationship with her grandmother; her interactions with her mother, her stepfather, her old friends from high school, her new friends at the House of Night, her new vampyre mentor, and her new vampyre boyfriend all have little basis. Zoey seems to go from place to place being liked because she's likable, without taking the time to develop deeper emotional connections and loyalties. This is perhaps due more to the tone of the book (which is written from Zoey's first-person perspective and includes lots of pseudo-teen-speak) than to Zoey's own emotional capacities; members of her circle of friends show little depth, without having more personality than the labels the Casts give them, including "black" and "gay" and "hayseed." The most complex relationship Zoey forms is her antagonistic relationship with Aphrodite, whose tormenting gives Zoey the most impetus to action of any other motivation in the book.

Body and Self-Image

Table 4. Body and Self-Image

		Protagonist's feelings about her body and appearance play little or no role in her story	Protagonist expresses contentment or happiness with her body and appearance	Protagonist expresses dissatisfaction or frustration with her body and appearance
Otherworld	Chalice	x		
	Fairest			x
	Graceling			x
	The Naming			x
	Singer of All Songs	x		
	Terrier		x	
Gateway	East	x		
	A Great and Terrible Beauty			x
	Marked		x	
	Tithe			x
	Wicked Lovely	x		
	Wildwood Dancing			x

One advantage of books as a story medium over television shows and movies is that readers have a measure of freedom in imagining how the characters and settings look. Some authors describe their characters' physical traits in great detail while others leave more up to readers' imaginations, but the details authors choose to provide about

how characters appear, how their appearances affect how others think of them and how they think of themselves are important tools of character portrayal. Teenage girls often struggle with their feelings about their own appearances in a youth culture where the way one chooses to brand one's self can be intimately tied to how well they get along with their peers and where they fit in social groups. Few girls feel entirely happy with their bodies, either in terms of their appearance or physical abilities. Books give readers a chance to see their own feelings and experiences mirrored in those of the characters, both through characters who are uneasy with their appearances and through characters who think about their bodies positively.

Of the many ways to discuss the self-images of the protagonists in these novels, I have chosen to focus my analysis on how the characters think about themselves. Some characters have primarily positive feelings about their appearances and are comfortable in their bodies, while others express dissatisfaction with their appearances and discomfort in their bodies. A significant third of the books included little or no reflection by the protagonist on her body; though her physical traits may be described, she has little to say about them and they do not particularly affect her understanding of herself.

The books which did not include much discussion of the protagonist's self-image may provide readers with a welcome respite from our own culture's focus on appearance. The protagonists in these books had other important issues on their minds, and readers might welcome chances to see young women acting, interacting, and reflecting without spending much time considering how they look. All five of the characters in this sub-set of books (two otherworld books and three gateway world books) were involved in some stage of a romantic relationship, which reinforces the message that love is not about what

one sees on the surface.

Though all five women become involved romantically with men, they may feel insecurities that do not relate to their appearances and, instead, relate to other qualities. Calwyn, the protagonist of The Singer of All Songs, is described in little detail; all readers really know about her is that she wears her dark hair in two plaits that fall down her shoulders. As she begins to develop feelings for Darrow, Samis preys upon her insecurities when he tries to convince her to join him, cloaked in the shape of Darrow. As Darrow-Samis reaches out to touch her, she realizes how desperately she wants Darrow to want her – however, her insecurities are related to her sheltered life, youth, and inexperience, not the way she looks. She recognizes that Darrow is both very learned himself and appreciates others who are the same, and she worries that she could not be engaging to him because of her limited knowledge. Darrow himself does not do much to reassure her; it is clear that he feels slightly superior to others and desires to learn more, traits that are part of why Calwyn sometimes wonders about his motives in seeking out Samis. However, Darrow does appreciate Calwyn, and by the end of the novel, she finds she has become more of the learned and well-traveled woman that she once believes Darrow would want instead of her.

Aislinn of Wicked Lovely also worries that the man she has feelings for, Seth, does not feel the same way toward her in return. Seth has a reputation for not getting into committed relationships, preferring purely physical short-term relationships instead, and since Aislinn enjoys the deep friendship she has already formed with him, she believes that he does not want a physical relationship with her, and she would rather have the friendship anyway. When she finally gives in to a kiss with him, it comes to a great

surprise to her when he admits that he had been waiting for months for her to let a romantic relationship develop. The friendship that has been built grounds their relationship, and though they are physically attracted to one another, their emotional bonds are what take the foreground. Aislinn's initial dismissal of the idea that Seth could be interested in her is not based on her own feelings about her appearance; instead, she bases her assumption on Seth's past behavior patterns and sees that they do not fit the relationship she has with him.

