

“Before *Annie On My Mind*: Nancy Garden and The Weird and Horrible Library”

Before popular culture domesticated the werewolf, brought sparkles to vampires, or mainstreamed the witches, Nancy Garden’s contribution to the Weird and Horrible Library provided young readers with historical information. In her four books, *Vampires* (1973), *Werewolves* (1973), *Witches* (1975), and *Devils and Demons* (1976) Garden explores how these creatures serve as manifestations of fear and desire. Thus, in learning about the “horrible,” young readers learn about human psychology: the fear of what one does not understand, and human behavior: the tendency to punish those who do not conform.

Drawing on Nina Auerbach’s reading of the vampire, and Terry Castle’s work on lesbian narratives and ghost stories, among others, this presentation argues that Garden encourages readers to think critically about supernatural creatures. Written ten years before her ground-breaking book *Annie On My Mind*, these four books illuminate Garden’s use of myth, legend, and folklore to address female experience and diffuse fear and bigotry.

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