Monsters and the Monstrous

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Special Issue

Monstrous Memory

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Queen Inang Yellow, printed with permission from the artist, Tilde Acuña.

Currently based at the University of the Philippines, Systems Information Office, Tilde (**Arbeen Regalado Acuña**) holds a BA Communication Arts degree (writing major) with honours from the University of the Philippines Los Baños and will be an Araling Philipino (Philippine Studies) graduate student at the University of the Philippines Diliman this coming semester. His works have appeared in university and national publications, and his first published works in a refereed journal are, 'Entry Taken from The Encyclopaedia of Biomechanical Convertebrates' and 'io', which both appeared in *Kritika Kultura*, published by the Ateneo de Manila University.

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Artistic Monstrosities in New Gothic Art: Creating Shock Waves which Help us Find a Lost Sense of Ourselves

Maria Antónia Lima

Abstract
At a time when the media are so preoccupied with projecting shocking imagery and violent narrative, obliging the public to consume violence as if they were completely detached and alienated from its origins, perhaps the role of contemporary art should be to produce the kind of shock waves which help people find their lost sense of self. In *Idée sur les Romans*, the Marquis de Sade observed that Gothic literature was the inevitable result of the revolutionary shocks which were felt all over Europe. New Gothic art is necessarily the result of the many contemporary cultural earthquakes that have shaken many regions throughout the world, haunted as we are in modern life by the fear of death in its many monstrous guises: for example, the war in Iraq, serial killers, paedophiles, guns and gang culture, environmental disaster and global warming. Gothic creativity and its dark imagery have sought to create a sense of control and orientation with a view to establishing coordinates to guide us towards recovering a sense of identity. Through some monstrous works of well-known artists such as Cindy Sherman, Robert Gober, Louise Bourgeois, Damien Hirst, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Paul McCarthy, Keith Edmier, Douglas Gordon and many other creative geographers of our contemporary horrors, we may encounter vital pieces of our fragmented and disintegrated selves.

Key Words: Artistic monstrosity, monsters, gothic art, shock waves, shock, identity.

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At a time when the media are so preoccupied with projecting shocking imagery and violent narrative, obliging the public to consume violence as if they were completely detached and alienated from its origins, perhaps the role of contemporary art should be to produce the kind of shock waves which help people find their lost sense of self. In *Idée sur les Romans*, the Marquis de Sade observed that Gothic literature was the inevitable result of the revolutionary shocks which were felt all over Europe. New Gothic art is necessarily the result of the many contemporary cultural earthquakes that have shaken many regions throughout the world, haunted as we are in modern life by the fear of death in its many monstrous guises: for example, the war in Iraq, serial killers, paedophiles, guns and gang culture, environmental disaster and global warming. Gothic creativity and its dark imagery have sought to create a sense of control and orientation with a view to establishing coordinates to guide us towards recovering a sense of identity. Through the monstrous works of well-known artists such as Cindy Sherman, Robert Gober, Louise Bourgeois, Damien Hirst, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Paul McCarthy, Keith Edmier, Douglas Gordon and many other creative geographers of our contemporary horrors, we may encounter vital pieces of our fragmented and disintegrated selves.

By definition, a shock wave is a type of propagating disturbance. Such waves are characterized by an abrupt, almost discontinuous change in the characteristics of the medium. During a shock, there is always an extremely rapid rise in pressure, temperature and density of the flow. Such a wave travels through most media at a higher speed than an ordinary wave. Metaphorically speaking, Gothic aesthetics can be said to seek to create the same effect through its capacity to invent new techniques for instilling terror that surpass those created by a

sensationalist media which is concerned to stimulate consumers' addiction to its orgy of atrocities. However, we know that nowadays it is increasingly difficult to produce a rush of adrenalin or a quickening of heartbeat that might cause the desired sensation of 'pleasurable pain', a sublime paradox described so well by Edgar Allan Poe, which inexplicably justifies our perverse impulses for evil and our uncontrollable and irrational will to be terrified.

In *Limits of Horror*, Fred Botting compares certain aesthetic Gothic shocks to the shocking effects produced by technological progress that provokes fearful responses, concluding that they are part of the system of modernity. Defining a shock as an 'experience which signals an unexplainable disjunction between phenomena and modes of habituation, whether cultural or technological', Botting thinks it 'marks a disruptive process of subjective and corporeal reordering',[1] provoking a deviation from the rules and a disruption of the uniformity and proportion that originates a 'subjective manifestation of aesthetic deformity.' He thinks shock provides an index of a crisis, which like natural disasters and technological accidents produces 'the reverberation of traumatic after-effects'.[2] If shock provokes derangement caused by a powerful violent event that disrupts the continuity of an artificial or mechanical situation, shattering tradition, the repetitive and mechanical use of shocks can exhaust consumers who become accustomed to them and are rendered incapable of stimulation or excitement. Consequently, at the same time that Botting considers that Gothic shocks have many new creative potentialities for producing terrifying images that activate 'an instinct of self-preservation that invigorates the mind's imaginative powers', as 'a response to a catastrophic reordering of the rhythms and expectations of everyday life'.[3] He notes that through repetition these shocks become too familiar and even pleasurable, stripped of effect as they are by their banality. In an essay entitled 'Aftergothic: Consumption, Machines, and Black Holes', Botting states that,

> A sense of cultural exhaustion haunts the present. An inhuman future is shrouded in old Gothic trappings emptied of any strong charge; past images and forms are worn too thin to veil the gaping hole of objectless anxiety. Gothic fiction, which served as earlier modernity's black hole and has served up a range of objects and figures crystallizing anxiety into fear, has become too familiar after two centuries of repetitive mutation and seems incapable of shocking anew.[4]

However, we are still fascinated by monsters and the dark side of the human imagination. We crave Gothic forms of stimulation for their immediacy and power to make our hearts race, our blood pressure rise, our breathing shallow and quick, and our stomachs heave. Steven Bruhm confronts us with our special attraction for horrifying images that are strangely familiar, as uncanny as they are abject, which seems to explain why we require a Gothic fix. Bruhm comes to the conclusion that

> we need it because the twentieth century has so forcefully taken away from us that which we once thought constituted ourselves—a coherent psyche, a social order to which we can pledge allegiance in good faith, a sense of justice in the universe—and that wrenching withdrawal, that traumatic experience, is vividly dramatized in the Gothic.[5]

Inexplicably, we adhere to the Gothic style and the horrendous images it produces because we enjoy the feeling of trauma, the negative sentiment that reflects the turbulent times we live in, fraught with uncontrollable circumstances, in which it is impossible to survive

without a strong sensation of disorientation and discomfort, which has produced a society languishing in a permanent state of cultural pessimism and spiritual crisis. Gothic has become the stage on which trauma can be re-enacted through its monstrous creations in order that it may be overcome and exorcised. If we consider that contemporary geography has made much of the assertion that, as Dereck Gregory puts it, 'mapping is necessarily situated, embodied, partial: like all other practices of representation',[6] Gothic can be said to use a kind of 'geographical imagination' in order to seek a symbolic space for the recreation of its principal themes of horror, madness, monstrosity, death, disease, terror, evil and deviant sexuality in order to locate the source of our most secret fears and trauma and illuminate them. This is why it can be said that certain artists like Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, Kiki Smith and Rona Pondick

> have developed a model of art as 'the re-experiencing of a trauma', which they understand sometimes as symptomatic, acting out of a traumatic event, in which the art work becomes a site where memory or fantasy can be attempted, as it were a symbolic working-through of such an event, in which the work becomes a place where 'treatment' or 'exorcism' can be attempted.[7]

Inspired by the uncomfortable realities that surround us, some artists can only find adequate expression in a disturbing and grotesque art, using aesthetic equivalents and many metaphors for the extreme experiences that haunt us insistently. They seem to believe in the power of art to shock and disturb. Whenever they recreate the avant-garde drama of provocation and refusal of cultural glorification through works that, as the antithesis of all smiling faiths, may be called monstrous, nihilistic or morbid, they also express a nostalgic faith in creativity for questioning the stereotypes and false appearances that constantly limit and prevent an in-depth perception of ourselves. Commenting on the presence of images of excessive and gruesome violence in contemporary art, which are usually intended to achieve a disconcerting impact, Christoph Grunenberg observed that 'many contemporary visual artists share a common aesthetic, a preference for crude, fragmentary, and contorted forms which are employed to produce effects of horror as well as amazement.'[8] The dual nature of these effects shows that Gothic thrills imply a certain sublimity due to the association of the beautiful with the ghastly, which produces ambiguous emotions of attraction and repulsion.

According to Edmund Burke, the sublime is an aesthetic category able to produce 'astonishment' and 'that state of the soul in which all emotions are suspended, with some degree of horror'.[9] This allows us to conclude that the effects of shock depend on certain sublime elements, mentioned by Burke, such as obscurity, vastness, greatness of dimension, infinity, darkness, and a rugged and broken surface, associated both with beautiful and monstrous forms.[10] Kant also perceived this dual movement of the sublime, noting a first moment in which one is almost overwhelmed or shattered by an awesome sight or sound, followed by a second moment in which one apprehends intellectually the sublime experience, feeling a rush of power and not of loss. The first traumatic moment has interested many contemporary artists, such as Matthew Buckingham, Janet Cardiff, Stan Douglas, Douglas Gordon, Pierre Huygahe, Steve McQueen, Tony Oursler, Paul Pfeiffer, Pipilotti Rist, Rosemarie Troeckel and Gillian Wearing, who are engaged in projecting video and film images of both beauty and violent monstrosity.

On selecting a group of artists who have created powerful, shocking works, certain extremely influential figures cannot be omitted: for example, Kiki Smith, well-known for her interest in body parts: hearts, wombs, pelvises and ribs sculpted out of a range of materials including wax, plaster, porcelain and bronze. *Intestine* (1992) features a thread of gut in bronze, as long as an actual intestine, which is stretched out on the floor, the disembowelling acting as a

metaphor for loss of self; the artist is especially interested in portraying the death drive and also violated women. Also dealing in body parts, Robert Gober sculpts male legs and buttocks in wax and other materials, displayed isolated on the floor, or in spare settings with unusual decor. He explains that his sculptures represent memories which have been recreated, recombined, and filtered through his current experiences. Gober has called his installations 'natural history dioramas about contemporary beings'.[11] He thinks we are like voyeurs of forgotten events, our lives being the result of an uncanny experience that seems to incorporate both past and present, the imagined and the real. Questioning the origins of desire, Gober also considers the nature of loss, and he creates an art of loss and survival in the age of AIDS, throwing light on his view that 'death has temporarily overtaken life in New York City'.[12]

Cindy Sherman, also known for her monstrous images of the fragmentation of female bodies, which usually tell a story of violence and dismemberment, highlights the stereotyping of women in films, television and magazines through her photo series. In this series she combines whimsy, grotesque costumes and make-up, and unnatural lighting, to produce a series of self-portraits aiming to comment on or portray porn actresses, fairy tales, pseudo-historical figures, or women in a variety of distressed states. Her images are both disturbing and humorous, penetrating an uncertain, violent zone, in which individual identity struggles with the collective imagination, stereotypes and issues of symbolic power, which can be either playful or very dark when they touch on horror and repulsion provoked by the decay and dismembering of the body. Such is the case of *Untitled #153*, which could be a still from a crime scene: a corpse growing cold and stiff in a lonely field. Both sublime and grotesque, her images shock us, the power of their monstrosity being drawn from that which makes us uneasy or uncomfortable. Commenting on the *Fairy Tales* series for *Vanity Fair* from 1985, Sherman points out that

> In horror stories or in fairy tales, the fascination with the morbid is also, at least for me, a way to prepare for the unthinkable … That's why it's very important for me to show the artificiality of it all, because the real horrors of the world are unmatchable, and they're too profound. It's much easier to absorb—to be entertained by it, but also to let it affect you psychologically—if it's done in a fake, humorous, artificial way.[13]

That's why her photographs are visually overwhelming and loaded with content that inspires extreme emotional reaction. The Japanese photographer Izima Kaoru is also interested in subverting stereotypes created by fashion images in his *Landscapes with a Corpse*, in which he depicts actresses and models in their idealized moment of death. He is attracted to creating a powerful and provocative setting for fashion shoots, through which he can comment on death and consumerism. He explains his intentions by saying that:

> I wanted to illustrate the fact that fashion is part of our everyday life. I wanted to raise an awareness that death is always there. It's part of life. Why, then, can't it be appropriate for a fashion shoot?'[14]

Departing from the question: 'What is an ideal death for human beings?', Kaoru creates scenarios that contain a contrast between beautiful, stylized images and the horror of death, producing an art that prevents us from distancing ourselves from the natural monstrosity of death. However, his art possesses macabre and positive content, because its intention is to show death as a part of life, which cannot be ignored, even if we are wearing Christian Dior, Dolce & Gabbana or Yves Saint Laurent.

Douglas Gordon is another artist who focuses on the traumatic, obsessed as he is with psychological, imagistic, formal and thematic splits so often associated with the image of monsters and clones. In order to explore his main theme of the split personality, he uses split screens, on which he projects scenes by Hollywood directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and Martin Scorsese divided in two halves, seeking to highlight a fragmented subjectivity. *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1996) is a video projection that contains extracts of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* which are projected on two screens, one a positive image and the other negative, splitting the personality of the main character. *Monster* (1996-1997) revives this division, with which Gordon feels he is identified, through a dual self-portrait in which one photograph shows of his expressionless face and the other his face Scotch-taped into a grotesque mask. Gordon demonstrates his interest in a well-known movie which deals with the theme of schizophrenia, Hitchcock's *Psycho*, producing a hypnotic effect by slowing the film to a catatonic pace and calling it *24 Hour Psycho*. Sometimes he interrupts his films to create hysterical effects produced by quick stops and starts. He is also able to induce experiences of bodily shocks or traumatized subjectivity through flicker effects produced by the rapid-fire alternation of clear and opaque frames, stimulating the reflexes of the body. His images possess a psychological intensity capable of portraying the power required by our subjectivity for adapting itself to contemporary experiences that demand a close encounter with imaging devices that force us to survive and even to thrive on technological shocks.

Paul McCarthy is one of the most obscene and darkest artists of American Gothic Art, depicting all structures of identity—especially the family—in dissolution. In his works, he inverts the order of both natural and cultural worlds through anti-aesthetic actions which in the 1970s were transformed into performances in which his body became the brush, using food products like ketchup as paint, presenting a portrait of the artist as infant and madman. In his most recent performances, which are filmed or videotaped, McCarthy attacks the conventional figures of male authority, using grotesque masks and bizarre costumes based on deranged pop-cultural icons, through which he ridicules the figure of the artist. Objects like stuffed animals, dolls and artificial body parts found on the street or in junk shops are used in his installations to defy all boundaries between young and old, human and animal, person and thing, thereby creating characters that move beyond stereotype and grotesquery and become examples of artistic monstrosities.

In all the disturbing works created by these artists, there is a common message, expressed by the Portuguese artist Nuno Cera on referring to his film *Lost Souls:* 'It is a metaphor for contemporary culture and social collapse. Anyone can turn into a force for evil. It's about the inescapable dark side, exploring the blurred frontiers between mind and body, real and unreal.'[15] This is the shock of recognition which New Gothic Art is so powerful in producing, contributing towards recovering the lost sense of our human identities through the revelation of our monsters: our own selves.

Notes

[1] Fred Botting, *Limits of Horror: Technology, Bodies, Gothic* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2008), 96.
[2] Ibid., 93.
[3] Ibid., 100.
[4] Fred Botting, 'Aftergothic: Consumption, Machines, and Black Holes', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 298.

[5] Steven Bruhm, 'Contemporary Gothic: Why We Need It', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 273.
[6] Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1994), 2.
[7] Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, eds., *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 645.
[8] Christoph Grunenberg, *Gothic: Transmutations of Horror in Late Twentieth Century Art* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1997), 210-209.
[9] Edmond Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 144.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Robert Gober, 'Interview with Richard Flood', in *Robert Gober*, ed. Lewis Biggs (Liverpool and London: Serpentine and Tate Galleries, 1993), 8-14.
[12] Gober, quoted in *Pankett* (27 March 1991).
[13] Cindy Sherman interviewed by N. Fuku, 'Interview with Artist Cindy Sherman: A Woman of Parts', in *Art in America*, at <http://www.americansuburbx.com/2011/04/interview-interview-with-artist-cindy.html>, accessed March 2012.
[14] Francesca Gavin, *Hell Bound: The New Gothic Art* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2008), 78.
[15] Ibid., 22.

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Maria Antónia Lima teaches American Gothic Literature at the University of Évora, in Portugal. She is a member of the CEAUL (University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies) and writes literary criticism and fiction.

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Come Hell or High Water

Stephen Morris

Abstract
This article contains excerpts from the new novel by first time author, Stephen Morris. A historically rich page-turner set in medieval Eastern Europe; its examples show how dark deeds of the past echo down through the years creating a monstrous memory that only an intrepid band of scholars can dispel. This gripping historic-fantasy trilogy erupts in 1356 as a witch's curse rings out over Prague's Old Town Square. As the old crone is bound to a stake and consumed by flames, her vengeful words set in motion a series of dark events that unfold across the centuries, culminating in the historic flood of 2002 that threatens to destroy the city. The author, a veritable Dan Brown of Prague, weaves his tale through time showing how the nefarious events of the past never die and live on in the present as dark memories that hide in every nook and cranny of the picturesque capital of the modern day Czech Republic.

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Excerpt One

In this excerpt, the memories of the townsfolk of Prague twist and turn to support the conclusion that the old woman Fen'ka must be a diabolical witch:

Although his neighbours had a told Kryštof to go see Fen'ka to get a blessing for his cow, none of them had known for sure if he had finally done it or not. So it was a surprise when, in his grief, he blurted out, 'I should never have gone to get her help. I should have never asked her for her blessing. I should never have made that smoke in the moonlight as she told me!'

The news spread like wildfire. Old Town, Little Town, New Town, Castle Town. Everyone in the four villages that had sprouted along the river that flowed through the valley heard that Kryštof had gone across the river and bought a charm that had been meant to bless but had instead brought death. It was the straw that broke the camel's back. The floodgates of gossip burst, overwhelming the towns with twisted memories and malicious tales.

'Remember the time I asked her to help my sister keep her husband? Told me she'd be better off without him, she did! Refused to help, selfish old bitch!'

'There was the time I asked her to save my cousin's boy from the dropsy. Laughed in my face, she did. Finally gave me something to make a tea for him to drink. He got better, but never completely well. Laughed in my face, she did!'

'I recall now—when was it? Must have been right after she first moved out there to that God-forsaken cabin she calls 'home'—I recall how one time all the fields went fallow and nothing grew. Right after we asked her to do something to help bring in the harvest. Remember that year? A hard winter it was, because nothing had grown the spring and summer before. After we asked her to help! But she had expected us to pay her so much! How could anyone expect us to give her what she wanted?!'

'She gave me a candle once. I'm sorry I never told any of you about it 'til now. But she gave me a candle. Told me to burn it and when it was used up, that awful boy would stop pestering me. You know the one—my husband now. He was terrible as a youngster. Told me to burn the candle, she did, and he would leave me alone. Don't remember now if I ever really did ever finish burning that candle. But the boy never did leave me alone and my father ended up

marrying me off to him. Almost knocked my head off the last time he was drunk, he did. I could hardly walk for weeks. Told me to burn that candle, she did.'

These stories and a hundred more like them whistled down the streets between the pubs at night. Everyone knew someone or knew-someone-who-knew-someone that had suffered some misfortune that was Fen'ka's fault. Witch. The stories weren't whispered anymore. They were said out loud. Full voice. She was a witch.

Then came the new priest. The Germans and other foreign merchants, living out past the town proper in that neighbourhood called *Ungelt*, had been given a church on the Old Town Square and had brought a new priest, Father Conrad, with them as well. He was a young man, thin and even verging on scrawny because of his ascetic fervour. Born the seventh son in a family from a large town back home, his uncle had convinced his fellow businessmen to invite him to come serve the growing community of Germans in this thriving market town. He had come, anxious to show the benighted locals the new, sophisticated ways of city life and city learning now that they were beginning to take their place on the world stage. It was difficult work, serving as priest for both the richer, better educated immigrant merchants whom he liked and the poorer, less educated townspeople whom he did not care for. There was much the townsfolk seemed ignorant of, basic biblical commandments as well as newer formulations of doctrine that he needed to teach them. ''Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,'' he preached one Sunday evening at Vespers in his shrill voice, quoting from Exodus. 'You shall not allow such a woman to live, God tells us. Not allow her to live in town, near town, not live at all. If such a woman were to walk in here, to this very church, I myself would come down out of this fine pulpit to box her on the ears and ask how she thinks God could ever hear the prayer of such a one as herself. Not allow her in the church, not allow her in the town. Not allow her to live!'

Excerpt Two

Taken from 'Come Hell or High Water', Part Two: Rising. In this excerpt, the Dublin academic Elizabeth recounts her memories of life and of becoming the 'monster' known as the Dearg-due:

Magdalena turned back to Elizabeth.

'You wonder perhaps why you should be the ally of such a creature?' Elizabeth asked her. 'I do not blame you for such thoughts. I am not as heartless as I may sound. You should know that my victims are not random innocents. They are all men, men who have attacked and often killed an innocent woman themselves.' Magdalena nodded, her eyes wide.

'I was betrothed by my father to a man against my will,' Elizabeth continued to explain. 'We were a farming family and I loved one of the herders from a nearby farm, a man little older than myself, a handsome youth but whose family was as poor as ours. My father thought to improve his lot in life, as well as my own, by accepting the proposal of a well-to-do gentleman farmer who lived not far from us as well. But my father's choice was a heartless man, a cruel and cold taskmaster who wanted not a wife to love but another servant in his household, a servant whom he could call 'wife' but treat little better than a trained animal.'

'What did he do? Did he make you what you are?' Magdalena interrupted.

'He beat me for bringing him a cup of tea that was not as hot as he would have liked. He beat me for allowing the cook to serve a stew that was not to his liking. He whipped me for hesitating to give my body to him whenever he wished it,' Elizabeth continued. 'He beat and flogged and whipped me for no reason at all some days. And, yes, finally the day came when he beat me until I was glad to collapse into the embrace of Death.' Elizabeth paused. It had been so, so long since she had recounted the story of her life that she surprised even herself at the sorrow and fury that washed over her.

‘But it was not my lot to remain forever in the cold, sweet embrace of forgetfulness and peace,’ she continued after a moment. ‘It was only my herdsman, my true love, who mourned my death and watered my grave with his tears. Not even my father wept or mourned or thought to avenge himself against the man who had stolen me, his daughter, from him. I realized that he had killed me, just as surely as if he had dealt me the final blow himself, by trading my happiness for a chance at gaining some small wealth for himself.’ The Irish woman sneered at him, her memory of that realization as fresh as the moment it had become clear to her.

‘I could not remain resting in the churchyard where I had been laid. My thirst for revenge against the men who had taken my life, stolen my love and happiness from me, drove me from my grave. I found my false husband one night and avenged myself on him, and I discovered the delight of seeing the fear and terror on his face as I took from him what he had taken from me. I found my father one night as well, and took from him the life he had deprived me of.’ Magdalena could see a strange light in Elizabeth’s eyes and realized that the beautiful woman was seeing her father cower before her, just as Magdalena recalled seeing him cower before his daughter in her vision that night last spring in her back garden.

‘I discovered both the sweetness of justice and the delight of revenge on those nights,’ Elizabeth admitted. ‘I found strength and joy in their blood and in their fear and in their souls as they passed through my hands to face everlasting judgment. I found myself unable to rest, knowing that other women suffered as I had suffered and so my thirst to wreck vengeance on those men that still stole a young girl’s love remained unquenched. The women slain by those who pretended to love them called out to me and I could not turn a deaf ear to their pleas. I rose to seek justice for them, again and again and again. And in winning them justice and avenging them, I found the solace and the strength to continue in my loneliness. Rest escaped me. Love escaped me. But I could avenge those who suffered as I had suffered.’

Stephen Morris is an Independent Scholar specialising in Late Antiquity-Byzantine church history. He completed his BA at Yale University in 1980 on Medieval History. Stephen also attended St Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Academy, receiving his M.Div in 1985 and was Eastern Orthodox chaplain at Columbia University, 1985-1997.

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Ziska: Voluptuous Vamp, Sinister Seducer, Dangerous Dame

Curt Herr

Abstract
The year 1897 saw the publication of three important Gothic novels: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, and Marie Corelli's *Ziska*. All three novels were extremely popular with Victorian readers and have remarkable similarities. When looked at together, they form a triptych illustrating Victorian nightmares. Each novel features a supernatural foreigner with extraordinary powers of evil and erotic seduction, a boy band of Brits aimed at saving mother England, and a misogynistic description of the erotic and destructive power of female sexuality. The novels form a trilogy of seductive female Vampires on a journey to destroy (or castrate) the good men of England. Culturally, a new threat was looming on the Victorian horizon: Woman's Rights. In an attempt to combat the new army of suffragettes, much of Victorian pop-culture contains despicable representations of power hungry women. As academics begin to pay more attention to Victorian pop-culture, Corelli is gaining academic recognition as a valuable contributor to Victorian literature. In this essay, I examine Corelli's contribution to late Victorian sensation fiction and make connections between three sexual seducers: Ziska, Stoker's Dracula and Marsh's Beetle. Corelli understood the contradictory threat of the alluring and sexually dangerous woman and, like her contemporaries, Stoker and Marsh, capitalizes upon the Victorian code that involvement with sexual women will only bring death.

