THE ROLE OF THE OUTSIDER IN CLASSIC AND MODERN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study is to explore the role of the "outsider" in classic and modern young adult literature. Young adult books that feature a main character who is smart, pretty or handsome, well-liked, and well-adjusted, and who fits in with his or her peers dominate the literary market. However, this project looks at other books that center on the lives and troubles of characters who are not usually the most intelligent, best looking, or well-liked among others their age. These books and characters provide a different type of didactic lesson and allow young readers to walk in the footsteps of someone who is considered "outside" the conventional mainstream and vicariously experience the struggles they go through. The outsider's trying to be accepted into common society is not a new storyline, as will be evident by studying the classics, and it has not waned in popularity or topicality. Many children, young adults, and even adults are quick to judge people because of appearance, dress, sexual orientation, race, or habits. This is a quality that needs to change in the future. Through authors and books such as will be studied in this project, young adults can recognize that they are not alone if they feel like an "outsider" and that it is not humane to treat others who are different as "outsiders."

Young adult literature must inevitably offer many themes that appeal to young readers. The universal questions of "Who am I?" and "Where do I fit in?" are addressed

in stories aimed at helping young adults find their place in the world. Many young adults feel alienated from their society, whether it be their families, their friends, their social setting, or just the world in general. These individuals often feel that getting through their day is a test of survival and of meeting challenge after challenge (Herz, Gallo 14). Numerous authors of young adult literature have taken this idea of being the "outsider" to heart, recognizing that it is a common thread affecting adolescents. The books and stories they create often center around a character who feels alienated from society and looks to each day as a test of his or her survival.

Authors in both the past and present have chosen to create a protagonist who is outside of the realm of "normal" society. This type of character allows young readers to see their own life experiences through the eyes of a fictional person. According to Katherine Bucher and M. Lee Manning in Young Adult Literature: Exploration, Evaluation, and Appreciation, young adults are able to identify with the trials and tests these characters go through, and this kinship they develop with the main character allows them to develop their own sense of self and understand the many joys, trials, successes, and problems of life (1).

This particular study concentrates on twenty-three different young adult books that range from well-known classics to more modern and contemporary novels. The purpose of looking at both classic and modern texts is to create a compare-and-contrast situation. First, a format is established by looking at classic texts that feature an outsider as the main character. In these stories, a formula is founded as to what constitutes an outsider. The character is usually some type of orphan, lacks some characteristic that is important to others in the story -- such as money or intelligence -- finds himself or herself

in trouble with the authoritative adult characters, and has his or her own group of friends who are usually considered outsiders as well. This formula is then transferred to studying more modern novels to find out if the same format holds true in more contemporary literature. Also, looking at both classic and modern texts allows a chance for discovering new elements as well as assessing traditional ones.

The outsider is not only a crucial character to study because of the above-mentioned characteristics, but also because of some classic themes that usually help make up the story surrounding that outsider. Excluded characters often undergo some sort of dramatic change in the novel as they either learn to accept what makes them different or try to change to be accepted by the "popular" crowd. In order to arrive at this change, most outsider characters must take some sort of physical or spiritual journey where they learn things about themselves to allow this dramatic transformation to occur. One of the more important features of these novels takes the form of conflicts. The conflicts frequently center on the outsiders versus the popular crowd. Other conflicts arise between the outsiders and the adult or authoritative figures, because outsiders can be viewed as troublemakers since they do not conform to the established social groupings. Other themes that arise in both classic and modern texts include the value of loyal and trustworthy friends, the loss of innocence one experiences as he or she grows up to discover who he or she is, coming of age and learning to deal with the pressing problems, and learning that it is acceptable not to be the same as everyone else. Looking at these types of themes allows this study to explore in great detail the similarities and differences between the outsiders of classic and contemporary literature.

Each book and protagonist will be examined by looking at the five different categories that constitute an "outsider" novel. First, the type of orphanage is discussed along with the degree of community alienation he or she feels. One of the first traits of an outsider is his or her abandonment. The orphan is a beloved character in literature, especially within young adult literature, because deep in all young readers' minds is the fear of being a lost child. The orphan can lack parents altogether, can have only one parent, or can have one or more parents who are unable to fill the role of parent. This character can also be a temporary orphan whose parents are unable to be present during times of critical importance for the main character (Donelson, Nilsen 103).

Second, the physical or spiritual journey the character embarks on is analyzed. This includes taking a look at the different challenges and conflicts the character faces, the possible loss of innocence or coming of age, and whether or not the protagonist decides to remain an outsider or rejoin mainstream society. According to Sarah Herz and Donald Gallo in their comparative study of adolescent literature entitled From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges Between Young Adult Literature and the Classics, although different in their reasons for being outsiders, all of these protagonists must embark on a journey of some sort, whether it be physical or spiritual, to learn about themselves (112). Most of the time, these journeys are rites of passage that help the characters mature into adulthood as they find out whether it is best for them personally, either to remain an outsider or to join the norms of society (Bushman, Haas 28). These journeys and quests, be they physical or spiritual, allow the characters to meet challenges, prove their worth, sacrifice something of value, and determine what it means to truly grow up (Donelson, Nilsen 99, 101-102).

Third, the protagonist's friends and loyal and trustworthy companions are discussed. Although considered outsiders, the protagonists do have a fiercely loyal and trustworthy group of friends who help them through their struggles and challenges. As Charlotte Otten and Gary Schmidt argued in The Voice of the Narrator in Children's Literature, rejected characters need a loyal companion or companions to accompany them as they set out on their journey in case help is needed (141). These companions are typically around the same age as the protagonist and often themselves fit into the category of outsider for one reason or another. They are there to help and provide some guidance when it is needed due to the lack of parental guidance (Donelson, Nilsen 105).

Fourth, the villains and the confrontations each main character has with them are analyzed. Outsiders are outsiders because they do not fit into the mainstream, but outsiders can only exist if there is some force trying to make them conform to the norms of society. This is where the villains in these stories come into play. According to Kenneth Donelson and Alleen Nilsen in Literature for Today's Young Adult, these characters or situations are trying to defeat the correct choices and actions that are made by the protagonists (106). At times the villain is merely an older, authoritative figure attempting to make the outsider conform to the rules of society. In some instances, the villain is indeed an evil character who is trying to thwart the revelatory journey that the main character has embarked upon. Other protagonists are not forced to face a malicious person, but rather deal with evil and villainous situations.

Finally, the lessons and morals learned by both the outsider and the reader are brought to light. One of the most important aspects of any young adult novel, whether it involves an outsider or not, is the lesson or moral that it teaches both the protagonist and

the reader. After going through a journey full of challenges and coming out at the other end a changed person, the main character should have received a valuable life lesson. The reader, too, should be able to take that lesson to heart and apply it to his or her everyday life. As Barbara Stoodt-Hill and Linda Amspaugh-Corson posit in Children's Literature: Discovery for a Lifetime, there are also more common and general themes that arise, such as the need to love and be loved, the need to achieve, the need for security, the need for knowledge, and the need to belong or not to belong to society (28). Other themes and lessons are more direct and personal to the story at hand. These include the need to understand one's own situation, the necessity of knowing one's self, and the benefit of encountering other people who are similar and seeing how they negotiate their lives (Mitchell 258).

A final chapter in this study draws conclusions by examining all the classic and modern texts studied and noting similarities and differences between the role of the outsider in past and present literature according to the five different categories. A direct correlation can be made between the outsiders of the more popular classics and the outsiders of today's lesser-known contemporary fictions. These results lead to the conclusion that modern texts essentially provide the same didactic lessons that the more time-honored and trusted classics exemplify, thus securing a more respectable place for contemporary literature in today's middle school and high school English and literature classrooms.

The goal of this thesis is to examine the role of the "outsider" and determine its importance in both classic and contemporary literature. These characters often mimic real-life dilemmas that real-life young adults struggle through and therefore provide a

guide for handling or coping with situations. Society today is facing a great responsibility and challenge to encourage the next generation to continue reading. A constant battle rages against books as video games, computer games, and other interactive software come online and compete for the attention of young people. Even with all these great technological advances, future generations need to be reminded not only of the joy of reading but also the tremendous life lessons that it can provide. This study hopes to provide evidence that the role of the outsider in classic and modern literature is relevant and needs to be incorporated into today's classrooms.

CHAPTER II

THE LOST BOYS

Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876) and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885), Charles Dickens's Oliver Twist (1838), and C.S. Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe (1950), are four classic young adult novels in which the protagonist, or protagonists, are outsiders of their own societies, sometimes by their own devising. The story of Tom Sawyer revolves around his antics and tricks as the town bad boy. He is constantly getting into trouble with his Aunt Polly and having to talk his way out of many sticky situations. Huckleberry Finn's story primarily centers on his adventures on a river raft as he and runaway slave Jim try to escape the harsh realities and confinements of society. Oliver Twist is the story of an orphan who is born into a life of poverty and ill-treatment and recounts the trials he goes through to attain his goal of being accepted into a family who will love him for the goodness he possesses. The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe tells the story of the Pevensie children--Peter, Susan, Edmond, and Lucy--and their adventures to defeat the White Witch and save the people of the magical land of Narnia. All of these characters and stories exhibit the five categories that make up an "outsider" novel.

Tom Sawyer's parents are absent throughout the novel, although he does have a parental figure in Aunt Polly. Even though Aunt Polly fills the role of Tom's parent, she is absent much of the time due to Tom's wild and roaming nature, and the novel takes the

reader through his many adventures. As M. Thomas Inge reminds the reader, Tom is classified in literature as a "bad boy" who causes trouble wherever he goes (143). He occasionally cuts himself off entirely from the rest of the community, such as when he fakes his own drowning death just to be able to attend his own funeral. He continually plagues the town of Hannibal with these types of antics. Tom rebels against most things that make a boy respectable, admired, and regular, thereby giving himself an outsider status as far as the town citizens are concerned (Inge 149). Tom also chooses to make himself an outsider by taking himself out of normal, everyday society with his overactive imagination. Whether he is playing pirates, reciting scenes from a Robin Hood book, or daydreaming about Becky Thatcher, he would rather live in his fantasies than in the real world.

Huckleberry Finn is an orphan due to the absence of his mother and his father's deplorable lack of parental responsibility. Pap Finn is an alcoholic and degenerate who is detested by the town. When he does turn up to play a fatherly role, his behavior tends toward beating and berating Huck for attempting to rise above their station in life. This is evident when Pap Finn says:

> You've put on considerable many frills since I been away. I'll take you down a peg before I get done with you. You're educated, too, they say - can read and write. You think you're better'n your father, now, don't you, because he can't? *I'll* take it out of you. Who told you you might meddle with such hifalut'n foolishness, hey? - who told you you could? (27)

Huck's father represents the stupidity, brutality, cowardice, dishonesty, and meanness that are evident in some backward individuals. Quite understandably, Huck chooses to live

without his father rather than to subject himself to this type of life. The Widow Douglas attempts to fulfill the role of mother for Huck, but she introduces a stifling, crushing code of rules to which Huck has a hard time conforming (Olan 146).

As much as Huck is an orphan because he lacks sufficient parents, he is even more of an orphan and an outsider because he chooses to take himself out of society. According to Levi Olan in his article "The Voice of the Lonesome: Alienation from Huck Finn to Holden Caufield," for him adaptation to the world is "worse than hell" (145). To have to obey rules like going to school, taking a bath, and eating his vegetables represents a fate almost worse than his father's mistreatment. As Inge states in his book Huck Finn Among the Critics: A Centennial Selection, Huck becomes aware "that membership in the cult [of the respectable] will involve the dissolution of his character and the denial of his values" (145). Huck wants to be able to smoke, swear, drink, be dirty, and go and do what he pleases when it pleases him to do so. Therefore, simply taking himself completely outside both the strictures and the protection of society seems preferable to him.

Unlike Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, the earlier Oliver Twist is an orphan who desires nothing more than to belong to a loving society. In Victorian society, an orphan not only did not have the advantage of parents but was deprived of defenders, benefits, and happiness. To be an orphan was to live a life that was miserable, deprived, and vulnerable according to Laura Peters in her study entitled Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture, and Empire. The orphaned person also took on a more sinister meaning during this era because he or she represented a threat to the idea of family. It was outside the norm to be an orphan because it meant that he or she was outside the

family atmosphere where values, morals, and beliefs were instilled (Peters 2-3). Established values, morals, and beliefs were essential characteristics for a productive citizen to have in the Victorian age. Being an orphan indicated that one was not on the road toward fulfilling his or her role as a useful member of society.

Oliver is an orphan in the truest sense. His mother died during childbirth, and no one knows the true identity of his father. From the beginning, he is subjected to the life of an outsider, sent to live in a juvenile workhouse where the proprietor, Mrs. Mann, treats the children in a harsh and unforgiving manner. He moves on to another workhouse with much the same treatment, and then on to Mr. Sowerberry, from whom he receives ill treatment and later is pushed into a life on the streets with Fagin and his gang. His life is continually one of isolation, alienation, and loneliness, all because he is identified as an outsider due to his lack of family (Peters 40). He spends his life trying to fit into society and be accepted by anyone who will see the innate goodness he has in him.

The Pevensie children from The Chronicles of Narnia embody all the different types of orphans. They are true orphans because the reader is led to believe that their father has been killed or is missing during World War II, leaving them with only one parent. They are also temporary orphans because they have been sent to the countryside to live with an old professor to avoid the nightly air raids that plague the city of London. They further qualify themselves as outsiders when they venture through the forbidden wardrobe into the land of Narnia where they are not native inhabitants.

In addition to the Pevensies' being outsiders together, they also tend to be outsiders individually. According to Leland Ryken and Marjorie Lamp Mead in A

Reader's Guide Through the Wardrobe: Exploring C.S. Lewis's Classic Story, Lucy, the youngest and the heroine of this story, becomes an outsider to her brothers and sister when she discovers the land of Narnia, and her siblings refuse to believe her contention that this place truly exists (37). She is the dreamer and imaginative one of the family, and the others assume that her wild imagination created Narnia. Edmund also is an outsider to the rest of his family. He is a generally unpleasant and negative person who always believes that things are being done to put him down on purpose (Ryken, Mead 38). Even when he discovers that Lucy is telling the truth about Narnia, he continues to uphold the lie of its nonexistence to Peter and Susan. He even becomes in effect an outsider to himself when he perpetuates this lie, since he knows he is lying. As David Downing posits in Into the Wardrobe: C.S. Lewis and the Narnia Chronicles, Edmund exiles himself when he betrays the rest of his family to the malevolent White Witch (92-93).

Tom Sawyer's journey is that of a boy developing toward manhood and maturity through several frightening trials (Inge 176). Tom is very much a young boy when the novel begins. He coerces his friends into doing his chores for him, he plays make-believe with others, he taunts his brother, and he drives his Aunt Polly to the point of despair. He loves nothing more than to spend the day with Huck in search of adventure as they float down the river, pretending to be pirates. When he takes an interest in Becky, his idea of wooing her is to show off in front of her to attract attention. All of these are typical behaviors of a young boy seeking fun and diversion at every possible turn.

However, as Tom goes on his last adventure with Becky and becomes trapped in a cave with Injun Joe, he abruptly realizes how serious life can be. What started out as a

fun trick to play on the rest of the picnic guests turns into a life-or-death situation. Tom is no longer merely playing pirate or Robin Hood. Because of his status as an outsider, this type of prank is expected of him. Only by taking Becky with him does he attract the attention of the rest of the town in a community effort to bring them safely home. Even when Tom returns home, he does not immediately change his ways to those of a regular, respectful, and obedient boy. He still decides in essence to remain an outsider among the society of average citizens. However, he has at least learned a valuable lesson about how quickly life can go from an entertaining and fun moment to a life-threatening crisis.

Huckleberry Finn's journey is both physical and spiritual. He decides to escape from the St. Petersburg world because he finds himself disillusioned with civilization or, as he thinks of it, life on land. According to Sam Bluefarb in The Escape Motif in the American Novel: Mark Twain to Richard Wright, Huck sees the river and the woods as a means of escape because he can evade the Widow Douglas's idea of rules and regulations of society and live the way man originally lived on the frontier: in the woods, off the land, and free to smoke, fish, swear, and run about naked (14). On the one hand, he is disillusioned by civilization because of the violence of his father and the controlling nature of the women and schoolmasters in his life. But he is also simply bored by the life on land and wishes to "escape the drab, prosaic realities" (Bluefarb 15). He yearns to escape into that highly imaginative and romantic life Tom Sawyer is always talking about.

This journey is also a time for Huck to find out who he truly is and to grow up and mature by being forced to live on his own and make tough decisions. As he undergoes his many adventures down the river, he tries on many different "faces" to

discover who he is, and this gives him more experience and knowledge to help him grow up and mature. As Inge states, by the end of the novel, Huck has come to some grim realizations about the world and is forced to make a particularly "tough" decision (163-164). This choice of whether to join society or to remain an outsider is a crucial step in Huck's journey toward responsibility, true freedom, and eventual manhood (Bluefarb 16). Huck chooses to remain an outsider, not because he wants to be different or rebel against things as Tom does, but because being alone on a raft is the only way he can truly be free, and being free is the primary goal that Huck desires (Schacht 199).

In Oliver Twist, Oliver's journey is his walk through English society as an orphan and outcast. His physical trials include his continual confrontations with adversity, corruption, and ill treatment from various institutions and people. Oliver's journey is much sadder than Huck's or Tom's, according to Peters, because his is compulsory, not voluntary, thrust upon him due to his lack of family (40). His challenges are more vigorous because the very places that are supposed to help integrate him into society, like the workhouses, are run by the cruel people who push Oliver further into loneliness and alienation (Peters 41).

The ray of hope for Oliver is that there is an inherent goodness and innocence about him that does find its way into some people's hearts (Dunn 20). This goodness allows him to have a sturdy purpose in his life: to belong to someone somewhere. He does not allow himself to be made into a street thief like Charley Bates and the Artful Dodger. He has the ability to refuse a life of crime. Although he does possess a sense of wholesomeness, it does not necessarily guarantee his success in life. According to Dunn, Oliver has to overcome numerous struggles in his life, guided by this inner goodness, in

order to achieve his goal (59). His quest is a search for a place to live that will give him peace in his heart and allow him to connect at last with someone who will acknowledge his worth and goodness (Dunn 61-62). Oliver's dream comes true when he is adopted by Mr. Brownlow in the end, allowing him to join society and cease to be an outsider in the eyes of Victorian society.