Mirasol of Chalice and Rose of East both have relationships with men who have unconventional appearances themselves, and both characters have more pressing concerns to save their men from greater dangers than winning them over with looks. Given the rules that apply to Master and Chalice, Mirasol does not think of the Master as a romantic prospect until the very end of the novel, for Masters and Chalices do not marry each other except under the most extreme of circumstances. At first, Mirasol believes that they cannot marry each other at all until her research turns up an exception – an exception that she learns will be used against her to force her into marriage with the new Master candidate being raised, Horuld, a move that those plotting against the current master would propose as being for the good of the land. With avoiding one forced marriage and frantically searching for ways to save the Master filling her mind, there is little call for her to reflect on her appearance in the story. The only time she does is when she realizes that Horuld is looking closely at her body; her feelings in response only clarify that thinking about her body is something she rarely does herself.

Rose has a particular characteristic that makes her stand out to the White Bear: she has purple eyes. It is clear, even from the simplistic poems the White Bear uses to

tell his story, that he finds Rose attractive. However, Rose herself comes to love the White Bear first in his bear form – a form which would not allow them to have any sort of romantic relationship. In this way, Rose is similar to Aislinn; the love they both share for their partners is built on something deeper than appearances first, before any physical relationship develops. And, like Mirasol, Rose's primary goal becomes saving the man she loves, a goal which requires her to risk her life in journeying sea and tundra and to bide her time as a slave to the Trolls while she forms a plan. We see that Rose has little thought for her own appearance when she weaves and sews the three dresses she makes while living in the White Bear's palace, one gold, one silver, and one the color of moonbeams. When she tries on the moonbeam dress, she is shocked to see herself in a mirror and think of herself as beautiful for the first time. Yet her relationship with the White Bear is built on a quiet trust and calm understanding that requires little mention of how Rose feels about her appearance.

Zoey Redbird of Marked makes few statements that give readers an idea of whether she feels she is attractive or not. However, unlike the characters in other books in this grouping, Zoey thinks about the appearances of other frequently, and other characters often comment on her looks. It is difficult to judge whether the comments of others reflect Zoey's own self-image when she provides no reaction to those comments. Though she has had many boyfriends and the vampyre heartthrob Erik is clearly very attracted to her, Zoey simply accepts these feelings of others without reflecting on them. Though the other women in this category base their romantic relationships on other measures of compatibility, Zoey and Erik seem to fall into a relationship without any other connection, other than their obvious physical attraction to each other, which makes

Zoey's lack of thought about her self-image particularly noticeable. Without any reflection, Zoey gives readers no clues as to whether she feels the same way about herself as the people around her do.

Only one protagonist in the selected books had particularly positive attitude toward her body. Beka Cooper of Terrier takes a practical approach to understanding her body. When she gives a description of herself at the beginning of her journal (which forms the narrative of the book), she describes her hair, her eyes, her stature, and even the size of her breasts, and she values her appearance for the surprising effect it has on others; she enjoys the fact that that effect isn't one of lust, but, instead, is one of slight intimidation. She is able to stare others down with her ice blue eyes, making them uneasy enough to give up information more readily. Her wiry yet solid build helps her keep from getting too beaten up on the job, and she wears her red hair braided back to keep it out of her way. Beka enjoys the ways that her body lets her do her job, and though she chooses to dress for practicality, she has had experience with men in the past and feels confident that she is attractive to men, if she had any desire in her current life to attract one.

The fact that a full half of the protagonists in this study had negative feelings about their bodies makes a strong statement about both the self-images many teenage girls hold and the models authors provide for them in the books they read. On one hand, teens can empathize with characters whose feelings and thoughts reflect their own, but, on the other hand, teens may need more examples of girls who view their bodies positively to help teens learn to feel that way about themselves.

The protagonist whose self-image issues have the most impact on her story is

clearly Aza of Fairest. Aza saw when she was small that others stared at her in curiosity and an amount of distaste, and she was exposed to these reactions day after day in her adopted family's inn, where she lived before being taken to court as an emergency substitute for a duchess's maid. Internalizing the looks of others both as a child and when she becomes the subject of malicious whispers and teasing at court, Aza feels that she is less than the other ladies of the court, and this makes her easy prey for the manipulations of Queen Ivi. Aza's desire to be beautiful takes hold of her most strongly when Queen Ivi blames Aza for the whole plot to disguise Ivi's singing with Aza's ventriloquism. Left alone in Ivi's chambers, Aza uses Ivi's mysterious beauty potion. Her elation at being beautiful is, however, soon dimmed by the fact that it changes little about her situation. Aza learns through harsh experiences that valuing her inner beauty and believing in others who value that beauty makes for a better life than judging one's self by the surface, but she struggles with body issues more than any other protagonist in this set of novels.