Key Words: Marie Corelli, *Ziska*, Stoker, Dracula, reincarnation, Victorian ghost, Richard Marsh.

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1. Prelude

My copy of Marie Corelli's *Ziska*, is over one hundred years old. It is a tattered first edition published in 1897 which I bought on eBay for a mere $2.99. Its spine is cracked and its cover is soiled. The pages are as thin as dry onion skin and they have the colour and smell of old tobacco. Moreover, they are as brittle as razor thin ice. Upon opening, its arid spine cracks like dry leaves and dust from a century ago rises from faded pages.

I treasure this book.

There was a time when Marie Corelli was a literary pop star. The public was obsessed with her daily activities, and her name was never out of print in the daily newspapers. She was known throughout England, the continents, and the United States; indeed, she was the second most famous woman under the Queen during the late Victorian era.[1] Her novels became instant best-sellers all over the world. They were translated into dozens of languages (including Hindustani and Gujurati) and sold over 100,000 copies a year, over five times the amount of H.G. Wells and Arthur Conan Doyle combined. At her height, she earned £10.000 per book—close to $1,000,000 in today's US currency,[2] making her the Victorian equivalent of Stephen King and Jackie Collins. Queen Victoria requested Corelli's novels to be sent to her upon their publication while the Tsarina of Russia, the Queen of Italy, Oscar Wilde and Alfred Lord Tennyson were counted among her fans. Furthermore, she was the only Victorian writer to be invited by the King himself to the Coronation of Edward VII. Even the Price of Wales declared she was 'the only woman writer of genius we have'.[3]

Today however, we have a different tale. The Victorian household name 'Corelli' has joined the list of hundreds of overlooked and forgotten female Victorian writers whose books have become relegated to infrequent eBay sales and second hand book stores. Moreover, very few contemporary academics explore the rich themes in her once best-selling novels. In her important study *Idol of Suburbia: Marie Corelli and the Late-Victorian Literary Culture*, Annette Federico states:

> [Corelli is] an underappreciated contributor to the on-going debates about literary value, class, and gender, [she is] a writer whose fame alone suggests myriad possibilities for interpreting the reading activities of the British at the turn of the twentieth century.[4]

Clearly, Corelli's literary contributions are extremely significant to Victorian popular culture studies. They are representative of Victorian middle class tastes, values, fears and politics and contain shrewd insight into the complexity of the Victorian's obsession with gender roles. Unfortunately, as time passes, her books, which were printed on acid paper, are oxidizing and disintegrating at an alarming rate. If they are not reprinted and published in new editions, they will be permanently unrecoverable within one or two decades.[5] This is terribly unfortunate for Corelli's oeuvre is a delicious witch's cauldron of literary styles that makes even the most imaginative reader swoon in their seductive steam. 'She invented stories that anticipate feminist science fiction, mixed bodice-ripper sex with transports of spiritual ecstasy, and daringly rewrote biblical history'.[6] One whiff of her intoxicating elixir and you're hooked. A cross-pollination of literary trends, Corelli is excitingly difficult to label. Her thirty novels, countless essays and public lectures travel an amazing range of themes and styles including gothic revenge, history, horror, murder, romance, time travel, science fiction (including visits to Mars and Saturn), fantasy, Fin de Siècle decadence, out-of-body experiences, religious theory, Satan studies, atheism, reincarnation, social criticism, realism, moral transgressions, addictions, feminism, homoeroticism, gender performance and sexual theories—and that's just the beginning. After the success of her first two novels, *A Romance of Two Worlds* and *Vendetta* (both published in 1886), Corelli wrote the following to her publisher, George Bentley:

> I want to prove myself capable of more than one style of novel, and that the simply sensational will form but a very small part of my future work. In brief, I have resolved that no two books of mine shall be in the least alike, so that neither the critics nor the public shall know what to expect from me.[7]

Clearly, Corelli stuck to her purpose and reinvented herself upon each new literary endeavour.

Ziska is a surprisingly extraordinary novel. It is Marie Corelli's thirteenth novel and, conversely, her thirteenth best-seller as well. Additionally, it marks the final instalment in her decadent Gothic Trilogy which includes her astonishing Poe-inspired novel of premature burial and revenge, *Vendetta* (1886), and her novel of absinthe induced madness, *Wormwood* (1890). Deceptively simple, yet highly effective, *Ziska* combines several genres of pop-culture fiction in one tale. It is a fantasy, a romance, and a supernatural tale of reincarnation. It is both a Vampire tale and a ghost story. It affirms the significance of religious faith, and it is an indictment against solipsistic Victorian pop-culture. Astoundingly, Corelli manages to combine all of the above into a streamlined narrative which upon flight, arrives at a spellbinding climax. …and her readers went wild.

The public's addiction to Corelli and her novels never waned until her death in April, 1924. Today, she holds a unique place in Victorian pop-culture, and thankfully, academic

interest in Corelli's oeuvre is beginning to grow. In this introduction, I want to place Corelli's novel in context of her literary contemporaries while drawing connections between her novel and trends in Victorian Gothic fiction.

2. The Terrible Trio

The year 1897 saw the publication of three important Gothic novels: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, and Marie Corelli's *Ziska*. All three novels were very popular with Victorian readers and have remarkable similarities. When looked at together, they form a triptych illustrating Victorian nightmares more frightening and intimate than images from Hieronymus Bosch. Each novel features a supernatural foreigner with extraordinary powers of evil and erotic seduction, a boy band of Brits aimed at saving mother England, and a misogynistic description of the erotic and destructive power of female sexuality. The novels form a trilogy of seductive female Vampires on a journey to destroy (or castrate) the good men of England. Culturally, a new threat was looming on the Victorian horizon: Woman's Rights. In an attempt to combat the new army of suffragettes, much of Victorian pop-culture contains despicable representations of power hungry women in art, literature, and highly flawed social theories. According to the fascinating study, *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality on Twentieth-Century Culture*, Bram Dijkstra posits,

> The Later nineteenth century used Darwin's discoveries to transform the scattershot gender conflicts of earlier centuries into a 'scientifically grounded' exposé of female sexuality as a source of social disruption and 'degeneration.' At the opening of the new century, biology and medicine set out to prove that nature had given *all* women a basic instinct that made them into predators, destroyers, witches—*evil sisters*. Soon experts in many related fields rushed in to delineate why every woman was doomed to be a harbinger of death to the male.
>
> A 'latent vampire' lay 'concealed under thoroughly respectable inhibited womanhood,' as William J. Fielding, author of numerous, and very influential, books on sex and socialization, stressed in 1927, in a widely distributed pamphlet with the lurid title *Woman; The Eternal Primitive*. Under every apparently saintly skin throbbed the hungry flesh of a sinner. Whenever given 'the opportunity to gratify a fundamental craving of her nature,' woman could be counted upon to give free rein to 'an unconscious instinct that is deeply rooted in the primitive feminine mind' (37-41). Such apparently 'scientific' rhetoric encouraged the general public to regard women as biological terrorists out to deplete the creative energies of every civilized male. Female sexuality had come to be seen as a degenerative disease.[8]

With this in mind, the women who haunt Dracula's castle are more threatening than the old master himself. Stoker builds the image of the sexual female to its most extreme and offensive climax when he transforms Lucy (the poor girl who wonders why she cannot be allowed to marry three men) into the anti-mother/daemon-lover 'Bloofer Lady' who entices children with promises of sweets and seduces men with promises of toothy kisses.

Additionally, Richard Marsh's novel, *The Beetle* (which was more popular and outsold *Dracula* on its initial publication), develops the same themes, albeit with a large dose of homoeroticism and extremely racist theories. Based upon an ancient tale of revenge, this frequently overlooked gothic thriller contains perhaps the most frightening opening chapters in

late Victorian fiction. An ancient evil Egyptian force (of indeterminate gender) arrives in modern day London and begins to terrorize men in profoundly intimate and extremely sexually suggestive ways. For the first half of the novel, this force is characterized as male. With Svengali-like powers, 'he' mesmerizes his victims and literally crawls over their nude prostrate bodies, squeezing and probing them with excessively pornographic details rarely found in Victorian popular fiction. Turning British men into mindless slaves, it is revealed half way through the novel that this ancient being may indeed be female (though old and withered), whose ultimate goal is revenge upon a popular politician. Marsh emphasizes a horrifying image of female sexuality. It is seedy, paralyzing, vampiric, sadomasochistic, and deadly. A strong warning to men to avoid the erotics of women, for to be attracted by female sexuality is simply to be lured into a spiders' web of death.

These two examples may represent man's modernist wishes to transcend human nature in order to control the body over primitive instinct and desire. Conversely, they represent the apex of Fin de Siècle gothic fiction and the misogynistic culture which produced them. Outselling Stoker and Marsh by the hundreds of thousands, Marie Corelli, on the other hand, is the only female of this Gothic triptych—yet she remains curiously overlooked. Ziska, like the other dangerous females, is a powerful woman who is alluringly seductive to the men who encounter her; consequently, she is terrifying to the good women who see her. Sexy, voluptuous, and dangerous, Ziska sits among Stoker's and Marsh's deadly women for she is a vampire *and* a ghost, a hypnotic seducer and a seductive destroyer. However, what makes Corelli's novel stand apart from the monsters of *Dracula* and *The Beetle* is the title character. Corelli's creation is not simply a monster: Ziska is both villain and heroine, a daemon and saviour.

3. *Ziska*: Romantic Revenge

Featuring a cast of characters that resembles a game of 'Clue', the basic plot of the novel is deceptively simple. Princess Ziska hunts through the centuries for the soul of Araxes, her powerful lover who murdered her in a pyramid centuries before the novel begins. She finds his soul reincarnated in Victorian England in the body of Armand Gervase, a British artist visiting Cairo. Ziska's seduction of her murderer and her journey toward deadly revenge accounts for the majority of Corelli's romantic/Gothic tale. Unlike her contemporaries, Corelli's horror is subtle and sly. It sneaks upon the reader like a snake in the fog and builds to a tremendous climax where plot and theme collide in a Gothic setting worthy of any Poe nightmare.

Interestingly, depending upon whose story the reader focuses upon, we have two very different tales in the same novel. If one should focus on the title character, Ziska, we have a metaphoric Vampire tale of seductive revenge, a *Novel Noir*; conversely, when the reader focuses upon the artist, Armand Gervase, the novel transitions into a Ghost story of lost love, revenge and redemption.

Tales of the past haunting the present were particularly in fashion in the late 19th century, both on stage and in popular fiction. Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* was published in 1843 and remains popular to this day, and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* centres on a ghost haunting her lost lover. On stage, Henrik Ibsen's family tragedy of reincarnated sins, *Ghosts* (1881), and his romantic drama of ghostly love, *The Lady from the Sea* (1888) bookmark the decade when Ziska made her first entrance. Indeed, tales of reincarnated love are still very prevalent in popular culture. The 1990 film *Ghost* features one of the most romantic spirit-world love stories to hit the silver screen and the 1997 Broadway musical *Steel Pier* features a ghostly romance between a 1933 stunt pilot and a marathon dance-girl.

Corelli's ghost story focuses upon a cynical French artist, Armand Gervase, who is vacationing in Cairo. Denying the existence of a soul, Armand's life is empty and unfulfilling.

Calling the soul a 'barbaric superstition',[9] he believes it to be nothing more than mere temperament which dies with the body. However, upon meeting Ziska, his beliefs change with drastic and deadly results. From the very beginning of the novel, Armand recognizes an unexplainable intimacy with the mysterious, ghostly Ziska. Even saying her name affects him deeply: 'as suddenly as the strange name passed his lips he recoiled as if he had been stung, and seemed for a moment dazed.' Furthermore, when ghostly Ziska walks by him she is described as 'moving with floating, noiseless grace'.[10] This unearthly recognition is unsettling for Armand; he does not believe in the soul and he rejects any form of the afterlife. Yet Ziska's laugh rings in his ears like a distant memory, and the sight of her eyes leaves him breathless. Is he falling in love, or is his psyche responding to a deeper connection?

Captivated by Ziska's allure, Gervase attempts to paint her portrait in a scene reminiscent of Poe's *The Oval Portrait* (1842), and predating Wilde's *Dorian Grey* by two years. As Ziska sits for the painting, Gervase unintentionally creates a horrifying portrait. He has painted Ziska's lovely face ravaged in ancient pain—her death mask.

> What a strange awful face it was!—what a thing of distorted passion and pain! What agony was expressed in every line of the features!—agony in which the traces of a divine beauty lingered only to render the whole countenance more repellent and terrific! A kind of sentient solemnity, mingled with wrath and terror, glared from the painted eyes,—the lips slightly parted in a cruel upward curve, seemed to utter a shriek of menace,—the hair drooping in black thick clusters low on the brow, looked wet as with the dews of *rigor mortis*,—and to add to the mysterious horror of the whole conception, the distinct outline of death's head was seen plainly through the rose-brown flesh-tints. There was no real resemblance in this horrible picture of the radiant and glowing loveliness of the Princess Ziska, yet, at the same time, there was sufficient dim likeness to make an imaginative person think it might be possible for her to assume that appearance in death.[11]

Deeply disturbed by the haunting image he finds on his canvas, he states, '[W]hy should I paint her so? She was perfectly tranquil; and her attitude was most picturesquely composed. I sketched her as I thought I saw her,—how did this tortured head come on my canvas?'[12] Further evidence in his art reveals disturbing accounts of his subconscious past-life history manifesting itself in vivid detail on his canvases. For example, his most famous painting, *Le Poignard*, which hangs in London, features a dark woman in Egyptian costume clasping a knife in her right hand—looking as though she is about to commit murder. Ironically, Gervase had never been to Egypt before he painted *Le Poignard*. He had no previous knowledge of Egyptian attire; yet, he painted the image with precise detail—as though he'd lived it before.

The female face wracked with pain, captured in the moment before death—the mysterious dark woman sleekly attired in Eastern dress about to commit a murder, both paintings reveal experiences deeper than Gervase is willing to understand—or even acknowledge. His avoidance of faith and his rejection of the soul may be subconscious protection from the horrific truth: in a past life he murdered his beloved, and in his present life, the ghost of the murdered has returned to seek revenge.

4. The Vamp and Novel Noir

Ziska's first appearance at Egypt's luxurious Gezirch Palace Hotel is a cinematographer's dream come true. It is *the* perfect entrance fit for any Grande Dame of the silver screen. Reminiscent of an ethereal being, Ziska does not walk; she glides and floats.

Ziska enters a room like an Egyptian Goddess. Fanned by peacock feathers, she is draped in 'gleaming gold tissues … with jewels flashing about her waits, bosom, and hair … so unusual and brilliant [she] seemed to create an atmosphere of bewilderment and rapture around her'.[13] Yet Theda Bara, Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford are all upstaged by Corelli's literary vision of Woman and Demon. Containing many classic horror tropes and contradictions in one alluringly dangerous dame, Ziska is ghost, spider woman, and foreign seducer. However, it is her connection to the classic Victorian vampire which is unmistakable.[14] For example, Ziska finds rejuvenation from moonlight. In pre-*Dracula* literary lore, all Vampires may be reborn in moonlight. Much like a Werewolf's transition from man to beast, the moon held transformational power over the mid Victorian Vampire. No matter what manner of death the Vampire may experience, (gunshot, hanging, drowning, fire, etc.), as long as a few beams of the silver, nocturnal glow falls upon the vampire's corpse, it will revive within moments. James Malcolm Rymer's 1845 Vampire, *Varney the Vampire*, features this theory countless times. Sir Francis Varney dies in dozens of ways, yet always manages to fall within a few feet of silvery moonlight. When the moon beams hit his prone body, his tinny eyes bolt awake and his blood hunger rises for more chapters of thrills and terror. Ziska is effected in much the same way. Her soul is revived by moon light and she is frequently connected to its silvery, feminine glow. She first appears as a moon-lit mist floating among the pyramids, calling out to seek retribution upon the soul of her murderer. A cross between a vengeful Vampire and love-sick ghost returning from the grave, Corelli writes:

> Moonlight and the Hour wove their own mystery; the mystery of a Shadow and Shape that flitted out like a thin vapour from the very portals of Death's ancient temple, and drifting forward a few paces resolved itself into the visionary fairness of a Woman's form … whose dark hair fell about her heavily, like the black remnants of a long buried corpse's wrappings; a Woman whose eyes flashed with an unholy fire as she lifted her face to the white moon and waved her ghostly arms upon the air.[15]

Her vaporous body and drifting gait suggest she is a ghost emerging from the crypt. On the other hand, her long black hair, wrappings from the tomb, and unholy eyes bathed in the moonlight suggest a Vampire on the prowl. Indeed, she is the Victorian prototype of today's Vampira (Maila Nurmi). The long black hair, the coffin shroud, the accentuated deep kohl eyes —all are the classic details of a seductive Vamp. Born out of the moonlight, she vanishes upon sunrise. And like a vampire, Ziska does not die. At one point, her vampiric face is spot lit by moon beams in a highly cinematographic description reminiscent of Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*: 'All Cairo slept,—save where at an open lattice window the moon shone full on a face up-turned to her silver radiance,—the white, watchful face, and dark sleepless eyes of the Princess Ziska'.[16] Highlighting her other-worldliness and connections with the nocturne, Corelli masterfully gives her readers a mere suggestion of Ziska's possible nature. However, Corelli never allows us to be certain of Ziska's character. Fluctuating between Vampire, ghost and seductress- Ziska must seduce her readers as well.

Perhaps what strikes the reader most in the opening chapters may be Corelli's emphasis on Ziska's eyes and her other-worldly, animalistic body. Dressed in ancient garb, 'clothes from the tomb', Ziska mesmerizes her victims like Du Maurier's Svengali. Described as having 'black hair hiding a jewelled serpent', with 'the eyes of an angry snake', she captivates her men with the 'eyes of a vampire bat'. When they are locked with a man's, he becomes entranced, breathless and dizzy—in short—everything that a Victorian male should *not* be. Unable to look away, men are hypnotically attracted to her seductive powers and are lured to her deadly web.

'[M]agnetized' by her gaze, they 'seem to lose breath and speech' at the mere sight of her face. Indeed, '[s]he is a spider weaving a web',[17] notes the good Dr Dean. Like a spider's web, her home's many hallways and invisible walls trap any man foolish enough to fly into her flame.

Serpent, bat, snake, spider, these animalistic images of sexual women have long haunted the masculine psyche and popular culture—yet a dangerously seductive dame like Ziska was rare for the middle class Victorian reader. Even Victorian medical books written for physicians about human sexuality were written in Latin so only 'responsible physicians and men of comparable dignity might know what was being discussed'.[18] To the middle class reader, Ziska's animalistic seductions were quite a thrill. Indeed, vicious depictions of the sexual woman as vampire continue to thrill, horrify and titillate audiences. Ziska is not alone:

> [T]he cat woman, tiger women, praying mantises, snake fanciers, and man-eating tarantulas still prowl about our movie theaters, television screens, best-seller lists and comic book stores. Batman, the X-men, and a horde of other superheroes (with a few impossibly buxom, barely thronged female sword-fighters and monster-bashers thrown in to the mix to satisfy contemporary adolescent taste) have their hands full trying to control this ever-burgeoning feline, insect and rodent population. On Broadway, the deadly kiss of the spider woman is one of the milder afflictions addling men's minds. In the fashion magazines, jeans designers display an endless succession of anorexic models who try their best to look as hungry and dangerous as possible.[19]

Corelli understood the contradictory threat of the alluring and sexually dangerous woman and, like her contemporaries, Stoker and Marsh, capitalizes upon the Victorian belief that involvement with sexual woman will only bring death. However—Corelli shatters this stereotype with her novel's closing moments. I will not spoil the plot—the final moments of Corelli's pair are too good to give away, and indeed, academic analysis would easily destroy the romantic trope Corelli celebrates in her extraordinary closing. So, read the book the way Corelli intended—with your heart in your hand … and in your throat.

5. Coda

In her essay, *Oxidation is a Feminist Issue: Acidity, Canonicity, and Popular Victorian Female Authors,* Carol Poster suggests readers take action to save the overlooked literature of female Victorian novelists. She urges academics to write and publish articles about these overlooked contributors to popular culture and suggests we 'assimilate *popular* and *serious* authors within the same critical frameworks to deconstruct the *popular=female* and *literary=male* binary opposition.' Additionally, she urges her readers to take a personal stake in the preservation of lost literature. 'When we notice the brittleness of a book by an unrecovered author in our libraries, we must take matters in our own hands, walk over to the nearest Xerox machines, and start copying'.[20] Thankfully, readers, academics, and publishers alike are beginning to rediscover the thrill of Corelli's narratives. Recent publications and critical editions of her works are appearing more frequently: *Wormwood* (Broadview Press), *Vendetta!* (Zittaw Press), and Valencourt's editions of *The Sorrows of Satan* and *Ziska.* With each new edition, Corelli's innovative voice is revitalized and readers are becoming increasingly intrigued by the Victorian sensation of Corelli's wild flights through fiction.

Notes

[1] Brian Masters, *Now Barabbas was a Rotter: The Extraordinary Life of Marie Corelli* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), 6.
[2] Kirsten Macleod, introduction to *Wormwood by Marie Corelli* (Ontario: Broadview, 2004), 21.
[3] Annette Federico, *Idol of Suburbia: Marie Corelli and Late-Victorian Literary Culture* (Charlottesville: Virginia University Press, 2000), 1.
[4] Ibid., 8.
[5] Carol Poster, 'Oxidation is a Feminist Issue: Acidity, Canonicity, and Popular Victorian Female Authors', *College English* 58 (March 1996): 287.
[6] Ibid., 2.
[7] Federico, *Idol of Surburbia*, 17.
[8] Bram Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters: The Treat of Female Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Culture* (New York: Holt, 1996), 8.
[9] Marie Corelli, *Ziska: The Problem of a Wicked Soul* (London: Arrowsmith, 1897), 52.
[10] Ibid., 66.
[11] Ibid., 177.
[12] Ibid., 179.
[13] Ibid., 155.
[14] Indeed though written the same year, both *Dracula* and *Ziska* contain many startling comparisons. Both feature a title character whose appearances make up less than ¼ of the novel, both are ageless foreigners with supernatural power to hypnotize, seduce and drain. Both books feature a band of loyal British men who attempt to hunt down the title character through a maze of ancient architecture, and both novels feature an older male father-figure who knows all the answers to the monster's tale, yet remain suspiciously silent: Van Helsing and Dr Dean. It is important to remember that *Dracula* was written in the same year as *Ziska*, so it is nearly impossible for Corelli to have Stoker's novel as an influence. It is more likely that Corelli was familiar with James Malcolm Rymer's highly popular penny dreadful, *Varney the Vampire; or, The Feast of Blood* (1854). Nearly all contemporary vampire images stem from Rymer's 250-chapter opus. *Varney* was a Victorian pop-culture phenomenon and was as familiar to Victorians as Bart Simpson is to us.
[15] Corelli, *The Problem of a Wicked Soul*, p. 8.
[16] Ibid., 122.
[17] Ibid., 58-153.
[18] Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters*, 11.
[19] Ibid., 5.
[20] Poster, 'Oxidation is a Feminist Issue', 302.

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Curt Herr, Ph.D., teaches Victorian Sensation fiction and Gothic literature at Pennsylvania's Kutztown University. He has written the critical editions of several Victorian novels including Mrs. Henry Wood's *Danesbury House* and *Dene Hollow* (Whitlock Books), Marie Corelli's *Vendatta* and the notorious Penny Dreadful, *Varney the Vampire, or, The Feast of Blood* (Zittaw Press). Additionally, he is the co-editor of *The Journal of Dracula Studies*.

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Matchbox Love, printed with permission from the artist, Love Joy Lagrosa Raza.

Love Joy Lagrosa Raza is a graduate of BS Civil Engineering at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. She is a member of the PANTAS UPLB (Pandayan ng Talino at Sining), a literary school organization. Her short fiction *Test Tube Baby* was published in the Literary Apprentice, an annual folio of the University of the Philippines Diliman Writer's Club. She lives in Laguna, Philippines

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Female Monsters in Kabyle Myths and Folktales: Their Nature and Functions

Sabrina Zerar

Abstract
This article seeks to explore the nature and functions of monsters in Kabyle myths, which are primarily a male cultural production, and folktales, which mostly constitute the 'cultural capital' of traditional Kabyle women in Algeria. Using Leo Frobenius's (1921-1996) three-volume collection of traditional Kabyle narratives as a corpus, and adopting a feminist perspective, the investigation has resulted in the realization that the representation of the Kabyle woman as monster is a predominant feature in the myths, and even more so in the folktales. It is argued that the excess of female monstrous representations and the attractive and complex manner in which these representations are made in the folktales signify much more a symbolic resistance than a reproduction of the Kabyle man's mythologies about gender power relations.