The Pevensie children's journey begins as they enter the wardrobe and step into the magical world of Narnia. They participate in a physical journey through Narnia as they discover the different places, people, and events unfolding within this new world. It becomes a journey of true friendship as the children learn to trust each other and embrace the friends they make as they travel through Narnia. Ryken and Mead also argue that it becomes a journey of salvation for Edmund as he learns to accept responsibility for his actions and apologize to his siblings with all his heart (93). Most importantly, the journey is one of growth as the children, especially Edmund, learn that honesty is the best policy and the best therapy. Only by experiencing this firsthand can one truly understand that pure moral growth takes place when one learns to listen to the small voice of truth that often echoes within one's head (Downing 96). After the children learn this, they leave Narnia and rejoin present-day Britain. They cease to be outsiders to each other or in the world of Narnia, though they still must remain outsiders and orphans in the home of the adopting professor.

No journey, be it physical or spiritual, would be complete without someone with whom to share the adventures, trials, and triumphs. For Tom Sawyer, there is no companion in the world like Huckleberry Finn to accompany him. Huck lives the life Tom would like to lead. He has no parents, does not have to go to school, and does not

need to conform to the rules and regulations of society. Huck is always up for anything and ready to go on whatever adventure Tom has planned. Nonetheless, Tom gets to be the leader when he is around Huck. Tom likes to be in charge and dictate to the group which activity or imaginary game they will be playing. He appropriates the role of the leader of his gang and enjoys bossing Huck and the others around. Oddly, although very much an independent character, Huck allows himself to be bossed around. No one has ever shown much interest in his well-being, so he seems to enjoy having an assigned purpose in Tom's gang. The two are also extremely loyal to each other and neither would ever "rat out" the other one under duress.

While Tom does make an appearance in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, it is the companionship of Jim the runaway slave that is at the heart of this story for Huckleberry Finn. The man and the boy are both outsiders from the society they are trying to escape. Jim becomes Huck's one true friend on his quest for freedom because he only requires one thing from Huck -- loyalty. According to Schacht, this devotion is also the only thing Jim wishes to give to Huck in return (199). Huck and Jim leave society on a "quest for freedom from restriction and cruelty," even though each character's reasoning is different (Schacht 200). In Jim, Huck has found a mother, a father, a playmate, and a true friend (Olan 146). They are there to look out for one another, keep each other company, and ensure that their life of freedom on the raft never ends. Jim shows Huck nothing but kindness, consideration, concern for his welfare, and faithfulness. Huck thinks of Jim as a "fugitive of society" like him, not as a runaway black slave. As Bluefarb states, this revelation helps Huck in terms of his "human freedom" or his ability to have an open mind (21-22). In a time where most men in the South would have turned in a runaway

slave to collect the easy reward, Huck remembers that Jim is the only person who has ever truly loved him and chooses to remain true to him in the end.

Oliver's gang of companions differs from Tom's and Huck's because his friends show up at different times during the novel, and it is only at the end of the story when he is united with his adult benefactor. Oliver's first true friends are the other children at the workhouse. They look out for one another and try to make the harsh day-to-day living conditions as bearable as possible. In the most famous scene from the novel, Oliver puts himself on the line for his young companions when he returns to the man serving the gruel and asks, "Please, sir, I want some more" (18). The consequences of this action are brutal, but Oliver is the one elected to stand up for the group, and he does so without hesitation. His friend Dick repays this kindness when he sees Oliver walking to London and bids him, "Good-b'ye, dear! God bless you!" (43). It was the first time anyone had ever asked God to bless Oliver.

The prostitute Nancy also turns into a loyal companion of Oliver's when she endangers her own life to tell Rose Maylie about Oliver. Nancy is able to see the goodness and innocence within Oliver and wants to help him before he, too, succumbs to a life of crime. She proves to be Oliver's ultimate protector when she loses her life at the hands of Sikes for trying to save Oliver. This sacrifice is a testament not only to the goodness within Oliver but also to the remaining goodness within Nancy. Finally, though, it is Mr. Brownlow who is his truest companion. He instantly recognizes something of worth in Oliver and stops at nothing to prove to others what he can see. He travels to the West Indies to help prove the truth of Oliver's parentage and adopts him in the end. As Peters states, this integrates Oliver into a family and larger community,

which is Oliver's greatest wish (43). The trustworthy and altruistic Brownlow proves to be Oliver's staunchest ally.

The Pevensie children belong to their own gang already when the story begins, since they are all displaced siblings. They are able to rely on each other for advice, companionship, and other things they may need. However, they find additional loyal companions on their journey throughout Narnia. Mr. Tumnus realizes the value of trust when he befriends Lucy and refuses to turn her in to the White Witch. He is severely punished for this act but acknowledges that his loyalty is more important. The beavers become fierce protectors of the children as they help lead them to Aslan. Their very lives are on the line as they help the children find their destination. Aslan makes the ultimate sacrifice for a friend as he lays down his life in exchange for Edmund's. This pure, unselfish act shows the Pevensies just what it truly means to be members of a family.

Although each character is surrounded by a group of loyal companions, each must also face an adversary on his or her journey. Tom Sawyer's main caregiver and opponent is his Aunt Polly. She wants Tom to change his ways and develop into a mature and respectable individual in the town. She is constantly berating him for his wild antics around town and encourages him to be more like his brother Sid. According to Inge, Tom also perceives Sid as a mortal enemy inasmuch as Sid embodies everything Tom is not, about which his aunt constantly reminds him (149). Tom does not want to be respectable or normal in town. He is a typical teenage rebel who loves the idea of living in an imaginary world, pulling off daring stunts and tricks with the prospect of being caught, and luring other boys into his wayward style of living. Injun Joe is also an enemy of Tom's where the treasure is concerned and because Tom has witnessed a horrendous

scene in the local graveyard. Joe is clearly a villain, because although Tom will occasionally resort to lying, cheating, and stealing, he would never commit a vicious act like murder as Injun Joe is willing to do.

Huckleberry Finn encounters many individuals during his journey he considers villains because they are trying to force him to do things he does not want to do. The Widow Douglas, Miss Watson, and Miss Sally initially represent the "mother figures" who are trying to make him a good little boy who will follow the rules of regular society. Huck does not want to be "stifled by the organizations of men" because the men he has seen, namely his father, are not men he wants to model himself after (Olan 150). The King and the Duke are also enemies of Huck's and Jim's because they impose their adult privileges and commandeer the insulated world that Huck and Jim have made for themselves on the raft. At the very least, they destroy the freedom that had been found there. Huck and Jim no longer are at liberty to do the things they enjoyed the most on the raft. Furthermore, the King and the Duke keep insisting on pulling back onto land, the very place from which both Huck and Jim are trying to escape. As Schacht states, only in the rhythms of nature had Huck and Jim found true freedom (195).

Fagin is the ultimate villain in Oliver's life. He makes his living by tricking street children into a life of crime because they lack the education and training needed to live a decent life (Peters 14). The purely evil Fagin manipulates Oliver's feelings of loneliness and makes Oliver trust him so much that he comes close to embarking on this life of crime. Fagin preys on the insecurities of others to help make a life for himself that is free from work and responsibility. As Peters reminds the reader, only Oliver's "nobility of purpose" allows him to thwart the efforts made by Fagin and continue his life of

goodness while searching for a place of acceptance (42-43). The other authority figures in this novel--Mr. Beadle, Mr. Sowerberry, Mrs. Mann, the man who ladles the gruel--are all trying to keep Oliver in the hopeless cycle of poverty and prison. Although polite when asking for more gruel, Oliver is met with a harsh response and even harsher punishment. None of these detestable adults wants to see Oliver's dream come true of a happy life with a loving family, and so they try everything they can to keep him confined.

The Pevensie children find that they must fight the truly evil forces of the White Witch. Not only has she threatened the lives of these four, but she has also undermined the very way of life that has characterized Narnia for centuries. The Pevensies have become close to their friends and companions in Narnia, so not only must they defeat the White Witch for themselves, but they must also defeat her for their loyal new companions. She is as purely evil as Fagin because she manipulates the children in order to get what she wants. She tries to divide the family and force a wedge between Edmund and his brother and sisters. She fails to realize, however, that love is stronger and will always prevail, as even Edmund learns in the end. This also rings true when she tries to kill Aslan. The pure, unselfish love Aslan demonstrates when he gave himself up for Edmund cannot be suppressed by mere death. Aslan was able to come back stronger than before and help the Pevensies defeat the White Witch once and for all.

The lessons learned by these characters are another aspect that helps shape them as "outsiders." The one lesson that Tom Sawyer takes away when he comes face to face with a deathly situation after he and Becky are trapped in a cave is that life is not always about fun and games. He recognizes that his playful attitude and trickster ways are what put them into this crisis in the first place. When he emerges from the situation, one

expects him to turn his life around so that these trials do not happen again. However, the main character is a twelve-year-old boy who has led a life of nothing but tricks and fantasy games, so one brush with death is apparently not lesson enough for him to turn his life around.

Huckleberry Finn absorbs more mature and worldly lessons in his adventures. He learns that being free from a world that is "sivilized" is more important to him than belonging to a civilized society. This is a hard lesson for him because in order for him to be free he must be alone. He cannot go with Jim or Tom back to a community because those in society will try to make him into something that he is not, and that is a fate Huck cannot allow to happen to him. According to Olan, in the end, Huck accepts that he is an outsider and always will be, and that no place on earth can be a true home for him (146-147). Nevertheless, he has matured enough by the end of his adventure to know where his heart truly lies. Unlike Tom, who is more than willing to live in a society that tries to tie him down and continually rebel against it, Huck knows he cannot do that forever and chooses to isolate himself from everyone. As Inge states, this is a tough lesson for Huck where Jim is concerned, because it shows him love and freedom are often not compatible, since Jim cannot accompany him anymore (134).

Oliver learns and teaches the reader some important lessons about humanity during his quest for acceptance. The character of Oliver shows readers that a person's inherently pure, good, and innocent nature can be able to win against a world that attempts to morally corrupt its people through neglect (Peters 42). One does not have to be born good, but when faced with a hostile environment, this trait is able win out over other conditions. Oliver is able to withstand all that he has to suffer without ever

compromising who he is. He never lies, cheats, steals, or acts in a dishonest manner on his own. Even Rose and her aunt recognize he must have been forced to participate in the robbery of their house. Oliver shows that "humanity will persist and good feelings survive and even prevail" (Dunn 48). Oliver had nothing on his side when the novel begins, yet he is the richest, happiest character when the story concludes.

The Pevensie children gain valuable lessons that apply to children everywhere. They learn to stick together as a family and see that being a family means forgiving and loving other family members, even when they are in the wrong. Edmund recognizes that honesty is always the best policy and that to be mature means to be able to tell the truth and admit when one has done wrong. The most important lesson this story teaches, however, is the value of pure, unselfish love. Aslan demonstrates this as he sacrifices himself for Edmund. No one can feel like or be an outsider if someone is willing to stand up for them with that kind of love.

Tom, Huck, Oliver, and the Pevensie children are classic examples of outsiders. They are orphans to their societies for various reasons, yet they overcome the negatives of being an outsider through the challenges they face with the assistance of their gang of loyal friends. Although Tom and Huck choose to remain outsiders and Oliver and the Pevensie children rejoin mainstream society, all the characters mature to an extent at the end of their adventures because of what they had to endure as characters outside the realm of a larger society.

CHAPTER III

EXCLUDED--EVEN IN THE WORLD OF FANTASY

Modern-day young adult literature continues to address the plight of the outsider. In these contemporary times when children and young adults are influenced by images on television, magazines, and other types of media, the idea of being accepted and part of the "popular" group is ever-present in today's schools and communities. Young adult literature authors are recognizing this epidemic and combating it with stories of outsiders learning that it is acceptable to be outside the "in" group. One genre that especially takes this to heart is the category of fantasy literature. According to Otten and Schmidt, fantasy novels not only transport the reader on a journey to any place in any time, they also provide an excellent vehicle for dealing with deeper intellectual, spiritual, and philosophical matters that young adults cope with on their journey to maturity (125, 127). Modern fantasy novels also illustrate the classic struggle between good and evil and show the commendable perseverance of the protagonist in the face of adversity (Stoodt-Hill, Amspaugh-Corson 138). Louis Sachar's Holes (1998), Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events series (1999-2007), and J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series (1997-2007) are excellent examples of modern young adult literature stories that center on the life, conflicts, and challenges of an outsider.

Holes is the story of Stanley Yelnats, a twelve-year-old, overweight boy who is sentenced to a troubled boys camp for a crime he did not commit. Meanwhile, the

parallel plot of his grandfather Elya and how he angered Madame Zeroni unfolds and connects with the main plot by the end of the tale. A Series of Unfortunate Events deals with the Baudelaire children -- Violet, Klaus, and Sunny -- and the adventures they go through as they try to thwart Count Olaf and other clueless adults who would like to get their hands on their inheritance. The Harry Potter series focuses on Harry Potter, a young wizard who is attempting to learn the ways of the magical world (after living in ignorance of it for eleven years) while fighting the evil forces of Voldemort, the wizard responsible for the death of his parents.

Stanley Yelnats becomes a temporary orphan in Holes because he is separated from his parents after he is sentenced to Camp Green Lake. However, he was an outsider and an outcast long before he made his way to the opening scene of this book. To begin with, he experienced the feeling of being an outsider in his middle school because he is overweight. The other children and even the teachers often made fun of him and singled him out for the fact that he was overweight. He was also ostracized from his community when he was accused of a crime he did not commit. The town labeled him a troublemaker and a "bad kid" before his trial even happened, simply because he was a non-popular kid accused of a crime. He is also an outsider once he arrives at Camp Green Lake. He is truly innocent, which sets him apart from many of the other children at the camp. He is the "new kid" trying to be accepted in a new place. He has to deal with the pre-established cliques and groups that exist within the camp. He sets himself further apart from the other boys when he chooses to befriend those at the camp who are considered even more outside the realm of normality than he, such as Zero, who is illiterate. The adults who are in charge of the facility also treat Stanley as an outsider

because he is overweight, presumed guilty of a crime, and seems to have trouble fitting in at the camp. The punishment that those in charge inflict upon the children is to dig five-foot-by-five-foot holes all around the camp. The boys are told it is to "value what they formerly might have overlooked" (Hipple, Maupin 41). This also places Stanley in a world that is intolerable and full of annihilation and absurdity due to the Warden's strict management of the prisoners. Stanley has to learn to accept this life if he wants to survive, even if it means continuing to be an outsider, since he has no parents there to help him seek justice (Herz, Gallo 116).

Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire are true orphans as their initial tale begins in the first volume, The Bad Beginning. Their parents have been killed in a horrible fire, and the children are left to various relatives who disappoint them, abandon them, or deceive them. The children are, therefore, truly alienated from society because they are genuine orphans. Like Oliver Twist, the Baudelaire children simply desire a safe place to live with a trustworthy guardian who will love them and take care of them. Since that never seems to happen in their unfortunate adventures, the children continue to remain outsiders for the better part of the series. The Baudelaires, however, represent a different side of the typical orphan. According to O'Keefe, instead of letting their state get them down or make them wallow in despair, they use their unfortunate experiences to turn themselves into stronger, more resourceful, more resilient, and more intelligent young people so they can get out of their predicaments (46). These children seem to thrive on the fact that they are orphans. They rely on their own wits, intelligence, and strength to survive. The Baudelaires are alone and must trust in themselves and each other to achieve success (Stoodt-Hill, Amspaugh-Corson 164). They allow their situation to work

to their advantage so that, at the end of every story, they have once again thwarted Count Olaf's attempts to murder them and take their money.

Harry Potter is also a true orphan because his parents were killed by the evil Voldemort when he was only a year old. He is also an orphan because the only family he has left, his aunt Petunia, uncle Vernon, and cousin Dudley, barely acknowledge him and treat him like a servant when he is living in their house. According to Lana Whited in The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon, Harry's status as an orphan encourages the reader to have sympathy for him because of his lack of parental and familial support and envy of him because of his independence at a young age (101). Harry is also an outsider when he arrives in the magical world of Hogwarts at age eleven. He is famous before he even knows about this world because of his having survived Voldemort's strike (which left a mark on his forehead). This makes Harry physically and fundamentally different from his classmates and isolates him as events unfold around him. As Blake states, he also continues to exhibit traits, like speaking the language of snakes and being tormented by the Dementors, that constantly set him apart from the other students at Hogwarts (43). Ironically, what also makes Harry an outsider to the others in the story is his ability to succeed. He always seems to be able to call upon an innate ability to save the day, which seems to push other students and adults away (Blake 45-46). This is evident when he is able to summon a Patronus to ward off the Dementors as they attempt to harm Sirius and Harry in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. Those who favor Harry seem to believe that he wins with courage and fortitude while those who despise Harry seem to think it is nothing more than "a little serendipity" (Gupta 158).

Stanley experiences both a physical and a spiritual journey as he does his time at Camp Green Lake. According to Hipple and Maupin, his is a journey to freedom, both from prison and from his insecurities and uncertainties as an outsider (40). Stanley's journeys allow him to learn some things about himself (Herz, Gallo 112). He is physically put into this camp where he has to find the strength within himself to bring to light the truth of what this camp is about. Stanley has things he needs to prove and learns some life lessons in this camp, such as absorbing and overcoming the abuse of power by the adults and enduring and overcoming the tyranny he experiences at the hands of the other kids who feel they are the popular ones and "in charge." When Stanley decides to befriend the even-more-ostracized Zero, he takes additional abuse from the other kids at the camp, especially when he teaches him to read. However, this shows Stanley how to take a stand for his own personal beliefs and face down the group, no matter what the cost (Hipple, Maupin 42).

A loss of innocence is also experienced by Stanley in this story as he is taken from his safe home with his parents and forced into a brutal situation of hard, manual labor run by cruel and wicked adults. He truly knows what it feels like to have to grow up quickly and take responsibility for one's own actions. Although innocent of the crime with which he was charged, Stanley must adhere to the rules of the camp if he is to survive. He learns how to deal with a tough situation in a mature manner. According to Hipple and Maupin, the reader sympathizes with and admires Stanley as he or she reads about the thirst, heat, daily digging, and cruelness of the Warden that Stanley experiences (41). Stanley's story does end happily, though, as he is able to return to his community a hero after proving his innocence and performing other courageous deeds that bring honor

to his family and to him. He is able to rejoin the community as a member, not an outsider, because he has proven his worth and lost a considerable amount of weight in the process of digging daily holes, illustrating that perhaps society does not have its priorities in line.

The Baudelaire children also experience both a physical and a spiritual journey. The entire series focuses on the journeys the children take as they are shuffled from one relative to another searching for a place to call home. Because they are orphans, they have been forced at an early age to experience the psychological release from their parents. They are examples of characters who live in a world where "their voices are the voices of parental authority and stability" (Otten, Schmidt 143). They do not have a dependence upon any adult because their past experience has shown them that they should be wary of trusting adults. Every time the Baudelaires do rely on an adult, that adult character ends up dead, bad, or too self-centered to care about the orphans. They have to learn to survive in a world where the adult is not someone to be trusted.

