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“Queen of the Underworld and Mistress of the Labyrinth;” An Exploration and Critique of
Females in the *Bildungsroman*

Introduction

In this thesis, I discuss the female *bildungsroman* as a twofold entity, in which the former, the Counter *Bildungsroman*, portrays the coming of age through a singular sexual entrance, coupled with a ‘fall’ into womanhood, creating a static female ending in which the girl eschews transformation to remain ‘pure.’ The Contra *Bildungsroman* shares characteristics with its former counterpart; however, it acknowledges a more complex entrance into womanhood, and reconfigures the female coming of age as a rebirth instead of a fall.

Charlotte Goodman exposes the theoretical problem of a female *bildungsroman* by discussing Jerome Buckley’s definition of the *bildungsroman* as “explor[ing] the young man's progressive alienation from his family; his schooling; his departure from home; his sexual initiation; and his ultimate assessment of life's possibilities” (28). The question emerges, then, as to how this male-centric story translates when focused on the female, and the answer for the Counter *Bildungsroman* is, it does not. Goodman states of these doomed heroines, “[...] most women authors created female protagonists who, like Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, eventually accept their role as wife and mother-or end up either mad, like Sylvia Plath's Esther Greenwood, or suicides, like Kate Chopin's Edna Pontellier,” (30). This inability to successfully transform results in the stasis seen in the Counter *Bildungsroman* as its heroine try to stave off this single fate. However, as the female coming of age progresses, Goodman notices that, “the feminist movement of the nineteen-sixties and seventies has of late given rise to a number of feminist Bildungsromane which more closely approximate the male model of the Bildungsroman in their delineation of the education, reassessment, rebellion, and departure of their respective female

protagonists (30)” which parallels the latter coming of age story as it shifts and changes throughout time.

The first chapter, The Counter *Bildungsroman*, explores and exposes how this coming of age portrays problematic expressions of sexuality (or lack thereof) and entrance into womanhood. I discuss the film *Labyrinth* and the poem “Goblin Market” and establish them as Counter *Bildungsroman* through their respective protagonists Sarah and Lizzie, and the reoccurring motifs and symbols found in both texts. I discuss the motifs of villainization and silencing of female sexuality, coupled with the singular sexual entrance to womanhood, which creates tension and contributes to the static female ending. Due to the denial of sexuality in the Counter *Bildungsroman*, it creates a hypersexuality in both texts, which can be examined through Jareth and the goblins, and in turn fetishizes sexuality. I discuss symbols that emerge as supplements for the denied sexuality; the consumption of fruit and the labyrinth. The consumption of fruit will be explored through a psychoanalytic lens, as well as through the mythical and biblical characters of Eve and Persephone, and how these lenses merge to create the problematic portrayal of womanhood. Through the Eve narrative I will establish how this view portrays a ‘fall’ into womanhood, making the woman into a degradation of her former ‘pure’ self. The symbol of the labyrinth also serves to keep girls static as it leads only to one point, initiation through sexuality, seen as Jareth’s castle becomes the middle of the labyrinth and Sarah constantly moves towards it. The image of the phallus appears abundantly in both texts, which serves as a supplement and an eerie foreshadowing of the inevitable.

The second chapter, the Contra *Bildungsroman*, focuses on the second, and often more modern form of female *bildungsroman*. I discuss the 2017 novel *Burning Girl* by Claire Messud and the 2018 memoir *Educated* by Tara Westover, through the respective protagonists Julia and

Tara, as they come of age through sisterhood and knowledge, or a 'building' allowing alternate and more complex entrances into womanhood. I discuss how signifiers like Eve and Persephone reemerge in these texts, and how they shift from their traditional roles. I will explore the inversion of the symbol of the labyrinth, it no longer leads in to point inward, but multiple points outward. I revisit "Goblin Market" and reclassify it as *Contra Bildungsroman* as focuses on entrance into womanhood through sisterhood and rebirth by fire, which leads to the question of authorship, since *Burning Girl*, *Educated* and "Goblin Market" all have female authorship. The *Contra Bildungsroman* explores the complexities of female coming of age as a labyrinth of becoming a woman.

The Counter Bildungsroman

The Villainization and Silencing of Female Sexuality

The 1986 film *Labyrinth* directed by Jim Henson, and the 1862 poem “Goblin Market,” written by Christina Rossetti share striking similarities in style, tone, and concept, despite the near one-hundred-year gap between the creation of these texts. Through their romanticizing of the grotesque goblin, a figure that functions as both lover and villain, or the unified love-object, both narratives demonize and thwart female sexuality. The merged lover-and-villain that causes the villainization of sexuality in these texts becomes paired with the adult/child audience that hide and mute female sexuality as well. The market appeal of these texts as children’s media amplifies the hidden sexual elements that makes female sexuality seem in itself childish and unsubstantial, effectively silencing it. The characteristics described above become the defining elements of the Counter *Bildungsroman* with its static female ending, in which the girl must deny her sexuality and entrance into womanhood to remain pure and avoid the “fall” from the impurity womanhood causes. The perversion of female sexuality causes this initiation into womanhood to be viewed negatively, yet ironically, it remains the only path for the girl’s transformation, perpetuating a stasis that occurs in both Sarah’s and Lizzie’s narratives.

The villainization and subsequent denial of sexuality becomes a common element in *Labyrinth* and “Goblin Market.” Both texts create a dual figure of lover-and-villain, as they utilize goblins to convey the attractive yet repugnant nature of female sexuality. Rossetti uses the more traditional goblin figure in a globular group of “brothers” to create a single lover-and-villain, through their highly sexualized actions and exotic (erotic) fruit market, coupled with their animalistic description. Rossetti debases the sexual object by describing these “queer brothers” animalistic characteristics as a cat, rat, snail and wombat, creating the image of sexual savagery and conveying the idea that Victorian society viewed female sexuality as uncivilized. However,

Rossetti juxtaposes these demeaning characteristics with sensuality as only one line after their animalistic portrayal, Laura “heard a voice like voice of doves/ cooing all together:/ They sounded kind and full of loves/in the pleasant weather” (77-80). These dual representations of the love-object as the goblin men both appeal and repel Lizzie, expose how these men offer the binarily “evil gifts” as sexuality becomes villainized.

In *Labyrinth*, Jareth, too, offers Sarah “evil gifts” as he portrays the dual role of lover-and-villain, similar to the goblins in “Goblin Market.” *Labyrinth* employs goblins to villainize and debase the love-object. Despite Jareth’s appearance as mostly human with fairy-esque elements, he rules over more traditionally imagined goblins as “King of the Goblins” and shares some of their animalistic qualities, such as a crass sense of humor, lack of empathy, and knack for mischief. Jareth’s animalistic characteristics paired with the physically animalistic qualities of the goblins, exemplify Jareth’s perversion as a love-object in the film, creating a similar effect as Rossetti in her poem. Although the goblins do not run a market, but a labyrinth, there exists a similar economy in which Jareth offers Sarah crystal balls, like the fruit, that contain her “dreams.” If Sarah accepts, she must pay Jareth by fulfilling his commands, encapsulated in the line, “Just fear me, love me, do as I say, and I will be your slave” (1:42:50). His domineering personality, paired with his animalistic tendencies make him a clear villain, yet like “Goblin Market” he also functions to awaken and offer Sarah her sexuality, becoming the love-object. In addition to portraying the only male in the film without any familial ties to Sarah, Jareth’s costume transforms him into the post-modern Byronic suitor, like Mr. Darcy with unruly blond hair and makeup. The two also share sexual tension seen most prominently in the ‘ballroom scene’ and through love ballads sung by David Bowie despite its hidden nature in the film, placing Jareth as lover-and-villain.

The goblins and Jareth's modality as both lover-and-villain places the Victorian Lizzie and her post-modern counterpart Sarah in a position in which they must deny their sexuality to defeat the villain, contributing to their static female endings. Movie critic Monique, discusses in her article "Labyrinth (1986): Sex, Power and the Coming-of-Age," how *Labyrinth* conforms and deviates from fairytale structure using Vladimir Propp's Thirty-One Functions. According to Monique's analysis, the plot follows the typical fairytale and hero's journey until the end, when Sarah defies the thirty-first function, "The hero is married and/or ascends to the throne" (Monique) by denying Jareth the offer of her "dreams" which serves as a thinly disguised marriage proposal. Monique goes on to discuss the feminist meaning of Sarah's rejection (Monique). While Sarah's denial of Jareth should not be viewed as 'wrong,' an issue exists in the text as to what this denial means. Similar to "Goblin Market," both Lizzie and Sarah, to defeat the villain, must also deny the "gifts" they present, their sexuality. Since the only induction into womanhood in the Counter *Bildungsroman* exist through sexuality, this creates a problematic paradigm that results in stasis. By denying the love-object-as-villain, they also deny the thing they present, the sexual awakening and christening of womanhood. By villainizing the love-object and forcing the heroines to deny sexuality, female sexuality itself becomes villainized, and despite maturation during their 'journey,' they must remain girls.

Due to the twofold natures of the texts as children's media with adult themes, female sexuality becomes hidden behind the childish façade, resulting in its muteness or silencing. The silencing of female pleasure extends outside of literature, but becomes indicative of the Counter *Bildungsroman* as well, discussed in Barbara Johnson's book *Literature, Psychoanalysis, Race, and Gender; The Feminist Difference*. Johnson discusses the silencing of female pleasure through Lacan's theory of *jouissance*, or enjoyment, and how this lack of *jouissance* can be

found in the female's stasis, using Keats' urn. She states, "Returning to Keats' urn, we find that the question of *jouissance* (or lack of it) is very much at issue" (Johnson 134). Johnson discusses the silencing of female pleasure through the stasis of the woman on Keats' urn and her confinement to an eternal state of girlhood, unable to experience pleasure. The dual nature of the texts as both children's and adult media similarly mute the expression of female sexuality, due to the predominate childishness of the texts masking the underlying sexual expression, or pleasure, resulting in the stasis of the female.