Key Words: representation, monsters, Kabyle, myths, folktales, fertility, female resistance, male domination.

*****

1. Introduction

> Chez les Kabyles, le monstrueux […] est si prépondérant dans les contes en général mais aussi dans les récits d'aventures enjolivés que j'estime tout à fait justifiée ma décision de faire passer le tome II avant le tome III, consacré plutôt aux fables d'animaux et autres contes merveilleux.[1] *To the Kabyles, the monstrous […] is so predominant in the folktales in general as well as in embellished adventure narratives that I consider my decision to place the second volume [of Kabyle folktales entitled The Monstrous] before the third one devoted to animal fables and magic folktales completely justified.* (Trans. Mine)

This is what the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius (1921) writes in the 'introduction' to his second volume of Kabyle folktales entitled *Contes Kabyles: Le monstrueux*. There is nothing to be particularly surprising about this culture-specific marker of Kabyle folktales. As Steven Swann Jones aptly remarks, though folktales are common to all mankind in various genres, folktales that are popular for one ethnic community, or in one cultural area are not necessarily so for another. Jones argues that folktales are culturally marked by the context of their collective production and consumption, which shows in the saliency accorded to certain motifs and stylistic features in folktales indicating culturally predetermined preferences of the audiences across ethnic communities.[2] Apart from this general cultural preference of the Kabyles for folktales of the monstrous noted by Frobenius, there is a more significant preference related to the popularity accorded to folktales containing female monsters over those which do not. Among these Kabyle female monsters, the figure of *Teryel* is so popular that Kabyle folktales can be called her proprietary narratives.

2. Literature Review, Issue and Method

Though Frobenius had drawn attention to the significant role that the monstrous plays in Kabyle folklore, nearly a century ago, thus far the sole studies worth mentioning in this regard are those undertaken by Camille Lacoste-Dujardin[3] in response to Pierre Bourdieu's work on

'masculine domination' in Kabyle community.[4] For Lacoste Dujardin, Kabyle women do not totally consent to Kabyle man's subjugation as her fellow French sociologist claims. One of their means of critical resistance and self-affirmation is the deployment of female folkloric monsters in some sort of symbolic violence directed against the patriarchal order of things. Lacoste-Dujardin's insight into the function of monstrous representation as critical resistance is to the point. However, she overlooks the analysis of the narrative processes of monstrification of women, and the types of female monstrification that Kabyle men first employed to legitimate unequal gender power relations. Unless we understand these processes of monstrification and their types in the myths, we can easily miss the subverting drive of Kabyle women's folktales of monsters like those of the she-ogre *Teryel*.

As suggested earlier, Frobenius calls his three-volume collection of traditional Kabyle narratives *Kabyle Folktales*, subtitled respectively 'Wisdom', 'the Monstrous' and the 'Fabulous'. However, in the 'introduction' to the first volume, he also refers to the folktales in the collection as myths told by men while he continues to refer to other narratives as folktales, thus implicitly establishing gender distinctions between the two genres.[5] Using Frobenius's first and second collection of folktales as primary sources, and taking hold of his distinction, I would argue that though the male Kabyle sacred myths and female Kabyle profane folktales of monsters are steeped in a common folklore, they deploy significantly different epistemologies. Female monsters and female monstrous acts in female folktales are the visible markers of a critical discourse that degrade or uncrown the 'rational' mode of knowledge peculiar to the myths that carry men's 'wisdom'.[6] There is an iconoclastic predisposition in the female folktales of monsters that can be comprehended only if seen in opposition to the social and cultural construction of conventional female images or iconography in men's myths. The female monsters in the folktales do not only eat men, they also 'cannibalize' Kabyle men's mythical texts in their display of significantly different categories of female monstrosities (social, political, economic monstrosities, etc) as a textual strategy for imposing their domination over Kabyle women.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of this research show that Kabyle myths exemplify four major types of narrative monstrification of women in a bid to legitimate gender power relations in the patriarchal system: social, epistemological, political and economic monstrification. These monstrifying processes are illustrated respectively in myth 1, 9, and 17, in Frobenius's first volume. At their basis is women's refusal to negotiate their fertility for the benefit of Kabyle men as is the case with *Teryel*, or the loss of that fertility because of old age as in the case of *Setut* (Witch). 'Vice is a monster of so frightful mien/As, to be hated needs to be seen.'[7] These two verses by Alexander Pope aptly summarize the allegorical function of the monstrous representation of rebelling women in the myths. The indigenous folktales of *Teryel* inflect positively the mythical processes of the monstrification by celebrating those female v(o)ices suppressed in the myths. The realist mode of the former, often confirmed by the audience's firm belief in the concrete existence of *Teryel*, strongly contrasts with the allegorical mode of the latter.

Since myths are the original sites of the emergence of female monsters, I shall start this discussion part of the research with the analysis of this monstrous or anomalous aspect of myths in order to see how the idea of female monsters came to be constructed as a danger to male social, political and economic order. The first Kabyle myth with which Frobenius begins the first volume offers an indication of how monsters came to existence. The myth explains that at the beginning of the world, in *illo tempere*, there were only one man and one woman, living in the depths of the earth. The Kabyle Adam and Eve were totally ignorant of their sexual differences. One day they went to the fountain to quench their thirst. In their fight over who would drink first (in Kabyle the verb 'drink' has a sexual connotation), the woman fell down

revealing her nakedness as her clothes opened out. Looking at her genitals, the man realized that she was sexually different from him. Curiosity pushed him to put his finger in the woman's genital organ, starting thus an eight-day-long lovemaking. Nine months later, the woman gave birth to 4 girls, followed by 4 boys after nine other months. This cycle of pregnancies and births continued until the number of their offspring reached a total of 50 girls and 50 boys. Not knowing what to do with their children, the first parents of the world sent them away, the former going eastward and the latter northward.

As they walked on and on underground, each gender group came to a sky-open hole out of which they emerged into day light, a kind of separate chthonian, second birth, resolving the problem of incest. As the 50 girls and the 50 boys started to interrogate loudly the world around them, asking plants, rivers, the moon and the sky to tell them who created them, they realized that they were close to each other standing on opposite sides of a river. To cut the narration of this myth of the first Kabyle parents short, the 50 boys and 50 girls came to live in a forest clearing, putting a safe distance between them. One day, the boys told themselves that they would no longer live under an open sky, deciding to build houses instead. Accordingly, some of them started digging up holes and some others underground galleries to use them as shelters, but soon some of them realized that stones and trees could be used for construction works. The myth tells us that among each group, there is one anti-social person in each of the two gender groups, living separately from their own gender group. It happened that the male anti-social person, prowling around the boys' compound, surprised one of the girls, a dare-devil of her kind, spying on the boys before entering one of their houses during their absence. Roaring at her, the girl took fright and fled out shouting in the direction of the girls' encampment. Alerted by her shouts, the boys altogether ran after the fleeing girl only to meet half way through with the girls who also hurried to her rescue from the other direction.

A mythic battle of the sexes took place, with a female-Amazon war cry that each and every girl had to throw down a boy of her choice to the ground in order to confirm what the dare- devil girl had told them about their sexual difference earlier when she returned from spying on the boys bathing naked in the river. Tearing the boys' clothes off, they took out the swelling boys' genital organs in their hands, and with throbbing hearts, these Amazon girls decided to unclothe themselves and to make love to the defeated boys. Becoming more exited in their turn, the boys took their partners to their newly-built houses. The myth tells us that they married, and goes on to add that once settled in their houses, now their conjugal homes the boys told themselves:

> Ce n'est pas correct que ce soit la femme qui se couche sur l'homme! Désormais, lorsque nous nous accouplerons, c'est nous, les hommes, qui seront sur vous, les femmes. Ainsi, nous deviendrons les maîtres. *It is not right that a woman lies on a man. Henceforward, when we make love to our women, it is we men who will sit upon you, women. In this way, we shall become your masters*.[8]

At this point, the myth tells us that men and women lived happily in their homes, except for the two anti-social types, the wild woman and the wild man who refused to integrate the new social order. The two of them are discursively transformed into the first monsters, the former into the first she-ogre called *Teryel*, and the later into a lion *izem* or *ayred* in Kabyle. Both of them are represented as human flesh eaters, coming out of the forest only to prey on the young children of their socialized siblings.

At first sight, this myth places the female monster and male monster on the same footing. Yet, looking closely at it in the light of myth 18 in the Kabyle mythic system, recounting how 7 orphans raised among lions were restored to civilization to become the first seven Kabyle Kings, one realizes a marked gender difference in the mythic process of

monstrification. Obviously, *Teryel*'s monstrification is totally negative and immutable. Once expelled to the social margins, she does not re-appear in Kabyle mythology except in the form of another social monster the *settut*. On the contrary, the lion's social monstrosity is redeemable and can be said to shed positively and indistinctly on all Kabyle men if values like *Thurugazi* (courage) attached to this lion monster, often euphemistically referred to as *argaz elaili* (the noble man) in English are taken into account.

The monstrification of woman at the level of sexual politics, as Kabyle myths show, also occurs at the higher level of politics. Myth 9 recounts how at advanced age, out of resentment against those who doubted of her magic knowledge and power, the first woman of the world breaks wind on a pile of wood that was carrying her home just as a magic carpet. Not only did this monstrous act outrage the pile of wood which stopped and lost the power of speech, but it also resulted in the loss of communication with all animate and inanimate objects, the confusion and birth of languages, the conflicts and the separation of human beings into distinct peoples. The monstrous act of breaking wind is not left unpunished. The myth closes with the reminder that 'thus was power [understand male power], powerful nations and empires were born.'[9] To put an end to the anarchy thus loosened upon the world, the ant (a cultural heroine for the Kabyles) advised the elderly males (*imgharen izemnyen* in Kabyle) to guide the disunited people by assigning each and every people a separate and definite national territory. This myth of the political monstrification of women, allegedly thirsty for absolute political power takes its full significance only if set within the context of that Kabyle political and social organization the *tajmait* through which political power has been exercised in the public sphere in the Kabyle village communities ever since then. The *tajmait* is a village assembly constituted of the elderly males. Its access is closed to elderly women judged to be polluting because of their infertility, and hence the danger to the management of political affairs.

What has to be observed in this myth about how the first woman of the world was toppled down from political power is that the relation of knowledge to power and age is rendered differently for the two sexes. Age or seniority makes the males assume an epistemological respect that entitles them to the exercise of an allegedly rational and democratic form of political power. On the contrary, the factor of age and seniority inevitably leads women to an epistemological excess that metamorphoses them into political monsters (*settut*), whose dominant feature is political intrigue or manipulation, personal aggrandizement, unconscionable appetite for power, and the refusal of politics as a democratic game.

The political monstrosity sometimes has no age for women in Kabyle myths. This is what myth 16 entitled 'God's message and his gifts to people' teaches the Kabyles. In the early ages of humanity, this myth recounts, women were more intelligent than males, and so God thought of assigning a young girl the mission of distributing gifts to his various peoples. He gave her two bags full of money and two others full of lice with the order of handing the former to the Kabyle people and emptying one of the bags of lice on Arabs and the contents of the remaining other bags on the Europeans. This female messenger did not follow God's order since she left the two bags of lice for the Kabyle, one bag of money for the Arabs and another one for the Europeans. The core theme of this myth is economic monstrosity. The female girl was not able to manage God's wealth and gifts for the benefit of her own people, the Kabyles, for apparently this first female messenger is of Kabyle stock. God was furious when the girl reported how she had distributed his wealth or gifts to humanity. God is quoted saying:

> Voilà comment, à cause d'une femme, naissent la méfiance et la mauvaise foi sur la terre! Les femmes sont plus intelligentes que les hommes; mais elles ont si mal agi en commettant cette faute qu'à l'avenir, elles seront tenues de rester à la maison.[10] *This is how because of a woman, suspicion and bad faith were born on earth! Women were more intelligent than men. But they acted so*

> *badly in committing this mistake [mismanagement of God's gifts that in the future, they will have to stay at home*. (Trans. Mine)

After this divine decision to exclude women from the economic sphere, God punished the female culprit by transforming her into a crow doomed to live separately from other birds and to fly around in the sky croaking the avowal '*rkeg*', meaning 'I was wrong' in English.

'Where there is power, there is resistance,' Michel Foucault tells us.[11] This universal dialectic of gender power and resistance is best reflected in the relation that Kabyle myths hold with the folktales of the monstrous. What is remarkable about the folktales is the resurgence of *Teryel* after her brief appearance in the myths. One of the consecrated expressions in referring to *Teryel*'s independence in the folktales is that 'vav bukhem thnesth,' literally meaning that the owner of the home is she. The same expression can be extended to include the folktales themselves as *Teryel*'s proprietary narratives. To paraphrase Roland Barthes in another narrative context, she is the heroine in her own sphere of action, which is most often situated outside the Kabyle village.[12] So, the Kabyles do not seem to escape from the dialectic of power and resistance reflected in the relation of myth, a basically male sacred narrative retracing the birth of patriarchal power against the background of female monstrification, and folktales which are basically female profane narratives through which women subvert, undermine and resist the patriarchal order imposed on them by giving full vent to a positive female monstrosity.

Let us take the monstrosities one by one and see how the narrative process of monstrification in the myths is subverted in favour of women in the folktales. The first type of monstrosity to be undermined in the folktales is the domestic or social monstrosity. Contrary to the myth of creation, which makes such a small case of this monstrosity, the folktales provide all sorts of anti-family, monstrosities if seen through patriarchal eyes. So, the folktales sometimes delineate *Teryel* as a single aged woman reigning singlehanded over her home and her fields; sometimes she is delineated as a single mother or parent with a female or boy child; sometimes, she is married to an ogre with no children; and still at other times, she has forcibly married a human being. All these anti-family types are monstrified forms of the Kabyle family type marked off by patriarchy, patrilinearity, and the production of a huge number of male children. Against the miserable fate of the idealized mother who die at a young age exhausted by her many pregnancies, *Teryel* often lives to a healthy advanced age because of her practice of what looks like birth control.

In the folktales, *Teryel* is generally described as someone who has refused to negotiate her fertility for the benefit of man as is the case in the myths. Instead of marriage, she prefers to remain single without losing completely the maternal feeling. Though *Teryel* is barren, very often folktale heroes appeal to her maternal feeling by taking her by surprise and sucking suspended breasts on her back, becoming in this way her adoptive children. The status of adopted child ensures the security of the hero. When she is married, her children are generally female for whom she shows a great love. So on the whole, *Teryel* in the folktales opposes or resists the forceful male appropriation of women's fertility in the Kabyle myths. The terror that she inspires is mostly due to the possibility that women have of withholding this fertility from men, and proposing equally viable models of family as the dominant patriarchal one.

This deconstruction of the patriarchal model of family is also accompanied by the critique of the home as it is conceived in the myths. Contrary to these myths, *Teryel* is not represented as the monster which has refused to have a home built by a male for her, preferring instead to live in caves and underground holes or in a home of her own making. The picture that stands out in these folktales is that of a female home owner not obliged to spend her time in the kitchen. Arguably, the most prominent folktale in this regard is that of 'Mkidesh'. Mkidesh, the title character, was born to a sterile mother who managed to cure her sterility by taking a fertility medicine consisting of an apple. Because she helped herself to only a half of that apple, that is half the medicine, Mkidesh came to life a physically diminished person, but with

extraordinary intellectual capacities associated with his miraculous birth. In the version of the folktale consigned by Frobenius, Mkidesh is portrayed as one of *Teryel*'s close neighbours, which eliminates the spatial discrimination usually found in other versions. In other words, both the monstrified *Teryel* and Mkidesh live in a socialized space while usually *Teryel* is segregated in another negatively associated space like the forest (*amadagh* in Kabyle).

Frobenius's version of the folktale of Mkidesh starts as follows:

> Un jeune home nommé Mkidec habitait dans le voisinage d'une ogresse qui était immensément riche. Comme Mkidec était pauvre, il décida de s'emparer par la ruse et la subtilité de quelques-unes de ses richesses.[13] *A young man called Mkidesh lived in the neighbourhood of a she-ogre who was immensely rich. Since Mqidech was poor, he decided to cunningly and subtly seize some items of her wealth.* (Trans. mine)

The initial situation of lack (poverty) which triggers the action is the one which we usually find in the folktales of a mountainous people whose scarcity of sources often send them to distant lands in search of means of livelihood. In this case, Mkidesh is portrayed as a covetous stay-at-home villager, who decides to trick a female single neighbour taxed as a monster out of her hard-earned wealth. What is notable in this tale is that female and male roles are reversed since Mkidesh stays at home and desires the objects, all of them symbolic as we shall see, that *Teryel* possesses. The first object that he covets is a beautiful woollen blanket or carpet used as bedding that *Teryel* has stretched out on her fence on a sunny day before she goes away to work in the fields. Taking advantage of her absence, Mkidesh puts needles in the carpet. At night, dead tired because of hard work, *Teryel* feels a prick of resentment at the uncomfortable feeling caused by the little needles in her bedding. So she throws it out of the window. Waiting outside under cover of darkness, Mkidesh runs away with it to his home, takes the needles out and beds down comfortably on it. Clearly, *Teryel* does not throw away the carpet, so much as its prickle, a symbol of the sexual activity and the fertility in children that it connotes for her covetous neighbour.

The second object that our female monster throws out at Mkidesh's instigation is the domestic grinder mentioned in the Kabyle myths as the first kitchen utensil to be originally handed to women in order to transform the grain produced by their men into flour, a transformed ingredient necessary for making food. Disturbed by the noise of the grinder that Mkidesh keeps turning through a hole dug in one of the walls at a late hour in the night, *Teryel* gets up and throws it out of the window. As in the first case, Mkidesh takes it to his home. '*Imensi*' in Kabyle society is the last and most important meal of the day that all the members of the family often take together in the evening. It is in the context of this meal time that the dismissing gesture of *Teryel* throwing the grinder takes its full significance. What she refuses to comply with in this case is the transformation and nourishing activity assigned to women in Kabyle homes. Such a daily routine or ritual activity does not fit in well with her independent character as bread winner.

As Mkidesh weaves out his tricks, *Teryel* finds excuses to desecrate the most sacred objects and activities assigned to women as traditional homemakers. First, she throws away her fat hen that everyone in the village wanted to buy, thus doing away with the image of woman as hen raisers, i.e., subsistence or domestic farmers; she captures Mkidesh, but she lets herself be duped too easily into putting him in an earthen jar or granary (*Ikufen* in Kabyle) full of dried figs in order to be fattened for slaughter. Mkidesh, like another trickster figure *Ired* (the Grain of Wheat) in another Kabyle folktale, pollutes the provision granaries that Kabyle women generally manage for the household. At first sight, as some critics like Lacoste-Dujardin claim, this sounds as a derision of *Teryel* for her incapacity as a manager of man's produce. Indeed, it is Kabyle women who are supposed to store, manage, and preserve the domestic sources

amassed by men, from impurity. But in the case of the folktales of Mkidesh and Isher (finger nail in Kabyle), the monstrous act which consists of polluting domestic reserves and endangering the survival of female-centred and economically viable households comes as a result of envious male tricksters. If the social function of the folktales consists in proving that *Teryel* deserves the name of monster because she cannot classify products into convenient categories (e.g., humid versus dry) and to store the adequate one in the granary as conventional homemakers would do, there is a certain militant irony in these folktales at the level of discourse because to all evidence *Teryel* was good home manager before the intervention of these expedient tricksters.

Some other observations need to be made about the representation of monstrosity and the monstrous in Kabyle myths at this second stage of the discussion. First, what is notable about these myths is that they ascribe monstrosity more to females than males. Female monstrosity seems to be totally negative and immutable while the male one is redeemable, and can at times even turn out to be positive as is the case with the lion. Second, there are several aspects or levels of female monstrosity. At least three aspects or levels can be identified. One of them is sexual, social or domestic monstrosity caused in part by *Teryel*'s rejection of the patriarchal family at the beginning of the world when she refused to negotiate her fertility for the benefit of the Kabyle man. The second is political monstrosity ascribed to the first woman of the world, the matriarch *setut* whose autocratic rule was the cause of all sorts of monstrosities and abuse of power caused in part by her loss of fertility. Third follows economic monstrosity that finds expression in the female messenger whose economic mismanagement of God's wealth or gifts that made the Kabyles the poorest people on earth. Now if one has to ask the question about the main function of female monstrosity in Kabyle myths, the answer is not hard to come by because of the adulation that males receive in the same myths. Female monstrosity in Kabyle myths, I shall argue, serves both as a mechanism of repression and oppression of female rebels, and an ideological tool for legitimating the exclusion of women from the public sphere of politics and economy, their confinement and subordination in the household, and the logical replacement of a women's order of things by a patriarchal economic, social, economic, and cultural system judged to be more rational simply because it is instituted by males. In short, the monstrous mode of representing women in Kabyle myths is a form of symbolic violence that Kabyle men use as an instrument of masculine domination.

In what follows, I shall further argue, that there is a 'clash over the referent' between the representation of female monstrosity in the Kabyle folktales and that in the myths. If Kabyle myths, as I have said earlier, use the monstrous mode of representation as a means of repressing Kabyle women who rebel against the new patriarchal order, the folktales offers an ideal narrative site for the return of the repressed monstrous. As explained earlier, the Kabyle myth of the origins of the first parents also retraces the origins of the first female monster *Teryel* excluded from the human fold on the basis of her rejection of the institution of the patriarchal family model. What is to be noted about the mode of representation of *Teryel* in this myth is that it is allegorical. In other words, the portrayal of the female monster is limited to a sketchy description of character traits related to her resistance to the masculine order of things. No sooner is this female monster mentioned than her presence is ritually expelled to the margins as a danger to the purity of the newly instituted domestic order. She is never to be referred to again in the rest of the myths, except in the implied comparison with a *setut* or witch, with a stomach full of wind as a shared index of their danger to purity and fertility. To this ritual expulsion from the discursive space in the myths corresponds the discursive saliency accorded to her presence in the folktales of the monstrous proper. Indeed, the saliency of this female monster is such that people especially women, i.e., the primary narrators of folktales, and its young audiences believe in her real existence:

> 'It is a strange phenomenon,' Frobenius remarks, that 'narratives of adventure resorting to witches (*Teryel*) are regarded by their narrators as true stories, accounts of experienced events. (Trans. Mine): *Phénomène étrange, un grand nombre de récits de combats ou d'aventures faisant intervenir les sorcières sont considérés par les narrateurs comme des histories varies, des relations d'événements vécus.*[14]

The folktale of the monstrous, therefore, contrary to myth, is a narrative site wherein the female monster *Teryel* returns in a bid of self-affirmation and resistance to male power at the level of the imaginary. For a Kabyle audience, it is practically impossible to imagine folktales without this female monster. One of the consecrated expressions in referring to *Teryel*'s independence in the folktales is, as I have said, that '*vav bukhem thnesth*,' literally meaning that 'the owner of the home is she.'

Ever since Vladimir Prop's study of folktales (1994), scholars have generally looked at folktales as being 'heavily functional.'[15] Functions are deemed by some critics to be more important than characters in the analysis and classification of these types of narrative. This does not seem to hold completely true in the case of the Kabyle female monster, *Teryel*, because of the complexity of her characterization. She is not just a stock character or type that can be pigeonholed in a given role to fulfil an assigned function in an ordered set of functions in the folktales. Her physical appearance and her psychological attributes are so various that they set her apart from other folkloric monsters and make her look like, to use Freud's terms in another context, a real female discontent with man's civilization. The complexity of this monster is what makes for the pleasure of the text in the narration of Kabyle folktales of the monstrous.

So what are the definitional characteristics of the female monster in terms of physical appearance and psychology? As in the myth of creation, the folktales generally describe *Teryel* as a 'wild' woman of giant proportions. Furthermore, just as in the myth, she remains recognizably human in spite of the metamorphosis that she has undergone because of her resistance to male power. In accordance with her wildness, she wears long, dishevelled hair with pale, blue eyes and long crooked nails. Sometimes she is described as short sighted and as hard of hearing. At other times, she is represented as an unparalleled beauty with a higher degree of intelligence than other monsters. She carries her long breasts flung crosswise at her back. At night when she is deeply asleep, the heroes and the heroines can hear the beasts that she devoured during the day making a formidable noise in her large belly. In most of the folktales, this is taken as the signal that the time for escape has come. Her habitation space is generally the forest (*amadagha* in vernacular) with an isolated home of her own, but in some folktales she has neighbours who envy her prosperity.