The Baudelaires' dealings with Count Olaf also force the characters to come of age rather quickly. The children experience quite a shock when their parents are killed. They go from living a warm, sheltered life with loving parents to living a life where survival is a day-to-day struggle in which the children only have each other to depend on. Fourteen-year-old Violet must deal with the very real prospect of marrying Count Olaf in order to save her brother and sister. This is a life experience she was not expecting to have to grapple with at such a young age. As Bucher and Manning state, in order to survive, the Baudelaires must overcome their fears and accept these new responsibilities they have been given (91).

Just like Stanley and the Baudelaires, Harry embarks on numerous physical and spiritual journeys during the course of his adventures. He must come to terms with the loss of his parents once he finds out the truth of their murder. Not only that, but Harry must also deal with his nasty Muggle -- non-magical -- relatives and learn how to survive the summers in their painfully neat house on Privet Drive. He has to physically and mentally fight Voldemort, not only for his own protection, but to save the entire population of the magical world, which spills over into the Muggles' lives, too. While he is dealing with all of this, Harry must unmask spies, oppose growing prejudices against different groups of people, and complete all of his schoolwork. As O'Keefe reminds the reader, he must do all of this virtually on his own (179). Learning to deal with this entire burden is certainly a journey of coming of age and losing one's innocence. In addition to those two important lessons, Harry's struggles also represent the vulnerability and powerlessness that is felt by all children compelled to accomplish many tasks on their own. According to Jack Zipes in Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter, Harry must deal with abandonment, alienation, and loneliness, all of which will eventually help him to mature (184).

Another journey Harry experiences is also one felt by many adolescents: the desire to rebel against adults and the molds they prefer. Harry wants to create a separate identity for himself apart from his elders. He rebels against his Aunt Petunia when she attempts to make him hide his magical abilities. According to Whited, he continues to rebel during his years at Hogwarts at various times when he feels his way of doing things is more effective (102). The true journey of Harry, though, is one of maturity. He must

meet and overcome his terrors -- both in the magical and realistic world -- in order to achieve maturity. Harry is not always perfect and everything does not always go his way, but because he is learning to engage these things on a more mature level, he is able to triumph in the end. Each trial makes him a stronger person who is wiser in the ways of the world and more in control of himself, although at the same time reminds him of his solitude and lack of protection from others. Harry concludes that "life is difficult and full of struggles, but we can weather these ordeals and emerge, not unscathed, but more mature and more capable of enduring the next trials" (Whited 104-106).

Although Stanley is able to prove his innocence and accomplish many other lofty goals, he knows that he could not have performed all these heroic stunts without the help of his friends, and that many things are only accomplished through teamwork (Donelson, Nilsen 105). Stanley finds that it is important to have a gang of loyal and trustworthy friends because it is impossible to take on the adult world single-handedly and win (Otten, Schmidt 141). Stanley acquires the friendships of some of the other boys in the camp when he begins to prove his worth. He earns true acceptance into the gang of Zero, Armpit, X-Ray, Zigzag, and Magnet when he, too, becomes worthy of a nickname: Caveman. This camaraderie in sharing nicknames denotes that these boys belong to the same close-knit gang and have vowed to be there for each other under the cruel eyes of the Warden. According to Donelson and Nilsen, he also learns to accept people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (33).

Stanley shows that he is truly maturing as he becomes a part of this gang. He has lived his whole life as an outsider. He knows what it feels like to be shunned, laughed at, and humiliated by others in the community his own age and older. Stanley becomes a

part of the gang, but he becomes especially close to Zero. Zero is an outsider who does not even know how to read. Instead of making fun of Zero's disability as the other boys do, Stanley takes the mature approach and offers to teach Zero how to read. He does not desire to keep someone else feeling like an outcast; he knows too well how that feels. As Bucher and Manning state, with these boys, particularly Zero, Stanley has found a sense of belonging by being part of this new peer group (93).

Because they are in the same situation, the three Baudelaire children belong to their own immediate gang. Like the Pevensie children, their group of trustworthy and loyal companions is founded and based on blood. Unlike the Pevensies, the Baudelaires only have each other to rely on, not other adults, to get through tough situations and solve problems. According to Otten and Schmidt, because they must rely on each other, this gang has become their source of strength and makes the children more confident and capable in all that they do (146). They can only accomplish their goals if they work together. Toward the end of each book, as they fool Count Olaf yet again, the two older children continually praise each other for the contributions he or she made to the plan to get rid of Count Olaf. They are never selfish about taking the credit. They even credit little Sunny, who is only a one-year-old, with the efforts she puts forth in the situations by using her incredibly sharp teeth. Young adult readers are drawn to this courage, resourcefulness, and friendship that the Baudelaire children exhibit to each other in order to overcome the evil forces at hand (Bucher, Manning 66).

Like Oliver Twist, Harry Potter has had no one to rely on for most of his life. He has always been forced to be self-reliant and self-sufficient in any sort of situation. As his life changes on his eleventh birthday and he enters Hogwarts, so too does this attitude

of self. Harry discovers the true meaning of friends and dependence when he meets Ron and Hermione. They, too, are outcasts like him. Ron, coming from a lower-class magical family, is forced to wear hand-me-down robes and use hand-me-down books. Hermione is a Mudblood, meaning that she is a wizard born of non-magical parents. She is not considered "pure" by many in the wizard community and is, therefore, often the target of ridicule. Harry has been on the receiving end of ridicule and scorn by his aunt, uncle, and cousin, so the idea of social classes is not important to him like it is to his archrival Malfoy. As Whited reminds readers, Harry befriends Ron and Hermione instantly because of their inner qualities (133). Ron is loyal to the core for Harry in almost every situation, and Hermione possesses the cleverness and resilient personality to help Harry through his trials (O'Keefe 178).

Harry relies heavily on his loyal group of friends, which also include older characters who serve as sages and wise women, because of the many life-threatening situations he goes through to defeat Voldemort and save himself. According to Zipes, Harry needs his inner-circle to provide him with support, help, and, at times, gifts in order for him to succeed at the task at hand (177). When Harry defeats the Basilisk in Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets, it is only with Hermione's quick thinking and Ron's quick actions that he is able to accomplish that feat. As Gupta states, Harry must count on his friends to deal with the rational aspects of his challenges so that he can use his natural abilities to get him through and claim victory at the end of each book (157). Harry is also able to count on Ron and Hermione to help him fight the additional, typical adolescent woes he experiences as he goes through school, such as dealing with bullies, tolerating injustices, and learning to stand up for himself. Harry and his friends teach

young readers that "if we all pull together and trust one another and follow the lead of the chosen one, evil will be overcome" (Zipes 182).

As with many other "outsiders" in these young adult novels, the adult characters serve as the villains for Stanley and his friends in Holes. The adults are mainly the employees at Camp Green Lake. They automatically assume that each of these kids is guilty simply because they are there, and treat them as such. The employees, like Mr. Sir, feel as if these kids deserve punishment and use all the means within their power to exert their authority and force the children to do hard labor. The true villain, however, is the Warden who sets her child-inmates the inhumane task of digging endless holes and uses the camp for her own personal gain. She believes the hidden treasure of Kissin' Kate Barlow is hidden somewhere on that property, so she uses the children to help her look for the treasure. According to Ted Hipple and Amy Maupin in their article "What's Good About the Best?," she is truly evil anointing her fingernails with snake venom, will stopping at nothing to get what she wants, and functioning as a hybrid of Freddie Krueger and Hannibal Lector (41). She tries to capitalize on these children's status as outsiders for her own selfish desires.

The villain in A Series of Unfortunate Events is also an untrustworthy adult figure, Count Olaf. When the Baudelaires find that they are homeless and unsupervised, they are first sent to live with their closest relative, Count Olaf. Olaf is a horribly mean, manipulative, and menacing individual who is only interested in getting his hands on the Baudelaire family fortune. He tries many underhanded schemes to steal the money from the children, including plots to kill the three children. He continues to follow and plague the children for the entire series as he devises new ways to try and steal their money. The

other adults also become unreliable at best in these novels because they are never able to protect the Baudelaire children from Count Olaf. The relative always seems to die, run off, or simply not care enough to stop this wicked man from his attempts to run away with the Baudelaires' money. Because the children cannot rely on a single other adult's tangible help in this series, these adventures illustrate the classic theme of "the Junex versus the Senex." In other words, these stories illustrate the generation gap and conflicts that can exist between different age groups (Donelson, Nilsen 103). The children feel that no adult will understand their plight with Olaf no matter how many times they attempt to explain it, because the adults assume the children are exaggerating and over-dramatizing events in the way that young people tend to do.

Harry Potter faces many villains during his seven years of adventures. The first villains he encounters are the Dursleys. As Zipes states, they are cruel and vindictive to Harry by locking him in a broom closet, depriving him of basic needs, and starving him of love and affection (181-182). They refuse to deal with Harry because they are afraid of what he is and what he represents. The Dursleys are so consumed with living the "perfect" normal life that they believe the very presence of Harry will automatically elicit suspicion from the rest of the neighborhood. The next group of villains Harry has to deal with he meets at Hogwarts. Draco Malfoy is an instinctual enemy of Harry's because their morals and values are so opposite. He believes a person's worth is determined by his or her family name, the amount of money the family possesses, and other superficial qualities. He is quick to pass judgment on the fact that Harry has chosen to befriend Ron and Hermione instead of him and his Slytherin companions. Others at Hogwarts become Harry's enemies at times because they do not know what to make of his celebrity status.

As Voldemort begins to resurface, some doubt the stories and the "chosen one" reputation that has always surrounded Harry. Harry finds that he has to constantly prove himself to other students, teachers, and wizards and establish the fact that he has the abilities to perform what is required of him.

Harry's ultimate nemesis is Voldemort. He is the Dark Lord, the cruelest and possibly the most powerful wizard who ever lived. He has not only killed Harry's parents, but he vows to end the life of Harry, whom he has made an outsider in the wizard community. Eventually, Harry not only vows to destroy Voldemort but to make him pay for all the lives he has taken and the suffering he has caused. Owing to that rivalry with Voldemort, Harry must learn to harness his anger and deal with things in a mature and rational manner. Because Harry is symbolic of Good and Voldemort the ultimate embodiment of Evil, their struggles take on a greater meaning. According to Donelson and Nilsen, not only is Harry fighting for the past, he is fighting for the future as well since Voldemort plans to eliminate all but pureblood wizards from the community if he is able to regain power (206-207).

Although the life at and escape from Camp Green Lake were harrowing experiences, the lessons that Stanley Yelnats takes away and teaches the reader are worth the tribulations he endures. Like Huck and Tom, Stanley learns the value of loyal and trustworthy friends (Herz, Gallo 38). Stanley's friendship with Zero is what gives him the motivation to stand up for himself and prove his innocence and the Warden's deceitful behavior. Stanley realizes how important it is to have friends and achieve the sense of belonging that he craves and was never able to have at home. As Herz and Gallo state, searching for his place in society, as a young adult, Stanley is unsure of his role and

does not know whether to act like a child or an adult (38). He quickly realizes he is migrating toward adulthood as he is taken from his home with parents and thrust into a place where there is no one to love and protect him (Hipple, Maupin 41). This story poses some tough questions for young readers: What is fair? What is right and wrong? What is -- or ought to be -- the relationship between crime and punishment? What does redemption mean? What does freedom mean? What does prejudice mean?

The Baudelaire children teach and learn many lessons during their series of unfortunate events. These lessons help instill virtues, morals, and ideals not only in the Baudelaire children but also presumably in the many young adults reading this series. Themes such as good versus evil, the benefit of being an honest person, the need to think of others before oneself, the importance of always telling the truth, and the need to always be a team player are some of the standard lessons Snicket and the Baudelaires convey to readers. These books are also a lesson in triumph and hope. The events are so grotesquely horrid in these stories that the reader knows the children will not come out winners in the end, especially when they remember the title of the books. However, what the Baudelaire children instill in readers is hope. According to O'Keefe, triumph might not always be possible, but the hope is always there that next time will be more successful (46-47).

Harry Potter himself is an important lesson in Rowling's famous series. At first glance, he seems so ordinary with his average looks, floppy hair, glasses, ordinary intelligence, and modest demeanor (O'Keefe 178). He appears more "bookworm than heroic," but like many other protagonists, there is more to Harry than outward appearance indicates. His braveness, stubbornness, courage, and natural abilities allow him to rise

above his appearance when he is called upon by powers greater than himself. According to Zipes, he is the ultimate little guy who proves he is bigger than life as he continually defeats the criminal actions of Voldemort (175). This is an encouragement to many young readers who feel they are far too ordinary to do anything extraordinary. Another important lesson that Harry and his friends learn for themselves and teach readers is the fact that young people need to find within themselves the strength to do the right thing and to establish a moral code (Whited 137). Harry often faces many hardships and has to stand on his own, but he carries through until the end.

These modern protagonists prove that the "outsider" remains an ever-present figure in the young adult literary world today. The fact that these outsiders exist in numerous works of fiction suggests to young readers that the crucibles of learning to accept one's differences and find a place in society are not trials confined to young people of a certain place, era, or even world. These characters represent the struggles that all "outsiders" go through, and in published fantasies everyone can undergo the cruel torment of feeling left out and experience the joys of finding acceptance.

CHAPTER IV

"GROWN-UPS" IN THE OUTSIDER WORLD

While Tom, Huck, Oliver, Harry, and the Baudelaire children are indeed outcasts in their own societies, some characters have a more serious obstacle to overcome as they struggle with being outsiders. John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men (1937) and William Golding's Lord of the Flies (1954) are two classic examples of books with outsider protagonists whose struggles are more life-altering and realistic than the previous examples. These characters not only have to deal with the everyday struggles of being an outsider, but they are also faced with life-and-death situations in which their very survival depends on the outcome. Of Mice and Men is the story of George and Lennie, two downhearted, downtrodden men searching for work and acceptance during the Great Depression. Lennie, who is mentally challenged, exhibits behavior that makes it difficult for George and him to fit in anywhere. Although these two characters are adults, they do fit into the genre of young adult literature because Lennie's handicap makes him behave and be perceived as a young child rather than a full-grown adult. The plot of Lord of the Flies centers on a group of young English boys stranded on an island during an atomic war and their fight for survival and power. Although these characters are more realistic and undergo more serious challenges and problems as outsiders, they continue to fulfill the role of outsider by demonstrating the five traits of the classic outsider.

George and Lennie are different types of orphans than have been previously discussed. First of all, these characters are adults, not children. They have not been abandoned or deserted by their parents. Who they have been deserted by are the upstanding, job-holding citizens of California. The Great Depression sets the scene for this story, and George and Lennie are two more victims of its joblessness and homelessness. As Herz and Gallo comment, these figures are excluded from mainstream society because they are part of the masses that make up the unemployed and are living in poverty (70). Many wealthy and job-holding individuals during this time felt that being jobless and homeless was something that was easily overcome, and it was the jobless and homeless person's fault for not finding suitable employment. These are the attitudes that George and Lennie have to deal with, which places them as outsiders from the community. They illustrate to young readers that being an "outsider" is not limited to children and adolescents but that this same role can exist in the adult world.

They are also outsiders to the people with whom they work when they do find employment on a ranch. Most men who found work during the Great Depression were just happy to have a job. They were not thinking about where they would be in the next few years. All they knew was they had a job to work, food on the table, and a little money in their pocket. George and Lennie are different because they are "sons of nature seeking freedom in nature" (Astro, Hayashi 18). They have a dream of owning their own piece of land one day, and each job they take is helping them get closer to their goal. They are not satisfied with working someone else's land. George and Lennie aspire for something better than just surviving from day to day. As Claudia Durst Johnson reminds readers in Understanding *Of Mice and Men*, they want to provide for their own needs, be

their own bosses, and feel some sense of satisfaction and pride in their work (17). Most men during the Great Depression gave up dreaming, hoping, and setting goals long ago when it seemed that the depressive state would never end. George and Lennie are set apart from the others because of their choice not to let society squelch their longings (Johnson, *Understanding Of Mice and Men* 18).

Lennie's role as an outsider is enhanced because he is mentally challenged. The reader does not ever know how or to what extent Lennie is mentally handicapped, but several references are made to indicate that he is not thinking, processing, or acting on a normally sufficient adult level. This makes Lennie an easy target for ridicule, jokes, and torment, magnifying his status as an outsider with one more attribute that makes him different from the normal people of society. George is affected by Lennie's mental handicap as well. Because George chooses to stick by his friend through everything, he also becomes a target of scorn. People constantly wonder why he would choose to hang out with a person who is mentally challenged. He often makes up excuses for why he is in Lennie's company. When they arrive at their new place of work outside of Soledad, George tells the new boss, "He's my...cousin. I told his old lady I'd take care of him. He got kicked in the head by a horse when he was a kid. He's awight. Just ain't bright. But he can do anything you tell him" (23).

The group of boys as a whole in Lord of the Flies are outsiders because they are instantly orphaned from their families and community when their plane goes down on a deserted island. At first this scenario is every child's fantasy. They are in a world with no adults, no rules, no confinements, and no worries. Responding to this situation, the boys begin to create their own world with its own societies. Clarice Swisher states in

Readings on *Lord of the Flies* that a hierarchy seemingly had to be established as well as specialized groups, codes, and rituals (103). In the beginning, the boys feel they have to do the right thing and create a society that mimics the one the adults control back home in England. As time, nature, and pure animal instinct take over during the course of the story, it becomes apparent that some feel that order and rules are not needed. According to Nelson, the boys' unity begins to break down, and they become divided between a "chief" who wants order and rules, and another "chief" who wants to create a different kind of society where rules and order do not exist (7).

As this division takes place, the protagonists Ralph and Piggy emerge as the true outsiders of the society created on the island. Ralph is the leader who desires order and rules. His ideas and demands are met by deaf ears as most of the boys prefer the lawless, unregulated way of life promoted by the other "chief", Jack. As Kirstin Olsen suggests in Understanding *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph intuits that he is a better leader than Jack because he knows enough about society to realize that nothing can exist without some type of parameters. Otherwise, total chaos and anarchy would erupt (10). Piggy is the only one who will listen to Ralph's call for a society modeled after the civilized, adult-led land of Britain the boys call home. However, as Olsen also notes, Piggy is inevitably an outsider as well because he is fat, asthmatic, nearsighted, cannot swim, and tends to act like a know-it-all (6). This pair of boys become outsiders to the group when the other boys realize that although Ralph can provide a stable and organized environment, Jack can supply food in the way of meat. This creates an intense and hostile rivalry between Jack and Ralph, eventually isolating Ralph on the island as the only remaining member of his team (Nelson 8, 127).

George and Lennie's journey toward their version of the American Dream serves to illustrate to them -- and to readers -- just how elusive that dream can be. In this way, George and Lennie, although adults, embark on a another journey of maturity as they learn to accept things they were once naïve about in the past. To them, the dream is to own their own piece of land and be self-sufficient. Johnson states in Understanding *Of Mice and Men* that this would mean independence from others and a way to become accepted once again into mainstream society as working, productive adults (139-140). This journey for their freedom is constantly met by challenges because certain individuals and society itself do not want to see them succeed. If George and Lennie show it is possible to achieve this idea of freedom, then others will have no excuse for the sad condition of their lives. They, too, will begin to see that the "power of the human spirit to dream" does indeed exist and will eventually be rewarded (Johnson, *Understanding Of Mice and Men* 1).