Katsa of Graceling has a difficult relationship with her body in a different way than Aza: though Katsa is a beautiful young woman, she does not want to be because of the male attention it brings her way, and she fears the lethal power her body is capable of when she fights. The first time Katsa's Grace manifested was when a man in her uncle's court tried to touch her inappropriately; Katsa lashed out in fear and anger, as shocked as anyone else that she killed him in her struggle. Katsa's feelings about her Grace and her feelings about her body are intimately bound together. Her discomfort with the ways that her body betrays her, attracting unwanted attention through her beauty and holding fighting skill that she must concentrate to control, plays a large role in the isolation she feels and the anger she holds for both the world and herself. However, the trust she

builds with Po allows her to begin feeling comfortable with her body, finding healing through the experience of opening up physically to someone who has no desire to control her. Katsa begins to make peace with the capabilities of her Grace when the experience of trekking through a dangerous mountain pass in the winter shows her that she is built for survival and preserving her life against threat rather than for emotionless killing. The new light shed on her Grace gives Katsa a new way to understand and make peace with her body. This process forms a core theme of the book.

Maerad of The Naming does not deal with body and self-image issues nearly as much as Aza or Katsa; most of her inner concerns are turned elsewhere. However, Maerad's reflections on her body, when she does have them, reflect a past that she shares with Katsa – a past of assault. Her life as a slave at Gilman's Cot was harsh, and she built up a harsh, thorny nature to drive away the men who tried to have her after the initial experience of assault, and she has trouble trusting men when she first enters Bardic life. Her instincts to protect herself cause her to lash out and hit Dernhil, the teacher and friend who develops feelings for her, when he tries to kiss her. The misunderstanding is mended, but Dernhil is killed by agents of the Dark soon after, and Maerad's reflection on the experience cause her to begin to rethink the walls she has built around herself. Her discomfort with her body manifests in other ways as well: malnutrition caused her body to postpone menarche as well, a phenomenon that frightens her when it first occurs while she stays at Innail. When Maerad is given a fine dress to wear for the first time rather than her rough work clothes, she feels strange in it – a feeling which is understandable, given her past. With the past she has, it is little wonder that Maerad feels comfortable with her body, and her period causes her pain and trouble at different times in her

journeys until an ancient spirit of the forest gifts her by curing those pains forever. Though Maerad begins to understand that she can live safely and comfortably as a woman Bard and that her body and appearance do not necessarily bring pain, this understanding does not manifest (in this novel) as a more positive body image.

None of the heroines in the three gateway world books have the same deep-seated discomfort with their bodies that Aza and Katsa feel. However, like both of these characters, Kaye of Tithe has physical traits that make her feel strange and unusual in her world. Kaye's physical traits reflect that she is an outsider in both the human realm and the fairy realm; she has always felt weird as a human, having Asian features and blonde hair (a number of male characters remark that this makes her ideal for Japanese schoolgirl fantasies). When she begins to remove the glamour that the fairies put on her when she was a changeling baby, she discovers that she has green skin, dark black eyes, and wings – characteristics of a pixie – but she is still the full size of a human. Kaye never seems to feel at home in any place, including in her own skin. In a way, Kaye does seem to feel increasingly comfortable with the powers of glamour, the powers to change the way she appears, as they develop; the encounter which turns sexual between her and her best friend's boyfriend makes her feel uneasy early on in the book, but when she discovers the power of glamour, she uses it to taunt him before ripping it away. The message that the way to feel comfortable with your body by putting up a mask to change how you appear is questionable, and the intensity with which Kaye uses glamour implies that it doesn't actually help her address her feeling about her self-image.

Jena of Wildwood Dancing and Gemma of A Great and Terrible Beauty feel frustration with their bodies that is linked to the limitations put upon women in the

historical periods in which they live, and their self-images are very much tied to the gender roles acceptable in their societies – and, taken into account with those gender roles, their dissatisfaction with their bodies may not be a bad thing. Jena recognizes that her sister, Tati, is the beauty of the family, but Jena's plainness does not bother her as much as her discomfort at the idea of being put on display as a prospect for marriage. When Jena's aunt begins to raise the idea that the girls should host a ball to introduce them to eligible young men in the area, Jena balks; she has no wish to be married based on her appearance at a ball and is repelled by the idea of having to market herself in this way. Though this discomfort she expresses may not be empowering in the sense of positive self-image, it shows her mature and deep way of thinking about love. In the end, she marries Costi, who, as a frog, spent years being ironically physically close to her. In a society where women are expected to be fragile, delicate, and valued for their beauty, Jena's rejection of valuing herself through these terms gives a positive meaning to that rejection.