Most of the time, she is also portrayed as a single mother with a female child alternatively described as a beauty (Loundja) or a hideous, shorted-sighted figure (Aicha Bouteliss). In exceptional cases, she has a husband, standing above him in terms of both intelligence and physical stature. In equally very exceptional cases, the folktales say that she has given birth to one or seven ogres. Brother monsters are never mentioned in connection with her, but she is said to have several sister monsters whom she is always happy to invite for a feast on human flesh. Her food preferences go to fattened boy children or adults. Moreover, she is always portrayed as a property owner. Her fields in which she works all day long with barely enough time to gulp down her food are always prosperous and jealously guarded. The heroes or heroines are usually trespassers on her property. Her jars (*ikhufen*) are always full of agricultural produce, gold and jewellery. It is in these jars that Kabyle trickster heroes like *Isher* (finger nail in English) ask *Teryel* to put them. Her cattle and sheep are grazed fat. In spite of the mostly monstrous characteristics adduced to her, heroes and heroines often lovingly call her *Yama Jidda*, mother grand-mother in English. Arguably, *Teryel* is not a stock folkloric monster

since, as the folktale 'The Wicked Husband and the She-Ogre' shows, even married women often call her for help when they are victims of domestic violence.[16]

The brief model description above makes it clear that there is a discursive expansion of the representation of female monstrosity in Kabyle folktales. Admittedly, this is due to the propensity of the genre of folktale, but this does not totally account for its excess in Kabyle folktales. I rather consider this saliency as a response to the negative monstrosity assigned to women in Kabyle myths because nearly all the types of negative female monstrosity identified in the myths are taken over and transformed into positive forms in the folktales. For example, in folktale 32, 'The Agile Hunter and the She-ogre,' *Teryel* invites herself to the village assembly the *Tajmait* in search of a fleeing hunter caught poaching on her territory full of game. Metamorphosed into a beautiful woman, *Teryel* takes seat next to the hunter before she rises up to announce that she will marry the assembly man who will wrestle her down to the ground. In their response to the challenge, the assembly members are beaten up one by one in front of the frightened hunter. At last, she comes back to the latter shaming him to take his chance like the other village assembly men, which he finally does. *Teryel* falls on purpose at the first touch. The irony of it all is that he the agile hunter who is supposed to be a protector of the village from external danger finds himself married to *Teryel* and obliged to submit to her rule. In this tale, it is the political monstrosity on which Kabyle man's mythologies have constructed the patriarchal system that founders. *Teryel*'s defiance of the *tajmait* and her conquest of the agile hunter one of its best representative men reverse or rather subvert the sexual roles and the values that the same political organization has assigned to women.

4. Conclusion

It follows from this discussion that female monsters in Kabyle folktales are not, to paraphrase Pope, simply representations of vices to be seen in order to be hated. We have seen that the male Kabyle myth system monstrifies women as *Teryel* or *settut* in order to legitimate the patriarchal system of domination at all levels. The women's refusal to negotiate their fertility for the political, social, economic benefit of men makes of them monsters in the eyes of the community. On the other hand, this analysis shows that the representation of female monsters in folktales do not necessarily reproduce the masculine ideology of the myths as some sociologists like Bourdieu affirm. In the folktales of the monstrous, it is less a matter that Kabyle women's v(o)ices are represented as monsters, and more a question of the prominence or saliency given to resisting female monsters, as well as the complex and attractive manner in which they are presented by the predominantly female storytellers. By displaying female monsters like *Teryel* in a complex and attractive manner, it is what the patriarchal system castigated as female vices (female independence, birth control, single parenthood, etc,) rather than virtues (easy recognition of male ownership of female fertility, domesticity, etc,) that are promoted. So female Kabyle narrators are not solely 'guardians of traditions' acting in favour of a patriarchal society by initiating young children into adult roles, but underground rebels who undermine the prevalent unequal gender power relations, through monstrous representation in that 'art of subversion' that is the Kabyle folktale of the monstrous.[17]

Notes

[1] Leo Frobenius, *Contes Kabyles, Tome II, Le Monstreux*, trans. Fetta Mokran (Aix-en-Provence, 1996), 5.

[2] Steven Swann Jones, *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of the Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[3] Camille Lacoste-Dujardin, *La Vaillance des Femmes: Les Relations entre Femmes et Hommes Berbères de Kabylie* (Alger: Editions Barzakh, 2010).

[4] Pierre Bourdieu, *La Domination Masculine* (Paris: le Seuil, 1998).

[5] Leo Frobenius, *Contes Kabyle, Tome I, Sagesse*, trans. Mokran Fetta (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1996).
[6] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
[7] Alexander Pope, 'Essay on Man,' in *Alexander Pope's Collected Poems*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (Dent London: Everyman's Library, 1965), 195.
[8] Leo Frobenius, *Contes Kabyles, Tome 1, Sagesse*, 32.
[9] Ibid., 40.
[10] Ibid., 76.
[11] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol.1*, trans. Michael Hurley (New York: Panteon, 1978).
[12] Roland Barthes, 'Structural Analysis of Narratives,' in Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977).
[13] Leo Frobenius, *Contes Kabyles, Tome II, Le Monstreux*, 261.
[14] Ibid.; Leo Frobenius, 'Introduction,' in *Contes Kabyles, Tome I, Sagesse*,' 6.
[15] Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).
[16] Allioui Youcef, *Contes du Cycle de l'Ogre: Contes Kabyles*, Timucuha (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002), 22-23.
[17] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (London: Routledge, 2006).

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Sabrina Zerar is a *maître de conférences* at Mouloud Mammeri University Department of English in Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria. She has been teaching English for the last 26 years, first at High School and then at the university. She is currently directing a research team in Cultural Studies for the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. In addition to her teaching and research activities, she chairs the English Department Scientific Committee and sits at the Senate of the Faculty of Letters and Languages.

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Becoming the Temptress…

Kristy Crites

'GOD, PLEASE HELP ME' I cried out as a potential scream built up from the pit of my stomach and rose with the promise of bile dripped from my blood stained lips, and Darkness caressed me for the first time; running it's filthy fingers along my cheek, before moving to the chair in the corner.

My sobs echoed through the emptiness of the room as agony and disparity ate me alive.

'God has forsaken you, my love. You are beyond worthy of his preposterous charities anyway, darling please….' his voice trailed off as another spurt of pain ripped through my stomach, yet my lips moved with ease, and I asked in silence,

'What's happening to me?!' The moment the words were mouthed, Darkness surrounded me.

'You, my love, are becoming what you were born to be…' my mind was fixated on the pain pulsing through my body, whatever it was, I wanted it to end…

'Accept it, quit fighting and it will come as natural as breathing.' Darkness spoke with a voice so warm, like the soft glow of amber in the sun. With those words, it dimmed my pain; pulling it from the core of my body to rake along my flesh, digging my sins into the surface of who I was. I wanted to—to accept it, but whatever it was, it was evil. Nothing good could hurt that bad. And before I realized it, I lunged toward the darkness,

'YOU LIE!!' despite the pain, I screamed, determined to shed blood, make it pay for what it was doing to me, but it moved before I could touch it, leaving me to crumble in a ray of light while it settled in the other corner; laughing at the irony of my hope slipping away, and the ignorance of my actions.

'You foolish little girl, you may fall into the arms of purity but you'll always be tainted in the eyes of you so called god. You reek of betrayal, just look at you!' it came so close, I could taste it, 'You're sin drips from your lips, as visible as vomit. YOU ARE THE LIE.' its voice was no longer the warmth I felt just moments ago. It was harsh, like a red hot blade forcing its way into my soul; it leaked intimidation and control, forcing me into submission. Darkness moves even so close, toward me, inside me, becoming part of my twisted, writhing body. The moment I felt it touch my heart accepted it, evil or not. It was who I was meant to me.

The moment I let go and allowed it to take me I felt the bile turn to honey, and my sin resolve to perfection. Although I had been born a lie, in my master's eyes, I was pure, and I could no longer be tempted by demons because now, in that very moment, I became the temptress in demon form…

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Hungry, Angry Ghosts: A Construction of Female Suicide in Traditional China

Kathy McKay

Abstract
Suicide has long been constructed as a monstrous death within many societies. Its very existence challenges the social norms the majority of people presume to be acceptable; it leaves behind people questioning the reasons behind the choice. In this way, those who choose suicide have also been branded monsters—the most common of which is the belief that ghosts can arise from these deaths. Traditional Chinese stories of female suicide-related ghosts seemed to follow a distinct narrative trope involving rational, heroic men and irrational, villainous women. The ways in which stories of hungry ghosts were told speaks to the ways in which female suicide was understood and rationalised within traditional Chinese society. It also provides a demonstration of suicide prevention based within supernatural encounters. While the seriousness in which these stories were held is uncertain, they remain a colourful and potent source of suicide story-telling. By seeking to understand this mythology, we also begin to better understand the stigma and stereotypes that continue to attach to female suicide in modern rural China.

Key Words: Ghosts, haunting, trauma, rural China, female suicide.

*****

Picture a woman.

Desperate, bedraggled, exhausted. Having lived a loveless life, she has now been travelling for what seems like an eternity. Constantly hungry and thirsty, she is condemned to this miserable existence unless she can find someone to help her. So she searches for someone, another woman who might understand her plight, who might be feeling emotions similar to how she felt when she first began this journey. When she finds someone, who can blame her for what she does? This is violence born out of centuries-old abuse, a cycle that seems never-ending. She becomes a monster as soon as she hands over the rope.

Picture a scene.

A woman is found hanging after arguing with her family. Within the frames of traditional ghost stories in China, this woman would have fallen victim to a hungry ghost. Always a woman, the ghost formed after a hanging suicide tended to walk, searching for a substitute so that she could be reborn. This process was repeated again and again and again, the cycle of violent death never-ending. Can monsters be pitied? In spite of the horror and violence, this monster was born out of a family that did not love her, a community that did not protect her, a culture that did not value her.

When we look deep into its heart of darkness, suicide is a monster. If society's collective history is a tapestry, the stories of suicide are not woven into it. Rather, this monster storms into existence, wreaking havoc and destruction where it turns. It takes firm footing into social consciousness, leaving people to continually seek answers they may never find. The very existence of suicide brings light to the ugly truth that, sometimes, monsters cannot be

vanquished by love and good intentions alone. Indeed, love and good intentions may not be enough when peering into the gaping hole left by suicide, as family and communities try to exorcise the evil the ghost represents. The ghost stories told within this paper are all based in traditional Chinese mythology; however, their meanings may be reflective of the ghost stories attached to suicides in other cultures.

Yet, if ghosts are taken at the phantasm level, if they are presumed to be un-real, what does their existence within the suicide paradigm tell us? By seeking to understand the mythology tied to suicide, we can begin to understand the stigma and stereotypes attached to these deaths. It may be easier for a community to create a monster than to live with the memory that not enough was done to prevent a death. This fear seemed to shape the type of question asked when a suicide occurred in traditional China: who caused it? This question bound the language used about suicide to blame which also served another more tangible purpose—the allocation of punishment. On earth and in hell, people who were thought to have caused a suicide were punished.[1] On earth, compensations were extracted from the families held accountable and they were shamed within their community.[2] In hell, punishments could last for eternity. Similar to the stories of Dante, Chinese hells were described in vivid detail, eternal punishments suited to the crimes. In Hell Eight, those who had mistreated girls until they took their own lives suffered in great heat, eventually falling off a bridge where they were attacked by 'copper snakes and iron fish'.[3] In Hell Ten, people who had been made to suicide were able to watch their torturers suffer through their punishments; however, this was equally cruel to them as they were unable to be reborn until all the punishments were completed.[4] While these hells suggested suicide was not always a mortal sin as in Judeo-Christian culture, its completion still trapped a person in hell and delayed rebirth.

In this way, even within a society which condoned some forms of voluntary death, suicide was still predominantly considered monstrous in China. People who chose suicide, especially if it did not fit within the frames of acceptability, were painted to be even more monstrous. This is strikingly exemplified by the ugly ghosts attached to female suicides in traditional China, and which have become reconceptualised in modern rural areas. Ill-treated women are literally drowning their sorrows in pesticide at rates so high that rural China is one of the few places in the world where more women die by suicide than men.[5] In rural areas where traditional subjugation of women still occurs, women who don't have a voice or control in their future are choosing a monstrous end to a life without love, protection or value. While powerless in life, the chance to become a ghost frames death as a powerful choice; a suicide death inspires fear.[6] In life, a woman may be abused and forgotten. In death, she is remembered, recorded on family tablets with other ancestors, rituals and prayers said over her. Her potential monstrosity—a ghost—lives on for the family who must forever remember her to prevent a spectral uprising:

> Yes, she who has always been despised will now be felt as a power for once,—and the deed is done,—she commits suicide.[7]

Yet, this is a monstrous choice. Death may not have always provided the escape so desperately sought. Many suicides—mostly women according to lore—were sent to suffer within 'the factory of hunger and thirst' of the first hell.[8] Eventually taken back to the place of their death, if 'they behave and do not appear to frighten people or induce other people to serve as their replacement by inducing them to commit suicide, they return to hell number one and receive only the punishments for their remaining sins'.[9]

However, not all souls behaved, and neither did rebirth necessarily lead a soul into a human or heavenly state. Even after punishment, a suicide could still be transformed into a hungry ghost 'condemned to insatiable hunger and thirst…. These ever seek to exchange places with some unhappy or unfortunate living soul who in a moment of depression may be persuaded that death is preferable to life'.[10] A hungry ghost could exist for centuries until she was freed through substitution. Hungry ghosts were a terrifying spectre. Simple suicide ghosts pointed to an unjust death, one that was worthy of revenge because it needed to justify a purgatorial state. This revenge was bound with a certain morality where the ghost only attached itself to those accountable. In contrast, hungry ghosts were unbound by these same moral frames. As they searched for a substitute, no one was safe; substitutes were sought for eternity as each 'reincarnated' ghost sought her opportunity for rebirth.[11] This almost-exclusively female phenomenon speaks to their mistreatment—a spectral indictment on social structures that condemned women to submissive misery. More than a mere memory of the deceased, hungry ghosts became a lingering, continuing, unstoppable monster. Yet, these two types of ghost stories can now be read as a perverse kind of morality tale. They point to a bully's fear of repercussion as a victim finally stands up for herself—becoming a ghost is the ultimate way to fight.

However, this is very much a modern interpretation, written by a woman outside the bounds of that time or culture. Do these ghost stories actually provide a further injustice to women in China? Written by men, these stories create a hero (the male character and narrator), villain (the female ghost), and victim (the intended female substitute). Yet only the male narrator has a voice. Most stories are written in first-person which means that the voices of the ghost and the intended substitute tend to be heard as a report, if at all. The ghost allows a suicide trajectory to be narrated 'nicely'—the trajectory is linear, the reasons clear. The ghost tricks a woman who has just had a disagreement with her family into suicide. This narrative then allows for a hero to see through the deception and save the woman and, sometimes, even the ghost as well.[12] The seed of ghost's power lies in the bloody remnant of rope she holds and, once the hero hides it, the substitution will fail.[13]

Yet, this frames the narrative of female suicide into one of manipulation and irrationality. A woman who attempts to take her own life is drawn as being under a spell; if not for the ghost's actions, she would never have considered such an act. It becomes very easy to demonise the death (and the ghost) rather than look behind why women were so vulnerable. Why did the ghost suicide in the first place? Why is it often so easy to find a willing substitute? The very voicelessness of the women leave reasons half-told. Examples are given of domestic squabbles and financial woes. Despair is alluded to only in reaction to the ghost's proposal and the sense of impending death. A woman who attempts to take her own life seems never to be drawn as someone seeking escape from an abusive domestic situation. Domestic squabbles seem to trivialise the intolerable quality of life endured by many daughters-in-law, also famously caught in Chinese stories.[14] Impulsivity and manipulation overshadow the fey qualities exhibited once suicide is decided upon as a way to certainly end issues in life that seem unsolvable. The writers of ghost stories also seem to not always realise that a woman may have perceived the narrative differently to a man—suicide brought power to the powerless and punished those who were otherwise untouchable.

Stories of hungry ghosts are a further example where women could potentially suffer more than men both on earth and in hell, simply through their female sex. Hungry ghosts could not just be created through suicide; they were also found after a woman died in childbirth.[15] This type of death was considered to be as impure as suicide. The very act of childbirth sullied the woman's soul and she could not be reborn without spending time within an area of hell specifically set aside for such impurity.[16]

These types of ghost stories helped to reinforce the status quo—that men were rational and active beings and women irrational and submissive. A kind of supernatural suicide prevention, these stories imply that monsters could be slain

> by any ordinary man with courage, common sense, and a sense of decency, even such a dubious figure as a housebreaker… Yet like any tale of a coincidental rescue, the story emphasizes the fear that many women will not be saved from their private demons.[17]

Indeed, the male heroes in these stories do not ride in on a white horse; they are there by chance, some more moral and law-abiding than others. While women are hanging themselves for reasons bound in morality and fidelity, heroes are made of apparent thieves and drunks.[18]

In the end, these traditional hungry ghost stories read like monstrous pulp fiction. A happy ending is allowed, the surface left unscratched so as to not highlight the real reasons that so many young women have perceived death to be more desirable than life. Indeed, 'like suicide itself, successful substitution is an escape and change for one individual without final resolution for herself or anyone else'.[19]

While it is uncertain how seriously these traditional ghost stories were taken,[20] the idea that ghosts can influence women to suicide remains alive in some rural areas of China. In 1996, Fang was found drowned after severe arguments with her family[21] which some people believed was the result of supernatural occurrences:

> Fang told me some days before she died that one evening she heard voices in the yard; the voices said: 'Fang, come up with me, come to me, I will take you away from here'.[22]

Within the modern narrative of Fang's death, there remained the traditional question of who was to blame—who was the monster in this suicide? There is no doubt that this ghost story helped to relieve some of the blame from a husband who beat her, in-laws who mistreated her, and community members who were unable to help her. Indeed, it appeared that Fang's husband continued to mourn her long after the punishments on earth had been exacted.[23] Yet this narrative does not allow for the protection of other vulnerable women like Fang who become caught in an intolerable and inescapable familial situation.

Suicide may be a monstrous death but the continued search for blame becomes in and of itself a hungry ghost. Blame allows neither the deceased to rest in peace, nor those left behind to find solace. Suicide prevention becomes bound in luck and presumed male rationality as opposed to seeking what would best allow women to have a valid choice between life and death.

Notes

[1] Liu Meng, 'Rebellion and Revenge: The Meaning of Suicide of Women in Rural China', *International Journal of Social Welfare* 11 (2002): 300-309; Margery Wolf, 'Women and Suicide in China', in *Women in Chinese Society*, ed. Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 111-141; Wolfram Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

[2] Rania Huntington, 'Ghosts Seeking Substitutes: Female Suicide and Repetition', *Late Imperial China* 26 (2005): 1-41; Wolf, 'Women and Suicide in China', 111-141.

[3] Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin.…*, 39.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Michael R. Phillips, Jie Zhang, Ning Li, Xin-Ming Tu, Shuiyuan Xiao and Cunxian Jia, 'Risk Factors for Rural Young Suicide in China: A Case-Control Study', *Journal of Affective Disorders* 129 (2011): 244-251; Michael R. Phillips, Xianyun Li and Yanping Zhang, 'Suicide Rates in China, 1995-1999', *The Lancet* 359 (1999): 835-840.
[6] Meng, 'Rebellion and Revenge:', 300-309; Wolf, 'Women and Suicide…', 111-141.
[7] Ibid., 114.
[8] Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin.…*, 39.
[9] Ibid., 32.
[10] Clarence Burton Day, *Chinese Peasant Cults: Being a Study of Chinese Paper Gods* (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing, 1969), 129.
[11] See Huntington, 'Ghosts Seeking Substitutes'; Ibid.
[12] See Huntington, 'Ghosts Seeking Substitutes'; Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Chinese Civilisation and Society: A Sourcebook* (New York: The Free Press, 1981); J. J. M. De Groot, *The Religious System of China Vol. V: Book II Of the Soul and Ancestral Workship* (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing, 1972).
[13] Ibid.
[14] See Huntington, 'Ghosts Seeking Substitutes'; Ebrey, *Chinese Civilisation and Society*; Wolf, 'Women and Suicide…'..
[15] Huntington, 'Ghosts Seeking Substitutes'; Day, *Chinese Peasant Cults*.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Huntington, 'Ghosts Seeking Substitutes', 14.
[18] Ebrey, *Chinese Civilisation and Society*.
[19] Huntington, 'Ghosts Seeking Substitutes', 19.
[20] Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin.…*, 119-120.
[21] Meng, 'Rebellion and Revenge'.
[22] Ibid., 307.
[23] Ibid.

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Kathy McKay is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.

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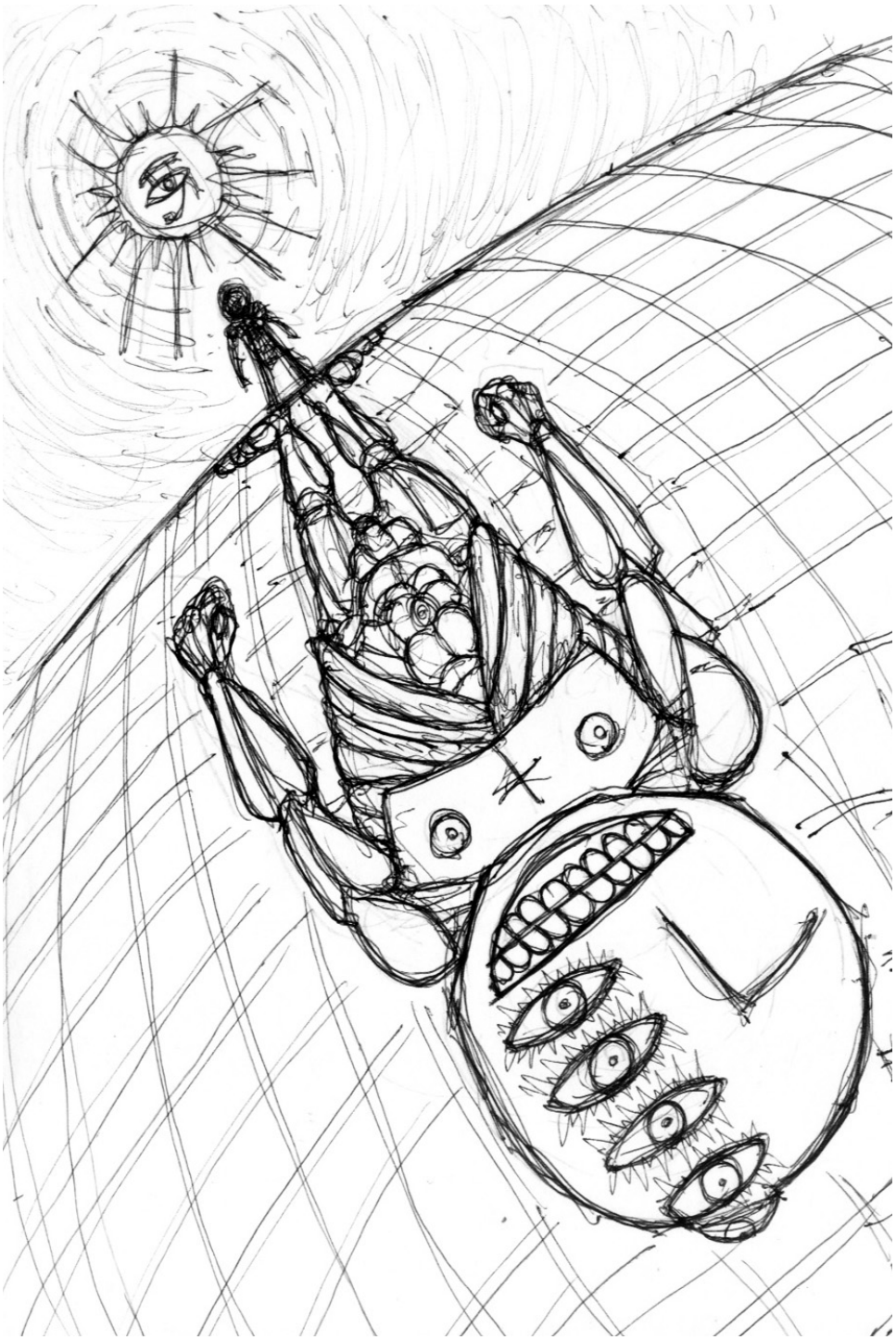

First Shadow, printed with permission from the artist, Tilde Acuña.

Currently based at the University of the Philippines, Systems Information Office, Tilde (**Arbeen Regalado Acuña**) holds a BA Communication Arts degree (writing major) with honours from the University of the Philippines Los Baños and will be an Araling Philipino (Philippine Studies) graduate student at the University of the Philippines Diliman this coming semester. His works have appeared in university and national publications, and his first published works in a refereed journal are, 'Entry Taken from The Encyclopaedia of Biomechanical Convertebrates' and 'io', which both appeared in *Kritika Kultura*, published by the Ateneo de Manila University.

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‘A Contagion Within’: Male Hysteria and Survivor Guilt in Chang-rae Lee’s *A Gesture Life*

Justine Gieni

Abstract
In *A Gesture Life*, Chang-rae Lee represents the conflicts of masculine gender identity under the constraints of a patriarchal-military system. Lee delves into the hidden past of Franklin Hata, a Korean-born, but self-identifying Japanese man who served as a medic for the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II. During the war, Hata’s conflict exemplifies male hysteria as conveyed through splitting of his subjectivity between a public self who acquiesces to military protocol, and a private self who struggles with his desire for and identification with the abject, ‘comfort woman’ under his charge. Decades later, Hata is still haunted by feelings of shame and experiences a form of survivor guilt, where he is symbolically sickened by his complicity in women’s sexual oppression in a patriarchal social order.