However, because George and Lennie are outsiders, they are always losers of their dream. They are constantly on the move and on the margins of society because of the handicaps that make realizing this dream impossible (Johnson, *Understanding Of Mice and Men* 140). Every time their dream seems within their grasp, Lennie unknowingly causes the dream to be pushed further and further away. The only thing they truly accomplish on their journey is to escape. George and Lennie must escape from different situations in order to ensure their survival, like they had to in Weeds when the story begins. They are not the typical rebellious outsiders, though, trying to drop out of society in order to pursue individualism. They are being forced out by society because of the handicaps that make them individuals. The true escape comes at the end when

George performs the mercy killing of Lennie as they become the target of a lynch mob. According to Richard Astro and Tetsumaro Hayashi in Steinbeck: The Man and His Work, this journey Lennie embarks on at his death is one of a true dream world where he can be at peace (82). This is evident as Steinbeck begins the dialogue with George in this final scene:

> "You...an' me. Ever'body gonna be nice to you. Ain't gonna be no more trouble. Nobody gonna hurt nobody nor steal from 'em."
>
> Lennie said, "I thought you was mad at me, George."
>
> "No," said George. "No, Lennie. I ain't mad. I never been mad, an' I ain't now. That's a thing I want ya to know." (103)

However, this escape for Lennie provides the beginning of George's true journey. George must go on living after having killed his best and most loyal friend. He must learn to live in this "living death" he has created for himself in order to provide an escape for Lennie (Bloom 45). In a sense George has made a place for himself back into mainstream society, but he had to give up the one saving constant in his life.

The physical and spiritual journey that Piggy and especially Ralph embark on is one that teaches them about the loss of innocence; good versus evil; the power, abuse, and tyranny of a group; and the ability to take a stand for one's beliefs (Herz, Gallo 59). The loss of innocence is evident as these boys must act like adults at age twelve and provide rules, guidance, and structure for the others who are present on the island. They learn all too quickly that being in charge and making the rules is not as enviable as one might think. The loss of innocence is especially clear as they watch, and to some extent take part in, the killing of Simon. As Arnold Johnston notes in Of Earth and Darkness:

The Novels of William Golding, to watch a group of once-civilized boys reduce themselves to their most primal state is one that reveals the "darkness in men's hearts." Ralph truly weeps for the end of their innocence at the end when they are rescued (17). He has not only witnessed Simon and Piggy being massacred, but he, too, came close to falling victim to the animalistic state to which many of the boys had succumbed.

Like George, Ralph's true journey begins where the book ends. He must now live the remainder of his days with the knowledge of things he witnessed on that island. As Johnston cautions, he was rescued physically, but his major predicament is internal and has just begun (17). Ralph watched what happened when a lawless group gains control. By themselves, individuals are capable of making rational decisions and working out their problems. When united as a group, the collective and unconscious decision-making that happens usually leads to certain individuals being singled out. Those individuals who find themselves outside the condition of "groupthink" -- Ralph and Piggy -- find their lives becoming miserable as they are punished and persecuted by the group. One person alone cannot inflict this type of intense isolation and torture, but a group of people can bring about this treatment. Ralph senses that a gang is "manifestly inadequate"; it cannot think straight and is capable of atrocities (Swisher 105-106). In the end, Ralph is able to rejoin society, but it is at a cost that could prove to be too much for him to bear as he grows into adulthood.

As in both the fantasy world and the fictional world, true and loyal friends play a significant role in realistic fiction. According to Bucher and Manning, these friendships teach readers lessons that are true to life and help them explore, with a trustworthy companion, the themes, events, and complex human interactions that must occur in real

life (87). George and Lennie have been together for as long as the two of them can remember. George has honored his promise to Lennie's Aunt Clara to look after Lennie when she is gone since Lennie is incapable of looking out for himself. At first, it was that circumstance that brought the two of them together. As time went on, their reasons for staying together and needing each other changed. As Astro and Hayashi note, they became united by their common dream of owning land and providing for themselves (18). George and Lennie represent the human bond in this story. They are the only sort of family unit in this book. They travel together, share a history together, look out for each other, and have a commitment to each other (Johnson, *Understanding Of Mice and Men* 17). No other characters in the book have a relationship like they do. As George reminds Lennie in the beginning of the story, "We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us" (15).

Lennie has complete faith and trust in George. He understands he is not smart and does not always do the right thing, but he knows that George is there to help him and look out for him. When he "accidentally" kills Curly's wife as he had killed the rats and puppies, he is more nervous about what George will say about his actions than the consequences. When George decides to end Lennie's life at the end, it is not out of anger, desperation, or even selfishness to save himself. This is the only way George knows how to give Lennie true release and freedom. According to Astro and Hayashi, George also needs Lennie because Lennie provides an excuse for his own failure (82). George knows they will never achieve the dream of land ownership for various reasons, but he can always blame Lennie for it. With Lennie gone, George has no option but to turn to himself as the reason for his failure to attain the land he wanted. As Bloom

observes, he is free of the burden of being in charge of Lennie, but he is saddled with the knowledge that he will still never reach his goal and the loneliness he finds himself in without his one true companion (38).

The relationship of Ralph and Piggy is better defined as a superhero and sidekick type of friendship. Ralph begins as leader of the group because he has the physical superiority, instinctive administrative skills, and likeability needed. Piggy becomes his sidekick because he has the superior intelligence needed to make sound decisions and judgments for the island. As Nelson states, Piggy also vocally supports the decisions that Ralph makes, which becomes vitally important to Ralph as he begins to lose his position of leadership (8). Ralph relies on Piggy to help him bring back some of the boys to his camp once Jack organizes his own society on the island. This is evident during the initial scene that Jack begins to assert his control over some of the other boys. Piggy tries to make Ralph see he has to do all he can to bring them back to the camp. Piggy says:

> "You got to be tough now. Make 'em do what you want."
>
> Ralph answered in the cautious voice of one who rehearses a theorem.
>
> "If I blow the conch and they don't come back; then we've had it. We shan't keep the fire going. We'll be like animals. We'll never be rescued."
>
> "If you don't blow, we'll soon be animals anyway. I can't see what they're doing but I can hear." (92)

Piggy is a loyal and trustworthy companion because he never leaves Ralph's side. He, too, believes in order and rules and at times sounds like an echo to the decisions that Ralph makes. After all, the idea that the conch should become the symbol of civilization and authority originated with Piggy.

Piggy also needs a fierce companion like Ralph. Piggy knows he is a weaker individual on this island. He lacks the physical characteristics and popularity to ever be leader. He knows that his strength lies in the group. Left on his own, he would feel weak and powerless, but with Ralph on his side he has an air of confidence about him. As Otten and Schmidt posit, Piggy knows he has to stand by Ralph when the group begins to break into two societies because Ralph stands for the group and rules that would speak for the individually weak like Piggy (146). As Jack commands power of all the boys on the island after Simon's death, Ralph and Piggy only have each other to rely on. They never do anything without the other one, proving that they are a loyal and trustworthy duo. Even after Piggy is crushed to death, Ralph does not back down and join Jack's side. He realizes that Jack is responsible for the death of his only friend and chooses to be hunted down like an animal on the island rather than join Jack's camp and feel like a traitor to Piggy. As Golding writes Ralph's thoughts in the final chapter, "He argued unconvincingly that they would let him alone, perhaps even make an outlaw of him. But then the fatal unreasoning knowledge came to him again. The breaking of the conch and the deaths of Piggy and Simon lay over the island like a vapor" (184).

What is interesting and different about both of these classic stories is there is no one person or thing that can be pointed to as the villain. In both cases, it is the society in which the story takes place that creates and magnifies a negative setting. No evil villain exists on the ranch in California where George and Lennie make their home. As Harold Bloom observes in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, it is a culmination of things that creates the unpleasantness with which they have to deal (45). The first villain in this story is the Great Depression itself. It has created a society that either brings out the

lowest, most self-centered aspects of human nature and kills off kindness or magnifies the loneliness and solitude that is indicative of human nature (Johnson, *Understanding Of Mice and Men* 19). George and Lennie are already powerless characters who have to struggle to maintain their humanity and try to live out their dreams in the face of "overwhelming forces of dehumanization" (Bloom 11). Some of the men on the ranch, like Curly, become bad guys in the story because of their treatment of Lennie. Curly torments Lennie, therefore ensuring a fight with George. George knows they have to be careful around Curly and not let him see their animosity if they want to keep their jobs.

Curly's wife is also another harmful force in this novel. She is bored, lonely, and flirtatious, seeking the company of anyone who will talk to her. She knows of Lennie's mental state and takes advantage of that as she looks for a friend. This is, of course, her downfall as well, which brings out the final malicious force in this story of Lennie's brute strength and his inability to recognize it. Like Curly's wife, Lennie is only looking for something to take care of and love, but all the things he tries to love and take of are too fragile and weak for his fierce strength. Lennie is his own worst enemy. Because of Lennie's actions, he and George must run away from different places of employment, making the achievement of their dream that much harder.

A similar situation occurs on the island as the power struggle between Ralph and Jack continues. The story does not depend solely on unlikable characters or sources of tension for its villain. Rather it is the group and what can happen as a result of "groupthink" that makes up the first evil force in this book (Swisher 105). As a group, these boys transform themselves from a group of civilized, well-bred English schoolboys to a group of painted, battle-hungry, screaming savages. In the unexpected and untenable

situation in which the boys find themselves, they discover that being absorbed into a group and losing their individuality provides a sort of psychological and physical protection. They are alone on an island with no supervision. What begins as merely fun and games with no adults quickly escalates into a dangerous situation as the rules of civilization are discarded. William Nelson observes in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*: A Source Book that Ralph finds himself an enemy of the group because he is the only one, with the support of Piggy, who is trying to reconstruct civilization in order to re-establish the limits the group desperately needs (146).

When thinking in terms of Ralph and Piggy, the character of Jack grows into a villain and a destructive force. Jack finds that he is not comfortable with Ralph's leadership of this group. Ralph's preoccupation with order and rules, his befriending of Piggy, and his care for the "littluns" makes Jack realize that he himself could be a stronger leader. He has a skill that Ralph does not possess: he is able to hunt and bring meat to the table. As Olsen comments, in Jack's leadership the boys find camaraderie, hard work, secret knowledge, a clear end, and a tangible reward. With Ralph, the boys find themselves hungry, stranded on a beach, and saddled with a lot of rules (12). Jack uses his skills as a master manipulator to increase his power. He slowly takes the role of leader away from Ralph as more and more of the boys change to his side. Jack is not only an enemy to Ralph because he stole his power, but he is also an enemy because the kind of power, guidance, and way of life in which he is leading the boys culminates in the deaths of Simon and Piggy.

Unlike the previous books studied, the lessons, morals, and endings of these two novels do not wrap things up in a clear, happy, and neat package. The reader is left with

many questions not only about the main characters but also about society in general. Of Mice and Men teaches, first of all, a lesson in commitment. George and Lennie are devoted friends until the end. George never gives up on Lennie and never lets him down when he is in trouble. Lennie always tries his hardest to be a good friend to George and listen to what he says. Although at times he does not obey George's rules, it is never with malicious intent or a rebellious attitude. This spirit of commitment is most evident when George shoots Lennie. He knows what kind of life, or lack of life, Lennie will have if Curly finds him and punishes him for the death of his wife. He also knows what kind of life he will have to lead without his faithful companion. George is willing to sacrifice all that for the best interest of Lennie. As Herz and Gallo note, George is concerned about the dignity of each individual and shows that in the end (70).

This story is also a lesson on the human spirit. During the Great Depression, social and economic conditions had an overwhelming power to destroy the finer human spirit and reduce men to their lowest point (Johnson, *Understanding Of Mice and Men* 15). George and Lennie were trying to rise above this power by having a dream of their own. They not only believed in their dream, but they were even able to convince Candy of their dream and moved him to try to defeat this societal power as well. There is also a lesson to be learned about freedom. As Johnson comments in Understanding *Of Mice and Men*, to these men, freedom was a place where they could make their own decisions and choices, have independence, and would not feel like they were living the "shifting lives of children." They want lives independent of others' whims, favors, finances, and powers (17). Freedom for them was grasping the elusive American dream.

Lord of the Flies is a novel of self-discovery (Johnston 24). It is a story about finding who one truly is when all trappings of society are stripped from him or her. These characters must decide if they will join the "popular" group because everyone else is a member, even though its actions and beliefs are far from what a civilization would endorse or if they can endure exclusion and hold onto their beliefs, principles, and morals. According to Olsen, this story also allows the reader to explore and think about some of the most intense human urges and emotions, such as the desire for power, the fear of the unknown, anxiety about other people, anger, and jealousy (2). This book ends with the goal of making the reader ponder whether he or she would be more likely to be Ralph, representing law and order, or Jack, representing the defects of society as reflected in human nature (Johnston 56).

Although serious and life-altering, these stories still boil down to a basic question: is the main character in the popular group, or is he an outsider? George, Lennie, Ralph, and Piggy all choose to remain on the outside of their societies because those groups represent ideas, beliefs, and practices with which they do not agree. George does not want to truly be a part of society because of the way the individuals in that society look down upon and treats Lennie, who has been his truest and most loyal companion for most of his life. Ralph and Piggy do not want to be part of the larger society because Jack's way of life celebrates anarchy, chaos, and the lack of value for human life. These characters are outsiders in the truest sense of the word because the reader is left to believe at the end of each story that even though George and Ralph are invited back into society, they elect to remain outsiders because they have discovered their own moral codes are more important than being part of the winning group.

CHAPTER V

THAT OUTSIDER IS JUST LIKE ME!

Serious issues for and with outsiders are addressed in the more modern young adult literature as well as in the classics. Fantasy is not the only modern genre with its fair share of outsiders; contemporary realistic fiction also addresses the serious troubles and situations that plague those outside the "normal world." According to Amspaugh-Corson and Stoodt-Hill, the characters in these books could be real, the settings could exist, and most of the action in the plots could actually happen (21). Since these actions and characters could truly exist, the circumstances and problems of these outsiders are usually more serious and realistic, dealing with the problems and tribulations of adolescence that all young people can recognize. James Howe's The Misfits (2001), Joyce Carol Oates's Big Mouth and Ugly Girl (2002), and Carl Hiaasen's Hoot (2002) are three examples of contemporary realistic fiction with an outsider protagonist that demonstrate the possibility of overcoming the label of "outcast."

The story of The Misfits centers on Bobby Goodspeed and his three best friends. They are twelve years old and in the seventh grade at Paintbrush Falls Middle School. These kids, or "The Gang of Five," as they like to be known, are the outsiders of their class because of certain traits. Bobby is overweight, Joe is homosexual, Addie is unbelievably tall and skinny, and Skeezie is a former juvenile delinquent who now dresses like a 1950s Greaser. They are tired of always being called names and feeling

like outcasts, so they create their own party for the student council elections and run on a platform to make the school a place where name-calling is not allowed. Matt Donaghy and Ursula Riggs are the title characters and outcasts in Big Mouth and Ugly Girl. Ursula is a tough-looking, tough-talking, attitude-ridden, tall basketball player who prides herself on being on the outside. Matt is a popular, funny, and well-liked guy in the junior class until some of his humorous remarks are taken too seriously. Suddenly the whole school and town believe Matt is trying to bomb the high school. As he becomes an outsider, he is befriended by Ursula, who helps him clear his name while they become life-long friends. Roy Eberhardt and his owls are the outcasts in the novel Hoot. Roy is the new kid in town as his parents move to Coconut Cove, Florida. Not befriended by too many people at school, Roy becomes obsessed with a boy he sees running down the sidewalk barefoot. Eventually he befriends the boy Mullet Fingers and his step-sister Beatrice, and the three work together to save a group of burrowing owls who are about to be buried alive as construction begins on another Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House. These contemporary "outsiders" continue in the twenty-first century to demonstrate the five characteristics that make up the character of the outsider.

Bobby Goodspeed is an orphan in the truest sense because his mother died when he was only eight years old. Although Bobby does have his father, Mr. Goodspeed is often busy working in order to support Bobby and himself. Bobby is also forced to be on his own because most of the action of the story takes place at the middle school where there are no parents. One of the trends that begins to take place in modern young adult literature is a shift away from settings that involve parents. According to Otten and Schmidt, characters are depending less on listening to and relying on their parents, and

authors are putting more emphasis on the necessity for children to start finding their own way in life (142). This is helping to create a new genre of putative "orphans" for the modern age. All children and young adults must go to school and learn to be away from their parents and make decisions on their own; therefore, all young adults will experience a sense of what it is like to be as lonely as an actual orphan.

Matt Donaghy of Big Mouth and Ugly Girl still has both of his parents and lives in a typical nuclear familial environment. However, most of the action takes place at Rocky River High School, so he, too, is away from his parents for the bulk of the narrative. This continues the modern trend of the definition of "orphan" in contemporary young adult literature as a character who experiences the "psychological release from parents rather than the necessity for continual dependence on them" (Otten, Schmidt 142). Matt also becomes an orphan because his close cluster of friends -- the guys he has always counted on in school -- immediately desert him when his name begins to be associated with a bomb threat. He is forced to eat lunch by himself, cannot get anyone to return his phone calls or e-mails, and begins to have people talk about him behind his back. Not only has he become an outsider, but he has also been victimized by finding himself an orphan in the environment of his school.

The other half of Oates's story, Ursula Riggs, has always been an outsider and an orphan when it comes to the environment of Rocky River High School. Ursula is also alienated and isolated at home because she does not always have the support of her mother, father, and sister. Ursula dresses differently, acts differently, and behaves differently than most of the other girls her age. She wears men's shirts, pants, and sneakers or combat boots every day. She has approximately nine piercings in her ears,

continually wears a dirty old Mets cap to school, and plays basketball. She speaks harshly and brashly, letting whatever is on her mind come out of her mouth. Her parents wish she were more demure and feminine and do not seem to support the person she has chosen to be. Ursula must learn to deal with her fragile relationship with her parents and sister. Her family must also learn to cope with the differences of opinions each member has on both trivial and serious issues. As Bucher and Manning observe, Ursula must help her family learn to embrace her differences rather than shun her and treat her like a distant relative in the family or else they will become a dysfunctional family (92).