"Goblin Market" and *Labyrinth* use similar and effective techniques to mask the sexual content of the material. Through the use of nonsensical language, animalistic descriptions and fantastical creatures creating a pseudo-fairytale structure, the adult themes become effectively disguised, especially to the inexperienced viewer or reader. The poem "Goblin Market's" lulling meter and rhyme allows the poem to function as a traditional children's poem, as well as its nonsensical phrases such as "helter skelter" and "hurry scurry." *Labyrinth* employs a similar technique through Jareth's iconic utterance of the nonsense phrase "Tra la la." Rossetti's use of animalizing the goblins has a dual effect of not only villainizing them, but also creating a mask of childishness for them to hide behind, as their zoomorphism when Lizzie and Laura first encounter them molds them into simple, docile creatures. However, as Lizzie encounters the goblins a second time in the metaphorical 'rape' scene, the true nature of their animalistic intent becomes exposed. Both texts utilize goblins to transform the texts into children's media, as the use of the fantastical creatures disguises the environment with childish whimsy. Critic Akemi Yoshida in her article. "Temptation of Fruit: The Symbolism of Fruit in Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" and in the Works of D. G. Rossetti and J.E. Millais" states, "Indeed, it has been pointed out by critics such as Terence Holt that the narrative style of "Goblin Market" is that of a

fairytale” (Yoshida 76). The use of the fairy tale structure infantilizes and diminishes the larger issues of sexuality.

However, the goblins in both texts possess a twofold nature through their animal characteristics. Their second sexual nature, like the animalistic primal, becomes masked by the first, a fable-istic portrayal. Animalizing the love-object, especially into something as disgusting as goblins defined in folklore and fantasy fiction as, “a mischievous, ugly creature resembling a dwarf” (English Oxford Dictionary), serves to abject the love object, and through this, abject female sexuality. However, the use of goblins has a dual silencing effect as the Cambridge English Dictionary also defines them as “imaginary.” The use of these elements allows the texts to become effective fairytale like narratives, yet the childish superficiality hides and silences Lizzie’s and Sarah’s sexuality, as it must be forfeited to maintain the childish façade. This also parallels the girls’ static female ending, as the childish façades of the texts deliberately mask the girls’ inability to fully transform into women, resulting in their limbo between the purity of girlhood and the experience of womanhood through pleasure.

Through the villainization and silencing of female sexuality, sexuality becomes fetishized in the texts. Victor Mendoza, in his article, “‘Come Buy;’ The Crossing Sexual and Consumer Desires in Christina Rossetti’s *Goblin Market*” challenges the traditional reading of the poem as an allegory and seeks to expose the complexity of the sexual and economic relationships between the characters, ultimately leading to fetishization. Mendoza explores the idea of fetishization of sexuality in the poem through its seductive language, the sensual characteristics of the fruit, and the idea of desire, which leads to the poem promoting the very thing Lizzie must renounce. Mendoza states, “Ultimately, if Rossetti intended that the poem be read as a critical renunciation of capital commerce and sexuality, as critics have suggested, then we must consider that it is the

very act of renunciation that allows for the text's own production- and enjoyment- in the first place" (Mendoza 914). For the text to deny the sexual, it must acknowledge the sexual, and Rossetti's clear acknowledgement of the sexual seen throughout her poem, despite the message against it, fetishizes or privileges it.

Like "Goblin Market" *Labyrinth* displays this fetishization as well, as Sarah's denial of the sexual forces viewers and Sarah to understand the thing being offered, sexuality itself. Jareth's offer of Sarah's dreams functions similarly as the fruit in "Goblin Market" and when Sarah renounces this, the very acknowledgement of the sexual allows it to be enjoyed despite the film's contradictory message. This ideology can be applied to the villainization and silencing of female sexuality as well, as for something to be villainized or muted, it must first be present. Indeed, in both texts, Sarah and Lizzie's sexuality becomes signified by the fruit and crystal balls, allowing them to deny this temptation and defeat the villain, the suitor. Through the twisted, almost labyrinthine, portrayal of sexuality, the Counter *Bildungsroman* becomes a hypersexual space, as the denial of the sexual serves to bring more attention to the thing that must be renounced. However, the fetishization of the sexual only happens through the renunciation of it, so Sarah and Lizzie still inhabit the space of girlhood.

Consumption and Consummation

The symbol of the fruit and its consumption, or lack of consumption, by its heroines, allows the girls of the Counter *Bildungsroman* to experience a pseudo-sexuality in which they can metaphorically achieve what they literally cannot attain. However, this false thrust into womanhood ultimately results in an inauthentic transformation. The consumption of fruit becomes a major part of *Labyrinth* and "Goblin Market." Due to the highly sexual nature of the children's film, many reviewers of *Labyrinth* joke that the 'ball room scene,' enabled by Sarah

eating the poisonous peach, serves as the “climax.” Despite the joke’s intention to elicit giggles at the inappropriate idea, it illuminates the scene by exposing that the literal ingestion of fruit doubles as a metaphorical consummation. The consumption of fruit as symbol in the Counter *Bildungsroman* becomes a trope for the sexuality which cannot be achieved. A ravenous Sarah, when presented with a peach from her companion Hoggle, greedily takes a bite, only to become immediately apprehensive about the fruit while noting its odd flavor. The psychedelic powers of the poisoned peach enable Sarah to enter the dream-like reality that she soon realizes to be Jareth’s doing. By eating the fruit, Sarah becomes metaphorically initiated into the adult world of the masquerade ball. As Monique states, “This is what adulthood looks like to 15-year-old Sarah: painted masks, lascivious grins, a confusing cacophony of debauch and threat, and she the only one in a pure white dress.” Sarah’s innocence, exposed by her white dress, shows Jareth’s pursuit of Sarah as both a villain and a lover in the cat and mouse style scene. This also becomes the “climax” of the film, because it shows the eroticized nature of Jareth and Sarah’s relationship, which, until this point, has only been suggested. These adult themed undertones become very obvious for this one scene in which the heroine and supposed antagonist dance in a Venetian inspired ballroom while Jareth sings the evocative love ballad “As the World Falls Down.” Despite this opening scene, after Sarah shatters the dreamscape, the two continue as classic heroine and villain. However, wiser audience members understand the consumption of fruit serves as a vehicle and correlative for the sexual awakening.

In “Goblin Market,” the core of the poem revolves around the fruit and its consumption, as it becomes the center of the market and the plot, and ultimately creates the metaphor of Lizzie’s quest for, and denial of, her sexuality. Rossetti’s poem emerged during the Pre-Raphaelite movement, in which using fruit to connote a woman’s emerging sexuality became a

reoccurring motif, appearing in paintings, poetry, literature and other artistic outlets. Rossetti's brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a prominent figure in the Pre-Raphaelite movement, often used the young Rossetti as a model in his paintings, leading Akemi Yoshida in her article to speculate Rossetti's awareness of the meaning behind the symbol of fruit as she states, "Members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Everett Millais, often employed images of fruit in their prose or poetic works and in their paintings, which carried sexual connotations, and it would be natural to suppose that Christina Rossetti was familiar with such symbolic usage of fruit" (Yoshida 75). When encountering the poem with this awareness, it exposes the hypersexual nature of the fruit. Rossetti's evocative description of the fruit in lines 1-20, with descriptions such as "Plump unpeck'd cherries" (7) and "Bloom-down-cheeck'd peaches" (9) "All ripe together" (15), transform the exotic description of the fruit into the erotic description of un-pecked, bloom-down-cheeked *girls* ripe for the picking, which parallels Lizzie's state of in-between. This transforms the image of the fruit into an iconographic signature of female adolescent sexuality. Similar to Sarah, Lizzie's relationship with the fruit allows readers to understand Lizzie as a girl on the cusp of womanhood, through the idea that consumption of fruit acts as a metaphor for consummation, and entrance into womanhood.

These stories such as Sarah's and Lizzie's, revolving around the centrality of the sexual meaning of fruit, have distinct Persephonal parallels. The myth of Persephone becomes integral to the Counter *Bildungsroman*, as for Persephone, the literal consumption of fruit serves as the metaphorical consummation of her marriage to Hades, allowing the fruit to take on a sexual meaning. The sexual meaning of the fruit continued, seen in poetry and films for centuries to come, and made its way into the field of Psychology, as Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud thought the ingestion of seeds mimicked the act of oral impregnation as "In psychoanalytic practice, the

idea of eating seeds is a common children's fantasy of oral impregnation" (Kulish & Holtzman 49). The myth of Persephone and the focus on orality allows fruit to double as a sexual metaphor of girls' initiation into the world of adult sexuality, reminiscent of Sarah and Lizzie.

If the Persephone myth establishes the coupled meaning of fruit and sexuality, the incorporation of the degradation of female sexuality, or "the fall" must be examined next, to see how this element creates the overall image of fruit, sexuality, and punishment, which leads girls like Lizzie and Sarah to deny their sexuality when it becomes presented to them. The Persephonal image of the sexualized fruit becomes merged with biblical image of the "forbidden fruit," which creates the idea that the partaking of fruit leads to the girl becoming a lesser version of her former pure self. Akemi Yoshida classifies Lizzie's predecessors, Laura and Jeanie, as "daughters of Eve" after eating the goblin men's fruit. Yoshida states, "The phrase "forbidden fruit," which is used to refer to the goblin fruit, clearly connects the world of "Goblin Market" to that of *Genesis*, incorporating Jeanie and Laura into the genealogy of Eve" (Yoshida 78). As Jeanie and Laura slowly wither away, Lizzie learns that eating the fruit, an allegory for sexuality, inevitably leads to a punishment, or a fall. The idea of forbidden fruit has penetrated many stories, especially depicted as an apple as, "The motif of the poisonous fruit, beautiful to the eye but fatal to the one who tastes it, might remind the reader, for example, of the apple in the Brothers Grimm's "Snow White." (Yoshida 76). Snow White follows a similar narrative of girls who consume fruit, as she too becomes 'punished' by her deadly slumber, similar to Sarah's dream, and Laura's emaciation, creating a long succession of females in the Counter *Bildungsroman* as "daughters of Eve" who must renounce their sexuality in order to avoid the fall.