Key Words: Masculinity, war trauma, hysteria; survivor guilt, World War II, comfort women.

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Traumatized men, those who suffer from the mental and physical duress of war, represent a hysterical disturbance of gender identity that when critically explored, can offer insights into the psychological structures of patriarchal society. The wide-ranging symptoms are both mental and physical in nature, including but not limited to: recurring nightmares, tremors, loss of voice, gaps in memory, dissociation or splitting, duplicity, avoidance, and flashbacks. The presence of these symptoms in soldiers is not solely due to the violent trauma of warfare, but can also be seen as deriving from the gender ideologies endorsed by a patriarchal-military system. Pressure to conform to dominant gender ideologies places soldiers in a potentially harmful situation of witnessing the dissolution of their ideals. This disillusionment contributes in no small way to the mental and physical breakdowns incurred by soldiers, on and off the battlefield.

In Chang-rae Lee’s novel *Disgrace*, the protagonist and narrator, Franklin Hata or ‘Doc Hata’ as he is referred to within his community, an elderly, Korean-born, but self-identifying Japanese man, hides behind an innocuous persona, keeping to himself his inner discontent and traumatic past that continue to haunt him. Shadowed by the traumatic memories of his service under the Japanese Imperial army during World War II, Hata can neither escape a past replete with violent sexual oppression nor deny his persisting sense of self-estrangement. At the heart of his inner identity conflict is his continuing desire for and identification with Kkutaeh or ‘K’ as he refers to her, the Korean ‘comfort woman’ who was placed under his authority during the war and whom he failed to protect from a brutal and torturous death. For Hata, a part of his identity is embodied in the alterity of Kkutaeh’s vulnerability and Korean heritage, yet he has to repudiate and suppress these parts of himself in the construction of his patriarchal identity. As a result of his traumatic witnessing of K’s victimization and his overwhelming guilt surrounding her brutal sexual assault and death, decades later Hata is still haunted by his war trauma. In his everyday life, his routines, rituals and quotidian gestures are haunted by the past. Indeed, through his compulsive repetitions, including his adoption of and problematic relationship with his Korean daughter Sunny and his continued visions of Kkutaeh, Hata reveals a distinctively hysterical enactment of masculinity, where he is symbolically sickened by his complicity in

women’s sexual oppression within a patriarchal social order and experiences a form of survivor guilt.[1] As an example of male hysteria, Lee’s protagonist illustrates how symptoms such as Hata’s flashbacks and vivid fantasies of Kkutaeh, while seemingly innocuous and private, mask deeply rooted identity conflict, so much so, that Hata is perpetually tormented by a death wish and desires his own annihilation.

Hata’s suppression of his war trauma also re-enacts the collective silencing and shame surrounding Japan’s war policies, where ‘as many as two hundred thousand women were tricked or abducted into slavery for sexual services for the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II.’[2] The Japanese government’s silencing of the abuses that went on during the war continued until the 1990’s, when women’s groups began to demand compensation and a public apology for the crimes committed against ‘comfort women.’[3] As George Hicks describes in his discussion of the Japanese government, they took the approach that it was better to ignore or forget the past: ‘the past is the past, which most people prefer to forget like a bad dream . . . . the issue is best ignored for the sake of future good relations, since it can only be a source of friction.’[4] Like Hata who tries to forget his past and put on a mask of contentment, the Japanese government also tried to pretend that the whole thing never happened.

Male hysteria, as it has been perceived in the context of men’s military involvement, implies a connection between masculine gender identity, trauma, and sickness. Historians Mark Micale and Paul Lerner have discussed how gender in particular plays a central role in the development of the disorder in male soldiers. According to Micale and Lerner, on and off the battlefield, the incidence of hysteria in men appears to correspond with the ‘unique capacity [of trauma] to undermine male ideals.’[5] Indeed, the pressure to remain ‘masculine’ during wartime corresponded with a vilifying of anyone who exhibited behaviours deemed ‘weak, selfish, and insubordinate.’[6] The pejorative labelling of those men suffering hysterical symptoms as malingerers, frauds, as well as frequent accusations of homosexuality and effeminacy are indicative of the enormous pressure on men to conform to masculine ideals. Yet, the prevalence of specific threats during times of war have the capacity to breakdown these gender ideals, provoking unprecedented anxieties and fears in those serving in the military:

> the threat of physical death or injury, burial alive, observation of the death of others, the anticipation of fighting, prolonged material deprivation, stress among officers ordering soldiers into battle, moral disgust at killing others, anxiety at readjusting to civilian life, and the guilt of survival.[7]

Facing these threats, male soldiers often fall victim to hysteria or what we now refer to as Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the symptoms of which often represent a fixation on the trauma.

For soldiers in the Imperial army, the harsh conditions, rigid hierarchy, and socialization into a mind-set of extreme violence can be seen as contributing to the mental instability of many men. In *Soldiers of the Sun*, Meirion Harries describes how basic training of the Imperial army was used as a way to socialize or ‘implant a lethal combination of willingness to be led and readiness to kill’[8] in the men. Harries suggests that indoctrination in a patriarchal-military mentality of extreme violence and ‘breaking down of the recruit’s consciousness of self and sense of independent responsibility’[9] contributed to the high incidence of war crimes. Indeed, Harries goes so far as to suggest that the mind-set of the Imperial army ‘bordered on psychopathy: a view of death as sublime and beautiful … [and] surrender as the ultimate dishonour’[10] Recruits were obligated to blindly follow the orders of superior officers, trained to accept the possibility of violent death, and routinely abused and humiliated by senior officers.[11] Under these circumstances, war crimes such as rape and torture became a normal occurrence,

the result of military conditioning. Indeed, the primary purpose of Japan's sex slave operation was 'to reduce the large number of rapes committed by Japanese soldiers.'[12] Adding fuel to this fire was the fact that mental illness within the Imperial army was often left untreated: 'only toward the end of the war did the military authorities acknowledge the existence of battle fatigue.'[13] As Harries astutely remarks in his discussion, when human feeling is degraded, as it was within the military system, this 'open[s] the way to inhuman behaviour.'[14]

Lee's depiction of Hata's military service provides a representation of the personal effects of wartime and the traumas incurred under the patriarchal regime of Imperial Japan during the Second World War. By witnessing the crimes committed against 'comfort women,' including Kkutaeh, the woman he falls in love with, Hata suffers the unrest of a man divided between his sense of duty and his personal feelings. Kkutaeh's presence in Hata's life symbolizes more than just a lost love; she represents a homeland that he has forsaken, an abject otherness that he denies in himself, the embodiment of victimization under a patriarchal regime, and a reminder of his own failure to act independently from that social order.

From her first arrival at Hata's military camp, Kkutaeh and her fellow 'comfort women' disturb the orderly routine existence to which Hata and the other male soldiers are accustomed. Hata recalls expecting the 'imminent arrival' of the women, or girls as they turn out to be. Their presence takes on a disruptive force, upending Hata's routine existence, and fracturing the patriarchal social order within the camp. Hata goes on to liken the girl's arrival to an 'air raid'[15] that puts every man on edge. With anxieties already high with expectation of their demise, not only among the individual men themselves, but also in the faltering Japanese empire, the presence of the girls carries the potential to shatter an already fragile structure.

Hata describes the instabilities of the patriarchal structure by acknowledging the building anxieties of the men: 'for every man who showed no fear or hesitance, there were three or four or five others whose mettle was . . . ashamedly wan and mortal.'[16] Breaking with the myths of Japanese masculinity, the 'lore' of the Japanese soldier, whose 'tenacity and courage . . . in the face of certain death'[17] was legendary, Hata acknowledges how the reality of men's lives was fraught with fears, anxiety, and a looming sense of their own mortality. Hata confesses that he too shared these fears: 'there was little question of the terrible hours ahead of us, and it was a startlingly real possibility that every man in the camp, every soul one looked upon, would soon be dead. . . . My dreams were wracked nightly by the burden of it.'[18] While Hata experiences nightmares, his afflictions are not isolated, but rather part of a contagion of 'malaise and fear'[19] that permeates the camp.

Hysteria is present in the encampment through tell-tale signs as Hata describes a soldier 'who had just come in from the front, who had not a scratch on his body but could no longer see or hear or speak.'[20] While hysteria is clearly apparent in this extreme example, there is indication that hysteria has permeated the everyday lives of soldiers in subtler, insidious ways. Hata describes the symptoms of the other soldiers as well as himself: 'I myself had developed a minor skin condition on the lower calves, and I was treating many others for similar irritations such as boils and scalp rashes and an unusual variety of fungal infections. It seemed the whole encampment was afflicted.'[21] The symptoms are not only physical, but also psychological, as is the case with Corporeal Endo, a young man who confesses to Hata his unhealthy penchant for the pornographic pictures he keeps with him. Hata observes how through the strain of war, this young man's 'besieged mind . . . [has] grown sickly and ornate' in his obsession with women.[22] The nature of Endo's symptoms included 'talking to himself' in a feminine voice and mimicking the English dialogue of female starlets while recreating a cinematic scene of seduction.[23] Given his mimicry of femininity, Endo is labelled as 'a homosexual' by the other soldiers and is even perceived as a 'threat to the other men.'[24] While Hata shows concern, the other soldiers ostracize and mock Endo. In this way, the latter exemplifies how the group

identity of masculinity is threatened by abject Otherness that may exist within the corps, or within oneself.

The treatment of the ‘comfort women’ as property of the corps signifies their objectification and abjection with a patriarchal system. Although the sexual service of the ‘comfort women’ is seemingly handled in an orderly fashion, with visitations allotted to men according to their military rank, the very presence of the girls in the camp escalates the tension among the already agitated men. The fact that there are only five girls allotted to a camp of ‘nearly two hundred men’[25] and that their services were obtained through deception and coercion does not cross the thoughts of any of the men, for whom they were ‘nothing, or less than nothing.’[26] Indeed, the girls are treated as if they were animals, kept in small compartments and ‘crudely referred to’ as ‘*chosen-pi*, a base anatomical slur which also denoted . . . Koreanness.’[27] Hata, too, shares in this patriarchal mentality, as he admits that he saw the girls ‘only as parts of the larger mechanism of his living, the steady machine that grinds along each night and day.’[28] Hata feels the pressure to conform, serve, and obey the patriarchal order of the military encampment or else be labelled and punished as sick, weak, and expendable.

Almost immediately after her arrival, Hata and Kkutaeh share a moment of connection that is derived from their kinship as both being Korean-born. Born in Korea, but adopted by a Japanese family, Hata recalls how his ethnic identity as a Korean was repressed: ‘I’d had [a Korean name] at birth, naturally, but it was never used by anyone, including my real parents, who, it must be said, wished as much as I that I become wholly and thoroughly Japanese.’[29] While Kkutaeh grew up in wealthy family in contrast to Hata’s working-class origin, their shared ethnicity and in particular, their shared language, creates an instant bond between the two. While Kkutaeh wishes for ‘a completely different life,’ she also recognizes the reality of her dire situation; in particular, she sees how the only escape from her current situation is death. It is in this regard that she implores Hata to help her: ‘I only ask that you give me something now … you must know what to give me, so I won’t wake up again.’[30] Kkutaeh’s death wish requires Hata to assist her. Yet, Hata’s desire for Kkutaeh and sense of duty to the patriarchal order of the military camp prevents him from helping her. While Hata clearly desires Kkutaeh and wants to rescue her from this dire situation, he also maintains a continual allegiance to the patriarchal order.

Hata’s obligation to follow the status quo is strengthened by his identification and duty to follow his superior officer, Captain Ono. Captain Ono is both rival of and mentor for Hata; he admires the doctor and chooses him as ‘a model for my future career.’[31] Yet, the disparity of authority between the men also fuels Hata’s growing resentment towards his mentor. Ono often teases Hata for his youthful naivety, causing him to feel ‘anger and shame.’[32] This element of the rivalry between the men is exacerbated by the presence of the ‘comfort women.’ Once the comfort women arrive at the camp, both Ono and Hata will vie for control over Kkutaeh’s fate. Hata will eventually confront Ono about his love for Kkutaeh, and declare his intention to marry her after the war. This declaration occurs only after Hata has ‘taken’ Kkutaeh, in what is decidedly an act of rape.

Hata’s sexual violence is enacted under the façade of masculine gallantry but involves his own erasure of Kkutaeh’s subjectivity. Indeed, in recollection of the rape, Hata emphasizes how ‘swift and natural, as chaste as it ever could be’[33] having sex with Kkutaeh was, all the while ignoring signs of her resistance: ‘She was sleeping, or pretending to sleep, or somehow forcing herself to, and she did not move or speak or make anything but the shallowest of breaths, even as I was casting upon her.’[34] Indeed, Hata’s intense feelings toward Kkutaeh are driven by his desire to possess her and his feeling a sense of entitlement to her body. The fact that his immediate actions following their first sexual encounter is to promise her marriage and demand that she be released from having to provide sexual service to the other men is telling of

Hata's possessiveness. As critic Young Oak Lee suggests, Hata's 'possessive male ego' is obsessed with an 'ideology about gender that associates a girl's purity and integrity with her virginity.'[35] Most important to Hata is that Kkutaeh's virginity is intact before their first sexual encounter, and that she remains in his possession. In fact, Hata claims that he would rather Kkutaeh be dead, than 'bear anyone else having her.'[36] In this regard, Hata's sense of entitlement and possession are in accordance with a patriarchal model of male dominance. He enacts a selfish, oppressive desire to possess and control not only Kkutaeh's body, but also her destiny.

As Hamilton Carroll discusses in his analysis of the text, Hata violence towards Kkutaeh is a reflection of Hata's own conflicts about race and gender. Carroll argues that Hata reduces and erases Kkutaeh's subjectivity through his rape, which in turn acts as a form of abjection of both her femininity and Koreanness. Accordingly, Hata's rape of Kkutaeh is linked 'to his own attempts to cast off his own marginal ethnic status and become wholly Japanese or later, wholly American.'[37] I would add to Carroll's reading of the text, that Hata's rape is also an attempt to erase and repudiate his own feelings of powerlessness and emasculation in the face of patriarchal authority as well as his looming fears of death. Hata will also subject Kkutaeh to a second rape following his confrontation with Ono, wherein he is beaten by Ono and it is revealed to him that Kkutaeh may in fact be pregnant with another man's child. Kkutaeh denies the truth of the rumour, yet Hata is sceptical. Hata will scrutinize Kkutaeh's body as he conducts an examination of her body, subjecting her to his medical gaze. Once she bares her body for him to examine, Hata loses control of himself:

> She did not hold me but she did not push me away. I never meant for this but I could no longer balk, or control myself, and then something inside her collapsed, snapped clean, giving way like some storm-sieged roof, and then I descended upon her, and I searched her, every lighted and darkened corner, and every room.[38]

The image of Hata as a kind of powerful, natural disaster that devastates and penetrates every part of Kkutaeh's body is indicative of his violent response to her body and sexuality. He 'searches' her, wanting to uncover the mysteries of her sex and the truth about her rumoured pregnancy, yet in doing so, he has himself become a violent, deplorable interloper. Given Hata's adherence to gender propriety, he is undoubtedly shaken by the suggestion that Kkutaeh has been unfaithful, that she has all along been 'mastered' by another man.[39] Hata's reaction to the destabilizing threat of Kkutaeh's possible pregnancy is to rape her, a desperate act of a hysterical man. The fact that Hata feels himself to be no longer in control of his actions and experiences a sense of powerlessness in response to seeing Kkutaeh's body identifies how his masculine identity is compromised by the threat of female sexuality.

Hata's sadomasochistic rage is fuelled by his feelings of entitlement over Kkutaeh and narcissistic defence of his masculinity. Increasing the intensity of Hata's feelings for Kkutaeh is his equally intense resentment of Captain Ono. The rivalry between the men culminates in a violent standoff between Ono, Hata, and Kkutaeh, where it is Kkutaeh and not Hata, who takes the life of Captain Ono. Having committed this subversive act, Kkutaeh demands that if Hata truly loves her, he will end her life now, killing her and sparing her the fate of punishment at the hands of the other soldiers. In the end, Hata does not shoot her, 'could not shoot her.'[40] His failure to act in this moment seals her fate. Subsequently, soldiers intervene, taking Kkutaeh into their possession. As Hata resumes the duties as the camp's doctor, taking over for the now deceased Captain Ono, Kkutaeh is brutally tortured, assaulted, raped and murdered by a group

of soldiers. Hata returns only to find her eviscerated body, abandoned on the ground. His reaction to the bloody scene is immediately to repress the event:

> I could not smell or hear or see as I did my medic’s work. I could not feel my hands as they gathered, nor could I feel the weight of such remains …. I could not see the figured legs and feet, the utter, blessed digitations of the hands. Nor could I see the face, the perfected cheek and brow. Its pristine sleep still unbroken, undisturbed. And I could not know what I was doing, or remember any part.[41]

Hata’s memory of the horrifying discovery of Kkutaeh’s body is characterized by a reaction of hysteria. The loss of bodily sensation conveyed through the numbing of his senses of smell, hearing, touch, and sight illustrate a hysterical splitting of mind and body, where the traumatic event, too overwhelming to be fully integrated into consciousness, becomes dissociated. While Hata suggests that he cannot ‘remember any part,’ it will become evident that his traumatic memory is neither fully repressed nor forgotten within the contemporary events of the novel.[42] On the contrary, Hata’s post-war life, in particular, his actions and reactions surrounding his relationship to his adopted daughter, Sunny, can be seen as hysterical re-enactments of guilt originating in his failings with Kkutaeh.

In the contemporary events of the novel, Hata is clearly representative of a man afflicted with a breakdown of his identity. The barriers between past and present, self and Other seem to dissolve as Hata grapples with the rupture of his ideological constructions of race and gender. In his own words, Hata describes what it is like to feel his world crumble: ‘I’m not sure anymore what I see when I ‘look out,’ if it’s real or of my own making or something in between, a widely shared fantasy of what we wish life to be and, therefore, have contrived to create.’[43] This passage describes Hata’s questioning of patriarchy, in particular, the ‘fantasy’ construction of his identity, of which he has grown disillusioned. Hata’s recognition of his fantasies include acknowledgement of how he has been living a double life. He recalls swimming in his pool: ‘It was an unnerving thing, but when I was underneath the water, gliding in that black chill, my mind’s eye suddenly seemed to carry to a perspective high above … I knew there was also a man in that water, amidst it all, a secret swimmer who, if he could choose, might always go silent and unseen.’[44] This passage demonstrates an out-of-body sensation, where Hata’s sense of himself is split. Perceiving his double self as a ‘secret swimmer,’ Hata recognizes how he has been harbouring a part of himself hidden from others. Indeed, Hata has never spoken to anyone about his traumatic military experiences, but rather carries the burden of his past alone.

From the outside and even to his closest friends, Hata appears as a man completely at peace within his quiet, unassuming existence. Having emigrated the American town of Bedley Run in 1963 and lived there for over thirty years, Hata appears to have left his traumatic past behind him. Yet, all is not what it seems with Hata, as the psychological scars of his military experience continue to haunt him. For Hata, the pastime of swimming is more than just a form of exercise, but rather enacts a disturbing return to the past, drawing upon the death instinct. The immersion in water seems to connect Hata with a primitive desire to return to a state of inertia: ‘I could remain within it, silently curled up as if I were quite unborn, as yet not of this life, or of the world…. I did not want innocence so much as I did an erasure reaching back, a pre-beginning … never go forward again.’[45] The desired return to a ‘pre-beginning,’ to a time before birth, is connected with the almost womblike atmosphere of being enveloped by water. In this way, he expresses a wish for self-annihilation or erasure. Indeed, there is a disturbing death wish involved in his pastime: ‘some of us long-time swimmers often wish for ourselves that submerged, majestic flight, feel the near-desire to open one’s mouth and relax and let the

waters rush in deep.'[46] This self-destructive urge will reach its peak during the period when his adopted daughter Sunny reveals to him that she is pregnant.

Indeed, Sunny's presence in Hata's life will resurrect all of his unresolved issues with Kkutaeh; in particular, Sunny will become the object of Hata's symbolic transference, as she is forced to take on Hata's anxieties, fears, guilt, and desire, all of which he once invested in Kkutaeh. He will see Sunny's sexuality as a threat and burden to his identity. He will react in not only fatherly disappointment, but also desire when witnessing her sexuality. He will also exhibit a violent resentment of her marked racial difference, which is evident in his reaction to seeing his adopted daughter for the first time:

> A skinny, jointy young girl, with thick, wavy black hair and dark-hued skin. I was disappointed initially;…. [I] should have known that he or she would likely be the product of a much less dignified circumstance, a night's wanton encounter between a GI and a local bar girl…. Her hair, her skin, were there to see, self-evident, and it was obvious how some other color (or colors) ran deep within her. And perhaps it was right from that moment, the very start, that the young girl sensed my hesitance, the blighted hope in my eyes.[47]

Hata's reaction of 'blighted hope' and disappointment reveal how his patriarchal expectations are a barrier to true connection and intimacy between father and daughter. Hata's degradation of racial and class difference, and his critical disapproval of sexual impropriety disrupt his fiction of patriarchal conformity. The understanding that Sunny was multiracial and the product of a 'wanton encounter' immediately registers her deviation from Hata's ideal vision of family life. Hamilton Carroll reinforces this point in his suggestion that 'Sunny cannot be … the chaste symbol of patriarchal benevolence and domesticated normativity Hata desires.'[48] As it will become evident in Hata's policing of Sunny's sexuality and surveillance of her actions, Hata's desperate attempts to control his daughter are a reflection of his own insecurities of conforming to an impossible patriarchal ideal.

When Sunny rebels against her father's ideals and authority, she will rupture and disturb the status quo. In particular, it is Sunny's sexuality that is most threatening to her father's patriarchal identity, as her actions may tarnish his public reputation. The threat of Sunny's sexuality engenders a violent rage in her father, as exemplified in his reaction to seeing her dance seductively for two men. As a teenage runaway, Sunny flees her father's home. Hata tracks Sunny to where she has been staying and witnesses her subversive sexuality firsthand. In witnessing her sexuality, this fantasy of her purity and his patriarchal role as guardian to that purity are destroyed. The reaction to this disillusionment is violence, anger, and repudiation. It is as if he would rather she be dead or gone, than disrespect him in this way, a feeling that he had also exhibited with Kkutaeh.

The threat of female sexuality compromises Hata's public reputation, where it is his daughter's disobedience and wanton sexuality that undermines his authority. When Sunny reveals that she is pregnant, Hata reaches a breaking point. It is at this time that he contemplates ending his life and Sunny's; in particular, he envisions killing himself and his daughter in a car crash and considers taking his own life by drowning. The same disgust that Hata experienced when hearing the rumor that Kkutaeh was pregnant, is repeated. Hata feels an 'imminent disgrace and embarrassment'[49] and insists that Sunny gets an abortion despite that fact that she is near full term. In this way, not only does Hata decide Sunny's fate for her, but also he directly assists in her abortion, helping the doctor by performing the duties of an attendant nurse. Once again, history repeats itself, and Hata chooses the path of patriarchal obeisance, rather than

allowing a woman to have control of her fate and her own body. Sunny’s abortion is the turning point of her relationship with her father, marking their separation and estrangement.

Although many years pass between the abortion and the contemporary events of the novel, Hata’s guilt surrounding both Kkutaeh’s death and his relationship with his daughter continues to affect him. He experiences his guilt as a perpetual death wish, an ‘ill-feeling’[50] most overtly displayed in his recurring visions of Kkutaeh, which have haunted him repeatedly since the end of the war. Hata reveals how some nights he will ‘think K has finally come back to me.’[51] He describes one such episode, where he regards her figure ‘naked and pale, loosely enrobed in a black silken flag …. I was almost sure she was a spectral body or ghost.’[52] In the return of Kkutaeh as a ghostly figure, Hata is like the war veterans described by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where the traumatized men give ‘the impression … of being pursued by a malignant fate or possessed by some ‘daemonic’ power.’[53] The presence of Kkutaeh’s ghost situates Lee’s novel within a context of trauma fiction. In particular, Lee’s representation of a ghostly presence suggests a return of the repressed for Hata, embodying his guilt surrounding the part he played in her degradation and death. Hata acknowledges the sick feeling of guilt that occurs each time he envisions Kkutaeh: ‘each time an ill feeling comes over me, the soiling, resident sickness you develop when you have never in your life been caught at something wrong, when you have never once been discovered.’[54] The feeling is that his dark past will finally be revealed and his guilt will be exposed.