Gemma, too, recognizes that she is not the beauty of her group; she and Anne pale in contrast to the dark and light beauties of Pippa and Felicity. Witnessing Anne's desperation to be beautiful and the way that Pippa's beauty is little consolation to her in the face of her epilepsy, Gemma feels desperate and desolate over the ways that young women in her society are valued for such meaningless, ephemeral qualities, including beauty. Gemma's frustration with her body is rooted in the fact that it limits her and causes her to be judged only by her attractiveness. On top of the burden of attractiveness being their only currency, the young women continually face messages that their bodies are sinful and wicked; their attractiveness gives them their power but also labels them as

the causes of the fault of lust in men. Trapped in this dichotomy, Felicity, especially, pushes the limits given to her in the human world and dreams up a way of living without limits as a Dianic huntress in the otherworld. Gemma's appearance and body are part of what doom her to be subject to the rigid limits of the gender roles in her time, and her dissatisfaction with those roles is more inspiring and positive to readers than if Gemma had accepted them, either through her actions or through her own ways of thinking about her body.

Inner Quest

Table 5. Inner Quest

		Self-awareness	Self-assertion	Filling fated destiny
Otherworld	Chalice			x
	Fairest	x		
	Graceling	x		
	The Naming			x
	Singer of All Songs		x	
	Terrier		x	
Gateway	East		x	
	A Great and Terrible Beauty			x
	Marked			x
	Tithe	x		
	Wicked Lovely			x
	Wildwood Dancing		x	

Finally, perhaps the most important element of character portrayal is the internal journey that each protagonist goes through and the discoveries she makes over the course of her story that cause her to grow and change, becoming someone different from the person she was on page one. Young adulthood is characterized by the processes of experimenting with identity and discovering one's self, and the protagonists of these novels mirror that process in different ways. To accomplish their goals, each protagonist must come to terms with her experiences in some way that allow her to step forward into

the resolution of her tale. Teenage women may look to these protagonists for examples of how to make sense of the experiences of their lives and how to synthesize them in order to achieve their goals.

Three major patterns of inner quests emerged from this selection of books. Some protagonists went through inner journeys of discovering parts of who they are that were hidden from them and coming to accept and integrate those parts into their self-identities. Other characters achieved their goals by stepping up to assert their own knowledge, discoveries, desires, and abilities, applying these parts of themselves to bring about positive resolutions to their stories. Many of the protagonists in these stories discovered greater purpose in their lives by finding that they were important threads in a greater tapestry, taking up their places in fated destinies and coming to terms with the responsibility of those fates. This type of inner journey, in particular, is popular in the fantasy genre, and the grand scope of many fantasy novels lends itself to this theme.

We have already seen many parallels between Fairest's Aza and Graceling's Katsa; here again, Aza and Katsa both go through similar journeys of coming to understand and act in their worlds by learning more about who they truly are and integrating that knowledge into their worldviews. For Katsa, this journey includes many of the other strong themes already explored: coming to relate to her world despite the gender roles she does not wish to follow, becoming more comfortable with her body and its abilities, learning to trust others and herself. To survive her journey through the mountain pass, to trust Po enough to leave him behind, and to reach out to him when she comes back for him, Katsa must put trust in the new ways of thinking that her relationship with Po has taught her. By being aware of what she has learned about herself and the world around

her, Katsa is able to bring the proper queen to the throne and find her own happiness.

Aza, too, goes through a process of integrating things she learns about herself into the ways she thinks about herself and her world. Aza literally does not know who she is at first; as an orphan, she has no idea who her true parents are. Though her adoptive family is very loving, Aza knows she is different (especially through her appearance – a difference she thinks of as bad). Her lack of knowledge about herself leads her and the people of court to believe that she is part ogre when she is blamed for Ivi's deception. Ogres are cruel, bloodthirsty, and manipulative; Aza struggles with the idea that this may be a part of her heritage. However, when she has nowhere else to turn, Aza comes to the underground land of the gnomes, where she is given refuge and discovers that it is gnome blood, not ogre, that flows in her veins. As Aza learns about the people she comes from, the feelings of Prince Ijori, and the price that she would have to pay for trying to be someone she is not, Aza comes to value herself in a new way. This new understanding of herself gives her the strength she needs to bring about the resolution of her story.