As these fruits become associated with sexuality and punishment, they become extensions of the female body itself. Most notably, fruits such as cherries, apples, peaches, and pomegranates often become symbols that directly correlate to a part of the female body. Cherries become a popular symbol to portray a girl's virginal state, seen in a painting produced by John Everett Millias during the Pre-Raphaelite movement, produced during the same time period as "Goblin Market." Millias' painting *Cherry Ripe* depicts a young girl next to bundle of cherries, however, as Yoshida states, "The employment of the singular form-"cherry," rather than "cherries"- in the title of the painting strengthen the symbolic interpretation of the title as directly referring to the girl" (Yoshida 82). Following the assumption that Rossetti's possessed knowledge of the symbolic meaning of fruit, it becomes no coincidence Rossetti decides to describe her cherries as "unpeck'd." Like Lizzie, Sarah, and the young girl in Millais' painting, the cherries indicate the girl as "unravished" (Johnson 134) yet "ripe."



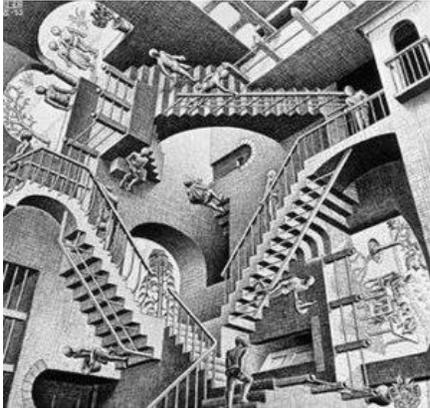
John Everett Millias' Cherry Ripe

Apples, another popular symbol, become associated with various parts of the female body due to its lustrous red color, enough to tempt Eve. D.G. Rossetti uses the apple as an extension of the

female's lips, red from kissing, as he places an apple by the female in his painting and titles it *Bocca Baciata*, "Kissed Lips" (Yoshida 81). A peach plays a prominent part in the film *Labyrinth* as Sarah's forbidden fruit, but it also becomes a symbol of a girl's virginal blushes, exposing her ignorance to the adult world. Rossetti describes the peach as a "cheek" as Lizzie "veil[s] her blushes" (35). The pale and slightly pink color of a peach takes on another image as a girl's flushed cheeks, embarrassed by her adult encounter, or alternately, after she has been "ravished."

The last symbol, the pomegranate, remains in the male sphere, as it often becomes associated with the male "seed" due to the Persephone myth in which she eats Hades' "seeds" and becomes bound to him in the way a literal consummation would (Kulish & Holtzman 39). However, the whole of the pomegranate, as opposed to the individual seeds, transform into a symbol of the female body as Rossetti describes them as "full and fine" (21). This evocative description coupled with the spherical shape of the pomegranate, become indicative of a feminine symbol such as the breast or womb. Despite the fruit in both *Labyrinth* and "Goblin Market" symbolizing the sexual awakening, creating the idea of punishment and sexuality, and becoming an extension of the female's ripe body, Yoshida's interpretation of the end of the poem "Goblin Market" mutes this single symbol of the coming of age in the Counter *Bildungsroman* as she states, "Near the end of the poem, however, the narrator distances the reader from taking the fruit metaphor too seriously by attributing the goblin men and their fruit to a time past [...]" (82). Ultimately, the consumption of fruit in the Counter *Bildungsroman* becomes a cruel representation of the sexuality that cannot be attained yet predicts the inevitability and punishment of a "fall," resulting in the quandary that traps females in these texts in a static female ending.

The Labyrinth



M.C. Escher's Relativity

This illusionary drawing *Relativity* by M.C. Escher, produced in 1953, can be found in Sarah's bedroom, making up one of the many objects in Sarah's bedroom that appear in the world of the labyrinth. This painting became the basis of the infamous staircase room that houses Jareth and Sarah's final confrontation and encompasses the entirety of the labyrinth condensed into one space, defying the laws of gravity and the planes of existence. The symbol of the labyrinth, like the symbol of the fruit, becomes an important device in the Counter *Bildungsroman*, which can serve as an entrapment, and exploration of female sexuality. Jareth's advantage over Sarah throughout her journey in the labyrinth shows Sarah's entrapment in Jareth's realm of the labyrinth. The idea of the unicursal labyrinth, "that with only one path to follow" (Muhlstock 1) becomes indicative of the singular entrance into womanhood that can only be achieved through Jareth's offer of the sexual awakening. Sarah constantly remains at the mercy of Jareth, as he sends set-backs to Sarah like the cleaners, a grotesque machine of spinning blades, and the oubliette, a black hole where people go to be forgotten, deriving from the French word *oublier* meaning "to forget." No scene shows Jareth's advantage more than their final confrontation in the room inspired from the Escher painting. Jareth can change his plane of

existence (and for some reason Sarah's infant brother Toby's as well) depending on the angle of the stairs, while Sarah remains stuck on the staircases that correspond with her current plane. Sarah's "stuckness" parallels her stasis, while Jareth's advantage of transversing the stairs shows his advantage in the male coming of age, that incorporates many elements besides the sexual when building its hero into a man.

The symbol of the labyrinth exemplifies the idea of a single sexual entrance serving to transform the girl into a woman. By the nature of labyrinths, one constantly moves to a singular point existing in the labyrinth. Ironically Sarah constantly moves to Jareth's castle, showing her movement towards womanhood as she tries to reach Jareth's domain. One reviewer, L.A. Banks in her article "The Hidden Meaning of 'Labyrinth'" states, "Sarah feels bogged down by this innocence (yes, I'm talking virginity here) and flirts with a rather dangerous older man in a bid to get rid of it. Cue the arrival of Jareth" (Banks), showing Sarah's desire to become a woman, which can only be achieved through her deflowering. The quest to enter Jareth's castle and retrieve her infant brother Toby can and has been interrupted as Sarah's wish to become a mother, and therefore a woman, by impregnation through Jareth. The reviewer "Hogbrain" focuses on this motif in his article "Puberty and Fertility Themes in The Labyrinth," as he discusses the symbol of "the babe" as, "On a literal level, Sarah moves towards the infant. Just as her body moves towards fertility (i.e.: puberty), her quest takes her closer to the baby. As such, the baby acts as a physical manifestation of childbirth and fertility" (Hogbrain). He exemplifies this idea through the symbol of the crystal balls as eggs, a sign of female fertility, and finishes by aligning Sarah with Eve through her consumption of the "forbidden fruit" to create Sarah as a pre-mother figure by paralleling her with Eve's maternal stature.

In “Goblin Market” Lizzie does not move through a labyrinth, but a market. However, if one connects the setting of the goblin market to a market familiar to Rossetti, the Covent Garden Market, the goblin market transforms in to a labyrinthine system Lizzie must transverse, similar to Sarah. Clayton Carlyle Tarr in this article “Convent Goblin Market” makes this connection between the fictional market and its real life counterpart as he states, “As a practical and fashionable destination for shoppers and a popular subject for writers across several genres, Convent Garden Market’s cornucopia of sights, smells, and sounds- and most certainly its prospect of danger- would have been familiar to Rossetti, a lifelong Londoner, and may have provided impetus for her poetic guidebook, *Goblin Market*” (297). The strange and whirling noises, sights and pleasures associated with one of the world’s largest markets becomes written into the goblin market, making it a very labyrinthine journey Lizzie must undergo to reach the center of her market, the goblin men. Like Sarah, the heart of the market/labyrinth becomes the goblin men Lizzie journeys to, and their offer of fruit, the symbol of defloration and entrance to womanhood. Laura, Lizzie’s sister and predecessor who navigates the labyrinth and accepts the evil gifts of the goblin men leaves only with “one kernel stone” (138) which she later tries unsuccessfully to plant, the planting of the seed becoming a fertility symbol of both Laura and Lizzie, on the brink of womanhood and able to hear the goblin cry.

However, once Lizzie and Sarah have navigated the labyrinth, arrive at its heart, and have their sexuality “gifted” to them, the key to transformation into womanhood, both deny it. Lizzie sees the consequences of her sister’s transformation, Laura’s “fall,” and decides to stave off her own fall. Similarly, Sarah sees that by accepting her “dreams” she must forgo the world of her childhood. If these girls could forever stave off womanhood, this might be considered a “happy ending,” however, this inability to indefinitely suspend womanhood results in the static female

ending as they remain girls. The readers and characters alike know this state of girlhood cannot last; they must accept the evil gifts and fall into womanhood like their mothers before them. Female initiation stories often become associated with the passage of time, or more appropriately, the “stalking of time.” This trope appears in stories as old as Vasilisa the Beautiful, who after navigating the forest and arriving at Baba Yaga’s hut, sees three figures: a white knight, a red knight, and black knight. When Vasilisa asks Baba Yaga about these elusive figures Baba Yaga states they represent Day, the Rising Sun, and Night (Estes 105). Vasilisa becomes stalked by time, informing her of her inevitable womanhood, and this trend continues as Lizzie must confront the goblins before her sister’s death, and Sarah must rescue Toby before the thirteenth hour. Despite Sarah and Lizzie completing their quests “in time” and forgoing their sexual initiation into womanhood, this only lasts temporarily. Lizzie, at the end of “Goblin Market” becomes a mother, and in the last scene of *Labyrinth*, Jareth can be seen outside Sarah’s window, waiting for her (Monique). This unsatisfying ending in which the heroines stave off womanhood only to “fall” later, causes their stasis and becomes problematized by this transformation only being possible by a single sexual entrance.