Unresolved guilt is the catalyst to Hata’s hysterical unrest, causing him to live in a perpetual state of self-torment and isolation. Specifically, Hata feels that it is his lot in life to bring death and pain to whomever he is with and wherever he goes. This foreboding feeling remains at the end of the novel, even after Hata has reconciled with Sunny. He still considers himself as a contagion that may spread and needs to be suppressed. The repeated motif of the black flag in relation to Hata’s identity reinforces this self-destructive drive: ‘Hata is, literally, ‘flag,’ and a ‘black flag,’ or *kurohata*, is the banner a village would raise by its gate in olden times to warn of a contagion within. It is the signal of spreading death.’[55] Hata literally incorporates death within his identity by holding onto his adopted name of ‘Kurohata.’ Indeed, feeling as if he is a harbinger of death, Hata believes that like Kkutaeh, all of his loved ones will also suffer from being near him. As a result, Hata is resolved to spend the rest of his days in estrangement:

> Too much now I’m at the vortex of bad happenings, and I am almost sure I ought to festoon the facade of my house and the bumpers of my car and then garland my shoulders with immense black flags of warning, to let every soul know they must steer clear of this man…[56]

Fearing that he will ‘steadily [infect]’[57] those around him with his malignancy, Hata decides to ‘go away from here,’ to leave his home and life in Bedley Run.[58] Like Oedipus, Hata’s exile is a gesture that connotes both self-punishment and atonement, as he decides to live the rest of his days alone, exiling himself from Sunny and her son.

In this final transformation of Hata’s character, he effectively takes up the position of the abject Other, determined to erase himself in one final gesture. As he describes, ‘I will fly a flag…. I will be outside looking in … in this town or the next or one five thousand miles away. I will circle round and arrive again. Come almost home.’[59] This statement captures his position as marginal, ephemeral, an almost ghost-like figure, a kind of passive non-being, who exists in a kind of limbo. The image of the ‘flag’ and of coming ‘almost home’ can be read as symbols of impending death. Like Kkutaeh, he will be only a memory, a peripheral figure who exists only in the minds of those who have known him. This final vision of Hata reinforces the idea that the

death drive is inherent in traumatic male hysteria, where self-annihilation is the primary motivating factor in the repetition of the past. By removing himself from his daughter's life, Hata enacts one last gesture of self-erasure, as punishment for the pain he has caused in not only her life, but also Kkutaeh's.

Notes

[1] George Fink, ed. *Encyclopedia of Stress.* Vol. 3. (London: Academic Press, 2000), 556. As defined by George Fink, survivor guilt is 'mental pain that results from the appraisal that a person has done wrong by surviving a trauma. This is because the survivor ties his or her own survival to the death of others. One of the prominent features is 'self-blame' that is derived from the feeling that the survivor 'could have, should have, but due to selfishness did not save others, but instead only caused suffering.' As Fink discusses, the feeling of self-blame is enhanced 'if one's usual role, such as husband, parent or rescuer, was to protect those who died.' From Fink's definition, the gender implications of survivor guilt can also be surmised; in traditional male roles of husband and father, or in certain occupational positions of soldier and medical officer, as well as in patriarchal constructions of masculinity as heroic, fearless, and protecting, these can be seen as adding to feelings of self-blame in men following trauma.
[2] Karen Parker and Jennifer F. Chew, 'The Jugun Ianfu System', in *When Sorry Isn't Enough: The Controversy over Apologies and Reparations for Human Injustice*, ed. Roy L. Brooks (New York: New York UP, 1999), 95.
[3] George Hicks, 'The Comfort Woman Redress Movement' in *When Sorry Isn't Enough: The Controversy over Apologies and Reparations for Human Injustice*, ed. Roy L. Brooks. (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 122.
[4] Hicks, 'The Comfort Woman,' 122.
[5] Mark S. Micale and Paul Lerner, *Traumatic Pasts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 23.
[6] Micale and Lerner, *Traumatic Pasts*, 22.
[7] Micale and Lerner, *Traumatic Pasts*, 22.
[8] Meirion Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun*: *The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York: Random House, 1991), 482.
[9] Harries, *Soldiers*, 482.
[10] Harries, *Soldiers*, 481.
[11] Harries, Soldiers, 482.
[12] Parker and Chew 95.
[13] Harries, *Soldiers*, 478.
[14] Harries, *Soldiers*, 482.
[15] Chang-rae Lee, *A Gesture Life* (New York: Riverhead, 1999), 165.
[16] Ibid., 170.
[17] Ibid., 170.
[18] Ibid., 170.
[19] Ibid., 158.
[20] Ibid., 178.
[21] Ibid., 170.
[22] Ibid., 158.
[23] Ibid., 158.
[24] Ibid., 158.
[25] Ibid., 165.

[26] Ibid., 250.
[27] Ibid., 251.
[28] Ibid., 251.
[29] Ibid., 235.
[30] Ibid., 254.
[31] Ibid., 179.
[32] Ibid., 178.
[33] Ibid., 260.
[34] Ibid., 260.
[35] Young Oak Lee ‘Gender, Race, and the Nation in *A Gesture Life*’ *Critique* 46.2 (2005): 151.
[36] Lee, *A Gesture Life*, 260.
[37] Hamilton Carroll, ‘Traumatic Patriarchy: Reading Gendered Nationalisms in Chang-rae Lee’s *A Gesture Life*’ *Modern Fiction Studies* 51.3 (2005): 604.
[38] Chang-rae Lee, *A Gesture Life*, 295.
[39] Ibid., 270.
[40] Ibid., 301.
[41] Ibid., 305.
[42] Ibid., 305.
[43] Ibid., 80.
[44] Ibid., 24.
[45] Ibid., 290.
[46] Ibid., 277.
[47] Ibid., 204.
[48] Carroll, ‘Traumatic Patriarchy,’ 610.
[49] Chang-rae Lee, *A Gesture Life*, 340.
[50] Ibid., 288.
[51] Ibid., 286.
[52] Ibid., 288.
[53] Sigmund Freud, ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ in *The Freud Reader* ed. Peter Gay (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 604.
[54] Chang-rae Lee, *A Gesture Life*, 288.
[55] Ibid., 224.
[56] Ibid., 333.
[57] Ibid., 333.
[58] Ibid., 355.
[59] Ibid., 356.

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Justine Gieni is PhD in the department of English at the University of Saskatchewan. She received her Master's degree and Bachelor's degree in English from the University of Regina. Her current research involves the study of contemporary narratives of sexual violence, with particular focus on representations of masculinity and male hysteria.

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The Heart Wants What It Wants

Evelyn Tsitas

Seth Barker awoke in the intensive care unit feeling like his chest had been cracked open and his heart had been snatched from its resting place. He knew what the surgeons had seen once they were inside: no glistening jewel of a pump, but an obscenely grotesque lump swelled twice its size to compensate for its faulty ventricle.

Seth knew it was the curse of the intelligent to go through life acutely aware of every shade of their mortality. As he entered a conscious state, he could feel each pain and knew the reason his body ached. His legs had been cut open and his veins harvested to use as bypass vessels to stitch on to the coronary arteries.

He could, he imagined, sense the weight of the surgeon's hand imprinted on his back where they flipped him over to gain access to the back of his heart. He had been put on a heart-lung machine while his old heart was virtually stopped. How long had they been working like that? Did the junior surgeon get cramp from holding his body like a dead weight?

Dead: that's what he had been, officially, without a heart in his chest cavity. They probably had to scoop out the decaying matter with their fingers to allow access for the new organ. The prize he had waited so long for, while his lips turned blue and his breath laboured and he was reduced to sitting in a chair barely able to raise his hand to the computer while he waited for the phone call.

In the recovery room, he opened his eyes and felt the tubes sticking down his throat. His surgeon patted him on the shoulder and gave him the thumbs up. Dr Greg Moore's blue scrubs were wet under the armpits.

'Seven and a half hours, Seth. It went like a dream. You've got a new heart pumping like a work horse.'

Seth followed Moore around the room with his eyes, the only thing he was able to move. The morphine didn't seem to be having any effect and it was as if he was being hacked open with a chainsaw.

He blinked his eyes frantically.

'I've upped the morphine. You've been out for ten hours since the operation, and are only just starting to come around. Give it time.'

Time was something Seth once thought he had used up. But now, as he felt the surprising sensation of warmth back in his fingers, he realised that he had been given a new clock.

It was as if he had hitched a ride with Ra the Ancient Egyptian sun god.

He blinked at Dr Moore painfully and lifted his two fingers in a victory sign.

Three days later, Seth was back in the ward, sitting up in the heavy silk dressing gown he had bought in the Khan el-Khalili bazaar in Cairo. Open on his hospital bed was the latest journal article about the identification of Akhenaton's mummy, and the possibility that Nefertiti ruled after him as the pharaoh Smenkaure. For the first time in years his head was clear, yet he had more interest chatting to the attractive nurse than in academic articles.

'I'd kill for a beer,' he said. He peered at the name tag pinned to her uniform. 'Nurse Sophie Angelos.'

Sophie's firm young breasts filled the ugly floral print with promise.

She concentrated on wrapping the blood pressure sleeve on his arm, but laughed at his high spirits.

'You're recovering remarkably fast,' she said.

Her fingers on his skin, a light touch, seemed to reignite something inside.

'I feel like a man half my age. My donor must have been a young man.' It wasn't just conversation. He wanted to know who shared his rising and falling, the minutes of his day and the passage of the sun across the sky.

'I can't say,' Sophie was firm and professional. 'It's illegal under the Human Tissue Act to identify a donor. In New Zealand the Organ Donor service is not even listed in any phone book.'

'However, I am sure you can find the numbers for the British Secret Service, the American Secret Service and the CIA,' Seth said. 'Interesting, don't you think, what we decide is secret?'

'I don't know about that.'

'Perhaps it's just as well we keep the ultimate secret of life and death from the public. They might not want to donate if they knew the truth, would they?'

'People are very altruistic,' Sophie said.

'You know that medical term brain death was only invented after they started doing organ transplants?' said Seth. 'I thought dead was dead. Oh no, your heart can still be pumping but they'll want your organs. This is despite how frequently people awaken from supposed comas and permanent vegetative states. Maybe the heart I have was taken before the person was really dead? Is that then a form of murder? Am I then, the recipient of stolen goods?'

'You think too much. You have a second chance of life, be grateful.'

'Gratitude I have, and also questions. You know, in Spain, the intensive care doctors are also the organ donor procurers, and their results get written up in the newspaper each month. You see, the Catholic Church is behind organ donation there, and they push it hard. Doctors need to meet their quotas like they are parking ticket inspectors or real estate agents on commission.'

'I do this job because I want to help people, because I care,' Said Sophie. 'You can't be a nurse without a belief in God, whatever god that is for you.'

'You talk about God—yet in Missouri they are considering legislation to allow death-row inmates to donate bone marrow or a kidney and have their sentences reduced to life in prison without parole. Where is God for those people? Have they been forsaken?'

Sophie shook her head. 'In Australia it's different. Here people have to sign up as organ donors or someone has to be willing to sign their organs away after an accident. Someone cared enough to donate their heart to you.'

Seth laughed. 'Oh, I am indeed lucky. You know why there is a shortage of organ donors?'

'Because people feel uneasy about not being buried whole?' Sophie was Roman Catholic and Sicilian. It didn't sit well with her, the whole organ donation procedure, but she has elderly parents, young children and debts and this was better paid that causal shift work.

'No, because air bags have made cars too safe,' Seth said. 'It used to be young men on wet nights with too much to drink. They were the choice cuts. Bang! Into a tree! A head injury and a healthy heart. But now, doctors can't afford to be so fussy: they take spare parts where ever they can, scooping it out of second class corpses, weighing up slightly damaged goods as better than none at all. So much for the Gift of Life, right?'

Seth noticed the colour in his hands first. Before the transplant, they were bluish, an oddly alien consequence of the cyanosis caused by inadequate oxygen in the blood. Now, his hands looked pink. Plump and soft, his skin seemed firmer, even his nails had a gloss to them.

Dr Moore laughed when he held them up as evidence.

'Seth, I don't need to look at your hands. I've seen your new heart beating hard and strong when I connected it up.'

'It's not my heart. '

'It is now.'

'It's stolen property.'

Dr Moore laughed. 'Donors signed a consent form before they died or their relatives did so after—we don't deal in black market organs in this country.'

'What did you do with my old heart?'

'It turned to slop once I started pulling it from your body. It was only the medication that was holding it together while you waited for the transplant.'

Seth imagined his heart barely contained in his chest, as unformed as a co nvenience store semi-frozen drink. What did it mean to have a heart so foul? From the time of the Ancient Egyptians, the heart had been seen as an 'inner book' containing a person's thoughts, feelings and memories. His heart had been taken out, and along with it part of who he was.

He remembered his last trip to Egypt, excavating statues built to house the souls of a scribe of divine books. Inside the wooden figures lived the scribe's Ka or life force. He had touched the brittle wood and felt a connection with the man who had prepared documents for the temples. And now part of that experience was consigned to the hazardous waste bin, part of his Ka thrown away. What did he have inside him now? Whose heart was it that beat strongly and made him hard at the mere sight of a pretty nurse? Whose Ka did he have now?

As he lay in the hospital bed at night, Seth felt an unfamiliar rhythm inside him, one that pumped to a new beat. He could visualise it in his mind, the atrioventricular valve, atrium and ventricle all pulsating inside his chest, the pulmonary arteries connected inside him with the slippery black thread that held his new heart tight.

Already he felt like a stranger in his own body. What was the sum of us, he wondered? The way we buttered our bread? The words we whispered in our lover's ear? A preference for beer or wine? The choice of television program? Each was a part of the internal road map that we learned to navigate by memory. But if the map changed? If the compass inside shifted? Then what?

He started wanting sugar with his tea. Stronger coffee. He was sure he was mixing up colors, preferring different types of books, and had an insatiable hunger for the news. Academic texts were boring him. He was losing himself.

Dr Moore told him his heart would never feel quite right, but it would work perfectly. 'You'll be fine, just remember to take the immunosuppressants at strict intervals as you've been instructed.'

'Otherwise the heart will turn on me,' said Seth. 'That I understand.'

Soon after the operation, the memories started. First, they were all about her: the woman, the one. He couldn't see what she looked like, but her long dark hair fell over his face as she straddled him when they made love. He could feel the softness of her olive skin and hear her laughter.

'I'm having a lot of vivid flashbacks,' he told the psychiatrist who had been sent to his bedside. She was a surprisingly young looking woman who wore severe glasses as if to give herself an air of authority.

'That could be a side effect of the Corticosteroids you are taking to take to suppress the inflammation,' she said. 'Strong memories, a sense of déjà vu, they're all part of the steroid package.'

'But they are not my memories,' Seth replied. 'I am dreaming of a woman I don't know, but my heart loves her.'

'It is probably a sign of being ready for a new relationship,' she said, in a clipped, efficient Asperger tone.

But Seth knew he wasn't just the same man with a new heart, ready for a new love. He was a man whose new heart was starting to invade every part of his being; he knew – the heart wants what the heart wants.

Once at home, nothing seemed the same. Seth went through his cupboards and threw out the food that now disgusted him: muesli, soy milk, tofu and non-dairy cream cheese. In its place he bought dark roasted coffee beans, thick hummus and baba ghanoush, a bag of shelled pistachios, salty Greek feta cheese and glossy Kalamata olives. He filled his freezer with meat, so much so that it looked as if he'd slaughtered an animal over the weekend and packed it in to ward off a long and cold winter.

Seth put his classical CD collection in a box and consigned Liszt, Mozart and Bach to the attic. He spent an afternoon at Readings Books in Lygon Street, where he purchased music by Elvis Costello, the Rolling Stones and The Who.

There was a resonance now and a rhythm to the days that were not his. When he went to bed, he could feel the blood pumping through his veins, he could hear his heartbeat, he could feel the back of his neck tighten against the cotton fabric. His body twitched and shuddered, sweat soaked the sheets. When he was awake, he sensed a presence beside him, like someone watching him.

There were obvious reminders that he wasn't alone, such as the scar on his chest and the pills that he swallowed. Then there were shadows and whispers and a glimpse every time he went past a mirror of someone else staring out at him.

One night, he woke up and couldn't see.

Fumbling for the bedside light, a deep voice said, 'Don't. Leave the light out.'

He got out of bed and drew back the curtains. 'Where am I? The last thing I remember is Sydney.'

He rummaged through his desk until he found a pen and clean sheet of paper pulled from the printer. In the hand he didn't use to write with, in handwriting not his own, he wrote a letter to a woman he never met. *Xanthe, my love, what happened? I am lost. I need you to find me.*

Other nights, he when he could sleep, the erotically charged dreams would visit. He could feel the weight of her heavy breasts under his hands when he awoke, and smell the musky scent of exotic oil on his pillowcase.

Seth had no memory of this, until a week later, Amber found the letter and held it out, hand shaking, crying at his betrayal.

'I could take care of you, make sure you take your medication,' Amber sobbed. 'You don't need Xanthe!' Through the fabric of his shirt she traced the scar snaking down his chest with her chewed fingernails.

'I don't need your pity or concern.' He pulled away from her. He had no idea who Xanthe was, nor had he ever seen the letter. He didn't want to tell Amber that.

'But I love you!' cried Amber. She unselfconsciously flung her arms around Seth and his heart pounded as if he'd been running. He'd noticed that his heart was responding to a rhythm that had nothing to do with his activities. If he walked in the morning, it would pound at night, as if it had no idea what he was doing. His heart was stupid.

'You have a second chance of life now and I want to share it with you.'

'Man's love is of man's life a thing apart; 'tis woman's whole existence,' Seth quoted, kissing her on the forehead.

Amber pursed her face in concentration. 'Shakespeare?' she asked, in a tiny, hopeful voice.

Seth shook his head and sighed. 'Byron.'

He pushed her out of the door just in time. Already the nausea that enveloped him after he swallowed the anti-rejection tablets was driving him to the floor, where he curled sweating and panting until the tide receded.

Seth now understood that his new life was coming at a cost. Since recovering from the post-operative phase, he'd been trying to get used to the crucial immunosuppressant medication that he had to take regularly, twice a day or his heart would fail. As he swallowed each tablet, he counted the risks. The ciclosporin A and tacrolimus together with corticosteroids and the azathioprine meant that drug toxicity was almost inevitable.

After Amber left, he burnt the letter and became consumed with documenting his recovery. He started writing a book that his publisher was sure had a market. His Egyptian journals had sold well, coupled with his impressionistic photographs. Now he turned the camera on himself. Stripped naked, he stood in front of a white wall and took photographs of bruises and scar tissue. He wrote about his thoughts as he came out of surgery. But were they his? He got out his old journals and compared them with the letters he found around the house. *Remember the time I interviewed Tom Stoppard? I read all his books because I didn't want to seem like the ignorant colonial boy.*

He held these in his shaking hands. Seth had taken Amber to see a retro version of *Jumpers* and all she said was 'I thought there would be more in the way of set design.' Maybe the post-traumatic stress disorder was doing this to him. He kept trying to articulate the memories of pain and near death. How had he really felt? How could you explain nuances of agony? There was the necessity to pin these down, as if they were the signposts on this uncharted journey, or a brilliant butterfly to be trapped on a board. He wondered, if he pinned his memories to a board, attached each corner firmly down, what would it look like? His life in flashback? Already there were so many moments he couldn't recall.

Harder still to record was Seth's gradual loss of himself. If he wasn't his memories, then he must be his desires, his passion, his habits. But it was as if the new heart was taking away his very soul. Dr Moore said the heart was simply a muscle but Seth and his heart had been through 55 years together and now it was gone. There was nothing familiar about his life now. The radio seemed to tune itself to the sports news. He hated sport. He signed up for full pay TV and the news was on all the time. He never watched television. An enormous Panasonic flat screen plasma TV was delivered. He was shown his credit card details and signature on the forms.

Was it the general anaesthetic that had destroyed so many of those memories he had held dear? Why was the image of the Pyramid against the blue Egyptian sky now like a grainy photo in his mind? Were all the things that had made him now buried deep inside somewhere, waiting to be uncovered? Or, were the recipient's memories struggling to the surface?

He placed his hand on his scar where his rib bone had been cracked open with sharp pliers and flesh sliced and pulled apart to reveal the pulsating heart within. The quickening muscle was life itself, pushing and pulling to its internal memory. No wonder the ancient Egyptians worshipped the organ and held it sacred in mummification – it was the life source of the body just as the Ethiopian headwaters of the Nile carried the monsoonal rains that gave life to the Delta. He was being washed away, drowned in someone else's past and desires. And the tide was rising.

It seemed to Seth that the transplant process was much like the embalming one. Just as his chest has been washed with antiseptic by the surgeon, the Ancient Egyptians would wash the body to symbolise its rebirth into a new life. The salty natron killed bacteria just as the modern chemicals that covered his chest. His chest had been opened in the same way the embalmers would open the body, pulling out the organs through a neat slit at the side. How would Seth be judged now his heart was in a biohazard waste bin? Would Seth now be judged by his new heart? Each tablet he took every day seemed to chip away at who he knew as

himself. The blackouts became more pronounced. He'd wake up hours after on the floor, or even in another suburb, with no recollection of how he got there.

Dr Moore explained: 'Five years after transplantation, about a third of patients have abnormal renal function, a third have transplant coronary artery disease, and a fifth have experienced malignancy. Those are the bald facts. Some people live relatively normal lives but you have to take the tablets at strict intervals otherwise your body will attack your new heart.'

'What about the blackouts? The loss of memory? Buying things I don't recall'

'We'll try and juggle the dosage, but all the tablets have side effects. You have to live with it, and make the best of it. It's up to your new heart now, and you have to find a way of accepting that.'

'There must be something else we can do?'

'You've done all you can, I've done all I can. It's no longer in our control.'

Seth screamed in anger. 'Everything is in our control!'

'Perhaps, except the two big things: life and death. It's hubris to think we can affect those outcomes.'

'I don't believe that. Surely I can control this new heart instead of it controlling me.'

'It's not controlling you, Seth, it's keeping you alive.' Dr Moore eyed him, concerned.

'Then why am I having dreams and memories that aren't my own?'

'Flashbacks? Nightmares? Recollections? These are all symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. It's a distinct possibility as a result of severe trauma when you are in danger of being killed or maimed. Or dying.'

'I don't have mental illness.'

'Expert advice could be invaluable, especially if you start to numb the pain by using drugs or alcohol.'

Seth laughed. 'You think I'd drink myself to death just when I have another chance at life?'

As he lay in the crisp white sheets of his mahogany sleigh bed at night, Seth felt his new heart beating so loud in his chest he was worried it might explode through his ribs. But all he could remember when he woke shortly afterwards was a dark house, stairs, a mirror with no face.

He walked to the bathroom and stared at himself. *I am Seth, Dr Seth Barker, academic, researcher, and writer.*

The man who looked back at him was younger, handsome, blonde and familiar. It was Lawrence Griffon, television reporter, killed in the car accident; his wife had donated his organs. His face shattered into tiny shards as Seth smashed the mirror in anger. 'This is my life! I have the heart now!'

But Seth knew that was no longer true. The heart wants what it wants.

Evelyn Tsitas, Former News Ltd journalist is completing her PhD in Creative Writing at RMIT University, Melbourne. An award winning crime fiction writer, she is co-author of *Handle With Care,* a women's health book, and has had her libretti for children—*Software: Tale of A Virtual Valkyrie* and *Bookworm: Adventures on the Internet*, produced by Victoria State Opera and Opera Australia. *Software* toured the Edinburgh Children's Festival and the UK.

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Buffy's Dark Descendants: Cultural Memory and the Created Family in Supernatural Teen Dramas

Margo Collins

Abstract
Recent supernatural teen dramas *The Secret Circle*, *Teen Wolf* and *The Vampire Diaries* draw on the idea of created family as developed in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The teens in these television shows work to construct and control cultural memory in order to overcome the 'monsters' of adolescent anxiety. Ultimately, association with actual monsters such as vampires, witches and werewolves offer adolescents in these shows a measure of autonomy and agency that they otherwise lack.

Key Words: Television, drama, adolescent, supernatural, family, cultural memory.

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The supernatural teen drama *The Secret Circle* debuted on the CW network in fall 2011 to general panning by television critics, who decried the show as being 'a teen witch-fest that is dumb and obvious' and 'leaden'[1] and noted that 'adding magical powers to a set of dull, carbon-copy high school characters doesn't make them interesting. It just makes them dull in a different way.'[2] Even the best review allowed only that it was 'another pleasurably trashy teen fantasy in which the hormonal surges of youth are expressed as a magical yet scary power. Beats worrying about acne…. The acting is flat, but the show casts a hokey spell.'[3] To some degree, of course, the critics are right—the show is formulaic, perhaps even wooden. Despite critical disdain, though, the show has spawned dozens of websites, blogs, wikis, Facebook pages, and other evidence of fans' adoration of the new series, and *The Secret Circle* was nominated for a Saturn award for Best Youth-Oriented Series on Television—all indications that the show's targeted teen market is perfectly happy with the series. Part of its popularity derives, says Hank Stuever of the *Washington Post*, from 'this easy-bake coven's powerful spell of teen angst.'[4] In this case, the teen angst is particularly focused on family, as in virtually all recent supernatural teen dramas, including the CW's *The Vampire Diaries* and MTV's *Teen Wolf*. In their focus on family ties among both biological family and the created family of socially (and sometimes monstrously) connected teens, these shows take the traditional gothic fascination with the past and apply it to familial history. By taking control of cultural memory, the adolescents in these series strive to construct identities independent of previous generations' definitions of both family and monstrosity. Whereas the shows' previous generations used information about the monsters in their midst to create secret societies and isolationist groups, the teens reconfigure that information in order to build connections, implying that control of cultural memory equates control of reality. Ultimately, these supernatural teen dramas point to the possibility of constructing a reality in which adolescents take on adult roles and become the creators and curators of cultural memory. In doing so, supernatural teen dramas highlight concerns about inheritance, power, monstrosity, and identity, offering the created family and control over cultural memory to ameliorate typical adolescent anxieties.