Kaye of Tithe has a lot to discover about herself; like Aza, she comes to find that her heritage is something completely different from what she expected. However, while Aza is comfortable in the gnome kingdom, Kaye cannot bear the thought of joining the fairies who gave her away, who change and take the lives of humans without thought. It is her experiences of relating to the fairies, both when she thinks of herself as human and when she thinks of herself as one of them that convince her that the fairy courts are wrong and corrupt. By coming to understand who she is, a creature of both worlds and neither world, she finds where her loyalties do lie and discovers whom she can trust: Roiben, who takes the throne of the Unseelie court and begins a new reign with new rules

for his people of the fairy kingdom. It is Kaye's journey of fighting to understand her place between these kingdoms that facilitates Roiben's rise to the throne. Kaye's inner journey is one of change and understanding for both herself and for the otherworld of which she is a part.

All four protagonists who work to assert themselves effectively to achieve their goals have specific aims they want to accomplish and must use their inner resources to bring those goals to fruition. The two protagonists of the otherworld novels who set out to accomplish their goals in this way have villains to take down, and neither of them work alone; by asserting their unique strengths, both Beka of Terrier and Calwyn of Singer of All Songs bring down the threats against their worlds.

In Calwyn's story, in particular, the villain is defeated by the group of chanters and adventurers as a whole; however, Calwyn has been the voice of encouragement along their way and has used her intelligence and powers of ice chantment to get them out of various scrapes. Calwyn contributes to the group by using her talents and her mind. Because the group dynamic seems to take the foreground toward the end of the novel, readers do not get as much of a chance to hear Calwyn's personal thoughts and reflections, which is disappointing after thinking of the story primarily as hers for most of the novel. However, Calwyn's story is continued in two sequels, and this initial volume emphasizes her independence and her willingness to take action.

Beka Cooper takes a much more assertive stance to using her knowledge and skills to solve crimes and see that justice is served. With a natural inclination towards knowing how to talk to people to gather information, an analytical mind, enough energy to chase criminals all the way across the city, and a passion to see her cases through,

Beka struggles most with feeling that she may be overstepping her bounds as a Puppy; she fears that her Dogs may be offended that she does extra work, and worries about how much to tell them of what she learns. However, Beka is lucky to have understanding Dogs and enough social savvy to work out how to navigate police politics (despite making a few missteps). Her hard work and clear, focused vision win the over entire police force, helping her find the support she needs to break both cases, which are so large that the Dogs worried they would never be able to solve. Beka's success lies in her hard working nature and the skills she builds, and she accomplishes her goals by growing into those skills, mastering them, and using them.

Rose of East also has a quick mind and a fierce determination, and she needs both these things to save the White Bear. When Rose stays with the White Bear in his palace, she does not sit idly; instead, she industriously weaves garments on the palace's fine loom (two of which she trades later for services as she journeys North and one which serves as her disguise at the Troll wedding ball), she makes friends with Tuki (who teaches her Troll language, which she uses later), and washes her own laundry (a skill which is the final key to her rescue of the White Bear). Her initiative to take action and to learn new things are the parts of her nature that lead her to attempt her rescue, and her quick thinking helps her survive and outwit the Troll Queen. By asserting the best parts of herself, Rose saves Charles and frees him from his curse.

Jena sets out to save both her family and an entire realm in Wildwood Dancing. Though the powers of decision-making that should have been in her hands are taken over by the grasping Cezar, Jena bravely takes initiative to travel to the Other Realm to gather information to help her sister, uses her wits to contact Draguta, and perseveres

determinedly to win the forgiveness of Costi. Jena is the leader of her four sisters, taking responsibility for them (even Tati, the elder), and her father left her in charge of the household and his accounts, roles that show her responsible nature, independence, and strength in her own world, and she is the sister who bargains with Illeana, Tadeusz, and Draguta of the other realm. Even Cezar is attracted to her because she has the most spirit of her sisters. Though Jena faces the reality of being a woman in her society when Cezar disempowers her so easily, emphasizing that she has been spoiled in being allowed to be so independent, she still manages to use the best of her inner resources to own her own power. Her efforts are rewarded: her love and care for Gogu as a frog frees him from his transfigured form, and Costi had seen the way Cezar had treated Jena and her family since her father left (Costi had even learned how to run a business by watching Jena's lessons from his perch on her shoulder). Jena's independence and refusal to give up her power and be less than who she is saves her family, her lover, and both realms she loves.