Supplements in the Counter Bildungsroman

Symbols and language become supplements for the lack of expressed sexuality in the Counter *Bildungsroman*. *Labyrinth* employs the use of phallogentric symbols, particularly around Jareth, and fertility symbols around Sarah, to signify the sexual nature of their relationship and supplement this aspect of their relationship that can never come to fruition. Similarly, “Goblin Market” employs sexual language and symbols to compensate for Lizzie’s unachievable sexuality. Jacques Derrida creates the notion of supplementarity through the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau and his unattainable “Maman.” Deriving from this incident,

Derrida states, “The logic of supplementarity thus makes nature the prior term, a plenitude which was there at the start, but reveals an inherent lack of absence within it and makes education something external and extra but also an essential condition of that which it supplements” (Sturrock 168). This creates a conundrum in which the lack of something, for this purpose sexuality, must use supplements to compensate for the lack. However, even if the absence could be filled, completion cannot be attained because the supplement becomes the necessity. The inability to attain true sexuality and therefore womanhood in the Counter *Bildungsroman* creates the need for supplements in the texts.

The phallogentrism in *Labyrinth* derives from the overcompensation of masculine objects surrounding Jareth. Jareth’s riding crop, tight pants, and “magic balls” all serve as phallic symbols and supplements that heighten the masculine aspect of his sexual subjectivity. The image of the penis also becomes a reoccurring motif in the text as Sarah firsts meets Hoggle while he urinates. One of the men at the masquerade ball can be seen stroking the suggestively long nose of his mask, and one of the fountain statues in Goblin City quite explicitly urinates. The reoccurring connection between the penis and urination can serve a dual purpose as a supplement and debasement of sexuality. However, many other sexually suggestive imaginaries emerge in the text as well, such as Sarah’s encounter with the helping hands, portraying groping, and groups of “fung-eye” that line the labyrinth walls, suggesting voyeurism. Sarah has many of her own fertility symbols, besides the fruit, that illuminate her sexual development. In one scene, Sarah has a conversation with a worm, a common phallic symbol also used in the *Book of Thel*, about “openings” in the labyrinth. The image of the phallic worm discussing the vaginal openings transforms the innocent conversation into a visual and verbal correlative for Sarah’s awaiting transformation through intercourse. The odd ‘fiery swamp’ scene, with creatures that

can disconnect various parts of their body, often becomes linked to Alice's changing body in Alice in Wonderland and clue the audience again about Sarah's impending "transformation" (Dyer). Finally, the significance of Sarah and Jareth's first and last meeting occurring in a bedroom becomes obvious when explored through the lens of the supplement.

Although the filmic nature of *Labyrinth* restricts some of its supplements to the realm of the visual, supplements through language emerge as well, most notably the songs. The songs in this film underscore the villain and hero roles Jareth and Sarah play, and expose them as lovers that can never truly be. The opening theme "Underground" the formerly discussed "As the World Falls Down," and the song Jareth sings during their final confrontation "Within You" tell the romance the movie hides. The opening theme tells of a girl forgoing her responsibility to live in the carefree world of the Underground, Jareth's domain, through ways of a "love injection," perhaps foreshadowing the poison peach. The second song tells of a man who will stand with his love, in this case Sarah, even as "the world falls down" and the final song expresses Jareth knowledge that he cannot attain Sarah and quite literally will never be able to live "within her." Through enlightening dialogue from the opening of the movie such as Sarah's step mother telling her "I'd like you to have a date. You should have dates at your age" (6:09) and Sarah reading, "But what no one knew was that the King of the Goblins had fallen in love with the girl" (8:26) the hidden language of the film exposes a romantic relationship doomed to fail, creating the need for the supplement, and also fulfilling it by supplementing the unfulfilled union.

The poetic nature of "Goblin Market" allows the supplement as language to emerge more evidently. Rossetti's specific word usage such as "unpeck'd" "suck'd" and the reoccurring chant of "come buy" not only serve as sexual signals, but also create a supplement for Lizzie's lack of transformation through sexuality. Besides Rossetti's specific word usage, she also utilizes

cohesive passages to indicate sexuality, most notably the allegorical “rape” of Lizzie as the goblin men try to force her to consume their fruit. When Lizzie declines their offer to dine, the brothers begin “Grunting and snarling” (393) jostling Lizzie as they “[Tear] her gown and [soil] her stockings” (403). However, Lizzie keeps her mouth closed, and remains, “like a royal virgin town” (418) until the goblin men accept defeat and disappear. While in this scene Lizzie emerges triumphant, the language and images serve to supplement Lizzie’s denied sexuality, which she eventually succumbs to as she becomes a mother herself by the end of the poem. The goblin men still exist at the end of the poem as Lizzie and Laura warn their daughters to heed their calls, and just as the goblin men cannot be permanently defeated, the supplement continues to need supplementing, even if the initial need is fulfilled. This notion that the female forever needs to supplement a lack derives from Freud’s theory of penis envy (Kulish and Holtzman 9). So, even if Sarah and Lizzie do achieve womanhood through sexuality, they will forever need supplements to compensate for their feminine sexuality, deriving from a culture that prioritizes presence and visibility over absence and invisibility, a bleak outcome that contributes to the static female ending.

Ariadne, Persephone and Eve as Atavistic Signifiers

Ariadne, Persephone, and Eve appear in the Counter *Bildungsroman* as avatars that allow readers to identify this female coming of age archetype. When these women appear in the texts, their heroines no doubt suffer from the same ailments that plagued their predecessors, the notion of “the fall” into womanhood, the stasis as a figure forever in between child and bride, and a woman trapped in a labyrinth. Ariadne becomes a signifier for the fear of punishment for accepting sexuality, as Artemis the goddess of maidenhood punishes Ariadne for entering womanhood through Theseus, teaching her successors, like Lizzie and Sarah, the problematic

message that accepting one's sexuality leads to punishment or a "fall," also established by the Eve narrative. Persephone becomes the avatar for the stasis this avoidance of the fall causes, as she becomes permanently trapped between child and bride, constantly covered by her mother or husband. Both women and Sarah and Lizzie, become "daughters of Eve" as the fruit constantly tempts them, yet they know the consequences of such actions.

The myth of Ariadne continues to fascinate scholars and laymen alike with her fight of the minotaur, love of Theseus and entrapment in the labyrinth. Sarah's journey through the literal labyrinth and Lizzie's journey through the labyrinth of the market immediately identify them as followers of their precursor, Ariadne. According to Judatha Temple-Hoon in her dissertation thesis *Returning to the Labyrinth, The Sacrificial Body in Cartesian Philosophy, Phenomenology and the Myth of Ariadne and Theseus*, like the girls that follow her, Ariadne's fate is bleak, "Sources give three options for Ariadne's fate: "(1) Dionysus seduces Ariadne, Theseus carries her off, Dionysus prevails on Artemis to kill her, (2) Dionysus and/or Theseus seduce Ariadne, Artemis kills her for in chastity; (3) Theseus carries her off, Dionysus supplants him and marries her" (88). According to the various versions of the myth, either Ariadne continues to be possessed by a male figure, such as Theseus and Dionysus after forgoing her womanhood to them, or Artemis punishes her for her sexuality. Ariadne's punishment for sexuality becomes coupled with the stasis of entrapment in the labyrinth, which Sarah and Lizzie both parallel.

Temple-Hoon makes an interesting connection between Ariadne and another signifier Persephone as she states, "In *The Gods of the Greeks*, Kerényi recounts that "Ariadne [...] is a superlative form of Hagne, a surname of the Queen of the Underworld" (269). Kerényi appears convinced that Ariadne "is certainly no earthly maiden, but the risen Persephone [...]" (89). This etymological connection binds Ariadne and Persephone together in the Counter *Bildungsroman*.

By the eating of fruit in both Sarah and Lizzie's narratives, both girls draw clear Persephonal parallels, as well as Jareth's labyrinth being alternately called the Underground, similar to the Underworld. Persephone, with her time split between her mother and husband, occupies a liminal space similar to Sarah and Lizzie, a space of incompleteness resulting in stasis, in which they become acquainted with womanhood but cannot become one.

However, another theme emerges through these women, transgressing the underworld and the labyrinth. As established in the Eve narrative, by giving into temptation, consuming or consummating, the girl must inevitably fall becoming part of the dark world of womanhood, reminiscent of Freud's "dark continent" (Kulish & Holtzman 3). However, the meaning of the word "dark" no longer refers to the unknowable, women know this underground "continent" well; they know of the supposed sinful things that occur there. These girls know this underground terrain so well they avoid their claim to womanhood, so they will not have to descend. This underground labyrinth of womanhood becomes "dark" because of the associations made with womanhood seen through the texts. It becomes something that must be villainized, silenced and made into abjection; it becomes "impure." The girls of the Counter *Bildungsroman* have a quick glimpse into this dark world and fear it, such as the virgin Thel who upon seeing the dark world of womanhood, runs back to her girlhood of the Har screaming:

"The Virgin started from her seat, & with a shriek

Fled back unhindered till she came into the vales of Har," (Blake 4.22)

The girls in the Counter *Bildungsroman*, like Sarah and Lizzie, upon seeing the dark and bleak fate of womanhood, try to reclaim their childhood until they physically can no longer, because they come to view their sexuality as deviant through the demonization of the love-object and the

notion of the “fall” into womanhood. However, this story of stasis does have the potential to move forward.

Ariadne, Eve, and Persephone, upon their removal from their place of purity, thrive in this dark and strange labyrinth. Persephone becomes Queen of the Underworld, despite her literal life in hell, Ariadne, with the aid of magic yarn, defeats the minotaur and escapes the labyrinth, and Eve, despite her fall from Eden, becomes the mother of all nations. Chapter two provides hope for the bleak outcome of the girls in the Counter *Bildungsroman* by the portraying entrance into womanhood as a rebirth, and resurrecting Ariadne, Eve and Persephone as symbols of power instead of stasis and degradation. The juxtaposing entity and propellance forward of the Counter *Bildungsroman*, the Contra *Bildungsroman*, explores the female of coming of age through multiple means of entrance, with sexuality as a positive component instead of a negative whole.