Roy Eberhardt of Hoot is also not a true orphan because he, too, has his birth parents. Roy assumes the role of an orphan as he ventures out on his own for his adventures with the mysterious local boy Mullet Fingers. Roy is an only child and has moved six or seven times in his short twelve years of existence. He has always had his parents to count on and has always felt a sense of responsibility to them to stay out of trouble and be safe since he is an only child. The temptation of Mullet Fingers's plan to save the owls, however, is too much for Roy to resist, and he begins to break away from his parents' grasp. Roy is not only experiencing a physical independence from his parents, but he is also experiencing an emotional independence. He wants to create an adult relationship with his parents as he entrusts them with the secret of Mullet Fingers and his plan to save the owls. As John Bushman and Kay Parks Haas note in Using Young Adult Literature in the English Classroom, this is a difficult time for both Roy and his parents as he leaves the security of childhood for the complicated adult world (11). Roy is eager to experience life on his own and learn more about himself, others, and how to handle life's tricky situations (Mitchell 258).

In The Misfits, Bobby is forced to take the journey through middle school that can be both physically and mentally straining. He finds courage within himself to stand up for what he believes in front of his peers and demand a change. According to Herz and Gallo, he is a hero because he sees a change that needs to be made that will not only benefit his friends and him but also many others whose voices are not heard (121). At the end of the novel, during the student council speeches, Bobby sums it up for "The Gang of Five" and all the other misfits at his school when he says, "The No-Name party wants to put an end to name-calling in school. We want to start with a No-Name Day, in which we all think about the names we call each other and stop using them - just for a day. Maybe we'll think about more than names and stop talking to each other like some of us are less than others of us" (251). Bobby must also learn to deal with the teachers at the school who set the rules they think will be the easiest to enforce and then become upset at any child who tries to break these rules, even if they are trying to make the school a better place. This is evident when Bobby and Addie try to form their new political party for the elections and their teacher discourages them. "'There is no need for a new political party,' Ms. Wyman states flatly Thursday morning in homeroom. 'Work within the system'" (65). Bobby also is required to learn to get along with the popular kids at school as he tries to find his place in the classroom as well as with those who have different ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

The unjust world of middle school also helps Bobby discover some truths about the cruel, unjust real world he will be forced into one day. There are no parents to berate kids for calling each other names or not letting people sit at their lunch table. Bobby sees this abuse of power from the popular kids at school. The children who are thin, pretty,

straight, and dress acceptably are the ones who get to set the standards and be in charge of everything. They are unable to accept anyone who is the slightest bit different. As Herz and Gallo observe, Bobby learns the importance of standing up for one's beliefs (70). He knows it is his duty to speak up for all the people who have ever been called a name at school so that a change can come and no one will ever have to hear "loser" or "fatso" again. For this reason, he goes along with Addie's decision for him to make his speech during the elections.

Bobby also comes of age in this novel and realizes that life is not always cheerful and rosy and people are not always good. Bobby and his friends face prejudices from the popular kids at school because there is something different about them that is feared. They must learn that prejudice and judging by appearances are elements of life that will always be present and must be fought (Herz, Gallo 85). Bobby also has trials similar to those of George and Lennie in Of Mice and Men because he is excluded from the mainstream society of middle school since he is overweight and hangs out with others who are considered to have social deformities. He survives the brutality of the other seventh graders through the help of his outcast friends and by realizing that, in order for a change to occur, he has to be willing to sacrifice himself (Herz, Gallo 70). Bobby realizes it is more important to stand up for what one believes in than to fit in with the popular crowd.

Similarly in Big Mouth and Ugly Girl, Matt must make the harrowing journey of physical and spiritual hardships that is known as high school. His innocence is lost quickly when he realizes how fast people he once considered friends can cling to rumors and innuendos started by third parties. He goes from being a trouble-free, well-liked kid

to a suspected criminal sociopath. According to Herz and Gallo, Matt learns how truly uncaring the world can be as he experiences firsthand what it feels like to have hardly anyone believe what you say and immediately jump to conclusions (50). This is evident in the text when he is being interviewed by the Rocky River police:

> "Now you're saying you are serious, you are telling the truth, yes? You're *not* lying now."
>
> "Yes, sir. I mean - no."
>
> "You're not lying now?"
>
> "I wasn't l-lying, no. It was just a dumb joke."
>
> "Do you consider a bomb threat, a threat to 'massacre' as many people as possible a 'dumb joke'? Or something more serious?" (35)

He must also face this realization without the support of his parents. His father is often out of town, and his mother becomes too humiliated, embarrassed, and angry to deal with the situation. As Otten and Schmidt state, Matt must let his own voice become "the voice of parental authority and stability" (143).

Like Bobby, Matt also realizes what it means to stand up for one's beliefs. He risks his place in his community by taking a stand for his innocence and for his friendship with Ursula, a known outcast yet the only supporter he has for a while (Herz, Gallo 50). Another journey Matt experiences is one of harmless love and friendship. Matt begins an unlikely friendship with Ursula when she stands up for him. This friendship blossoms into something deeper when the two of them realize they occupy the same place in society as outsiders. They quickly comprehend they can count on each other for support and trust. As Herz and Gallo note, this deep friendship soon develops into an innocent

love that the two of them are eager to explore (75). Matt realizes that having Ursula in his life as a friend and possible love interest is more important than finding his way back into his previous, popular crowd. This is evident when all the commotion has settled and Matt has been found not guilty of his supposed crimes, and he begins to be included in the events his former friends are attending. When he broaches the subject of bringing Ursula along, Matt is met with this response:

> Cal said, tactlessly, "Ursula *Riggs*? You want to bring *her*?"
>
> "Yes," Matt said, annoyed, "I want to bring Ursula."
>
> Cal said uncomfortably, "Ursula's cool, but...she wouldn't fit in too well, would she? I mean...with us?"
>
> Matt said, "Then I wouldn't fit in with 'us' either." (261)

Similarly, Roy's journey in Hoot is one of learning to make it in the capricious, unjust world of middle school, but it is also one of adventure. To save the owls, Roy must undergo some physical challenges such as running from the maniacal construction site manager and learning to survive in the urban wilderness like his exiled friend, Mullet Fingers. Roy achieves a "sense of identity and self-actualization" as he helps defeat the wicked corporate thugs of Mother Paula's and saves the owls from devastation (Bucher, Manning 124).

Like Bobby and Matt, Roy must deal with the ever-challenging problems faced by all seventh-graders, such as being bullied, trying to fit in at a new school, and being judged by adults since he is the "new kid." Roy learns to stand up for himself when the school-bus bully, Dana, decides to make him his new punching bag. He learns that confronting one's problems and trying to deal with them is a better solution than ignoring

them or continuing to be the victim. Roy illustrates this as he travels to Dana's house to confront him about his bullying and says, "'The only reason I came over here was to talk things out. Put a stop to all this dumb fighting'" (169). Roy also learns that although he feels alone at times, there are some people who are willing to stand up for what they believe in (Donelson, Nilsen 123). Like Mullet Fingers, Beatrice comes to the aid of Roy when he is in need, showing that others do know how it feels to be on the outside. Roy realizes that it is important to be a part of a group with a band of trustworthy friends, but not at the expense of sacrificing what he believes to be right in his heart.

As with every outsider, a group of faithful and devoted friends is needed to help make it through the unpredictable tests one faces through his or her middle and high school years. Bobby knows that he could not have performed all his heroic stunts without the help of his friends, learning that things are only accomplished through teamwork (Donelson, Nilsen 105). Bobby finds a place with his friends because they do not judge him by his appearance and like him for who he is on the inside. They also form a fearsome gang because each one of them knows what it feels like to be called names and not be included in some groups. Bobby is confident he can count on Addie, Joe, and Skeezie no matter what he needs. As young adults, Bobby and his friends learn to live at Paintbrush Falls Middle School amid prejudice, politics, and conflict. Bucher and Manning observe that this will enable them to live in the real world surrounded by those same issues (99).

Bobby's father is also part of Bobby's inner circle of friends. In most young adult literature, the parent does not play a key role in the protagonist's circle of friends. According to Otten and Schmidt, the parent is often worried about the child's becoming

too independent or else tries to be a parent when a friend is needed or vice versa (144). Mr. Goodspeed, however, fills the role of a caregiver and a sage advisor (Donelson, Nilsen 104). He is very supportive of all that Bobby and his friends are trying to do and offers his help in any way possible as well as providing an older voice of reason and confidence.

Matt discovers the true meaning of loyalty and friendship throughout his ordeal. When the story begins, Matt has a circle of friends who have been around him and faithful to him for years. They count on each other, trust in each other, and rely on each other in every facet of their lives. However, when things begin to go wrong for Matt, these so-called "friends" are nowhere to be found. Suddenly their reputation and well-being is far more important than sticking by their "friend" as injustice falls around him. Matt finds a true companion in his dog, Pumpkin, and also in the unlikely character of Ursula. No more than an acquaintance at the beginning, Ursula risks everything to help prove Matt's innocence when the slanderous remarks are being made against him. As time goes on, Matt realizes that Ursula is a true and honest friend on whom he can always count. She would never desert Matt in any type of situation. As Amspaugh-Corson and Stoodt-Hill observe, Ursula becomes more important to Matt than his own family, because with her, he can preserve his independence (163).

Roy is used to being on the outside and not having a group of peers to call his own gang of friends. Moving so many times makes it difficult to cultivate truly long-lasting relationships. In Florida, things begin to change for Roy. As Bushman and Haas note, he realizes that it is important to gain the approval of some friends his own age, and a failure to do so will result in his having to face all of adolescence's challenges alone (8-

10). Roy's first dependable companion is Beatrice. He proves his worth to her by standing up to her in the middle of the lunchroom when he says, "I've got no idea why you're mad about what happened on the bus. You're not the one who got choked, and you're not the one who got punched in the nose. So I'm only going to say this once: If I did something to upset you, I'm sorry. It wasn't on purpose" (44). Once he proves he cannot be pushed around, he has gained a friend for life. Beatrice looks out for Roy and helps defend him in any situation, whether it be physically, as with the bully Dana, or verbally, as with his parents.

Roy's second companion, although not as reliable as Beatrice, is Mullet Fingers. Mullet Fingers, like Huckleberry Finn, is a true outsider in that he lives outside of society, does not conform to the rules set forth for him, and does not seem to be bothered by the possibility of living on the fringes of society for his entire life. Roy is drawn to this part of him and also respects his decision to fight for what he believes. This is evident as he makes the speech to his current events class about saving the owls and trying to encourage others to join him. "'So tomorrow at lunch,' Roy continued, 'I'm going out there to...well, just because I want the Mother Paula's people to know that somebody in Coconut Cove cares about those birds'" (247). When Roy decides to emulate this characteristic of Mullet Fingers, it bonds them for life. Although Mullet Fingers chooses to disappear from society, somehow Roy knows he is nearby in case Roy needs a friend.

Roy has the added bonus of being able to count on his father for help, advice, and confidence. Like Bobby's father, Roy's father acts as a sage, offering counsel and help. Not only does he aid Roy in deciding what to do regarding the owls and the situation at hand, but he also teaches Roy that people cannot search for just one truth but must

understand that there are many different sides to a situation. As Donelson and Nilsen remind readers, all sides need to be investigated, weighed, and considered before serious action is taken (104). In the case of Roy and Bobby, they learn the valuable lesson that not all adults are out to control them. Some adults do want their children to have opportunities to assert their own independence and prove they can care and think for themselves (Donelson, Nilsen 124).

As was evident in Of Mice and Men and Lord of the Flies, the role of the "villain" is no longer boiled down into one force or character. The trend as young adult literature moves into the twenty-first century is to provide a few situations and characters that act as foils to set up circumstances to test and challenge the protagonists. The teachers at Paintbrush Falls Middle School seem to always be on the side of the popular kids who are happy with the status quo, primarily because it is easier to take their side rather than the side of Bobby's gang, who constantly seek change. The popular kids are easier to handle than Bobby and his friends, who are trying to alter the system. According to Donelson and Nilsen, there is also a generation gap between these two sets of characters that cannot be bridged that helps to enhance the conflict between the teachers and Bobby's group (103). However, once Bobby and the others put their plan into action, they begin to see that the teachers were once middle school students who were afraid to change things, too. The teachers are not so much villains as an authority that must be changed if Bobby and his friends want the attitudes of the students to change.

Adolescence seems to be the main obstacle for Bobby and his friends to overcome in The Misfits. The forces they have to conquer are the prejudices and stereotypes that all children, young adults, and adults are susceptible to believing and enforcing. As Herz

and Gallo posit, adolescence acts as a test or trial and serves as a transition from one stage of life to another wherein one experiences several rites of passages through growth, change, experience, and transformation (115). Learning to deal with adolescence as a challenge and not a horrible trap helps ease one through the pains of growing up, as Bobby and his friends learn.

The sinister force that Matt must grapple with is the fact that he is judged guilty until proven innocent. Matt has to deal with his school and community's automatic assumption that he is guilty of the crime with which he has been accused without any proof of his guilt or defense from him. He goes from being a respected, liked, and admired kid in the community to being completely ostracized because of something he supposedly did. Owing to this attitude by many in his community, Matt is subjected to torture by his fellow classmates and others in the town. He is alienated at school, abandoned by his friends, beaten and tortured by some of the older boys, and has his and his family's lives threatened. These are serious challenges he must contend with as well as the more minor negatives of adolescence.

Roy has a few villains to deal with as he makes his adventures through Coconut Cove. First, he must confront the school-bus bully Dana. Because he is the new and younger kid on the bus, Dana singles him out to be his next victim. Roy must decide whether he will fight back or remain the bigger person and try to reason with him. He tries both ways, and when neither of them works, he decides that perhaps ignoring him is the best policy. After all, he has more formidable people to deal with, such as the corporate people at Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House. Roy, a twelve-year-old boy, and his friends must battle a national, multi-million dollar corporation in order to

save the owls. This not only takes bravery and courage on the part of Roy and his friends, but it also requires some quick thinking from Roy and Mullet Fingers. That is evident when Roy comes up with his plan to save the owls:

> "If you can get a picture of one of the birds, we can stop the pancake people from bulldozing that lot."
>
> "Aw, you're full of it," Mullet Fingers said.
>
> "Honest," Roy said. "I looked it up on the Internet. Those owls are protected - it's totally against the law to mess with the burrows unless you've got a special permit, and Mother Paula's permit is missing from City Hall. What does that tell you?" (243)

The corporation has lied about their knowledge of the owls, and Roy knows he must bring that to light in order to save them. In his confrontation with the evil Chuck Muckle, corporate representative for the pancake house, Roy is reminded that not all adults are honest and responsible.

The main lesson Bobby and his friends learn -- and teach readers -- is that it is acceptable to be different and it is preferable to be true to yourself rather than to the social majority. One should never compromise just to fit in to what is considered "normal" society. As Bushman and Haas observe, acquiring a personal ideology and value system to guide one in all decisions is an important part of maturing and declaring independence from parental figures (13). Bobby also learns and teaches the value of loyal and trustworthy friends (Herz, Gallo 38). In the beginning, Bobby is just one of the members of his group. He does not make too much noise and is happy just being a wallflower. As he comprehends the injustices that surface around him at school, his

friends, particularly Addie, convince him to take a stand and try to change things. It is only by having his friends behind him that Bobby is able to make his speech and tell the girl of his dreams that he likes her.

As Bobby goes through these obstacles, he is searching for his place in society. According to Herz and Gallo, since he is a young person, he is unsure of his role and does not yet know whether to act like a child or an adult (38). Through his adventures at Paintbrush Falls Middle School, he realizes he is migrating toward adulthood. Bobby helps send a message of hope and possibility that even though life may be hard at times, survival and the possibility of better things are not out of the question. This is evident after Bobby makes his speech and the No-Name Party loses the election. Kelsey, the girl of his dreams, comes up to him and says, "'I will tell you later what a great speech that was, but before I lose my nerve and go back to being my shy old self I have to ask you something will you go to the dance with me?'" (255). Bobby and the novel itself encourage readers to believe that they can have "positive expectations of fulfillment" (Amspaugh-Corson, Stoodt-Hill 155-156). The Misfits also uses humor to teach these life lessons. Humor helps the characters and the readers deflect some of life's more challenging problems that adolescents experience day to day, and teaches them to rely on humor overcoming tough situations (Bucher, Manning 141).

The lesson that Matt learns and hopes to get across to the audience is the courage it takes from an individual to survive with dignity (Herz, Gallo 80). Matt is the victim of slander, rumor, and gossip, and although at times he becomes very angry, he always tries to resist doing something he would regret. He does not wish to make more trouble for himself, but he gets to the point where it is more important for him to voice his

displeasure in his community than to remain silent and hope for the situation to improve. As he learns this, Matt is developing and searching and asking the age-old question: "Who am I?" He is evolving a personal identity and must find the answer to that question by himself. As Bucher and Manning observe, this is a personal struggle that all young people must go through, so being able to turn to realistic fiction helps young adults see that they are not alone (93). This book also communicates a sense of truth to its readers. It shows young adults a little bit about the world and the people who inhabit it and allows the reader to choose for himself or herself what kind of person he or she wants to grow up to be (Amspaugh-Corson, Stoodt-Hill 138).

Hoot teaches Roy and the reader a valuable lesson about achieving social responsibility. Roy has to discover not only who he is throughout this novel, but he must also find his role in relation to other social groups and as a member of his community, state, and nation. According to Bushman and Haas, he learns that a person's choices, desires, beliefs, and behaviors affect many others (13). Roy also shows that it is not easy to stand up for what one believes. At times, he knows what is required of him to right the situation, but he is either unwilling or afraid to complete the task. Only by realizing that it is important to lead with what is in your heart does he find the courage to do what is needed of him to save the owls and return as a hero to his community.

Young adults who are outsiders moving through the different stages and experiences of adolescence often feel alone in their struggle. Due to the awkwardness they feel with parents and adults and the few peers they seem to have, they often sense that they do not have anyone to help them through this difficult time (Bushman, Haas 28). Stories like The Misfits, Big Mouth and Ugly Girl, and Hoot and the characters they

feature help illustrate to young people that they are not alone in all their struggles. All young people, whether real or fictional, must learn to cope with the hardships of life. Through learning to cope with difficult situations, adolescents can mature and develop as individuals in society. Contemporary realistic fiction helps actual young adults see that there truly is a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

CHAPTER VI

GIRLS ON THE OUTSIDE

The previous chapters have focused on books whose protagonists have been, for the most part, males. However, there are several classic and modern young adult books that feature a female protagonist who is considered an "outsider." Because adolescents are in a transitory period -- going from being a child to becoming an adult -- they often unavoidably feel like outsiders. According to Bushman and Haas in their study Using Young Adult Literature in the English Classroom, females especially feel the physical, intellectual, and moral changes that are taking place within themselves and often seek out young adult literature that meets their needs and interests while also helping them feel less isolated (1). These female outsiders play the same roles as their male counterparts and fall into the five categories of what makes a character an outsider. Their struggles are somewhat less dangerous and life-threatening, especially in the classics, since females generally have fewer opportunities for roaming and exploring. Nevertheless, they still go through the same trials and tribulations that allow them to see their status as an outsider and to decide whether they wish to remain outsiders or to rejoin mainstream society. Three classic examples of young adult literature with female outsiders are Lucy Maud Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables (1908), the multi-authored Nancy Drew series (begun 1930), and Harper Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird (1960).