Five of the heroines in this set of books grow and change by finding the place that their own stories play in a larger tale. These heroines are no ordinary women: they are chosen ones, priestesses, queens, and leaders. In order to understand themselves, they must understand the greater tapestry of which their thread is the weft. This theme is played out in some stories on a grand scale, most notably for Maerad in The Naming. In the world of the book, prophecies foretell the coming of a Bard known as the "Fire Lily" who will lead the defeat of the forces of the Dark. Maerad first learns that she might be the famed "Fire Lily" from Dernhil, who found a forgotten prophesy in one of his library manuscripts; when Maerad tells Cadvan about the prophesy after Dernhil is murdered, he believes that Dernhil's suspicions had been right. Maerad herself doubts that she is who

the older Bards believe her to be, but when she goes through the ritual that will help her come fully into her powers, she hears her true name, the name of power that comes to each Bard during the rite. Her name is Elednor, which means, of course, "Fire Lily." Maerad's inner journey in this first book in the series takes her from life as a downtrodden slave to an empowered Bard who has begun to understand her part in fighting in a great war, and she becomes more prepared for that fight.

Mirasol has been chosen by the earth to be the Chalice in a much smaller land, but to her demesne, she is no less important than Maerad to her own land. Before she became Chalice, Mirasol was a simple beekeeper, who took over her parents' business of selling honey when they died. However, even as a beekeeper, she could feel the energy of the earth in the leylines beneath it and in the moods of her hives of bees. In the period between when the old Chalice died and the new Chalice was chosen, Mirasol's bees began producing honey at an extremely rapid pace, her goats gave buckets upon buckets of milk, and her mead kept bursting its casks and overflowing in her basement; the land needed her so deeply that its call to her completely overwhelmed her daily life. Mirasol doesn't feel settled in her power until it has already been tested to its limits by the situations she faces in her story, but facing the trials of healing the land gives her the opportunity to own the role her demesne has chosen her to fill.

Destiny is behind the abilities of half the protagonists in the gateway novels to access the otherworlds they access. Though readers are led to believe at first that Zoey is marked by the vampyre tracker because of the genetic variation that she carries, it becomes clear as Zoey enters the vampyre world that she is unique among vampyres. Zoey goes through developments that usually don't happen to fledglings until they go

through the change: the crescent moon mark on her forehead is filled in instead of being an outline and she craves human blood. More signs of her uniqueness are related to her experiences with vampyre religion: she is the first vampyre ever to be able to feel all five elements and receives a vision from the vampyre goddess Nyx. Zoey uses her affinity for the elements, her knowledge of Cherokee rituals from her grandmother, and her connection with Nyx to stop the ritual held by classmate Aphrodite which nearly goes awry. Clearly, Zoey is destined to be someone important to the vampyres, and she seems to step into that role without question. Once again, the ease with which Zoey accepts her specialness takes away a chance for her character to be more deeply developed, though this shallowness fits with the rest of the novel. The Casts could have explored Zoey's feelings about her mysterious role in order to help readers better understand her character and gain more from reading about her than a play-by-play action story.

Aislinn of Wicked Lovely knows that she is unusual because of her gift of the Sight, but the trait runs in her family; the fact that she does not know whether she is the Summer Queen or not (and neither does Keenan or anyone else in the faerie kingdom) is part of the brave risk she takes. Though Aislinn's bravery and wit are part of what make Keenan believe that she is the fated Queen, she has no way of knowing whether taking up the Winter Queen's staff will result in her transforming into the being who will be Keenan's partner or into the icy Winter Girl, doomed to keep the staff until the next possible Summer Queen comes along to be tested. Aislinn has no choice than to become part of the world of faerie in one way or another; she further shows her bravery by rescuing Seth and Donia from the Winter Queen and by devising a way to stay with Seth. Aislinn's inner journey is different from the journeys of the other protagonists in this

category in that it culminates with her choosing to change the role to fit her rather than changing herself or giving anything up in order to fit the role's strict rules. Her decisiveness and empowerment are part of what show Keenan that she may be his true Queen, and these traits will help her in her reign.

Gemma Doyle, too, shares a heritage of being able to access her own otherworld passed down through her mother. Gemma has a vision in the middle of the street in India, where she sees her mother commit suicide to avoid being consumed by a shadowy creature that comes after her mother and a mysterious man her mother knows in a marketplace. Gemma's mother had given her a necklace with a crescent symbol on it which she learns was the symbol of the Order. In the visions that come to Gemma, she meets a little girl who leads her to Mary Dowd's diary, hidden in the back of a cave near the school. Clearly, there are forces at work in the otherworld which wish for Gemma to come into her full potential for using her power to access the magical realm. Gemma is only beginning to discover the scope of the world she has learned to enter and the two societies, the Order and the Rakshana, that she has come into contact with. However, Gemma's power has prepared her to step up and meet the challenges of dealing with her two worlds and the warring organizations, and by the end of her first book, she feels ready to take up the quest to learn more.