The Contra *Bildungsroman*

A New Focus

The female coming of age portrayed in literature changes and shifts as time progresses, which causes a necessary distinction between the former coming of age tale, the Counter *Bildungsroman*, and its successor, the Contra *Bildungsroman*. If the singular sexual entrance resulting in a stasis becomes the defining feature of the former, then the latter begins to explore a more complex and multifaceted representation of the transformation into womanhood more indicative of the *bildung*, building. While the former emphasizes one event in the girl's life, the latter recognizes that multiple components, including sexuality, coalesce to "build" a woman, more indicative of the traditional (and male) *bildungsroman*.

Before continuing, something must be clarified. The point of the female *bildungsroman* is not to evolve into the male *bildungsroman*, for that completely negates the purpose of a separate female coming of age. Instead, the Contra *Bildungsroman* shows a progression past the problematic aspects of the Counter *Bildungsroman*, and enhance aspects from the former that empower women, and magnify this empowerment that makes the female coming of age more indicative of the layered and complicated process of growing up. Barbara Johnson captures this idea nicely as she discusses the male and female difference. She states, "The 'knife that cuts both ways' does not so because the stories are symmetrical but because they are not, because each of them is differently situated, serves different ends, and accounts for different things" (31). This idea of *separate but equal* should be kept in mind while exploring the progressive ideas of the Contra *Bildungsroman* in relation to the previous portrayal of the female coming of age. This can be seen in the definition of the prefixes Counter and Contra as well. According to the English Cambridge dictionary "Counter" can be defined as "to react to something with an opposing

opinion or action” which shows the contradictory nature of the former coming of age, as instead of a building or progression, the girl remains static. However, in this new portrayal of the female coming of age “Contra” or “opposite” (English Cambridge dictionary) allows for the female to enter womanhood and maintain a coming of age separate from her male counterpart.

The novel *Burning Girl* by Claire Messud recreates this idea by inverting the male coming of age into a female narrative by deriving her title from Elizabeth Bishop’s poem “Casabianca,” which Bishop herself writes as a parody of the original poem “Casabianca” written by Felicia Hemans in 1826, depicting a fictionalized account of a true story during the French Battle of the Nile in which the boat L’Orient went up in flames. This progression of poem turned parody turned novel mimics the changing nature of the female *bildung* as well. In the poem, the son the real-life Captain Casabianca refuses to abandon the burning ship without his father’s permission. Besides the title, Messud alludes to many other elements of the poem, such as the quest for the father. The boy in the poem searches for his father aboard the burning ship, and similarly, in the novel Cassie searches for a savior in her biological father she thought to be dead. The protagonists and narrator of the novel Julia refers to Cassie’s volatile state as the “The French Revolution,” which becomes indicative of the French naval battle, the setting of the original poem. As Cassie becomes as successor and extension of the boy in the poem, the female *bildungsroman* becomes more androgynous, showing the female coming of age with the same complexity the male coming of age receives. Cassie herself exemplifies this, as Julia’s ultrafeminine body “Thick-thighed and big-breasted” illuminates Cassie’s own androgyny as her description follows, “Cassie was tiny, with bones like a bird. She was always the smallest girl in the class, and the span of an ankle was the same as my [Julia] wrist” (Messud 14).

Tara Westover's memoir *Educated*, largely depicting her unorthodox childhood in the mountains of Idaho, shows Tara as a highly androgynous child shaped by the harsh conditions of the mountain and her father's apocyl-mania. While in *Burning Girl*, Julia and Cassie together show the ultra-feminine and the androgynous, this dyad exists in Tara's single person, which becomes more evident as Tara leaves home and her selfhood becomes split between the women she has grown into and the girl from the mountain, which she often identifies as the girl she sees while looking into the mirror of her parents' bathroom. Tara begins to dissociate from "the girl in the mirror" as she states, "I stood and quietly locked the bathroom door, then stared into the mirror at the girl clutching her wrist. Her eyes were glassy and drops slid down her cheeks. I hated her for her weakness, for having a heart to break," (Westover 111). Tara tomboy attributes become magnified by her father's rules of no makeup or formfitting clothing, stripping her of the overt signs of femininity throughout her childhood. This androgyny becomes heightened as she must work in the junkyard with her father and brothers as she gets older. However, these androgynous characteristics become contrasted with the strict separation and expectations of women by the Mormon church and Tara's father. It becomes very clear to Tara from an early age her main purpose in life is motherhood. However, this becomes complicated by Tara's disdain for that lifestyle and quest for higher knowledge. This creates a dueling nature in Tara similar to the Julia/Cassie dyad, in which these girls come of age through their own personal quests in a "building" *separate but equal* to their male counterparts.

The 2017 novel *The Burning Girl* by and the 2018 memoir *Educated* portray two girls who enter womanhood through sisterhood and education and ultimately rely on themselves the women around them to enter the underworld of womanhood instead of a male love-object or remaining static. While womanhood still becomes a dark and uncertain terrain in these texts, it

becomes so because of the loss of innocence of childhood, and not the degrading “fall.” The universal signifiers of Persephone, Eve, and Ariadne resurface as well, but in these texts, they empower the heroines and show the strength accompanied with these women who rule the dead and navigate labyrinths.

Secret Sisters

If the female of the Counter *Bildungsroman* relies on a male love-object to gift her sexuality and key to enter womanhood, then the Contra *Bildungsroman* shifts this idea and creates the entrance of womanhood not as a locked door, but a secret society that a girl must first learn the passwords and handshakes to enter. Thinking of womanhood, in this context, as a secret society, allows these girls to transform through other girls and women. They learn from their ‘sisters’ all the idiosyncrasies of this underground world until they have learned, and grown, enough to enter themselves. Sisterhood becomes a significant aspect of the *Burning Girl* through the relationship of protagonist Julia and her best friend Cassie. Narrator Julia tells the tale of her coming of age through her best friend Cassie, and how the two grow apart as they both become women. However, Julia states that before their inevitable spilt the two lived as ‘secret sisters’ “Umbilically linked and inseparable” (Messud 31). Despite the girls’ portrayals as the complete antithesis to one another, physically and personality-wise, they share a ‘link’ with each other through their shared blue eyes. This, according to Julia, defines them as sisters. The theme of sisterhood continues throughout the novel as Julia and Cassie share a summer working at the animal shelter and adopt a pair of female kittens from the same litter. The cats, named Electra (by Cassie) and Xena (by Julia) parallel and foreshadow the girls themselves. While Julia’s cat grows large and docile, Cassie’s cat remains small and rowdy, half-feral. When Cassie’s cat disappears, this not only foreshadows Cassie’s own disappearance, but also that the two girls will

one day be separated. Despite their separation as they grow into womanhood, Julia continues to reinforce the idea of their 'secret sisterhood' as Julia can see through Cassie's 'cool girl' façade, and understands the true small and fragile Cassie, a caged bird.

As Julia enters womanhood, she creates her identity and definition of what it means to be a woman, or to grow up, through Cassie and her mother. Stephanie Rudig expresses creating a definition of womanhood based off a female's experience with other women in her essay "Miles Away: *Miss Miles, A Female Bildungsroman* by 'A Friend of Charlotte Bronte'" in which she discusses the novel *Miss Miles* by Mary Taylor. In Rudig's work she states, "In this way, she identifies homosocial relations between women as a space for defining female identity" (68). Julia similarly learns through her relationship to Cassie. Julia experiences rebellion through Cassie's desperate attempts to be free of her mother's tight grasp, and the effects that ripple out from that upheaval. Although Julia herself never experiences the tumultuous teenage angst, Cassie allows her to understand that the 'building' of a woman can be a painful and messy process, even adopting the idea that adulthood has tainted her. Julia states, "Can't you see I'm contaminated? Can't you see the grown-up dirt all over me?" (Messud 97). Through Julia's feeling of degradation at the idea of losing the innocence of childhood, she calls back upon the women of the Counter *Bildungsroman* who experience a similar 'fall.' However, Julia's feeling of degradation does not derive from a male lover, but instead a female friend she views as a sister. Cassie's constant party-going and drinking makes Julia feel 'dirty.' Through her link to Cassie, she takes on Cassie's rebellion as her own and understands the adult world of dark corners can be detrimental. However, unlike the heroines of the former coming of age, Cassie serves a dual role as Julia's derogator and mentor, initiating her vicariously into womanhood.

Since Julia has very little ‘adult’ experiences of her own, she learns from Cassie’s behaviors what a woman should and should not do in a contemporary society.

As Cassie searches for her father, she must abandon the overbearing grasp of her mother and venture into the world on her own. The leaving of home becomes a key element of the male *bildungsroman*, and although Julia herself never leaves, she experiences Cassie’s disappearance as if she accompanied her due to Julia’s ‘link’ to Cassie. This allows Julia to vicariously partake and this coming of age ritual. Cassie’s disappearance ultimately leads to the climax of the novel, in which Cassie has disappeared a second time, and Julia becomes the only one who can find her. In their girlhood, the two played in the Bonnybrook, a mansion, turned mental asylum, turned abandoned building. Julia instinctively knows Cassie has disappeared to this place that meant so much to them in their youth, perhaps to reconcile her disappearing childhood with her entrance of womanhood. Although Cassie’s name, Cassandra, references the cursed prophetess of Greek mythology, it is Julia that experiences a psychic dream. The dream follows;

Cassie, with her white-blond hair, put on a black feathered cloak -a bird cloak, a Nancy cloak- that promised to hide her, fugitive, wizard, teenaged girl, and to enable her to fly. Only, within seconds it burned into her skin, grafted itself, became exquisitely, agonizingly, irremovable. Hers was poisoned, a poisoned cloak (Messud 212).