Anne of Green Gables is the story of Anne Shirley, who is adopted by a brother and sister on Prince Edward Island in Canada. She is a spirited young woman whose overactive imagination often gets her into trouble with the rest of the community. Mystery is at the heart of the Nancy Drew series. Nancy is a young self-appointed detective who seeks to right the wrongs in her hometown of River Heights with the help of her attorney father. She is constantly jumping into one mystery after another, returning objects, fortunes, and missing children to their rightful owners. To Kill A Mockingbird is the now-famous story of Scout Finch, a young tomboy living in a small town in southern Alabama. With the companionship of her brother and neighbor, Scout grows up during this novel as she encounters the "ghost" next door, faces her aversion to becoming a lady, and witnesses the trial and death of a young black man in her community.

Like Oliver Twist and Harry Potter, Anne Shirley is a true orphan. Her parents died sometime in her youth, and she has been living for many years in an orphanage when the story begins. She has survived the hardships of losing her parents and being reared in an orphanage through her "power of pretending." As John Seelye observes in Jane Eyre's American Daughters: From *The Wide, Wide World* to *Anne of Green Gables*, she makes over whatever she regards as too dull and boring into something that is interesting, fabulous, and beautiful (334). Because of this attitude, Anne sets herself apart from the other orphans and from other people as well, preferring to live in her imaginary, creative world full of beautiful people and lovely ideas. According to Seelye, Anne understands the real world and knows she must live in it, but her imaginary world is so much lovelier she would rather dwell in it (333).

As her journey begins, Anne is adopted by Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert, who live on a beautiful piece of property on Prince Edward Island called Green Gables. Although at first this seems like an answer to her prayer of finding a place for herself, she continues to remain an outsider because it is revealed the Cuthberts had intended to adopt a boy. She wallows in the "depths of despair" until it is decided that she may stay. The Cuthberts do grow to love her and she feels a sense of family with them, but it takes longer for the town of Avonlea to accept Anne as one of their own. As Inness notes, she stands out physically and behaviorally, with her fiery red hair, thin and wiry frame, high spirit, overactive imagination, and quick temper (21). She is often teased for her red hair by Gilbert Blythe, a fellow classmate, and ends one argument by breaking a slate over his head. Mrs.Rachel Lynde, the Cuthberts' neighbor and friend, makes a remark about her looks, and Anne unleashes a fury of words at her:

> "I hate you," she cried in a choked voice, stamping her foot on the floor. "I hate you - I hate you - I hate you - " a louder stamp with each assertion of hatred. "How dare you call me skinny and ugly? How dare you say I'm freckled and red-headed? You are a rude, impolite, unfeeling woman!" (948)

According to Seelye, what makes Anne continue to be an outsider even after she is taken in by Matthew and Marilla is her proud temper, loud spirit, and creative imagination that she must learn to harness since it is so important to her to become part of the Cuthbert and the Avonlea family (336).

Nancy Drew is also a true orphan, at least partly, because she lost her mother when she was a young girl. She was reared by her father, Carson Drew, and his live-in housekeeper, Hannah Gruen. Due to her unique living and family situation, Nancy grew

up as the lady of the house without a mother after whom to pattern herself (Nash 37). Even though she is already a semi-orphan, Nancy also tends to make herself even more of an orphan by choice. Though she is eighteen when most of the stories happen and, therefore, does not need a guardian, she continually leaves the protected domestic sphere to solve mysteries. She seems more interested in the public aspect of life and in solving cases than staying home to be with her father and working on more domestic skills as many women her age and of the eras many of the novels were first published were doing to prepare themselves for marriage. She works alone most of the time and enjoys the independence that comes with that. As Inness states, Nancy seems to have the freedom, money, and ability to do what she pleases, despite her motherless status. This allows her to focus her full concentration on the mystery at hand (148).

Another characteristic of Nancy that seems to set her apart from the community is that she does not possess the stereotypical virtues and characteristics of a female of the 1950s; she seems to display certain masculine traits. Nancy is not overly concerned with impressing young men, shopping, lunching with fellow girlfriends, or trying to become married as quickly as possible. Rather, Nancy wants to solve mysteries. Her greatest strengths seem to be her well-ordered mind, her keen ability to put two and two together, and her desire to be recognized for her achievements. As Inness reminds readers, all of these are traits that are typically considered masculine for this time period (148). This fits with Nancy's familial situation, because her role model has always been her father rather than another woman. She is the son he never had, and she tends to pattern herself and everything she does after him (Inness 149). Her relationship with her father is also something that sets her apart. She seems to have a peer-like connection with her father

rather than a father-daughter one. According to Nash, Carson Drew gives her total freedom, trusts her judgment, and helps her when it is necessary (36). Because she has always been treated like an adult, Nancy tends to have an adult mentality no matter with whom she is dealing. An assertive young woman, she does not hesitate to oppose or contradict other adults (Nash 32). When Nancy is dealing with the police in The Secret of The Old Clock, she responds to their request for her appearance at the police station with a rather brusque answer: "'Yes, if it's necessary,'" Nancy promised reluctantly. "'But I don't live in this county and I'm eager to get home right away. Don't you have enough evidence against them? I think they're the same men who stole several silver heirlooms from the Turner sisters'" (140). This behavior sometimes makes her an outsider among the other young ladies and older people in town.

Like Nancy, Scout also lost her mother when she was very young and is being reared by her attorney father, Atticus, and their housekeeper, Calpurnia. In addition to that semi-orphan status, Scout is also a self-proclaimed tomboy. She wears overalls, keeps her hair short, and enjoys playing outdoors with her brother, Jem, and their friend, Dill. She has no desire to become more ladylike, much to her Aunt Alexandra's dismay. According to Claudia Durst Johnson in Threatening Boundaries, Scout finds those things that are ladylike to be oppressive, exclusionary, and puzzling (53-54). Since she has only had her brother for a true companion, she associates the word "girl" with something undesirable. Jem constantly reminds her that she's acting "like a girl" when she will not do something, and this always makes an impression on her. It seems to her that being a girl would be a bad thing that would oblige her to cease being friends and playmates with Jem and Dill.

This story takes place in southern Alabama in the 1930s during times of racial segregation and the onset of the Great Depression. Because the story is told through the eyes of a young child, the reader does not obtain the discouraging and racially disparaging attitudes the adults carried at this time, but one is instead able to see how a child viewed some of the most violent and ugly times in America's history. Scout herself does not feel inhibited by color. Calpurnia has always been there for her and is more like a mother than anyone else has ever been. She desires to "visit" with Calpurnia and go to church with her and her people. She does not care that Calpurnia is black; she only knows that she is someone she can rely on (Johnson, *Threatening Boundaries* 86). Scout is also not shy to stand up for what she believes. She does not know in every instance what she is doing by speaking what is on her mind, but because she does tend to say things no one wants to voice out loud, she encounters much opposition in her small town of Maycomb.

Anne Shirley's journey is one of being accepted, growing up and maturing, and learning what is important in life. Her proud temper and creative imagination often get her into trouble. She is forever getting herself and her "bosom friend" Diana Barry into trouble with her actions, such as when she brings out the raspberry cordial during tea and Diana drinks it to the point of intoxication. Anne's mistakes and mischievous actions are never done with malicious intent, but rather result from well-intentioned but badly made decisions. According to Seelye, Anne also tends to listen to the "enchanted world of her imagination" rather than what is going on in the real world around her (335). She eventually learns how to curb her temper and rein in her imagination as she finds the world of Avonlea accepting her for who she is (Seelye 337). She needs less and less of

her beautiful, imaginative world because the very world around her is becoming more appealing and she is finally able to fit in (Seelye 339).

Anne also shows readers that the spirit of childhood does not end with adulthood; it merely transitions into a different type of spirit in the woman that she becomes (Inness 18). One of the appealing traits about Anne is that although she does grow up in this story and in the subsequent novels, she never loses the spirit that makes her who she is. The spirit grows and matures and becomes less wrapped up in her imagination, but it never leaves Anne. She is still just as spunky and vivacious when the novel ends as when it begins, only more mature. As Inness observes, while Anne matures, she learns that being a part of a community is not just about living in a town but connecting with those around one (32). Avonlea and the people there offer Anne's first sense of true family. Beginning with the Cuthberts, she learns what it means to care for and about people and to have people care for and about her. That lesson made an impression and is confirmed when she gives up her dream of college at the end of the novel to come home and care for Marilla after Matthew dies. She does so willingly and lovingly because she knows everything Marilla had to give up to care for her. Anne does not consider this a sacrifice but rather an expression of the love and affection she and Marilla have for each other. Anne is part of a society and a family by the end of the novel, and is no longer considered such an "outsider." The novel ends not on a sad note but on one of hope. As Anne explains, "I don't know what lies around the bend, but I'm going to believe that the best does" (1070).

Nancy Drew's journeys through her many books are about helping others rather than helping herself. She spends her time assisting people who have emotional and

material problems. According to Inness, she helps insecure and frightened people find security a number of different ways (146). Nancy helps locate their inheritances, legacies, missing valuables, or missing children. She enjoys the satisfaction of seeing the joy on people's faces when whatever is lost is returned to them. Nancy never demands a monetary reward or payment for any of the work she does. She simply jumps into mystery after mystery with the intent to resolve it and restore order and peace to those around her. She shows that there exist people willing to step up and right the wrongs that mar people's lives. This classifies Nancy as a different kind of outsider than those looked at in previous chapters. She thrives in restoring order to situations instead of attempting to provoke the authorities and bring about chaos, such as Tom Sawyer or Harry Potter have a tendency to do.

Nancy also illustrates the importance of being a bright young female and sets herself up as a role model to other young girls in her town and those reading her adventures. Her success in solving mysteries often lies in being able to see what others fail to because she takes the time to thoroughly investigate and think through each step of the mystery. According to Inness, she also combines her astute common sense with observation and intuition to solve each case (147). Because of her more stereotypically masculine traits, Nancy often undertakes archetypal male quests. As Inness states, Nancy takes the initiative to solve some sort of injustice, undergoes many trials, is threatened by death, perseveres until order is restored, is praised, and receives some sort of emotional reward for her efforts (149). Each case takes her through this same quest, and she is able to come out with the answer due to her innate skills. She is a positive role model because she shows other girls that it is acceptable to be a strong, intelligent, and independent

woman who can solve problems (Inness 156). Although she does possess the social attributes that make her a popular female of her time -- cute boyfriend, nice car, devoted friends, and invitations to social engagements -- she tends to regard those as less important than solving mysteries. Most young women her age during this time period would be thrilled to possess a handsome boyfriend, sturdy car, loyal friends, and a full social calendar. Because Nancy demonstrates a different type of woman than most, she continues to be considered an outsider to some in River Heights, although some do embrace her and her unconventional way of life.

Of all the girls being discussed in this chapter, it is Scout who undergoes the most poignant journey of them all. Scout learns what it means to deal with, live with, or reject differences among people. Whether it be race, social deviation, class, or gender, Scout learns that not everyone readily accepts elements that are different (Johnson, *Threatening Boundaries* 32). Personally, Scout must learn that turning out to be a lady is something that is inevitable and not necessarily deplorable. According to Johnson in Threatening Boundaries, although Scout feels that the boundaries put upon her gender are stifling and counter to everything she holds dear, she realizes that she might be forced to embrace it one day (56). This is evident when Scout begins to understand what is going on in Maycomb and she voluntarily helps Aunt Alexandra:

> Aunt Alexandra looked across the room at me and smiled. She looked at a tray of cookies on the table and nodded at them. I carefully picked up the tray and watched myself walk to Mrs. Merriweather. With my very best company manners, I asked her if she would have some. After all, if Aunty could be a lady at a time like this, so could I. (272)

Still, for Scout, putting a dress on over her overalls to attend Aunt Alexandra's tea and helping to serve is about as ladylike as she is willing to get at this age.

Other challenges that Scout must encounter are those that involve courage and bravery. By learning to be brave and courageous in the manner her father would approve, Scout begins to grow up and pass through a rite of passage (Johnson, *Threatening Boundaries* 92-93). She sees bravery displayed through her father. Atticus valiantly shoots a rabid dog in the streets, carries on conversations with Mrs. Dubose, the local mad woman, and is willing to represent a man whom everyone assumes is guilty in a case that was never winnable from the beginning. Scout learns what courage is through her father, the trial, and also through Mrs. Dubose, who makes it a priority to end her morphine addiction before she dies. As Johnson notes in Threatening Boundaries, Scout matures as she begins to understand the complex nature of society and societal codes (98). She also learns that those who stand on the outside of society, like Boo Radley, sometimes do so of their own free will because of the repressive codes that society enforces. Scout finds she has much more in common with Boo than she originally thought. Her realization that most people are generally nice once you have taken the time to get to know them sums up exactly what it requires to get along with the differences in a community. Because Scout grasps this and is willing to live by it, she still stands on the outside of her society but is wise enough to know that it is better for her to have that knowledge than to try unsuccessfully to belong to the community to which she will inevitably seem an "outsider."

Anne Shirley craves the affection and companionship of others so badly that it is no surprise she creates a small, loyal circle of friends as soon as she establishes herself in

Avonlea. The first and most dear to her heart are the Cuthberts. She acknowledges the sacrifices they had to make when they took her in, knowing she was not the boy they desired to lend a hand on the farm. As Seelye comments, Anne also recognizes that she is a highly creative person with a heightened sensitivity and imagination that is not always easy to be around (334). The Cuthberts offer the parental roles that Anne has been seeking without imposing the parental control of biological parents (Otten, Schmidt 143). As Inness observes, Matthew is the "nurturer of Anne's spirit." He loves her feisty attitude and positive outlook on life and enjoys being in her company. Marilla is the "word of law and society" that Anne needs to help her deflate her overactive imagination and control her wild temper. Marilla loves Anne, but at times it is a tough love (21).

Besides the parental figures Anne needs, she also desperately wants a "bosom friend." Anne desires someone she can share all her secrets with, have fun with, and do all the things that true girlfriends are supposed to do. She finds this friend in Diana Barry. Diana is a quiet, ladylike, very typical Avonlea young girl. She is drawn to Anne's wild sense of imagination and adventure and is quickly taken with her. Diana provides the companionship and loyalty that Anne seeks in a friend. She also supplies Anne with encouragement, such as with her writing. Gilbert Blythe also becomes a loyal friend of Anne's, although at the beginning he is her sworn enemy. She and Gilbert have an intense intellectual competition all through school, and though he teases her mercilessly, there is always an underlying sense that he, too, is fond of her creative, wild, spirited personality. They eventually develop a close friendship that, as the two mature, evolves into a deep love, allowing them to marry. As Inness notes, it is with Gilbert that Anne finds a "kindred spirit" whom she can confide in and trust (23-24).

Although Nancy Drew does tend to solve her mysteries alone and enjoy the independence of it, she also has a fiercely loyal gang of supporters on call if she needs someone. Her father remains her most devoted companion. He is proud of her maturity and what she has chosen to do with her life at this point. As Nash points out, not only does Carson Drew provide his daughter with the freedom and mobility to solve crimes by his stepping out of the way and giving her a car, but he also provides her with advice, help, or a listening ear whenever she needs it (37). Other times, Nancy relies on her two friends, Bess Marvin and George Fayne, to help her solve her cases. They offer Nancy help during some of her cases but are more concerned with the "teenage" aspects of life, like shopping, lunching, and going on dates. As Inness observes, they always support Nancy, but they do not always understand why these cases are so important to her (149). In many respects, their "normal" preoccupations contrast with Nancy's and remind the reader of her uniqueness.

The final component in Nancy's circle of friends is her boyfriend, Ned Nickerson, who is introduced in the seventh book of the series. They continue to date on and off for most of the series. Ned is a college football player who is very enamored with Nancy and makes the occasional appearance in the books to take her to dances, barbecues, and on triple dates with Bess and George. He also provides the "muscle" for her mysteries if she needs it. As Inness comments, Ned, ever the accommodating boyfriend, never tries to ask for more than Nancy is willing to give since she seems to be more interested in solving cases than in getting more serious with Ned (149-150). Nancy's group of friends differs from past outsiders studied in other works because although they are there for her, she tends to rely more on herself than on any of her friends for help. At the end of each

mystery, when the case is solved and the goods are returned to their rightful owners, Nancy is more likely to be alone than to be accompanied by Bess, George, Ned, or even her father.

Like Nancy and Anne, Scout tends to rely on her father as one of her most loyal and trustworthy friends. Atticus has always educated Scout by teaching her the skills and truths she needs to know about life. At times, Atticus treats Scout and her brother more like peers than like his children, and this seems to elicit additional respect from them. They look up to Atticus and by the end of the book realize what a brave and courageous role model he truly is. Scout's other loyal companions are Jem and Dill. A day is never complete without some sort of adventure in the outdoors with these two playmates. They treat Scout like one of the boys and allow her to play along with them as long as she does not start acting like a girl. Jem also looks out for his younger sister when they are together and acts as her protector whenever the situation calls for it. Dill fits in perfectly with these two because, like Jem and Scout, he is an orphan after having lost his father. As Johnson reminds readers in Threatening Boundaries, Dill also has an overactive imagination like the two of them and can join in their many imaginary adventures (41, 51).

However, at times Jem and Dill find the company of a girl to be distracting and annoying. There are also instances when Scout feels left out because she is not a boy, such as when Jem and Scout are discussing the proper way to urinate off a porch. Scout then seeks the companionship of several other girls, but they are hardly conventional women, either. First, Scout has Calpurnia. Cal, as she is affectionately called, is black, which places her as an outsider in this small Southern town. Also, Scout likes the

company of Miss Maudie, a single woman who daringly wears overalls when working in her garden. Both of these women provide the female companionship that Scout is looking for, yet since they are atypical females they do not threaten the world that Scout has made for herself by not conforming to ladylike standards (Johnson, *Threatening Boundaries* 55).

As in the case of other twentieth- and twenty-first-century young adult novels, there is not one character who constitutes a fully delineated villain in these stories. Rather a combination of not only characters but of societal ideals adds up to evils and villains in these stories. Anne's primary antagonist is herself. She must learn to control her temper and her imagination so that she gets herself into less trouble. She is her own worst enemy because the very things she does to make herself feel better within her world are the same things that antagonize those around her. As Seelye observes, Anne is then forced to come up with ornate apologies to those she has offended to get out of trouble (336). Another antagonist in the early stages of the story is Gilbert Blythe. He constantly teases Anne about her red hair, pulls on her hair, and attempts to beat her at every competition at school. Although these harassments make Anne a better and more mature person, he is a force she has to overcome and learn to anticipate. The town of Avonlea also represents a challenge to Anne because its conservative residents resist accepting the eccentricities of Anne's character. By being herself and drawing the citizens to her lively spirit, she shows them that it is acceptable to be a little bit different.