Analysis of the Five Aspects of Portrayal

The two categories of novels are distinct from each other while still sharing some surprising similarities. The books were most similar in the various ways that their protagonists viewed and felt about their bodies. No matter what type of worlds characters came from or what worlds they traveled to, the majority of protagonists in these novels dealt with self-image issues in some way in their stories. Though reconciling self-image was a major theme in only a few of the novels, most authors used characters' changing feelings about their bodies as a tool of portrayal. This reflects the reality of the concerns of teenage girls, and it seems that fantasy books for this demographic are at least tuned into those concerns. Few books portrayed characters who were satisfied overall with both their appearance and the physical capabilities of their bodies. However, characters' dissatisfaction with their bodies was not always expressed in the same tone. Aza's almost obsessive desire to be beautiful sits in contrast to Jena's desire to marry for love rather than because a man finds her attractive. The different ways in which characters can express their feelings about their bodies could be an interesting subject for future analyses of books in this genre. Though more books with protagonists who have positive feelings toward their bodies (especially whose bodies may not conform to the modern media ideal) could provide much-needed modeling for young women, characters like Jena and Gemma who reject their own cultures' ways of thinking about the female form provide a different type of positive role model. Positive role models could potentially be found in either category of novels. Otherworld novels

could provide settings of different cultures and traditions that might foster more positive attitudes toward body image for teenage girls in those cultures. Gateway world novels may provide even more potent examples, if they portray teen girls who live in our own world and feel good about their bodies despite our own culture's messages that are counterproductive to that aim.

The selected books all shared patterns of characters' inner growth and development that were not limited by the otherworld/gateway world distinction. I was surprised to find that gateway novels used destiny so heavily as a means of giving the protagonist access to the otherworld; I had expected destiny to play a larger role in the otherworld novels in the style of epic quests. Overall, destiny seems to be a great motivator in the fantasy genre, particularly for this age group; it makes sense that teens would want to read about unique individuals who stand out, having special lives, when they are going through a period of intense self-involvement. It seems that both types of fantasy novel can facilitate all these types of inner quest well.

Though the two categories shared similar portrayals of character through body image, the gender roles available to the characters in their societies differed significantly between categories. Though few books in either set provided women with a wide variety of roles (including roles equivalent to those of men), more of these books fell in the otherworld category, as well as more books with protagonists who were content with the roles allowed for them. However, many of the books in both categories with protagonists who struggle against the strict gender roles of their societies provide more examples of strong women who would rather follow their own desires and be themselves instead of being what their societies say they should be. Katsa, Calwyn, Jena, Gemma, Aislinn, and

Rose all follow their own inner voices, believing in themselves and acting from that belief, in the face of societies that would limit their freedom, and they may inspire young women to work to change their own societies and be themselves, even when that means being different.

Most of the books in the study included characters who were integrated into a social group in some way or another, even if they did not conform to their larger society's gender roles. Generally, more protagonists made the journey from isolation to belonging over the course of their stories, especially in the otherworld books. This movement mirrors the developmental process that teenagers go through in learning to interact with others and identify with their peers. Though this progression was most typical in otherworld books, the gateway world books tended to include protagonists who felt that they belonged in their own worlds – a pattern that surprised me. I had expected that more protagonists would feel isolated, which would give the otherworlds they contact more influence over them and attraction to them. However, many of the gateway world protagonists felt comfort in their own worlds that gave them strength to cross over between worlds and do what they needed to do. The characters in all three books who felt mainly isolated had stories with the darkest themes of the selections, though their isolation seems to give them the most to gain: Katsa achieves that gain in her story, and readers may look forward to Kaye and Gemma finding their own gain as their sequels further their tales.

The final difference between the two sub-sets of books is in the ways that relationships motivate protagonists to act. I had expected a high number of protagonists in both categories to be drawn into action already in motion by characters they meet;

however, this was true for the otherworld novels more than the gateway novels. While many otherworld protagonists met people who drew them out to explore their worlds further, many of the gateway novel protagonists were compelled into action by characters already in their worlds rather than drawn into their otherworlds by someone from the other side. This motivation often spoke to the protagonist's loyalty and devotion, serving to highlight these parts of their character with this tool of portrayal.

Otherworld Novels vs. Gateway Novels: Implications

The significant differences between the otherworld and gateway novels cannot be used to generalize all novels in either set. However, the trends in the differences may help librarians who wish to build fantasy collections for this age group have a better understanding of how books in both categories contribute to a balanced collection. Both sets of novels address the issues that their readers face, but in some ways, their approaches to dealing with those issues tend to be different.

The otherworld novels have three particular strengths: they tend to feature emphasis on a journey toward being integrated into society or a peer group, they feature close relationships that draw protagonists into the action, and they portray a wider variety of gender roles for young women. The variety of gender roles is the most immediately perceptible advantage to collecting these novels for teen girl readers. Seeing examples of girls who are like them in some ways yet who have new and different ways of living as women in their own cultures, young women can be inspired to think beyond the limits that their own enculturation may have them place upon themselves.