Through this dream Julia senses Cassie’s distress and sets out to rescue Cassie from the clutches of her poisoned cloak. This act of saving Cassie serves as Julia’s own rebellion as she calls upon a local townspeople for help instead of her parents and sneaks out of her house early in the morning without her parent’s knowledge. As Julia enters the Bonnybrook, the place transforms from the play-world of their childhood to a the cite of initiation, as Julia can no longer see the place through childish whimsy. With the rose-colored glasses off, Julia can only see the

Bonnybrook in its true form, a place of death and entrapment experienced by the former female patients of the mental asylum, and now Cassie, as she slowly dies of alcohol and pill consumption in the corner of their favorite room. However, since Cassie has Julia to rescue her, and Julia has Cassie to initiate her into womanhood, the two girls escape the Bonnybrook, and Julia learns to function and thrive in the world of womanhood.

Julia also learns how to be a woman through her mother. While Julia learns through Cassie's current behavior, her mother teaches Julia with the benefit of hindsight, and as someone already part of the secret sisterhood. While Cassie shows Julia first-hand that being a woman can be dangerous, Julia's mother reinforces this idea through her news articles as a reporter, and constant shielding of Julia to news stories in which women get hurt. Despite her mother's efforts to protect Julia from the dangerous world, Julia already instills this ideal as she states, "Sometimes I felt like growing up and being a girl was about learning to be afraid" (111). However, Julia's strong ties with her mother allow her to form a correlative for her own womanhood as Julia begins to understand the 'umbilical link' that she shares not only with Cassie, but her mother too, and perhaps in a wider sense all women. She states of her and her mother, "-flesh of her flesh, brought into this world from between her thighs, always beside her, and still, somewhere, inside her-" (Messud 238). In this moment, Julia comforts her mother and through that assumes the role of the mother. Although this idea can be seen in the Counter *Bildungsroman* as well, as Sarah quests for the infant Toby, assuming the role of the mother becomes less about biological maternity, and instead focuses on the development of the girl into an emotionally mature woman. As Julia takes on the role of the mother, her maturation comes full cycle.

Julia's connection to women as a whole can be felt most powerfully as Julia and Cassie explore the Bonnybrook for the first time, and Julia feels the presence of all the women who have been there before her. Julia states, "I didn't see them-there was no visible mass of ghosts peering out of the hollowed windows-but I couldn't help but feel they marked the territory" (Messud 61). As Cassie and Julia continue to play, the connection they feel to these women, throughout time and history becomes further reinforced as Julia reiterates, "We both looked up the stairs at the dust motes drifting in a shaft of sun across the landing. We could feel them with us- I knew she did just as much as I; and they too were our sisters" (Messud 69). As Julia begins to grow into a woman, she learns from Cassie and her mother, but also feels a connection to the women that came before her and learns from their endurance at the Bonnybrook as well, contributing the idea that the concept of womanhood in the *Contra Bildungsroman* functions as a sisterhood.

However, initiation through sisterhood becomes a double-edged sword, as one sister in the pair learns to metaphorically 'fly' at the expense of the other, who remains caged or covered. Stephanie Rudig expresses this idea that only one of the female pair can join the secret society as she states, "Mutual affection and support between women is shown as an integral component of a woman's formation that alleviates *one's* sense of alienation and facilitates *one's* eventual reconciliation with society" (66 emphasis my own). This occurs with Julia and Cassie, as even though Cassie appears to have more adult experiences, she ultimately remains covered by her mother, literally and metaphorically, as when a mutual friend last encounters Cassie at the grocery store, she is obscured by the cart and whisked away by her mother. He recounts, "Cassie said hi, but didn't move out from behind the cart, and her eyes, he said, were dull. [...] And then [Cassie's mother] pushed Cassie and the cart forcefully into the pet-food aisle- like a kidnapper,

Peter said- and that was that” (Messud 239). In the sister pair, one ‘sister’ remains static, like the heroine of the Counter *Bildungsroman*, so the other can transform into a woman. In *the Burning Girl*, Cassie remains the static sister and exudes Personal parallels as she remains covered by her mother, unable to form herself into an independent woman. Even though both Julia and Cassie escape the Bonnybrook, which functions as the labyrinth and underworld, only Julia can truly follow the string that leads outward and accept her role in this new adult world. Cassie remains partially entrapped in this labyrinth as she cannot accept her womanhood and instead remains a child in her mother’s shadow, a caged bird as Julia foresaw in her dream. However, through Cassie, Julia can enter and navigate the new adult space she now inhabits.

In Sona Snircova’s study, “Girlhood in British Coming-of-Age Novels,” she separates the female characters into two prototypes, which parallel the sister pairs: the can-do-girl and the at-risk girl. She states, “the can-do-girls associated primarily with white middle class women are defined by ‘their commitment to exceptional careers and career planning, their belief in their capacity to invent themselves and succeed, and their belief [feminine] consumer lifestyle.’ On the other hand, the at-risk-girl version of Girl Power is found in the ‘laddish’ patterns of behavior (drug abuse, binge drinking, violence, delinquency and sexual promiscuity) usually adopted by young women from marginalized, working class and ethnic, communities” (Snircova 61). This dynamic clearly exists between the upper-middle class, college-bound Julia, and her counterpart, the lower-class, party-going Cassie. However, this duality exists internally in Tara, in her memoir *Educated*. Tara’s studies at places like Cambridge clash with her youth as a poor scrapper in a Mormon family in Idaho. Like the *Burning Girl* Tara yearns for the concept of sisterhood and solidarity despite her existence in-between well-educated and barely schooled, and masculine and feminine. As an eight-year-old, Tara first tries to reconcile these two selves as

she joins a dance team without her father's knowledge. Despite the girls moving in sync, Tara realizes that she still does not quite belong. She states, "Sometimes, when I glanced in the mirror and saw the tangle of out twirling forms, I couldn't immediately discern myself in the crowd. It didn't matter that I was wearing a gray T-shirt- a goose among swans. We moved together, a single flock" (Westover 79). Tara tries to merge the can-do-girl and at-risk girl through sisterhood as she finds solace in their moment of uniformity. However, as she grows older, reconciling these two vastly different spaces she inhabits becomes much harder and she begins to fragment herself into two different girls. "The girl in the mirror" who stays the at-risk-girl, confined to her father, mountain, and religious rules, and the can-do-girl, the person Tara becomes who can break away from her childhood and acquire an education.

Part of Tara's fragmentation can be attributed to her mother, who she learns from like Julia in the *Burning Girl*. Tara learns about both the strength and submission of womanhood as her mother too becomes a two-faced entity. This education of Tara's identity as a woman parallels her literal education at college, which liberates Tara not only by exposing her father's twisted ideals, but also allowing Tara to realize she does not need to be a fragmented being like her mother and reconciling her two selves. In Tara's early childhood, she views her mother as weak in comparison to her father, who holds all the power due to the Mormon ideals of the submissive woman. However, as her mother enters the workforce through midwifery, she realizes her mother possesses a silent strength. This grows as her mother becomes an 'energy healer' and entrepreneur of essential oils, running her own business and becoming the family breadwinner. However, this strength becomes contrasted by her extreme submission to Tara's father. When Tara and her sister Audrey wish to confront their brother about his physical abuse, they contact their mother to discuss the situation with their father. Tara's mother responds that

they have discussed the matter and have taken care of it with their brother, Shawn. Tara shows amazement at her mother's ability to confront her brother and father. However, this amazement quickly gives way to disappointment as it becomes clear her mother never confronted them and simply said what the sisters wished to hear, instead deciding to side with her husband. This exemplifies Tara's idea of womanhood as two faced, the strong woman and the submissive wife, and Tara's mother puts on whatever face the moment calls for. In the light of Tara's mother's fragmentation, Tara's own split becomes inevitable. However, unlike her mother, Tara cannot reconcile them. This can be seen most clearly in the moment Tara realizes she cannot be both her father's daughter and her own person. She states, "I understood that no future could hold them; no destiny could tolerate both him *and* her. I would remain a child, in perpetuity, always, or I would lose him" (Westover 133). As Tara decides to leave the mountain and attend college, she chooses to embrace her womanhood, and through this reconcile her two selves.

As Tara attends college, she still struggles to startle the new world she inhabits and the world of her childhood. During this time, Tara and her older sister Audrey decide to confront Shawn about his years of physical abuse. Audrey, like Julia and Cassie, serves as the antithesis of her younger sister. While Tara earns a PhD, moves away from the mountain, and rejects the Mormon ideal of motherhood, Audrey remains on the mountain, becomes a wife and mother at nineteen, and has an education level resting somewhere around the fifth grade. However, for this brief moment, the two sisters unite in their quest for justice for their childhood abuse, and both sisters have the choice to either submit to their parents will and claim the accusations against Shawn as false, or cast off their abuser and break free from their parents will. Like the *Burning Girl* Audrey remains the Persephonal figure, choosing to stay under her parents influence, and as Tara recognizes her sister's submission and coverture by their parents, Tara realizes she cannot

remain like her sister. Audrey's inability to cast off her childhood enable Tara to do that very thing, and Tara transforms into a woman independent from her father.

Like Julia, Tara's transformation cannot be complete until she assumes the role of the mother. As the memoir draws to a close, Tara recounts the death of her grandmother, her mother's mother. As Tara's mother refuses to spend time with her siblings and father due to her husbands unwelcome, Tara takes her place. Tara states, "I was uncomfortably aware that I had taken my mother's place, going with her siblings and her remaining parent on an outing to remember her mother, a grandmother I had not known well" (Westover 324). However, Tara's discomfort soon gives way to relief. By assuming the role of her mother, she regains a family after the lose of her own through her disownment. She realizes that by taking the place of her mother, she can truly transform into an independent woman and correct some of the mistakes her mother had made as she says, "I the space of a day, I had reclaimed a family- not mine, hers," (325). Through Tara's reclaiming of her mother's family, she simultaneously claims the womanhood that she oscillates between throughout the course of the memoir. She no longer needs to inhabit both the world of her childhood and the world of independence to keep her family, because by assuming the role of her mother she can claim a new one.