The villains in Nancy Drew's adventures, of course, are principally the criminals who steal the objects that she is trying to return. She encounters a new set of villains on every case. According to Inness, because she tends to overcome any obstacle in her path

in order to come up with the solution, she defeats the villain in every mystery (147). The criminal often goes to prison after learning that a young, eighteen-year-old woman has undermined his or her criminal plan. Other villains are occasionally authority figures. Since Nancy figures out the cases before the police do, she often shows herself to be smarter and quicker than the male police officers, detectives, and lawyers in town (Inness 152). Embarrassment sometimes results for these authority figures because they have been outsmarted by a young, middle-class woman. At times this creates a rift between Nancy and others.

Scout deals with many villainous elements during her early years in this story. She grapples with childhood imaginings that her neighbor, Boo Radley, is some sort of vampire (Johnson, *Threatening Boundaries* 74). The beginning of the novel has many humorous scenes of Scout, Jem, and Dill attempting to prove their bravery by confronting the inhabitant of this "haunted" house. Only after communicating with Boo do the children realize that he is not a vampire or a witch at all but just another person -- in fact, a hero -- who will eventually save their lives. Scout's teacher is also her opponent. Scout learned to read at a young age by sitting with Atticus and the newspaper; when she gets to school she finds out that most children her age cannot read and is chastised by the teacher when she tries to show off her skill. As Johnson notes in Threatening Boundaries, Scout becomes sullen and begins to dislike school because it is so boring, considering that their main lessons are ones she already knows (109). Other children qualify as antagonists to Scout at times because of what they say against her father. When Atticus is handed the case to defend Tom Robinson, he angers many folks in town.

Scout does not hesitate to beat up any of the other children who talk negatively about her father.

The boundaries set up by society also create obstacles for Scout. The first boundaries she must confront are the behaviors and codes that make up being a lady. As Johnson states in Threatening Boundaries, Scout feels that being a girl is nothing but acting superficial and snobby while conforming to oppressive and suffocating mores (56). How is she supposed to climb a tree wearing a dress? Her activities are not something she wants to give up just because she is supposed to act like "a lady." Since Atticus was her only parent, he never enforced any feminine behaviors like sewing or playing with dolls. Because Jem was her only playmate, she learned to play like he did. Another societal code Scout confronts is prejudice. She struggles with racial prejudice against Tom Robinson, social prejudice against Boo, Mrs. Dubose, and the Ewells, and gender prejudice against herself (Johnson, *Threatening Boundaries* 32). Scout learns what it means to have an open mind versus a closed mind and has to decide for herself which type of world she would rather live in: the closed-minded society that kills Tom, forces her to fit stereotypical "girlish" behavior, and upholds the Ewells' testimony, or the open-minded society of her father's teaching that accepts people for who they are and respects their differences.

Anne Shirley teaches readers and other characters what it means to be a strong character who shoulders responsibilities as they arise (Seelye 339). Anne begins this story as a young, imaginative girl looking for a family, and at the end is a warm, caring, mature woman who knows the value of family and community. She illustrates what it means to have to make tough decisions regarding the future and demonstrates that even

though you have a personal dream, it may not be a collective dream that fits the familial unit. Anne shows what it means to be a member of a family when she decides to stay at Green Gables with Marilla instead of heading to college: it means being able to be selfless at a time when someone else needs you. According to Inness, Anne of Green Gables teaches readers many important themes such as a sense of belonging, the virtue of motherhood, the duty of life, identity, and chivalry, and the value of a home worth fighting for (28-29). Anne Shirley amounts to a role model because she gives young girls a chance to see that there is more to life than what is put in front of you as a woman and as a part of society (Inness 32).

Nancy, like Anne, teaches young girls that it is possible to be more than what society plans for a young woman. Nancy did not spend her days trying to find a husband or shopping for new party frocks all the time. She found she had a talent and an ability to solve crimes around her town and bring forth injustices to restore peace and order. This was not something she had in mind for her future, nor was it something she completely thought out. Due to her innate skills, this is the path that was opened up for her. As Inness comments, Nancy shows the others in River Heights and especially her readers that an ordinary young woman can sometimes do extraordinary things when she sets her mind to it (150). Although these classics were written in the 1930s, they have been revised and new stories have been added as late as the 1980s that still provide the same moral lesson of "girl power."

Scout's adventures, like Anne's, teach what it means to be part of a community. The citizens of a small town like Maycomb have to protect each other, as when Atticus took care of the rabid dog. However, this story also points out that not everyone is

considered part of the community, like Boo Radley and Mrs. Dubose, and as such will not receive the same treatment. To Kill A Mockingbird also teaches great lessons regarding racism, prejudice, and intolerance. This was a time and an area so deeply seated in racial discrimination that this type of prejudice bled into other areas such as social prejudice and gender prejudice. As Herz and Gallo comment, this story teaches readers that injustice can be caused by judging someone based on a characteristic he or she has no or little control over, such as color, socioeconomic status, or gender (85). The greatest lesson this story teaches to Scout and her companions (and to readers) concerns courage. To Scout and Jem, courage initially is only someone with a firearm. Atticus shows them differently with Mrs. Dubose and then with Tom Robinson. He demonstrates that true courage is doing something to its fullest, even though the outcome will not be what is desired. Atticus says it best to Jem after Mrs. Dubose dies:

> I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do. (128)

Like their male counterparts discussed in the previous chapters, these female outsiders are typically orphans who experience a journey with a group of loyal friends in which they encounter villains and teach the other characters and readers valuable lessons. Although their journeys and confrontations can be less dangerous, the lessons they teach tend to be deeper and have a more life-altering effect. In addition, these girls rely on, instead of rebel against, their remaining parents when they find themselves in tough situations. Similar to Huckleberry Finn, however, some of these girls find that living

outside the realm of society is the best fit for them, though others want to be more like Oliver Twist, finding their place in society. Anne, Nancy, and Scout are all classic examples of female outsiders who undergo numerous trials in deciding if they want to remain outside or desire to be part of mainstream society.

CHAPTER VII

AM I NORMAL?

Adolescence is usually an uncomfortable period in everyone's life due to the multitude of challenging, dynamic, and unsettling issues that each individual must tackle in order to achieve that ever-elusive goal of maturity. It is a time of great change because these individuals are neither children nor are they adults. According to Bushman and Haas in Using Young Adult Literature in the English Classroom, they are experiencing physical growth, sexual awareness, emotional upheaval, and cognitive development at an alarming pace (1). Although all individuals must go through this "awkward" phase, it can be made that much worse if one is considered an "outsider" because then these confusing trials are faced unaccompanied. Also, girls seem to take this change much harder than their male peers, usually facing a more daunting journey down the road to growing up in both real life and novels. Therefore, female outsiders appear to have the most taxing time, experiencing all the pains and troubles of adolescence and looking for outlets to make sure that they are "normal," while going through all these physical, intellectual, and moral changes. Young adult literature can provide the outlet that these young women need to see that they are not alone in their struggles through puberty. Judy Blume's Blubber (1974) and Ann Brashares's The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants (2001) are both excellent examples of contemporary young adult literature that speaks to female outsiders. Blubber is the story of a fifth-grade class run by a few "popular" girls

who decide to make one overweight girl the object of their teasing, taunting, and torture. Brashares's novel is the story of four best friends who each have to discover what it means to grow up and become mature during their fifteenth summer.

One thing that makes these novels different from most of the texts previously discussed is that there is not one protagonist who makes up the "outsider" character. Rather, it is a couple or a group of young women who all at different times experience what it is like to be an outsider. Linda Fischer is the character who earns the nickname of Blubber in Blume's novel. She is slightly overweight and heavily teased by her other classmates when the novel begins. Linda and the other characters are not actual orphans in this novel. She and the others can be classified as temporary orphans because most of the action takes place in Mrs. Minish's fifth-grade classroom at the local middle school. There are no parents present so the children are left to deal with the problems and trials they encounter alone. Also, even though there is the authority figure of their teacher Mrs. Minish, much of the action takes place during lunch hour (when the teacher is not present) and in the girls' bathroom, where there are not any adults. As the novel continues, the popular girls in the class -- Wendy, Caroline, and Jill -- tease Linda unmercifully, making her do such things as show her underpants to the boys and eat lunch alone while they comment on the amount of food she eats.

As the story goes on, Jill Brenner, who had been on the giving side of the teasing and tormenting, finds herself on the receiving end of this torture, alienated like Blubber by her classmates, after she attempts to stand up for her beliefs. Since her teasing also takes place at school during lunch hour and bathroom breaks, she also does not have any adults around to protect her or help her make tough decisions, making her in effect an

orphan. Because both of these girls spend the entire day with this same group of students, the fact that they are excluded from everything at different times makes the reality of being an outsider that much more difficult.

Four girls form the eponymous group in The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants. They are best friends who have been together since their mothers took pregnancy aerobics together the summer before they were born. The mothers have fallen out of touch with each other, but the girls have stayed best friends for the past fifteen years. In their fifteenth summer, each girl is going to be someplace different. Since most of them will be somewhere without one or both parents, they do become temporary orphans for the story. They are also orphaned and alienated from each other as they are forced to spend their first summer apart. Carmen is headed to South Carolina to stay with her father who has been divorced from her mother since she was seven. Lena is traveling with her younger sister to Greece to spend the summer with her grandparents. Bridget is off to Bajá, Mexico, to participate in a soccer camp. Tibby is forced to stay at home and get a job at a local drugstore. Each of these girls feels alone and lost since she does not have the comfort, advice, and support of her "sisters."

They are also outsiders because of insecurities that make them self-conscious and too aware of themselves. Carmen is part Puerto Rican from her mother's side and is very much aware of how different her heritage is when she is bombarded with the news her father is remarrying a woman with two children. The "whiteness" of her father and his new family makes Carmen feel as if she does not belong in this new chapter of her father's life. When her future stepsister remarks about how little she looks like her

father, Carmen replies: "Right. I look Puerto Rican, like my mother. My mother is Puerto Rican. As in Hispanic. My dad might not have mentioned that" (78).

Lena has always been considered beautiful, which has caused her to shy away from any contact or relationships with boys because she always assumes they are only interested in a physical connection because of her appearance. This becomes harder for her to deal with as she meets a young man in Greece who demonstrates he is truly interested in Lena for who she is. When she is leaving Greece to go back home, she finally admits to Kostos, the young man, how wrong she was to avoid him all summer: "So what I'm saying is, I wish I hadn't acted that way to you. I wish I hadn't acted like I didn't like you or didn't care, because I really do...I really do...not feel like how I maybe seemed like I might feel" (278).

Bridget, who is also considered extremely attractive, confronts her aggressive, no-fear nature as she flirts dangerously with Eric, a soccer coach four years her senior. She soon finds out that she does not have the heart or maturity to back up the decisions that her daring body and mind make, falling into a deep depression after losing her virginity to Eric.

Tibby feels like an outsider in her own family, since she is twelve and thirteen years older than her younger brother and sister. At times it feels as though she is more of a live-in babysitter than her parents' first child.

The journey that Jill and Linda take is one of learning what it truly means to walk in someone else's shoes. Blume illustrates this with the classic concept of the "middle-class experience." As Stephen M. Garber notes in "Judy Blume: New Classicism for Kids," these characters are normal, middle-class individuals who are going through the

common problems in life and learning how to deal with them (58). The major problem dealt with in this book is the bully, a classic literary character who terrorizes, torments, and teases others he or she feels are less powerful or more vulnerable. Here the bully is a collective entity. Jill begins as part of the group that is bullying Linda. She is in the middle of the note passing, whispering, and verbal teasing that make everyday life hard for Linda. Later on, Jill becomes the target, teased relentlessly by the "lead" bullies, Wendy and Caroline. She now understands what it feels like to be tortured in the girls' bathroom, verbally teased every time the teacher turns her back, and have to eat lunch alone. Linda gets a chance to be part of the bullying side for a bit and sees that it is not much fun to give back what she herself used to receive, because she knows how it feels. According to Garber, both of these girls are typical characters who are an "illustration of a problem." They are both troubled with grievances and anxieties that arise because they are alienated from their fellow classmates at a time when acceptance is of crucial importance: middle school (57).

Carmen, Lena, Bridget, and Tibby each experience two important journeys: they learn the value of true, supportive friendship and what it means to mature through rough times and come of age (Nilsen, Donelson, Blasingame 134). Each girl faces a life-changing, maturing, serious issue during their summer apart. These issues force them to grow up, but, more importantly, they realize the importance of having and counting on each other to get through the rough times they experience. The story is filled with notes, letters, and candid observations from each one of the girls that symbolize the support they have for each other even though they are apart for the summer. As they mail each other the Traveling Pants (one pair of jeans that miraculously fit each different-shaped girl and

make each one of them feel special, beautiful, and courageous) they always include a note that imparts words of wisdom that the particular girl needs. When Carmen sends the pants to Bridget, she writes "I hope these pants bring you...I hope they bring you good sense...Let me tell you from recent experience, a little common sense is a good thing" (188).

Each of the girls grows up during the summer because of certain experiences she endures. These experiences teach the girls valuable lessons about what it means to become a woman and help these girls go one step further in their journey toward true womanhood. As Bushman and Haas state, the girls are attempting to "achieve their proper feminine social role in society." They have to experience these tough situations in order to develop into responsible, acceptable adults (10). Carmen has to learn that she does have a considerable amount of anger toward her father for leaving when she was young. She is finally able to let go of some of that anger when she opens up to him on the telephone: "Why wasn't your old family good enough? Why did you move away? Why did you promise me...we'd be closer than ever? W-Why did you keep saying we were, even though it wasn't true?" (245). She must come to understand that he is capable of loving both her and his new family, and because of that, she must learn to love and accept this new family she is now a part of. Lena must realize the danger that occurs when stereotyping and assuming knowledge of people's plans and motivations. Because of her preconceived notions of why boys want to talk to her, she denies herself an entire summer of a pleasant friendship with Kostos, a young man who truly desires to know Lena. She has to learn to let her guard down and not be so afraid of getting close to people even if they prove to let her down in the end.

Bridget faces the reality that she is not as brazen or mature as she would like to think she is as she deals with her maturing relationship with Eric. She flirts with him and pursues him for the whole summer with a maddening sense of urgency, only to find that when she gives herself to him, her heart is not mature enough to deal with the consequences. The next morning she realizes this: "Bridget had seen too many movies. She hadn't imagined her encounter with Eric would be...personal. She thought it would be a jaunt. An adventure to brag to her friends about. She expected to feel powerful. In the end she didn't. She felt like she'd scrubbed her heart with SOS pads" (216). Bridget learns that she must consider her actions before she goes through with them.

Tibby befriends a twelve-year-old leukemia patient who teaches her to see the good and interesting side of all people. As Tibby visits Bailey in her hospital room during her last days, Bailey helps her realize something as they talk about Brian, the geeky video game player they befriended:

> "He's a worthwhile guy," she [Bailey] murmured.
>
> Tibby laughed, remembering the phrase. "He is. You were right and I was wrong. Like always."
>
> "Not true," Bailey said...
>
> "It is too true. I judge people without knowing them," Tibby said.
>
> "But you change your mind," Bailey said, her voice slow and drifting. (284)

These journeys could not have been taken alone. Each one of these characters needed her friend(s) with her as she struggled through the various challenges. The idea of loyal and trustworthy friends is a tough lesson for the fifth graders of Blume's novel to learn. Jill learns that friends can change in an instant. The story begins with her being

part of the popular crowd as she hangs out with Wendy and Caroline. However, as she lets her true personality and feelings emerge, she learns that these girls do not want to be friends with her because she does not think the same way they do. They are willing to befriend her only if she fits the mold they create for themselves. She finds this out when she confronts Wendy and Caroline about not allowing Blubber to have a "lawyer" when they conduct their "trial" to find out if she was the one who turned in Jill and Tracy for their mischievous acts on Halloween: "So I faced Wendy and I said, 'I'm sick of you bossing everyone around. If Blubber doesn't get a lawyer, then Blubber doesn't get a trial'" (132). Soon after this episode, the girls begin to alienate Jill from the class.

The one true loyal friend Jill has is her best friend, Tracy Wu. Tracy is not in Mrs. Minish's class with Jill, but she lives across the street from Jill and they have been best friends since they were very young. Tracy is there for Jill no matter what side she is on. She supports Jill when she is the bully and when she is the one being bullied. As Donelson and Nilsen note, Jill knows that she can depend on her, and it is Tracy who provides a sort of sage-like wisdom for Jill (104). Tracy allows Jill to see that Wendy and Caroline are not her true friends. Just like Jill, Linda must learn that she does not have true friends in these two girls, either, but rather she is a means for them to get what they want, which at that time is revenge against Jill. This seems slightly crueler, however, because Linda, unlike Jill, does not seem to have any friends at all to support her and was, perhaps, naïve to think that these girls could suddenly be her friends after their previous harsh treatment of her.

The value of loyal and trustworthy friends is the very heart of Brashares's novel and is what resonates with its readers. According to Nilsen, Donelson, and Blasingame,

one of the goals of this novel is to show that these girls are helping each other and fulfilling their roles as loyal, trusting, and honest friends (134). Not only do they exchange letters and the Traveling Pants during the summer to show their support, but the girls also seem to sense when one of them needs more than just a letter. Due to her alienation from her father and his new life, Carmen returns home early to find Tibby in a changed mood because of the declining health of her new friend, Bailey. Carmen is there for Tibby when she needs her. Whether it is giving her advice or just sitting there holding her while she cries, Carmen provides the rock and stability that Tibby needs during this unsettling period in her life. Lena also senses that something is not right with Bridget. When she arrives back in the United States from Greece, Lena immediately boards a flight to Bajá to help Bridget through her deep depression as she learns to deal with her feelings after her sexual experience with Eric. With Lena's help, Bridget is able to face the choice she made and learn to live with her decisions. These girls are constantly there for one another in all types of situations and truly define, better than any other novel discussed, what it means to be part of a loyal and trustworthy group of friends.

On the opposite side of the spectrum from loyal friends, these novels also have their fair share of bullies, troublemakers, and rivals. The main antagonists in Blubber are Wendy and Caroline, the two girls who think they are in charge of everyone else in class. They are the classic bullies. They feel they are above the other students in the class and enjoy watching their classmates suffer as they force them to do and say humiliating things. They are only happy when they are torturing someone weaker than themselves. Jill also tends to be an enemy to Linda in the beginning of the novel. Although not as

brazen and bold as Wendy and Caroline, Jill does join in the teasing and tormenting of Linda. She eventually sees the error of her ways and the fact she has not been fair to Linda, but initially at least she does participate in the abuse of Linda. Adults also tend to play antagonists in this story because they never seem to understand what the children are going through. When Jill gets in trouble for egging Mr. Machinist's mail box on Halloween, she justifies herself by telling the adults how mean and hateful he is toward children. The adults do not want to hear this; they simply side with the other adult in the belief that children are invariably at fault and the adult is always right. This is further evident as Mrs. Minish is always conveniently absent from the classroom when the various abuses against Linda and Jill happen, and then when she returns, she refuses to believe what has happened. As Garber states, these instances further alienate the characters from the adult world, toward which they begin to feel hostile (57).