The close relationships that pull protagonists out of the mundane and into their own adventures are powerful to readers; as teenagers learn to navigate friendships and romantic relationships, these relationships have great pull on their own lives, becoming the center of their worlds. As relationships pull Calwyn, Katsa, and Maerad into epic quests, they also pull these characters into situations where they learn more about themselves. Though readers may not be magic-wielding warrior maidens, the

relationships underpinnings beneath the epic stories form an emotional core to stories that makes them very relatable to these readers, with an exciting, imaginative outer layer.

Otherworld novels often tend to address the power of relationships through emphasizing how relationships can pull one's life in certain directions, a feeling very familiar to readers.

Otherworld novels also seem to be prime grounds for building stories that take a protagonist from isolation to belonging. As teens learn to understand relationships with other individuals, they also learn to relate to the larger world and to find healthy, productive ways to inhabit their worlds. Otherworld novels are well suited to address this developmental concern by illuminating that process of exploring self-identity in context of the larger culture. Authors' freedom to construct new cultures, societies, and situations for individuals provide many imaginative avenues for characters to be different and to go on journeys to find places where they belong. Whether characters have special abilities, live in unusual locations or circumstances, or have unique roles to fill, the freedom provided in otherworld novels allows them to find ways to fit in and relate to their own worlds.

While otherworld novels seem to highlight new possibilities and opening horizons, gateway world novels seem to focus more on struggles to reconcile realities – a tension which makes sense in books that tell the stories of girls caught between two worlds. Gateway novels tend to present examples of young women with fewer choices, but the ways that protagonists deal with these limited choices also provide inspiring examples to readers. Though gateway world novels tend to portray characters who face stricter gender roles, these characters find powerful ways to work against those roles, and

their deep connections and loyalties to others and to their own worlds are part of what make them strong, empowered women.

Many of the young characters who live in societies with strict gender roles have feelings that may mirror those of readers, who also live in a world where girls are expected to look and behave certain ways. Many people and groups in our own culture fight gender stereotypes and limits; different feminist perspectives have formed a framework of dissent that is familiar, at least in some way, to young women growing up in our culture. The “feminist” characters in gateway novels who struggle for their own rights to decide who they want to be, provide examples that teen girls can look to in their own fight for the rights to determine their own identities.

The close relationships that characters in gateway novels form often provided impetus for them to act, compelling them to take up action and responsibility on behalf of themselves and others. This way of approaching teens' concerns with forming relationships addresses the power of relationships in a different way; these novels tend to explore the effects of the decisions we make based on our close relationships. As Aislinn, Jena, Gemma, and Rose take action in their worlds, readers are given opportunities to see the outcomes of decisions motivated by different forms of love and connection. In real life, we can never know if the decisions we make will have positive or negative consequences; gateway novels provide interesting, engaging stories focused around decisions of the heart.

The young women of gateway novels tend to have strong feelings of connection to their own worlds, or, conversely, they feel a strong lack of those connection. Both the deep loyalties and stark isolationism expressed by these characters provide examples of

experiences that may mirror those of readers. While teenagers are working toward being integrated into their worlds, their everyday experiences are often of anything but integration; the experiences of these readers may be more like those of Kaye or Gemma. At the same time, the contrast between the real worlds and the fantasy worlds in these novels is what makes many of the characters identify their own feelings of loyalty and belonging in their own worlds; reading about this contrast may help some teens find ways to identify with their worlds as well.

Conclusions

Though I began this study attempting to find a definitive answer of whether gateway novels or otherworld novels provide more developmentally appropriate models for teenage women, the process of reading and analyzing them has shown me that the two categories of novels both address the developmental needs of teenage women, just in different ways. Finding the right novel at the right time for any particular teen is about more than matching themes and characters to a reader's life; as Blackford's readers emphasize, enjoyment and fulfillment through reading is as much about exploring new and different experiences as it is about seeing one's own experiences on paper – and, indeed, the things that are different are the most exciting and attractive. Having a better understanding of the factors at work in what makes otherworld fantasies and gateway world fantasies different from one another can help a librarian or teacher recommend books suited to the tastes of a particular reader; the work of this study shows that the differences lie mainly in the novels' structures rather than in the portrayal of their characters. Characters who portray strong young women who relate well with their worlds, engage in healthy close relationships, and challenge the limits put on them by society can be found (and can be absent) in both types of books; if we, as educators, are seeking to find the best materials for our readers, it seems that a solid collection should include selections from both.

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