To Burn and to Baptize

As the focus of the entrance of womanhood shifts from the male love-object to that of a secret sisterhood, the portrayal of womanhood shifts a well. The girls of the Contra *Bildungsroman* no longer face the degradation of a fall, but instead a type of rebirth. The theme of being 'reborn' into a woman can be seen in both Julia and Tara's journeys through the incorporation of the elemental motifs of fire and water. Fire and water often become cathartic symbols and catalysts for rebirth, most notably through the idea of baptism for water and the

concept of the phoenix and burning for fire. Both stories incorporate these images to portray Julia and Tara's rebirth instead of the fruit iconography that connects the entrance of womanhood to a type of fall. The *Burning Girl* incorporates both fire and water motifs to signal Julia's change. The fire motif becomes the most evident due to the title of the novel that refers literally to the act of burning. Although derived from the Elizabeth Bishop's poem as previously discussed, the act of, and metaphor of burning serves multiple purposes when applied to the novel. Firstly, it alludes to Cassie's hectic state in the novel, her embodiment of the "French Revolution." Secondly, while the twelve-year-old Julia and Cassie sit by a neighbor's pool, they play the popular Eminem and Rihanna song "The Way You Lie" which sings, "*Stand there and watch me burn...*" (Messud 20, emphasis in text). Upon listening, Julia describes the lyrics as "creepy" and her mother reinforces this by stating the song as anti-feminist. However, by the novel's conclusion, the third and final motif of burning reveals that this painful and angst-ridden process ultimately allows for Julia to be reborn as a woman, as when something burns a permeant chemical change occurs, acting as a type of transformation, or rebirth.

The symbol of water too becomes an important theme in the *Burning Girl* through the quarry. Although the title alludes to rebirth by fire, the opening scene transports readers to an alternate place of rebirth as Julia states, "But still, I can't lie in the sun on the boulders at the quarry's edge, or dangle my toes in the cold, clear water, or hear the other girls singing, without being aware the whole time that Cassie is gone" (Messud 13). The quarry serves as a cite of initiation, and also a foreshadowing of Julia's rebirth and Cassie stasis. After the girls' first time visiting the Bonnybrook, Julia and Cassie stop to swim at the quarry. However, Cassie's injured hand prevents her from swimming, so while Julia becomes immersed in the water, Cassie sits on the edge and waits. Julia's pseudo-baptism becomes contrasted with Cassie's inability to enter

the water. Similar to how Julia's womanhood does not allow her to see the Bonnybrook with her childlike whimsy, after Julia's transformation and separation from Cassie, she can no longer see the quarry without her remembering that Cassie can no longer share it with her. The quarry, like the fire, ultimately serves as a type of womb in which Julia can be reborn from and enter womanhood, shedding the naivety of her childhood. The result of Julia's education as a woman leads to her to become a full-fledged woman, and not in a state of limbo and stasis like Cassie and her predecessors in the Counter *Bildungsroman*.

Tara's academic education and education as a woman mirror and interact with one another to shape her into the woman she becomes by the end of her memoir. The significance of the mirrored self shows Tara's fragmentation as someone in between girlhood and womanhood, but like the *Burning Girl*, it becomes a site of initiation for Tara in which she can be reborn. Through the symbol of the mirror, and its association with water, the mirror, similar to the quarry, serves as a symbolic womb. Many of Tara's moments of recognition occur while looking in the mirror of her parents' bathroom exemplifying the mirror as a catalyst for change and form of baptism. In their book *Classical Myth and Psychoanalysis* Vanda Zajko and Ellen O'Gorman discuss this concept of baptism and rebirth through the story of Anchises, where the Underworld becomes a site of journeying and rebirth as they state, "The events in the underworld are presented in two parts: first a journey, a katabasis, through the various territories and land of ghosts; and secondly a philosophical or theological account by Anchises of the notions of purification and rebirth..." (150). A similar journey occurs for Tara that leads to her rebirth as well as many of her moments of self education occur while she looks at herself in the mirror. The moment she finally reconciles her two selves, she looks in the mirror of her parents' bathroom and states, "And here I was still, and here was the mirror. The same face, repeated in the same

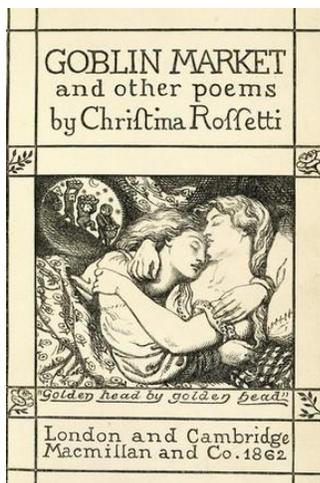
three panels. Except it wasn't. [...] It was something behind her eyes, something in the set of jaw- a hope or belief or conviction- that a life is not a thing unalterable. I don't have a word for what it was I saw, but I suppose it was something like *faith*” (Westover 286). In this moment in the mirror, Tara comes to realize she no longer has to be the timid child cowering before her father but can possess power and agency as her own individual person. Through this knowledge, a unified Tara becomes reborn as a woman with the ability to transverse the terrain of womanhood away from her father's grasp that keeps her a child. Tara reflects on her rebirth and unified self as a woman at the conclusion of her memoir in which she states,

It had played out when, for reason I don't understand, I was unable to climb through the mirror and send out my sixteen-year-old self in my place. Until that moment she had always been there. No matter how much I appeared to have change- how illustrious my education, how altered my appearance- I was still *her*. At best I was two people, a fractured mind. *She* was inside, and emerged whenever I crossed the threshold of my father's house. That night I called on her and she didn't answer. She left me. She stayed in the mirror (Westover 328).

In this moment Tara emerges as a woman transformed as her academic education parallels her education as a woman. Like Zajko and O'Gorman's analysis, the Underworld can function as a place of rebirth and completion, and becomes a space where Tara can accept her self and form an individual agency. Through the association of fire and water, burning and baptism, Julia and Tara forgo the traditional portrayal of womanhood as a fall and create a new perception of womanhood as a form of rebirth.

Redefining “Goblin Market”

Now that certain trends have been established in the *Contra Bildungsroman*, the entrance to womanhood as a rebirth rather than a fall, usually associated with fire and water, and one member of the sister-pair entering womanhood at the expense of the other, who remains static, the poem “Goblin Market” must be revisited. The poem, which centers around the titular Lizzie and her quest to save her sister from the evil goblins, remains in the *Counter Bildungsroman* due to Lizzie’s stasis. However, if Laura assumes the place as titular character, the poem suddenly shifts categories as well, for Laura meets many of the criteria her sister does not. Firstly, for Laura and Lizzie womanhood does become like a secret sisterhood, combining the relationships of Tara and Audrey, and Julia and Cassie, as the sisters are biologically related and also very close. Despite the absence of a mother, they do appear to be an invisible mother figure in the poem through Laura and Lizzie’s knowledge of domestic chores. An illustration on the cover of the 1862 poem book of Rossetti’s chooses to depict the close sisterly bond of the titular characters, instead of their interactions with the goblin men, illuminating the importance of sisterhood in the piece.



Laura's coming of age depends not only on the goblin men, but her sister who saves her. During this scene in which Lizzie gives Laura the antidote for the curse caused by the goblin men's fruit, Laura's reviving conjures images of both water and fire as the stanza reads

Swift fire spread through her veins, knock'd
 at her heart,
 Met the fire smoldering there
 And overbore its lesser flame;
 She gorged on bitterness without a name:
 Ah! fool, to choose such part
 Of soul-consuming care!
 Sense fail'd in the mortal strife:
 Like a watch-tower of a town
 Which an earthquake shatters down,
 Like a lightning-stricken mast,
 Like a wind-uprooted tree
 Spun about,
 Like a foam-topp'd waterspout
 Cast down headlong in the sea,
 She fell at last;
 Pleasre past and anguish past,
 Is it death or is it life?

Like *Educated* and *Burning Girl* similar motifs occur in which Laura's cite of initiation become entangled with elemental images of rebirth. First Laura becomes burned by "flame" and then appears to be like damage done by a storm. However, these lines allow the reader to understand Laura must be destroyed in order to be rebuilt as a woman, her moment of *bildung*. Through the life saving powers of Lizzie's antidote, Laura can be initiated into womanhood. The question posed in the last stanza has a positive answer in the line that follows, "Life out of death" (cite)

which solidifies the notion that in that moment Laura is reborn and not fallen. However, the same can not be said for Lizzie. Like Cassie and Audrey, Lizzie serves as the stepping stone her sister needs in order to enter womanhood. This can be seen in the final stanzas of the poem in which the two sisters, now mother's grown, recount their tale to their children. The heroine Lizzie does not tell the children the story, but instead, "Laura would call the little ones/and tell them of her early prime"(cite), reflecting the idea of Laura as the sister who truly becomes a woman, and like Tara and Julia, she has not only biologically but emotionally taken on the role of the mother. The concept of the poem shifting from the Counter *Bildungsroman*, which focuses on Lizzie's stasis and sexual renunciation, to the Contra *Bildungsroman*, which focuses on Laura's liberation and rebirth, can be found in Akemi Yoshida's work as well. Yoshida states the following about the contrasting messages of the two sisters, "In 'Goblin Market,' Lizzie's body becomes identified with fruit as an edible object, but not as a sexual object to be consumed by male desire" juxtaposed to "Laura [who] seems to succeed in freeing herself and other woman coming hereafter from negative stereotypes as doomed beings associated with sin" (83). Yoshida's statement about Laura's roll in deviating the negative opinion about womanhood allow "Goblin Market" to become a quasi-Contra *Bildungsroman* (if told through Laura's perspective) as it allows womanhood to be represented in a positive light and Laura's transformation rather than stasis.