The challenges that antagonize Carmen, Lena, Bridget, and Tibby are all different since their experiences occur in separate locations, but the one characteristic all the victims share is the difficulty of growing up. Each one of them must face the ordeal of achieving womanhood. They all must move through the different stages and experiences of adolescence. At times, each one of them feels alone because of the awkwardness that exists between them and others and they do not know if others can understand how they feel. As Bushman and Haas note, they are alienated from the world of children because of the experiences they are undergoing and also isolated from the adult world because they do not know if the trials they are going through are "normal" (28).

The individual crucibles the girls have to face depend on their situations. Carmen must realize that her new stepmother, stepsister, and stepbrother are not villains. They

are not to blame for the restructuring of her life. She realizes that it is her father she is mad at because he seems to be choosing this new life over her. Lena must face her insecurities when dealing with people of the opposite sex. She has never been able to establish a satisfactory relationship with boys and so has decided to avoid them all together. According to Bushman and Haas, Lena learns that strong attractions between men and women will always exist and that she needs to learn to cope with them rather than run away from them (12). Bridget must learn to deal with her decision to lose her virginity to Eric. She views Eric as the villain when the situation first turns sour, but with the help of maturing and her support system of Lena, she realizes that it was her own headstrong nature that led her to make that decision. Tibby's adversary is death. She becomes close to Bailey and then watches her die. She is angry at the world for taking away not only someone who has become precious to her but someone who had so much to give to the world. Tibby has to face the fact that death is not the sole source of unhappiness, but rather the way one chooses to deal with it is what causes the true heartache and pain.

Blume is known for writing books about life the way it really is. She proclaims that she is an "explainer of the unclear and a validator of invalidated and confusing experiences" (Garber 56). This novel supports her reputation. The most important lesson that Linda, Jill, and the reader learn is that bullies are never right. It is not acceptable to force others by coercion, bribery, or cruelty to get them to do whatever is desired. No one likes a bully and no one enjoys being bullied. Jill understands this lesson better than anyone because she ends up on both sides of the spectrum. She truly knows what it is like to walk in both sets of shoes. Another lesson this book teaches is about the process

of handling problems. Those who are being bullied do not run and tell the adults in the story what is happening. They learn to deal with the problems themselves and how to cope with situations without turning to their parents or other authority figures. As Garber comments, these lessons are assurances that those boys and girls who are experiencing these types of situations are not alone in these anxieties and trials but are normal and do fit into the normal realms of society. This type of assurance is comforting and necessary to young people who are unsure of their surroundings and experiences (59).

The lessons the reader grasps from The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants are the same conclusions the main characters had to master through their journeys. This story teaches about the wish-fulfilling aspects of supportive friends (Nilsen, Donelson, Blasingame 134). These girls are always there for each other, do not judge each other, and are completely unselfish with each other when there is a problem at hand. They understand that each other's needs are, at times, more important than their own. They also discover that no matter how bad they feel they erred or how low they feel about themselves, true friends will always be there no matter what. Carmen, Lena, Bridget, and Tibby also realize and teach the reader what it means to be in the crucible of adolescence. These fifteen-year-olds are trying to come to terms with their place in society now that they are no longer children. They are learning to think, act, and behave like adults. Although they will stumble from time to time, each mistake is a learning process that teaches them what it means to be an adult. To tie the lessons together, they also conclude that growing up and maturing is much easier when one has a supportive group of friends to help.

Questions such as "Who am I?" and "Am I like everybody else?" plague adolescents on a daily basis. Those who feel themselves stranded on the outside of adolescent society are even more tortured by these questions because they not only feel isolated from the world of adults they are trying to grow into, but they also feel isolated from the world to which they belong. Young adult literary works like Blubber and The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants are excellent examples of books that illustrate to young women that, yes, everything they are going through is perfectly normal. Books about ordinary girls experiencing everyday problems can depict characters who learn to grow up and mature because of the situations they turn and confront.

CHAPTER VIII

CLASSICALLY MODERN OUTSIDERS

The previous chapters have examined various classic and contemporary "outsiders" in an attempt to illustrate the roles those characters play in teaching young adults about themselves, others, and life in general. These protagonists allow adolescent readers to see that the struggles and problems they face are more commonplace than they sometimes may think. Whether it be Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn or Louis Sachar's Stanley Yelnats, outsiders can make an impact on the reader. This study has placed the different outsiders into five categories. All the characters, regardless of the year they were created, fit into these categories in some fashion. Although they were penned in various years, some similarities can be drawn. Areas of difference can also be pointed out as the mood, attitude, and trends of young people change throughout the years. This chapter seeks to note the similarities and differences between the "outsiders" of the past and present.

The appeal of the orphan status is the most crucial and integral element of being an outsider. Whether the character is a true orphan or a temporary orphan, the outsider must be free of his or her parental figures for the majority of the story. The character must find ways of dealing with his or her problems alone and must learn to grow up in the face of adversity. True orphans abound in both classic and modern texts. In classic adolescent literature, Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Oliver Twist, Anne Shirley, and

Scout Finch are all true orphans missing either one or both parents. This automatically puts them into a state of being different from other young people because they do not have the traditional family. In modern adolescent literature, The Baudelaire children, Bobby Goodspeed from The Misfits, Carmen and Bridget from The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, Nancy Drew, and Harry Potter are also orphans who are without at least one parent in their day-to-day lives. All of these characters face the harsh realities of being different because of something that was beyond of their control. Whereas in some other situations characters chose to be outsiders, these protagonists played no part their parents' death or abandonment.

Temporary orphans also flourish as protagonists in both classic and modern young adult literature. These characters come from the traditional, nuclear family, yet they are separated from their parents for one reason or another. When they become separated from their parents, they are forced, like the true orphans, to make and handle decisions on their own. The Pevensie children and Ralph and Piggy are examples of classic temporary orphans. They were forced to grow up and make adult decisions in their everyday lives because they were separated from the authority figures who usually helped them make tough life choices. Stanley Yelnats from Holes and Jill Brenner and Linda Fischer from Blubber are some contemporary temporary orphans who learn to make decisions on their own due to the separation from their parents.

Although seemingly very similar, there is one distinct difference between orphans of the classic novels and those of today's young adult fiction. More characters in contemporary young adult fiction are temporary orphans due to the setting of the novels. The trend in today's literature seems to be to set young adults novels in schools or other

situations where parents are not included or involved. Less and less are we seeing the more tragic ways of becoming a temporary orphan, such as the Pevensie children and World War II or Ralph and a plane crash. Today's outsiders are being placed in everyday situations where they are forced to rely on their own wits, intelligence, and quick-thinking to make it through. The characters from The Misfits, Big Mouth and Ugly Girl, Blubber, The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, and Harry Potter are all different types of orphans, yet the one thread they have in common is the settings of their stories. Middle school, high school, boarding school, and summer vacations are all environments where parents play a minimal role, thus allowing these characters to be free of their parental oversight and to try their hand at dealing with more adult situations.

This trend of setting books in more everyday situations and yet placing the character as an outsider is valuable to the reader because of lessons it provides. According to Otten and Schmidt, children and young adults have to learn things by experience as adults did (202). Books help young readers see that these situations are real and must be faced by each individual so that he or she may learn and grow from his or her encounters and mistakes. Reading about more realistic situations helps young adults not feel so alone as they prepare to face the challenges of adolescence. These situations also help adolescents realize that it is bearable to feel like and be an outsider.

The most obvious similarity between these classic and modern books is the journey that each of the protagonists travel. From Oliver Twist and Anne Shirley to Harry Potter and the Traveling Pants girls, all of these characters must undergo either a physical or spiritual journey that allows them to come of age. The most crucial component of their passage is the attainment of enlightenment and maturity. All of these

characters must take certain steps toward adulthood in their journeys. When each of these characters begins their walk through life, they are young, naive, dependent upon adult characters, and too shy to take decisive action. As they experience the adventures and events that occur in their stories, each character must grow up, lose his or her innocence, begin to rely on his or her own instincts, and make the hard decisions that life demands. This pattern is the same regardless of when the text was written. Oliver Twist relies on the state institutions for his needs in the beginning of his story. He quickly realizes that these adults are not trustworthy and will not provide him with what he must have. Forced to live on the streets, he must make a conscious decision not to follow in Fagin's or the Artful Dodger's footsteps. He intuits right from wrong, and he knows he must follow what is right in order to gain his place in society.

This journey and these lessons are the same for Matt Donaghy in the much-later Big Mouth and Ugly Girl. As his story starts, he is an average teenage boy who is dependent upon his parents and only knows the world he has created for himself in his high school. When he finds himself ostracized by the rest of the school for his comments, he realizes that those on whom he used to be able to depend are no longer there for him. He understands the harsh realities of being thrown into a situation out of his control. Matt learns that it is more important to be true to himself and uphold the things he knows to be right and true than to try and fit back in with his crowd at high school. At the end of both Oliver's and Matt's journeys, they are rewarded with the same prize. They have reached more mature versions of themselves, and they have found true companions in Mr. Brownlow and Ursula Riggs.

The quest for maturity brings with it many other smaller passages that these characters must go through as well. In addition to growing up, both Huckleberry Finn and Bobby Goodspeed from The Misfits discover that being an outsider is not always a negative thing. They both see that to be part of mainstream society they would have to compromise their evolving personal beliefs, which they are not willing to do. Stanley Yelnats from Holes and Ralph and Piggy from Lord of the Flies all find that the sheltered life they had been living can change in a moment and that a harsh, cruel world can descend on them. These three characters go from a protected, parent-involved environment to rugged outdoor situations where they must fend for themselves and perform challenging manual labor tasks. Scout and Jill Brenner from Blubber grow to understand that just because someone is different does not mean she is not worth having in one's life. Scout learns that Boo is not a ghost-like villain out to haunt her but rather a misunderstood grown man. She perceives that they have much more in common than she would have believed in the beginning. Jill sees that she, too, can be excluded from her fellow classmates just as she, along with everyone else, had snubbed Linda Fischer. She also deduces that she has much more in common with an "outsider" than she originally thought.

The gang of loyal and trustworthy friends is another characteristic virtually the same, regardless of what year the books were written. Each of these characters has a group upon whom they depend heavily and who offer them support throughout their journeys, triumphs, and defeats. Some characters seem to rely on only one person for guidance and support, but other characters have a number of friends they call on for help and advice. According to Bushman and Haas, young adults often feel alone as they move

through their struggles in life. They sense this isolation from adults because of the awkwardness prevalent with adolescence and the physical and emotional changes that are occurring. They need peers to help them through these difficult times because an understanding exists between those of the same age who are experiencing the same challenges (28). These young adult classics and contemporary books illustrate this concept that children often benefit from a group of loyal and dependable friends.

Huckleberry Finn welcomes the companionship and friendship of Jim as he makes his way down the river. He relies on Jim to be there for him when he needs help, advice, or just someone to talk to. Edmund Pevensie could never have found the strength to defeat his own demons and stand up to the White Witch had his brother and sisters not been there to forgive and encourage him. Likewise, the Baudelaire children count on each other's different areas of strength and expertise to fool Count Olaf time and time again. Harry Potter can only defeat Voldemort, keep Draco Malfoy at bay, and stay out of trouble at Hogwarts with the help of Ron and Hermione. Ralph accepts the support of Piggy to try to keep others from being lured into Jack's camp by a craving for security as these boys try to make a life for themselves on the island. Bobby Goodspeed in The Misfits finds the courage to stand up to the status quo because he has his best friends not only backing him up but taking a position with him against the teachers and popular crowd. As Anne Shirley makes a place for herself in Avonlea and tries to truly become a part of the community, she relies on the friendship of Diana Barry. Finally, the Traveling Pants girls would never have made it through their difficult, lesson-learning summers had they not had each other to confide in and rely upon.

Not only are friends an essential part of young adult literature for each one of these characters, but they reflect the changes that are occurring in real-life adolescents. As children grow up and enter middle school and high school, they are constantly being put into situations without their parents or other adults to guide them and instruct them. More self-reliance is placed upon the individual as he or she grows up and learns how to handle different situations. Also, according to Donelson and Nilsen, when advice is sought, young adults are more likely to ask their friends and companions for help rather than their parents, since this would be seen by their peers and themselves a sign of weakness and a step back in the process of maturity (123). The inclusion of a gang of friends in these books not only provides the protagonists with a loyal support group, but it also helps instill the concept that a group of trustworthy friends is essential in the real adolescent world.

An area where the past and present novels contrast involves the figure of the villain. In the classic novels, the villain is typically an actual person. This person will stop at nothing to destroy the life of the main character, usually because he or she is an outsider. The villain's very purpose for existence is to thwart all that the lead character tried to accomplish in the story. Injun Joe wants to catch and kill Tom Sawyer because he witnessed a murder and discovered a fortune. Fagin hopes to turn Oliver Twist to a life of crime so that he can profit from what Oliver steals. Fagin knows that he has a chance to accomplish this since no responsible, loving, adult character is looking out for Oliver. The White Witch wishes to kill the Pevensie children because they try to save Narnia from her evil clutches. Jack and his followers intend to destroy everything Ralph is trying to hold on to on the island. Evil robbers and other criminals are always trying to

be one step ahead of Nancy Drew so that they can get away with their crimes. These are all examples of real-life, flesh and blood villains so prevalent in classic young adult stories.

Although there are some modern-day young adult stories with actual villains, such as Voldemort in the Harry Potter series and the Warden in Holes, the trend in the twentieth century seems to be moving away from actual villainous characters to merely ominous situations. The more modern texts are often set in schools where unpleasant situations occur that traumatize and test the strength of the main characters. In The Misfits, Bobby and his friends must grapple with many obstacles that make up the collective "villain" in this story. They must deal with the attitude most people have toward them because they are not part of the "in" crowd. Different than the other students for various reasons, they are automatically stereotyped. They must likewise confront the teachers' desire to maintain the status quo. Bobby and his friends are asking for too much change too quickly. The negative force Bobby must fight is his school's overall attitude toward those who are different. Matt and Ursula must wrestle with the same thing in Big Mouth and Ugly Girl. Although there are a few people who could be named as actual villains, Roy Eberhardt in Hoot recognizes the trend toward urbanization as his villain. He and his friends must go against the mindset that people are more important than animals in order to win his case. Therefore, his villain, too, is also more of an outlook than an actual person.

Both types of villains have their place in young adult fiction. Actual villains teach readers that there are definitely some cruel people in the world whom one might encounter. Not every person is a follower of the Golden Rule, and the faster some

children realize this, the less naïve they will be when running into certain individuals. The villainous situations, however, provide a lesson because they are teaching the young readers about what else they will face when they grow up and become a part of this world. Not every problem is easily dealt with or comes out the way one wants it to. Sometimes there are dilemmas that are beyond our control and must be handled either by accepting them or by trying to change them. These contemporary young adult books show that it is admirable to change situations in the world that exemplify injustice. The outsider is the perfect character to illustrate this, because he or she is already a model of injustice. Ostracized to the outskirts of society, that individual is the logical candidate to change the status quo.

According to Herz and Gallo, the most important part of adolescence and adolescent reading is for young adults "to understand themselves in relation to the complexities of the world" (14). One can only accomplish this by comprehending different lessons and morals that help shape young people's attitudes and perceptions as they enter into the real world. Young adult literature helps accomplish this by teaching valuable lessons about the way one should aspire to live his or her life. Not only do all of these characters learn about themselves on their road to maturity, but they also master valuable life lessons that help shape their morals and values. This is also an area that stays parallel between the classics and the more modern texts. Whether it is understanding the value of good friends and family, as in The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe, A Series of Unfortunate Events, Of Mice and Men, The Misfits, Anne of Green Gables, Harry Potter, and The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, or figuring out how to stand up for one's own beliefs and ways of life, as in Adventures of Huckleberry

Finn, Holes, Lord of the Flies, Hoot, To Kill A Mockingbird, and Blubber, all of these characters learn how to be better and more productive citizens because of their trials as young adults.

Much speculation has been offered in the past about the value and worth of contemporary young adult fiction. Teachers, educators, and parents tend to rely more on the classics to show young readers the various characteristics that have been addressed in this study. However, the percentage of children and young adults who desire to read the classics is dwindling. They are not interested in reading something written one hundred years ago involving characters they think have nothing in common with themselves. This study has shown that the same values, lessons, and morals that are so prevalent in the classics are also found in modern day young adult fiction. A reader can take away just as much from Stanley Yelnats in Holes and the Traveling Pants girls as he or she can by reading Oliver Twist or Anne of Green Gables. This study is not suggesting that modern texts replace the classics but rather that the newer readings can be used as an entry or a bridge to lure young people into reading the classics. According to Herz and Gallo, contemporary young adult literature has proven to be an effective means to motivate young adults to read all kinds of literature, including the classics (14). Is not a goal of educators, teachers, and parents to instill a love of reading? Every necessary step should be taken to ensure that this happens.

Donelson and Nilsen have stated that the United States is in a youth-oriented or youth-dominated era. There is constant competition for the attention of young adults by books, magazines, newspapers, movies, television shows, comics, clothing lines, and video games. Today's authors and publishers realize this level of competition and have

begun to branch out with their levels of writing (79-81). A survey of young adult readers by Donelson and Nilsen shows that adolescents want to read about things that are relevant and interesting to them and would even prefer this over watching television or playing a video game (87-88).

As the numbers of young adults who read for pleasure diminishes, should it not be the job of educators and authors to cater to the needs of young people and provide them with what they want? Modern young adult literature can do that; it provides didactic storylines that instill valuable lessons. More importantly, it opens a whole new world of literature to young people and invites them to search other genres, eras, and styles of books. A young reader who loves the adventure of Roy Eberhardt in Hoot may find that he or she can love the adventures that Huckleberry Finn embarks upon. Another young reader who admires the friendships the girls share in The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants can learn to appreciate the friendship between Anne and Diana in Anne of Green Gables. In addition to learning to love to read, these readers can also discern that the struggles an "outsider" faces are not new to the twenty-first century but have been experienced by young people for hundreds of years. That is a lesson and a comfort that all young adults need to experience. As Bushman and Haas state in their book, "Perhaps the greatest gift that our society can give young adults in their journey into adulthood is not a credit card but a library card" (28). That card can not only open the limitless world of literature to new readers but offer the kind of support network and sense of belonging and acceptance that so many young adults -- outsiders by biology or culture -- might find no other way.

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