The three series under discussion here—*The Vampire Diaries*, *The Secret Circle*, and *Teen Wolf*—all combine traditional gothic elements with more mundane teen dramas in strikingly similar ways. In these shows, a teen with few family connections is swept up in supernatural events. The protagonist and his or her new circle face dangers, both supernatural

and mundane, that threaten their lives and their connections to one another. The shows differ in only in the specifics, as the following synopses clearly indicate.

In *The Secret Circle*, Cassie Blake (played by Britt Robertson) is a newly orphaned teen whose mother has been killed in what the audience knows is a magically created fire. She moves in with her grandmother Jane (Ashley Crow) in Chance Harbor, the small town her mother left before Cassie was born. There, Cassie is inducted into a group of teen witches who need her in order to complete their circle—a coven of six. In this circle are Adam (Thomas Dekker), his girlfriend Diana (Shelley Hennig), bad-girl Faye (Phoebe Tonkin), her best friend Melissa (Jessica Parker Kennedy), and Melissa's almost-boyfriend, Nick (Louis Hunter). Nick is killed off and replaced mid-season by his brother Jake (Chris Zylka), who is himself both a witch and a witch hunter. In the course of the first season, the circle faces a number of dangers including ghosts, witch hunters, former witches who want to drain the children's power, evil drug-dealing voodoo practitioners, and (predictably, for a teen drama) one another.

In *The Vampire Diaries*, recently orphaned Elena Gilbert (Nina Dobrev) falls in love with Stefan (Paul Wesley), a vampire. In concert with Stefan's brother Damon (Ian Somerhalder), Elena's witchy best friend Bonnie (Kat Graham), werewolf Tyler (Michael Trevino), and newly created vampire Caroline (Candice Accola), Elena and Stefan deal with ghosts, vampire hunters, vampires who want to drain Elena's blood for its power, and one another.

In *Teen Wolf*, recently bitten Scott McCall (Tyler Posey) resists being inducted into a pack of werewolves. With the help of his best friend 'Stiles' Stilensky (Dylan O'Brien), Scott learns to use thoughts of his new girlfriend, Allison Argent (Crystal Reed), to control the urge to shift into his werewolf form. Together, the teens work together to overcome problems created by werewolf hunters, werewolves who want to use Scott for his power, and (yet again) one another.

The parallels among the three shows are obvious, and reflect adolescent fears about family, power, and connection as embodied by the various monsters in each series. Of course, the idea that teen horror shows embody adolescent anxieties in monstrous forms is far from new. As Pat Gill notes in a discussion of slasher films,

> suburban and small town teenagers are put in danger time and again, at home, at school, at camp, and on holiday. These films seem to mock white flight to gated communities, in particular the attempts of parents to shield their children from the dangerous influences represented by the city: widespread crime, easy access to drugs, unsupervised friendships. The danger is within, the films seem to say; the horror derives from the family and from the troubling ordeal of being a late-twentieth-century teenager.[5]

That fiction might offer answers to those ordeals is also a critical commonplace. Most famously, Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* argues that fairy tales 'speak about . . . severe inner pressures in a way that the child unconsciously understands and, without belittling the serious inner struggles that growing up entails, offer examples of both temporary and permanent solutions to acute psychological difficulties.'[6] As modern versions of fairy tales, supernatural teen dramas offer the same potential arena to examine psychological difficulties and discover solutions. In particular, these shows suggest an adolescent ability to control the monsters by controlling the cultural memory of those monsters—and by extension, controlling the fears those monsters represent.

Moreover, in analyses of these supernatural teen dramas, it has become *de rigueur* to discuss Joss Whedon's television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), generally

recognized as, if not the first, at least the most influential supernatural teen drama. Rhonda V. Wilcox asserts that

> In Buffy's world, by contrast [to other teen dramas], the problems teenagers face become literal monsters. Internet predators are demons; drink-doctoring frat boys have sold their souls for success in the business world; a girl who has sex with even the nicest-seeming boy discovers that he afterwards becomes a monster. And underlying the various threats is a repeated one: the horror of becoming a vampire often correlates with the dread of becoming an adult.[7]

Finally, that the gothic in general and vampire tales in particular are fictions of family—or familiar fiction—has also been well documented. Steven Bruhm, for example, claims that 'the central concerns of the classical Gothic are not that different from those of the contemporary Gothic: the dynamics of family, the limits of rationality and passion, the definition of statehood and citizenship, the cultural effects of technology.'[8] And in her discussion of Ann Rice's vampiric families, Candace R. Benefiel writes that

> many texts have sought to portray the vampire as a part of a family grouping. The figuratively incestuous family of vampires can be traced in rudimentary form to Stoker's Dracula (it would seem that everything in vampire fiction descends from the grand old man of the genre); Dracula is first presented in his Transylvanian castle with three brides/daughters, who are barely restrained from bringing the visiting Jonathan Harker into the fold…. Anne Rice, however, expanded on this considerably in *Interview with the Vampire*, making the nuclear family of vampires a major theme in her novel…. where she broadened an existing path, others turned it into a highway.[9]

The three most recent iterations of Gothic teen drama under discussion here significantly focus on familial issues—specifically, on what constitutes a valuable familial connection. All of the shows set up this focus on what, precisely, 'family' means early in the first season, and all three series privilege the created family over the biological family.

In *The Secret Circle*, Cassie quickly learns that all of the members of her circle are orphans, either wholly or in part—each circle member lost one or both parents in a fire that happened sixteen years earlier, when the parents were little more than teens themselves. In their decision to 'bind' their circle—an action that leaves the witches more powerful collectively but unable to use magic individually—the members of the Secret Circle link together in a way that makes the created family of the circle more significant to its members than the more traditional familial ties. Indeed, when Cassie is first introduced to the other members of the circle, Diana begins by saying 'We're different; you're different.' Faye interrupts, saying 'Oh, for God's sake. Spit it out. You're a witch. You're a full-blooded, hundred percent witch. We all are.'[10] Faye's use of the term 'full-blooded' implies that the members of this circle are as related 'by blood' as any biologically connected family might be; they are as much 'family' as any other group connected by blood ties. Unlike Buffy, whose power is generational but not inherited biologically, Cassie's circle is made up of other witches, a family of witches connected by a shared biological heritage, if not traditional familial bonds.

Elena's created family on *The Vampire Diaries* is also linked by blood ties. She and her brother Jeremy are initially under the care of their aunt Jenna. But by the end of the second season, Jenna's death at the hands of a vampire, though horrifying, clarifies what Elena already

knows: that traditional familial ties do not have the same power as other kinds of blood ties. When the members of Elena's created family share blood ties, it's a more literal embodiment of those familial connections. In particular, Elena is the 'doppelganger,' an exact replica of her ancestor Katherine, who is also Stefan's and Damon's vampiric progenitor. Elena, Stefan, and Damon are all 'blood descendants' of the same person. Therefore, they are family—again, connected by a shared heritage of blood ties. Elena has more connection to her created family than her traditional family. That Elena was adopted into her traditional family only underscores these issues.

Teen Wolf's characters also share connections of blood, but not necessarily genetics. When Scott is bitten by the alpha werewolf Peter Hale (Ian Bohen), he is expected to become part of Peter's pack. The viewer discovers that Scott's fellow werewolf and sometimes mentor Derek Hale (Tyler Hoechlin) is already part of the pack, though Derek's werewolf status is an inherited biological trait. Derek is aware of the distinction between the genetic werewolf and the werewolf created through the blood/saliva exchange of a werewolf bite:

> Scott: I need you to teach me how to control this.
> Derek: Look. I am what I am because of birth. Teaching someone who was bitten takes time. I don't even know if I can teach you.[11]

However, in their first conversation, Derek emphasizes a new familial connection between them:

> Derek: The bite is a gift.
> Scott: I don't want it.
> Derek: You will. And you're going to need me if you want to learn how to control it. So you and me, Scott? We're brothers now.[12]

By claiming that the two werewolves are 'brothers'—and are, moreover, of the same lineage since Scott was turned into a werewolf by Derek's genetic uncle—Derek underscores the significance of created family. The season one finale furthers this privileging of the created family as Derek and Scott finally choose one another by allying against Peter to create their own werewolf pack. That Scott's sports rival Jackson (Colton Haynes) requests to be made a werewolf and join the pack (and that Derek apparently honors that request) means that as the new alpha, Derek plans to expand his created family. He is reproducing by means of the created family rather than the biological family.

The need for the created family in supernatural teen drama is often prompted by a lack of other familial ties. Moreover, for the teens in these shows, 'family' does not necessarily include parents, as Cassie's and Elena's orphan status indicates and Scott's single-parent mother reinforces. In its focus on the problems of the absent parents, Gill's commentary on slasher films again applies to these supernatural teen dramas:

> Slasher films show teenagers in peril, with no hope of help from their parents. Mostly these parents are generally too busy or too involved in their own problems or pleasures to help. Even caring, concerned parents are impotent; often they are hapless and distracted, unaware of their children's problems and likely to dismiss or discount their warnings and fears. Indeed, parents like these need guarding, and children frequently find themselves in the stressful adult role of protector. At times the parents, albeit unwittingly, have created the monsters. Some action in their past has brought about this relentless evil

> force to wreak havoc among their children. What is striking about most of these films is the notable uselessness of parents, their absence, physically and emotionally, from their children's lives. Teens must deal with the extraordinarily resilient monsters on their own.[13]

Teens in supernatural dramas must also deal with monsters without familial assistance. And unlike earlier versions of the genre, parental replacements do not seem to be necessary—Buffy may have had Giles, the adult librarian and her 'watcher' to replace first her absent father and then her dead mother, but none of the adults in these shows make adequate replacements. Some, like Peter Hale in *Teen Wolf*, must be killed off in order for the created family to maintain its privileged status. Indeed, the few remaining traditional relatives of the characters illustrate the apparent danger of prioritizing traditional family over created family, as traditional adult family members are at best ineffective and at worst potentially or actually evil.

In *The Secret Circle*, those parents who survived the fire were stripped of their own genetically inherited powers by the 'elders' (their own parents) and spend their time plotting to get those powers replaced by manipulating their children—in particular, Faye's mother and Diana's father scheme to take control of the children by potentially nefarious means. The power-hungry couple also kills Nick when he is taken over by a demon—an act that serves perhaps to protect their children but more importantly furthers their plan to regain their stolen powers. And Diana's grandmother attempts to murder Cassie to stop Cassie from using her 'dark' magic—an act that actually spurs that dark magic to manifest when Cassie breaks out of the coffin in which she has been buried alive.

In *The Vampire Diaries*, many of the characters' parents are on the 'Founders' Council,' a group dedicated to ridding the small town of Mystic Falls of vampires and other monsters. In its mission, the Founders' Council is diametrically opposed to the goals of Elena and her created family, who want to protect at least the vampires and werewolves that are part of that family. The members of this council are also often parents of the very monsters they wish to eradicate. For example, werewolf Tyler Lockwood is the mayor's son and vampire Caroline Forbes is the sheriff's daughter, making these parents (both council members) dangers to their own children. The biological family is thus pitted against the created family, again underscoring the importance of that created family.

In *Teen Wolf*, Scott's girlfriend Allison is the daughter of a professional werewolf hunter whose very existence threatens Scott. Stiles' father is the town sheriff, investigating the series of 'animal attacks' that plague the town Beacon Hills. And the alpha Peter, in his desire to draw Scott into the pack, threatens Scott's own created family. In this series, as well, adults are pitted against the adolescents' created family.

Even those adults who might be potential allies are ineffective. In *The Secret Circle*, Adam's father is an alcoholic who spends his time reminiscing over his love for Cassie's mother and announcing that Cassie and Adam are destined to be together. Diana's father kills Faye's grandfather, who was a member of the elders' circle that helped strip the parents of their power. And Jane, Cassie's grandmother and another member of the elder's circle, is bespelled with a memory charm and goes off to a clinic for several weeks of neurological testing and treatment, leaving Cassie to face danger with no traditional familial backup at all—she must rely upon her created family.

Elena's guardian and aunt, Jenna, dies at the end of the second season of *The Vampire Diaries* at the hands of Klaus (Joseph Morgan), one of the 'Originals'—the first family of vampires. But even before her death, she is ineffective, trying to talk to Jeremy or Elena about drug use or sexuality or even school attendance, and consistently failing. Alaric Saltzman (Matthew Davis), the high school history teacher who befriends the group, works with them to

research the history and present of vampires and werewolves, but is unable to save anyone. He cannot cure his now-vampire wife Isobel, rescue Jenna (whom he begins dating), or protect Elena. He cannot even keep the teens under his care from underage drinking and other inappropriate behaviour. He is, in his own words, 'every parent's worst nightmare. I am the chaperone teacher from Hell.'[14] Despite his aspirations, Alaric is ultimately unsuccessful as a protector.

Scott McCall's adult ally options are no better. Scott's mother Melissa is caring and even has good romantic advice for Scott, but she is ultimately unaware of the supernatural events surrounding her son. Scott's veterinary boss, Dr. Deaton, seems to know about the werewolves in town—at one point Peter Hale's entry into the vet's office is blocked by a counter made of Mountain Ash—and is able to medically assist Scott when the young werewolf is shot, but he seems unwilling to otherwise involve himself in the pack's business. Ultimately, the teen protagonists of supernatural teen drama from *Buffy* on must try (and sometimes fail) to protect the adults in their lives, rather than having the protection of those adults. Thus the created family in these shows is, as often as not, a reaction to the failure of traditional families.

That these recent television versions of monstrous families would follow in their predecessors' footsteps is not particularly surprising. However, their use of the idea of cultural memory—and the focus on who controls that memory, beginning with *Buffy*—represents a potentially new answer to those anxieties outlined by Bettelheim and his critical descendants. If, as Isabel Pinedo asserts, 'horror renaturalizes the repressed by transmuting the "natural" elements of everyday life into the unnatural form of the monster' and 'this transmutation renders the terrors of everyday life at least emotionally accessible,'[15] then control over cultural memory of those monsters becomes a form of control over monstrosity itself.

Jeanette Rodriguez and Ted Fortier claim that 'Memory culture is the process by which a society ensures cultural continuity by preserving, with the help of cultural mnemonics, its collective knowledge from one generation to the next, rendering it possible for later generations to *reconstruct* their cultural identity.'[16] And in Astrid Erll's definition,

> cultural memory refers to the symbolic order, the media, institutions, and practices by which social groups construct a shared past. 'Memory,' here, is used metaphorically. Societies do not remember literally; but much of what is done to reconstruct a shared past bears some resemblance to the processes of individual memory, such as the selectivity and perspectivity inherent in the creation of versions of the past according to present knowledge and needs.[17]

In these three shows (and, as ever, *Buffy*), constructions of the past as inherently monstrous demand the formation of created families, a group identity generated to revise ('reconstruct' in the sense of 'make over') earlier generations' versions of that monstrous past. In the 'Buffyverse,' history as we generally know it is simply wrong. What Giles knows—and now so do Buffy, her created family, and the fans of the show—is that Earth was first inhabited by demons, who created vampires and other monsters. This alternate history—a form of cultural memory held by only those within the created family—enables Buffy and her created family of 'Scoobies' to recognize and deal with the demonic. In this series, the 'typical Gothic family secret'[18] is that the planet is full of descendants of monsters. And of course, the implication is that we, too, may be monstrous. In the final season of the series, Buffy discovers that her own power is inherently demonic, forced into the original slayer by the first Watchers' Council—and yet by distributing that power to all the 'potential slayers' in the world, she creates a legacy that is infinitely less monstrous than the one she inherited. By creating a family comprised of every potential slayer in the world, Buffy rewrites history and constructs a future that, though based

on a monstrous past, allows for a future in which there are fewer monsters than she faces in her own adolescence.

Recent supernatural teen dramas, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s own descendants, all deal with the issue of the monstrous inheritance, reshaping it through cultural memory into legacies of connection and intimacy rather than monstrosity and alienation. Mark Edmundson claims that the 'Gothic shows time and again that life, even at its most ostensibly innocent, is possessed, that the present is in thrall to the past.'[19] In these shows, the teens are caught up in wars of their progenitors' making and only by eschewing their genetic family and clinging to their created family can they survive. The protagonists' inheritances must be reconfigured and the created families' cultural memories recast in such a way as to allow some measure of escape from that thrall.

Lisa Hopkins writes that 'the classic genre marker of the Gothic in film is doubleness, for it is the dualities typically created by the Gothic that invest it with its uncanny ability to hold its darkly shadowed mirror up to its own age.'[20] In *The Secret Circle*, Cassie's monstrous inheritance—the dark magic that she inherited from her father, John Blackwood—forces Cassie to function as both inhabited, Gothic space and doubled self. She has little control over the dark magic she possesses—or rather, that possesses her. She must access it frequently under duress to save herself, but has little conscious control over it. She uses it to blast her way out of the grave Diana's grandmother buried her in, but she also accidentally uses it to magically choke Adam when she gets angry with him. Although she is eventually able to stop herself from killing Adam, her dark magic is wielded unconsciously. On the other hand, Cassie also carries an inheritance from her mother; like Diana, she has discovered the family's grimoire (the Book of Shadows) and performs the same kind of magic as the other members of her circle (presumably 'light' magic, though that's never specified in the show). The nature of light magic, which the circle members can perform together, is illustrated in the first episode, when Cassie and Adam join hands in the forest and cause drops of water to float into the air around them. The water droplets reflect and refract the sunlight, creating a golden glow that surrounds the couple. Cassie is thus light and dark, the embodiment of both virtue in distress and potential evil—doubled and inhabited by her genes and by her magic.

More significantly, though, her dark magic enables her to act outside of the bounds of her small coven—unlike the other members of the circle, she is able to do magic alone and is presented as a danger because of that. Not only are her spells the result of dark magic, but she performs them without the strictures imposed upon its members by the created family of the bound circle. Cassie's power is frightening in part because it does not serve a communal purpose. By acting alone, she transgresses against the idea of the created family—she allows her genetic inheritance to overshadow the ties of that created family. When Cassie strays from the bounds of the Secret Circle, she endangers herself and others; when the created family pulls together, they all remain safe. In this series, remembering must be a communal act—attempting to deal with her inheritance alone forces Cassie into the role of virtue in distress, leaving her little room to reconfigure the cultural memory of her inheritance from one of darkness to one of light. Instead, the series suggests, she should allow her created family to participate in constructing her magic, her inheritance, her memory, and ultimately, her power and identity. If she is to be 'light' rather than 'dark,' she must submit to the group's cultural, communal memory.

The circle's claim on one another's memories is reinforced by a scene in which Cassie enters Jake's memories of their parents' death sixteen years earlier.[21] As she moves through the memory, Cassie discovers that her father, unlike the other teens' parents, did not actually die in the fire. In this search through her circle-mate's repressed physical memory, Cassie redefines

the circle's cultural memory, which ultimately allows her to meet her potentially monstrous father and contain the damage he might do to her created family.

Similarly, Elena in *The Vampire Diaries* must deal with repressed memories—in this case, though, the repressed memories already belong to a community: the Founders' Council. As the gatekeepers to this monstrous heritage, the council attempts to keep the townspeople safe. However, the members of the council are unable to keep their history a secret. As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen notes, 'History itself becomes a monster: defeaturing, self-deconstructive, always in danger of exposing the sutures that bind its disparate elements into a single, unnatural body.'[22] This unnatural body escapes the Founders' Council's attempts to keep it restrained—indeed, the town's history is consistently featured as unruly and frightening. In the first episode, when Stefan and Elena meet and Stefan says 'I'm Stefan' and Elena replies, 'I know. We have history together,' she is unaware of just how much 'history' the two of them share.[23] Once Elena discovers that Stefan is a vampire, he tells her that she must not reveal his secret because 'There was a time when this town was very much aware of vampires and it didn't end well for anybody. That's why it's important that you don't tell anyone.'[24] That bad ending involved the burning of vampires in the local church and the apparent killing of Stefan's former love Katherine (a vampire who is Elena's ancestor and physical double, also played by Nina Dobrev). But that bad ending is also the entire reason that Stefan introduces himself to Elena. Stefan originally chooses to meet Elena because she appears identical to Katherine—and in forming a relationship with Elena, he is recreating his past. His relationship with Katherine might have failed, but his relationship with Elena recasts that failure as success. Similarly, Elena attempts to recast her history, claiming in the first episode that 'I will no longer be the sad little girl who lost her parents.'[25] Memory can rewrite history, the series implies.

Even the title of the show indicates its connection to memory. The 'diaries' of the title serve to structure memory and reality in the show. In the first season, we are privy to entries about vampires and other monsters in Elena's diary and entries from a vampire in Stefan's diary. The 'diary' element eventually disappears from the content of the series, though the title continually reminds us that this is a show about deeply personal events. In *The Vampire Diaries*, to paraphrase a famous feminist truism, the personal *is* the historical. And of course, in this series, the historical is the monstrous—leaving the personal and the monstrous synonymous with one another. Personal histories become cultural memory, structured through created families of monsters. A flashback reveals that Stefan turned Damon into a vampire in order to keep his genetic family together—a direct action against that created family that is prioritized in these shows, and the source of much of the conflict in the series. In turning Damon, Stefan creates a personal history that forevermore 'monsterizes' their relationship but allows them to remain part of the same created family, despite their genetic connection.

In the third season, though, the original vampire Klaus's desire to create a 'family' of vampire/werewolf hybrids is horrifying, and for much the same reason—he wants to both keep his family of origin (the 'Original' family that created werewolves and vampires) and develop the kind of created family that enables other characters to create cultural memories and maintain control over their own narratives. Engaging in monstrous miscegenation from the beginning, however, reads as inherently inappropriate. Erll writes that 'no memory is ever purely individual, but always inherently shaped by collective contexts. From the people we live with and from the media we use, we acquire schemata which help us recall the past and encode new experience.'[26] In this case, werewolf/vampire hybridity violates the schemata of the characters' cultural memory.

Teen Wolf's concern with memory is less ambiguous, if no less angst-ridden. Scott's girlfriend Allison learns that she is descended from a line of werewolf-hunters extending at least to medieval France—a history that might be unproblematic until she realizes that Scott is a

werewolf. Like the characters in the other shows, *Teen Wolf*'s adolescents take part in a conflict that they did not create. And these teens, too, must re-cast their parents' cultural memories to reflect and create their own reality. Jurgen Reulecke notes that the idea of generational cultural memory is a uniquely modern phenomena and that it structures the ways in which groups of people construct their collective identity.[27] In this case, the generational divide between the adults, who believe in traditional family ties, and the adolescents, who believe in the created family, creates a gulf between the groups. In their reconstruction of the cultural memory of werewolves, the adolescents in *Teen Wolf* focus upon connection rather than separation—the created family that includes genetic werewolves, created werewolves, and humans is one that is connected by the ability to maintain control over violent impulses.

This need to control the violent impulse is discussed early on, when first Derek and then Stiles attempt to help Scott gain power over his shift into a werewolf:

> Scott: I need your help…. Am I going to hurt someone?
> Derek: Yes.
> Scott: Could I kill someone?
> Derek: Yes.
> Scott: Am I going to kill someone?
> Derek: Probably. Look. I can show you how to remember. I can show you how to control the shift, even on a full moon….[28]

That Derek casts control as a process of remembering is significant, as it illustrates the idea that memory and identity are deeply connected, even in the monstrous body. Stiles eventually helps Scott control the werewolf shift by helping Scott focus on Allison—again, a process of memory that keeps him connected to that created family.

By contrast, those characters, whether werewolf or human, who cannot control their violent impulses are doomed to a grisly death. Both Peter Hale, the werewolf, and Kate Argent, the werewolf hunter, end up dead at the end of the first season because they fail to remember correctly. Peter forgets that, as Derek says early on, werewolves are predators, but they don't have to be killers. Kate forgets the werewolf hunters' code that states that they do not kill werewolves who have not spilled human blood. Those who forget their cultural memories—who do not abide by the constructed codes of their community—do not survive. The created family is the one that is bound by cultural memory into a strong, cohesive unit shaped not by the adults in the series, but by the teens themselves.

William Veeder writes that 'A gothic text positions its reader in a potential space where the psyche's repressed desires and the society's foreclosed issues can be engaged and thus where healing can occur.'[29] In these television descendants of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, adolescent desire for power and agency is addressed through the dual media of the created family and the constructed cultural memory. The created family and cultural memory are inextricably intertwined in these shows. Ultimately, the monsters in these series allow adolescents to both create their own families and gain control of cultural memory. Association with monsters gives adolescents an agency they might not otherwise possess, even if that agency is one that potentially leads them to become monstrous themselves.