Since themes from the Contra *Bildungsroman* can be found in its predecessor, the opposite must be explored as well. In fact, many motifs from the Counter *Bildungsroman* carry on in its successor, particularly the *Burning Girl*. Since "Goblin Market," *Labyrinth* and the *Burning Girl* all portray works of fiction, certain literary traditions associated with the portrayal of womanhood continue. In the *Burning Girl*, while Cassie quests to find her father, Julia

describes the crisp spring morning she encountered saying, “The spring morning was chilly and bright, and the budding trees nodded as she passed. Forsythia bloomed in yellow bursts across the yards, alongside patches of crocuses and bluebells. To Cassie they were signs of hope, blessings on her path. Two cherries, earlier than the rest, had begun to unfurl their frilly pom-poms, and she paused beneath them for a while” (Messud 182). The association with fruit has already been discussed and Cassie’s lingering under the cherries conjures images of *Cherry Ripe*, however, the blooming flowers should be noted as well. The image of the blooming flower, similar to the fruit, symbolizes a girl ‘blooming’ like her ‘ripe’ counterpart. The symbolism of womanhood through the bloom draws from the Persephone myth and through popularized fairy tales such as Little Red Riding Hood as both ‘blossoming’ girls pick flowers before their captors/lovers whisk them away. Kulish and Holtzman note this connection to the two tales and its flowery symbolism as they state “Flowers, which are often symbolic representations of sexuality or the genitals, appear in both stories” (30) and Cassie’s as well. Since Cassie remains the Persephonal figure, while Julia transforms, understandably Cassie dwells under the symbols from the Counter *Bildungsroman* and not Julia.

The passage of time becomes another motif to appear in the *Burning Girl* that calls back to its predecessor. In *Labyrinth* time stalks. Sarah must beat the clock to save her infant brother and return to her childhood. For Cassie, time too functions as a way to keep her static. When Cassie gets her cast Dr. Shute warns her not to be the “im-patient” saying “As long as you’re a good patient, and not an impatient patient- the *im*-patient as we say around here” (Messud 34) meaning that to be a good patient, she must be patient with her healing arm. However, the cast, and the time it takes to remove the cast, act a stasis tool for Cassie. Cassie cannot enter the quarry due to her cast, the reason Julia becomes symbolically baptized while Cassie remains

unsubmerged, feet dangling on the edge of a womanhood she cannot truly enter. While these motifs clearly mark Cassie the Personal figure, for Julia time functions differently. Julia does not need to be “im-patient” because time does not stalk, becoming a predator; it simply passes. Julia recognizes the passage of time as a positive and negative force. It causes her and Cassie to drift apart, but it ultimately allows her to truly become a woman. Through Julia time does not need to be feared or denied, but instead accepted and empowered as it allows for the entrance of womanhood.

Julia enters the labyrinth of womanhood as she alludes to the same Escher staircase drawing that decorates Sarah’s bedroom found in the bathroom of Julia’s house. The drawing, with its many differing perspectives, shows how Cassie and Julia no longer exist on the same plane, Julia a woman and Cassie still a girl. Julia states, “Her version was the inverse of mine, like the Escher drawing of a staircase in our attic bathroom” (Messud 224). The Escher drawing symbolizes the navigation of womanhood and its ability to serve as a stasis tool and a site of initiation as Julia later states, “Although like the Escher drawing, once you’ve seen things from a certain perspective, you can’t entirely unsee them” (Messud 225). Julia can no longer see through the rose-colored glasses of girlhood, and the labyrinth, for her, serves as a tool of entrance. While Julia finds the key, the red string that Ariadne uses to navigate the labyrinth, Cassie remains stuck in her girlhood, the labyrinth becoming a tool for stasis in which Cassie becomes entrapped. Like Cassie and Julia/Tara and Audrey, Lizzie and Laura have a similar dynamic in which one sister finds the symbolic red string while the other sister remains trapped in an Escher like drawing.

Moving Away from the Mythological Model

The mythological model of the Counter *Bildungsroman* does not seem to influence the female coming of age as substantially as these stories enter the postmodern era. As these new tales shift and change so do the avatars that appeared as staples and signifiers in the previous female (non) *bildung*. While in the Counter *Bildungsroman*, these women came to represent the stasis experienced by the heroines, Eve's fall, Ariadne's labyrinth, and Persephone's pomegranate, these women have now become dual entities. Like the sister pairs of Cassie/Julia, Tara/Audrey, and Lizzie/Laura, half of them still represents what they previously signified, stasis and degradation, while the other half speaks to female empowerment and agency. They have reshaped their identity as proud women. Kulish and Holtzman introduce this concept of reforming identity through Persephone's name change from *Kore* (virgin) to her more common signifier saying, "The name change connoted this change in the girl's identity and status. It indicates her new and powerful role as queen of the underworld, a position that affords her the authority and respect that she was denied when she was merely *Kore*, Demeter's "slim ankled" daughter. At the beginning of the poem she lacks both agency and voice. When she emerges from the underworld, she is articulated and fluent, clear and confident in her speech-and has found her voice" (65). Similarly, like their female signifiers, the girls in the Contra *Bildungsroman* are transformed, building a voice, agency and identity through their womanhood.

But according to this theory, a conundrum has been created. Everything has been doubled, unstable. A type of schizophrenia has formed that plagues femininity as it tries to reconcile the "slim ankled" *Kore* and the pomegranate eating Persephone, Ariadne the girl and Ariadne the goddess, Eve the tempter and Eve the temptress. But this becomes part of the coming of age in itself, acceptance and integration. The female in the *bildungsroman* (who does not remain static) must accept that these two selves exist within a single body and integrate these

two selves into a cohesive whole, similar to Tara in her memoir, *Educated*. Even though these avatars may appear binary in their representations of an impure girlhood and impowered womanhood, they coalesce in their archetypal symbolism of an overall femininity. In the contemporary American culture, femininity and womanhood remains schizophrenic as well, which reflects in our current literature. According to Maura Kelly's study, the concept of womanhood still remains a polarized subject as even though it may be an age of "Liberated sex positive femininity" many females still view themselves as "Sexual objects [instead of] sexual subjects" with a highlight on "sexual purity." This does not mean women are not entitled their personal beliefs on virginity, but instead that for many females, they still do not view their sexuality as their own and lose their sexual agency, in an age where female sexuality is supposedly celebrated. Due to this feminine schizophrenia, womanhood in itself perhaps needs a coming of age, an acceptance and integration, which will lead to a third type of female *bildungsroman* to be examined another day.

However, the female coming of age has transformed to begin to give females the power and agency they have always possessed. Kulish and Holzman express this idea through the power of the symbol of menstrual blood as they state, "Thus menstrual blood is universally seen as very dangerous and powerful, used to cure diseases, as a love charm, or as a potent toxic substance (147). Through this analysis of female menstruation, we see womanhood not only as something powerful, but with positive aspects as well. As the females in the *bildungsroman* begin to show power and agency a theme of female authorship emerges. This does not mean that male authors are incapable of writing a *bildungsroman* in which the female successfully transforms into a woman, but that for the purpose of this exploration, "Goblin Market," the *Burning Girl* and *Educated* become examples of Contra *Bildungsroman*, while the film

Labyrinth, with primarily a male authorship, remains Counter *Bildungsroman*.¹ The difference between male and female authorship in the creation of a female coming of age is explored in feminist theory as well as,

If the assumptions of these feminist literary critics are correct, then one would expect to find significant differences between the *Bildungsromane* written by men and those written by women, especially since, as Buckley and others have pointed out, the *Bildungsroman* frequently draws upon autobiographical material. In a patriarchal culture where the "education" of males and the "education" of females is so vastly different, surely the *Bildungsromane* which male and female novelists respectively write would be very different (Goodman 29).

Through this trend, not only does the female in the text gain voice and agency, but the female author gains voice and agency as well, creating a society of womanhood that exists intertextually. The emphasis on womanhood through fellow woman instead of the male love-object becomes reflected in Kulish and Holtzman's analysis as they ultimately conclude, "Yet however seductive Hades' charms, Persephone and Demeter remain forever linked-separating, searching for each other, reuniting, and separating again" (187). And so, like stated by Kulish and Holtzman, the cycle of womanhood continues and will progress until a new type of female *bildungsroman* emerges, forever trying to reconcile and unite the daughter (girl) and mother (woman).

Conclusion

¹ It should be noted that the authorship of film usually involves a conglomeration of people and not an individual person, including *Labyrinth*. However, the major contributors to the film, Jim Henson, Brian Froud and George Lucas, are all men.

As the female *bildungsroman* progresses, it reflects the progressions of external concepts of femininity and womanhood. Through the Victorian ideals reflected in “Goblin Market” to the contemporary American view seen in the *Burning Girl*, the concept of womanhood and what it means to come of age continues to be fluid, ever shifting as time passes. The exploration of these two types of female stories, the Counter *Bildungsroman* and the Contra *Bildungsroman*, shows how the notion of femininity shifts, from a single sexual entrance exposing the preference for visibility and presence, to a more inclusive *bildung* that focuses on multiple aspects that truly result in a complete transformation of a woman.

While the male *bildungsroman* continues to be the more prevalent genre, as sexuality still experiences a split “whereas female sexuality is disempowered and disembodied [and] male sexuality is empowered and embodied” (Kelly 480) the female begins to gain a voice of her own in the coming of age, gaining a sense of embodiment and empowerment that has long since only been attributed to her male counterpart. I will continue to reinforce the idea of a *separate but equal* coming of age; for the progression of the female *bildungsroman* is not to evolve into a duplicate of the male’s, but instead, to reflect that the labyrinth of becoming a woman is just as complex and intricate as the males but with a difference.

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