Notes

[1] Tim Goodman, 'Fall's Troubled Dramas', *Hollywood Reporter*, 13 September 2011, 86.
[2] Robert Bianco, 'There's Little Magic in "The Secret Circle"', *USA Today*, 14 September 2011, accessed 28 March 2012, <http://www.usatoday.com/life/television/reviews/story/2011-09-14/secret-circle/50406416/1>.
[3] Tom Gliatto, 'The Secret Circle,' *People*, 9 September 2011, 65.
[4] Hank Stuever, 'CW's "The Secret Circle": Easy-Bake Coven,' *Washington Post*, accessed 18 March 2012, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/cws-the-secret-circle-easy-bake-coven/2011/09/11/gIQAlVqnSK_story.html?wprss=rss_lifestyle>.
[5] Pat Gill, 'The Monstrous Years: Teens, Slasher Films, And The Family,' *Journal of Film & Video* 54.4 (2002): 16.
[6] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Knopf, New York, 1976, p. 6.
[7] R. V. Wilcox, 'There will never Be a "Very Special" Buffy', *Journal Of Popular Film & Television* 27.2 (1999): 16.
[8] Stephen Bruhm, 'The Contemporary Gothic: Why We Need It,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 259.
[9] Candace Benefiel, 'Blood Relations: The Gothic Perversion of the Nuclear Family in Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire', *Journal of Popular Culture* 38.2 (2004): 263.
[10] Andrew Miller, 'Pilot', *The Secret Circle*, season 1, episode 1, directed by Liz Friedlander, aired 15 September 2011 (Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers Entertainment), Television Episode.
[11] Daniel Sinclair, 'Heart Monitor', *Teen Wolf*, season 1, episode 6, directed by Toby Wilkins, aired 04 July 2011 (New York: MGM Television and Music Television), Television Episode.
[12] Jeff Davis, Jeph Loeb and Matthew Weisman, 'Pilot', *Teen Wolf*, season 1, episode 1, aired 5 June 2011, directed by Toby Wilkins (New York: MGM Television and Music Television).
[13] Gill, 'The Monstrous Years', 17.
[14] Kevin Williamson and Julie Plec, 'The Birthday,' *The Vampire Diaries*, season 3, episode 1, directed by John Bering, aired 15 September 2011 (Burbank, CA: Alloy Entertainment and Warner Bros. Television) Television Episode.
[15] Isabel Christina Pinedo, *Recreational Pleasure: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing* (Albany, NY: University of New York Press, 1997), 39.
[16] Jeanette Rodriguez and Ted Fortier, *Cultural Memory: Resistance, Faith, and Identity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 7.
[17] Astrid Erll, 'Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction,' in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning and Sarah B. Young (New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 2008), 5.
[18] Abby Coykendall, 'Gothic Genealogies, The Family Romance, And Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*', *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 17.3 (2005): 443.
[19] Mark Edmundson, *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadomasochism, and the Culture of Gothic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 5.
[20] Lisa Hopkins, *Screening the Gothic* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 12.
[21] Dana Barrata, 'Witness', *The Secret Circle*, season 1, episode 12, directed by Eagle Egilsson, aired 19 January 2012 (Los Angeles, CA: Outerbanks Entertainment and The CW Television Network) Television Episode.
[22] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 9.

[23] Kevin Williamson and Julie Plec, 'Pilot', *The Vampire Diaries*, season 1, episode 1, directed by Marcos Siega, aired 10 September 2009, (Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Television and The CW Television Network) Television Episode.
[24] Kevin Williamson and Julie Plec, 'Lost Girls,' *The Vampire Diaries*, season 1, episode 6, directed by Marcos Siega, aired 15 October 2009 (Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Television and The CW Television Network) Television Episode.
[25] Williamson and Plec, 'Pilot,' *The Vampire Diaries*.
[26] Erll, 'Cultural Memory Studies', 5.
[27] Jürgen Reulecke, 'Generation/Generationality, Generativity, and Memory', in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning and Sarah B. Young (New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 2008), 119-126.
[28] Jeff Vlaming, 'Pack Mentality', *Teen Wolf*, season 1, episode 3, directed by Russell Mulcahy, aired 13 June 2011 (New York: MGM Television and Music Television) Television Episode.
[29] William Veeder, 'The Nature of the Gothic, or How Can a Text Be Both Popular and Subversive?' in *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*, ed. Robert K. Martin and Eric Savoy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998), 32.

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Margo Collins is a Visiting Assistant Professor of English at DeVry University. She holds a Ph.D. in Eighteenth-Century British literature from the University of North Texas and in recent years has focused on Gothic literature and popular culture.

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Simla Railway Station, printed with permission from Sukhdev Singh and Miranda Das.

Simla Railway Station: Simla, which is now spelled as 'Shimla', Railway Station is part of the Kalka-Simla Railway. It was constructed between 1898 and 1903 under the colonial rule of the British in order to facilitate their passage to the North-West Himalayas where they had founded the city of Simla between 1822 and 1880. Its track is a narrow gauge railway of 2 feet and 6 inches only. Likewise other trains in the colonised India, the trains on this line were a sign of the colonial modernity whereby they were able to penetrate the pristine mountain range. Notwithstanding the monstrous colonial modernity, the trains run on this line are usually called the 'toy' trains *vis-à-vis* those trains run in the non-mountainous regions in the contemporary India that indicates diminution of colonisation but advancement of science and technology. The Kalka-Simla Railway line was declared the UNESCO World Heritage Site in the year 2008.

Sukhdev Singh's academic interests are: Sex Research and Gender Studies (in both Indian and Western traditions); Foucauldian Notion of Power; Motion Pictures (Erotic, Science Fiction and Pornographic); Partition of India; and *Śūnya* (or zero). His non-academic interests include non-human photography by cell phone and digital cameras, and occasional drawing and painting. He is an award-winning one-act playwright and short story writer.

Miranda Das's current research is on 'Feminist Approaches to International Law: An Overview'. Her academic interests are: International Law; Feminist Legal Research; Gender and International Relations; and Feminist Theories. She is a keen watcher of the female-centric Hindi soap operas on YouTube, and she is also a horror films buff. She is interested in close-up photography, especially, focused on the female face.

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'This is Something Very Old—or Something Very, Very New!'[1]: The New 'Old Vampire' in *Fright Night* by Craig Gillespie (2011)

Simon Bacon

Abstract
This article will look at the changing configuration of the vampire from the late 20th to the early 21st century and look at how the memory of the earlier manifestation lives on, or doesn't, in the later one. Specifically it will concentrate on the recent film *Fright Night* by Craig Gillespie, which is a remake of the 1985 film of the same name by Tom Holland. It will compare and contrast the figure of the vampire, and the vampire slayer, to show how the monster, rather than being the product of the monstrous adolescent, as it was in the 1980s America, it is now seen as the manifestation of a monstrous society. In particular it is the embodiment of the monstrous memory of the society that earlier excluded the pubescent boy but which now wants to re-make him in its own image.

Key Words: Vampire, youth, monstrous, memory, society, adolescence, genre, patriarchy.

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1. Introduction

> He said 'I am a mirror. When people look at me they see themselves. it is not necessarily a part of themselves that they want to recognise, but it is there.' he quoted Shakespeare to me, *The Tempest*: 'This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.' Then he said, 'Prospero says this of Caliban. You see, he must face the monster in himself before he can leave the island, which is as much a creation of himself, as it is of nature.'[2]

This article will look at the changing configuration of the vampire from the late 20th to the early 21st century. Specifically concentrating on the recent film *Fright Night* by Craig Gillespie, which is a remake of the 1985 film of the same name by Tom Holland, it will compare and contrast the figure of the vampire, and the vampire slayer, to show that rather than being the product of the monstrous pubescent adolescent who necessarily excludes himself from society, as it was in the 1980s America, it is now seen as the manifestation of that same monstrous society. The teenager must destroy the vampire to become himself and not what that self-same society demands.

Fright Night by Tom Holland is a seminal film in the vampire canon, though rarely recognised as such. It stands at the start of an amazing run of vampire films in the late 1980's and although being the film that launched a thousand others it is largely out-shone and out-remembered by *The Lost Boys* directed by Joel Schumacher in 1987 or even *Near Dark*, released in the same year, by Kathryn Bigelow. *Fright Night* set the agenda for all teenage vampire films that were to follow and without it we would not have the phenomenon that is the *Twilight Saga*, or the plethora of supernatural romance novels and spin-offs, *The Vampire Diaries* being the most well-known, that grace every teenage girl's bookshelf. It established the special relationship between the adolescent and the undead, and specifically configured it as part of the process of life experience and rites of passage that sees both boys and girls becoming men and women in the eyes of wider society. As noted by Alain Silver and James Ursini, in

relation to the 1980s: 'for New Age undead the first kill, like the first sexual experience, might be regarded as a rite of passage.'[3] Holland's film introduced this idea to the vampire canon and its saleability in Hollywood was immediately recognised and reproduced. It was followed in quick succession by *Once Bitten* by Howard Storm (1985), *Vamp* by Richard Wenk (1986), *The Lost Boys* (1987), *Near Dark* (1987), *My Best Friend is a Vampire* by Jimmy Huston (1987) and *Fright Night II* by Tommy Lee Wallace (1988). All of them feature an adolescent boy who has to fight, often alone, against the dark and monstrous forces of evil in the shape of the vampire. Pat Gill identifies this in relation to the slasher film, to which the teen-vamp film is a more light hearted cousin

> If the roots of these myths are in stresses introduced into the late-twentieth-century American family by the intensified prevalence of divorce, the result in these films is a world emptied of the family as a resource for coping with growing up. The self-absorbed parents of these films, whether divorced or together, provide no useful knowledge, no understanding of their children's needs or fears, no viable models for negotiating the world, and certainly no protection from that world.[4]

Consequently, the films become very much about the singular relationship between the vampire and the young male protagonist not least because he is often the only one that 'sees' the vampire. As Silver and Ursini comment: 'Fright Night also typifies the dilemma of those who first notice the blood-sucker next door, i.e. overcoming the complete incredulity of those who have not.'[5] However, this symbiosis between the teenager and the vampire also points to something more than this, and it is what makes Fright Night and its contemporary remake worthy of attention. It signifies the relationship of the teenager to the society within which it lives.

Nina Auerbach is somewhat dismissive of this aspect of human/vampire relations noting that what she saw as the previous political import of the transgressive undead has been lessened by this turn of events: 'the ramifications of the vampirism have shrunk from the political arena into the snug domestic unit.'[6] Yet this is not the case for the vampire then becomes an expression of the monstrousness of adolescence and the manifestation of the emotional and sexual turmoil that makes the teenager both monstrous to itself and the family and society within which it lives. The vampire then a figure who must be overcome and conquered so that the protagonist can be accepted into adult society; a rite of passage so that the chaos and selfishness of the boy can become the order and responsibility of the man. This aspect is particular to the films of the 1980s in that they all feature an adolescent male who must metaphorically kill his father, the monster, to become a man and the head of the household. It is possibly no accident that this series of films ended in 1992 with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* directed by Fran Rubel Kusui. Buffy did not need protecting from the revenant, as the girlfriends of the male protagonists of the 1980s did, and yet without *Fright Night* there would have been no vampires for her to get her teeth, or stake, into.

2. You Always Remember the First

> All teenagers are monsters. Misunderstood, hated, blamed for the evils of the world. Also, reckless, selfish. With huge appetites as they slowly change from innocent things into something new.[7]

Holland's film is about sex, or rather how monstrous its libidinal pressures become within the body of the teenage boy. So much so that the adolescent cannot contain then and so they become projected outside of him and are made manifest in the figure of the vampire.

This motif informs all the teen-vamp films of the 1980s and is established at the very start of *Fright Night.* The film begins with a long tracking shot along a suburban street which then focuses on one house in particular and then rises so that we can enter the house through the bedroom window. This shot in itself is interesting for, as Stacey Abbott notes, unlike the majority of earlier vampire films it 'is therefore not taking place in a traditionally Gothic location...but in a contemporary setting'[8] and specifically in the suburban heartland of America. All the while we have been hearing a conversation between a man and a woman, and it is only upon entering the bedroom that we discover they are in fact voices from a late night horror show that two teenagers are watching. It is worth recounting this conversation for it informs what the adolescent boy and girl are doing—or rather not doing:

> Man: 'What was that?'
> Woman: 'Just a child of the night Jonathan. Come sit here beside me on the verandah.'
> Jonathan: 'Its chilly out here.'
> Woman: 'Oh no it isn't—its beautiful. I love the night so.'
> Jonathan: 'I've never seen you look so beautiful before Nina, so pale, so luminescent, so...'
> Nina: 'Yes?'
> Jonathon: 'Your lips are so red.'
> Nina: 'Are they? Would you like to kiss them?' [kissing noises]
> Jonathan: 'Why are you looking at me so strangely Nina?'
> Nina: 'Not you Jonathon...your neck!'[9]

This dramatically contrasts with Charley and his girlfriend Amy who are lying on the bed in front of the television. Amy suddenly exclaims 'Charley I said stop it!' to which he replies 'Jesus Amy, give me a break ... we've been going together for almost a year and all I ever hear is 'Charley, Stop it!'' The contrast between the vampire's lusty exploits on television and the frustration that Charley feels creates an instant link between the monster and sexuality, and specifically the monstrousness of the sexuality that is constantly being repressed within Charley. It is no coincidence then that it is at this moment that Charley sees a mysterious stranger moving in next door. No one else either notices or is interested in this fact intimating that this stranger is something that has come from Charley's himself and as a consequence only he is able to 'see' it for what it really is; a vampire.

Indeed the early encounters between the vampire and/or its victims are sexual in nature as Charley either meets attractive young women going into the house next door or sees them being killed as he spies on his new neighbour from his bedroom window. Here again only Charley 'sees' what is going on and it is almost as if the vampire is flaunting this purposely in front of Charley or it is the teenager's 'bad' self doing what his repressed desires actually want to do. This notion of a visual connection between the two, and that each 'sees' the other with special eyes, is further intimated as Charley watches the neighbour from his bedroom window using binoculars; it is with these inhuman eyes that Charley and the vampire first truly 'see' each other. Dandridge himself taunts Charley when phoning him from his house and saying 'I know you're there Charley, I can *see* you!' even though they are both in different houses. This connection via special eyes is of course one from Alfred Hitchcock's film, *Rear Window* (1954), where the main protagonist is the only one to sees the murderer that lives across from

him, and one which is again used in Matt Reeves *Let Me In* (2010). Reeves' interpretation of the earlier Swedish film, *Let the Right One In* (2008) by Tomas Alfredson, uses a telescope to create equivalence between the 12-year-old boy that uses one to voyeuristically spy on his neighbours and the vampire that moves in next door. The use of this 'vampire eye' to spy on people imbues its use with an inhuman yet strangely sexually charged character—one which can also be applied to Charley and his vampire, Jerry Dandridge.

Dandridge is the complete opposite to Charley. Well-dressed, confident and quite literally a lady killer, his appearance is, as Abbott notes, 'starlike' and has a correlating impact on the community around him.[10] He bewitches both Charley's mother and his girlfriend Amy with his charm and golden tongue, being symbolised by the apples that he constantly seems to be eating.[11] His affect on Mrs Brewster also reflects the nature of the relationship between Charley and his mother as well of the isolation felt by the teenagers. The mother only ever treats Charley like a child, and when he first explains his fears over the new neighbour and how Dandridge had attacked him she dismisses it as a nightmare and offers him hot chocolate and marshmallows. Her actions become increasingly configured as not those of a caring mother but someone who is self-obsessed. On hearing of their new neighbour, her first reaction is to say: 'knowing my luck he's probably gay.' And even worse, her silliness puts their lives at danger. As Sorcha Ni Fhlain observes, 'in both *The Lost Boys* and *Fright Night*, another vampire discourse involving single parent families of the 1980s, the single mother invites the vampire into the home at considerable cost.'[12] As Charley runs to tell his mother never to invite the vampire in he finds Dandridge sitting in their house talking to her, and with no hint of irony in her voice she says: 'Oh Jerry...it's nice that someone interesting has finally moved into the neighbourhood.' She, of course, remains totally unaware of the vampire throughout the film but that is not the case for Charley's girlfriend Amy who becomes all too aware of the monster.

Dandridge has a special fascination for Amy. It is slightly different to the other films of this time. Anne Billson notes:

> *The Lost Boys* and *Fright Night* have thinly veiled homoerotic undertones; in each case the token girlfriend seems like a 'beard', whose role it is to flag the male characters heterosexuality, since the central relationship in each film is the one between the young hero and the male vampire(s).[13]

This is not strictly true in *Fright Night*, for although Amy is largely ineffectual, Dandridge does recognise her as separate to Charley, and not just as a way to get to him, or vice versa. This is seen in the pictures that Jerry has of Amy, or at least of a woman that looks like her, which he has had painted over the centuries that he has been a vampire. This ties into a part of the vampire narrative that only really took shape on film in the 1970s and was first seen in *Blacula* by William Crain from 1972. Here the vampire encounters the soul of his long lost love who has been reincarnated in the body of a girl from the 20th century.[14] A similar plot informed *Love at First Bite* by Stan Dragonetti (1979) where Count Dracula himself reencounters an old flame and they are united again in love.[15]

Fright Night does not use this as its main story thread but its importance should not be ignored, for here the dying word of the vampire is her name. This, I think, again points to the symmetry of Charley and Jerry and the connection between them, for as the manifestation of his good and bad selves, they both love Amy but the vampire expresses the dangerous and monstrous side of the teenager's sexual desires. It is only though 'killing' the vampire that Charley regains control of himself and is 'safe' again. His strength over the vampire comes in being himself, or, at least, in being what is expected of him. As Abbott points out in relation to the 1980s teen-vamp films: 'they are rife with influences and allusions to popular culture and

their structure is particularly defined by an awareness of vampire film tradition, they draw their source and inspiration from other vampire films, horror fiction and comic books.'[16] This sense of having to play to type is often shown during the film, Charley says at one point: 'So far everything has been like it has in the movies. We just have to keep hoping,' and Dandridge says to Peter Vincent, the self-styled vampire killer: 'I've seen all your films.' More interestingly, he further says to Vincent, as the would-be slayer brandishes a cross at him: 'you need faith for this to work on me Mr Vincent.' This is a line that comes up three or four times during the film and the vampire saying 'Mr' makes it clearer that it is not religious faith but self-belief that counts. This is dramatically shown as Vincent finally believes he is a vampire slayer, or acts like one, and the vampire accordingly cowers before him. Similarly, Charley, to become a man, must act like one and this too is shown at the end of the film. Amy has become a vampire and as such becomes the aggressively sexual figure that the film opened with but Charley resists her and fights to save her. As such, he finally acts as a man is expected to and so becomes one. On doing so, he kills the vampire. Consequently, it is not killing the vampire that becomes his rite of passage but acting like someone who can; in being what is socially expected of him he becomes a responsible adult and is accepted back into society, and can safely contain the monster, vampire, inside himself.

3. Second Coming

> It sometimes needs an effort to remember that they can only represent ideas projected on to him from the minds of the living.[17]

Gillespie's *Fright Night* would seem to be the only re-make of Holland's film but there has, in fact, been one other, and, although it is not central to the purpose of this article, it is worth noting a few points from it as they make an interesting stepping stone between the two films under discussion. *Never Cry Werewolf* by Brenton Spencer was released in 2008. Its plot is very similar to *Fright Night* except that the vampire, Jerry Dandridge, is replaced by a werewolf, Jared Martin. Also of note is that the central character is not an adolescent boy but a girl. Loren Hansett, played by Nina Dobrev, seems to blend the roles of both Charley and Amy.[18] She is quite plainly dressed as the film begins and becomes increasingly sexualised as the presence of the werewolf next door gets increasingly disruptive.

As in the earlier film the werewolf is drawn to her not only because she is young and pretty but she reminds him of an earlier love. The monster here represents something from the past, not unlike Dandridge from 1985 version and definitely pre-empting the nature of the vampire in the 2011 film. One scene in particular highlights this and the kind of traditional, even casual, misogyny that the later version of Dandridge represents. Loren is trapped by Jared, who is trying to convince her she is his long-lost love:

> Loren: I'm not your territory, I'm not your fucking female or your mate.
> Jared: She was my wife.
> L: Let me go.
> J: I let you go a long time ago. I can't do that again.
> L: You're crazy. I'm not Melissa.
> J: She would've been about your age before...before she died. So young and *ripe*.[19] Beautiful. You know it's funny, in those days you would have been married by now [Loren is 16] with a couple of kids. so much for modern sexual awareness.

Just as the vampire will later, the werewolf here represents the past and, more explicitly, the memories of the patriarchal, misogynist ideologies that marks them out as monstrous. To escape these strictures imposed by a male society, and which her mother and friends seem only too willing to take part in, and be her own woman, Loren must kill Jared. Which, of course, she does. Somewhat curiously though, on accomplishing this she finds a boyfriend. Her rite of passage to become a woman would seem to lead her into exactly what she was trying to escape. That said, it does make an interesting stepping stone to the 2011 remake and lays the foundations for the modern conception of what the monster might represent.

Like many remakes Gillespie's *Fright Night* of 2011 is exactly the same but completely different to the 1985 original by Holland. Whereas the earlier film was about sex, it can be argued that the later one is about sexism. This is not to say that the views on woman in Gillespie's film are any different from those espoused in 1985 because in many ways they are not. What is important here is who is saying them. More importantly, the newer film totally shifts the relationship between Charley and the vampire which has a crucial impact on the meaning allotted to the teenager and to the vampire itself.

The 2011 film opens, as the original did, with a long tracking shot but here we come down from the clouds and into an isolated community in the Nevada desert. We move down a street to a house standing alone and enter through the bedroom window. But what we find here is a boy running for his life. He enters his parents' bedroom to find them already dead and in desperation hides beneath their bed. Unfortunately for him, the intruder finds him easily for this is no ordinary home invasion but the arrival of the vampire. This immediately shifts the premise of the first film where the vampire was uniquely linked to Charley; here the vampire has already arrived and started feeding of the local population. In fact, Charley refuses to believe that his new next-door neighbour is a blood sucking fiend even when his ex-friend Ed shows him evidence to the contrary. As such, all the markers that linked the teenager to the vampire in Holland's film have been removed—Charley neither sees or believes in the vampire first and is just another victim on a very long list. This makes a significant change in the reasons why the vampire is here. In the original it was Charley's monstrous adolescence and sexual frustration that made the vampire but in the new version it seems to be a product of the town itself.[20]

Situated not far from Las Vegas, it is a community made up of shift workers and people from the casinos or strip-clubs. Many work nights and sleep by day. Rather than the close community that marked the suburbs in 1985 this one is a transient community where no one notices when people go missing, a point show in Charley's school where each morning fewer students answer the morning roll call and no one seems to notice or worry. It is almost vampiric in its habits and in foundation in money and capital, as seen in its reliance on the casino town. This links it to how Karl Marks utilised the term 'vampire' and also in Franco Moretti's explanation of the meaning behind Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Marx remarked that 'capital is dead labour which vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.'[21] Moretti then cites the vampire as a metaphor for capitalist society in general and the profit driven individual in particular, as he notes: 'those who pursue their own profit are, without knowing it, the vampire's best allies.'[22] Consequently, it is the community itself that produces the vampire and as a result Charley is not fighting his own monstrousness but that of the society within which he lives.

This connection between the undead killer and the 'undead' community becomes more apparent as the film progresses. Jerry Dandridge, played by Colin Farrell, charms all those he meets, even the police when they call at his house. Interestingly he explains his evil intent, or malevolent ethos, in a monologue to Charley himself and subsequently it is worth quoting at length. Dandridge has come to Charley's house to ask to borrow some beers as he has a female visitor due that night. Not wanting to raise the vampire's suspicions but keeping him at bay, the

boy refuses to invite him in. Forced to stand just beyond the threshold of Charley's house, Dandridge launches into a man-to-man chat which begins with the following: 'This girl tonight, she's a handful. You know? Women who look a certain way, they... [he laughs] they need to be managed. It's true.' This feigned camaraderie only leaves Charley dumbfounded, not least as he has a very different kind of relationship with his girlfriend Amy. But the vampire continues taking an even more personal tack: 'Your dad ducked out on huh? Your mom, she didn't exactly say but... there's a kind of neglect. Gives off a scent. You don't mind my saying, you got a lot on your shoulders for a kid. The two of you alone.' This ties in directly to the earlier film where Charley is expected to be the 'man' of the house and shoulder the responsibility. If this was not enough, Dandridge continues: 'And your girl Amy, she's ripe. I bet there's a line of guys dying to pluck that. Your mom, too. You don't see it. Maybe you do, but she's putting it out. It's on you to look out for them. You up for that, guy?' This open misogyny positions Dandridge very clearly as something very old. Such patriarchal sentiments and associated male posturing are not what Charley is about but the vampire tries to draw him into the scope of such discourse and, subsequently, make him complicit in its tactics of subjugation. The role of the vampire here is then the same as before, a rite of passage to become the kind of man that society expects; but the vampire becomes the manifestation of societal expectation rather than adolescent resistance to be overcome. In fact, Charley does not need to become a man as he already is one.

Charley's maturation is signalled in many ways during Gillespie's film. Firstly, in his relationship to his childhood friend, Ed; as mentioned earlier, it is Ed that sees the vampire before Charley, but the former friend's nerdiness marks him as a child still. Charley already has a girlfriend and, subsequently, a new set of friends, both of which show him as adult in the nature of the relationships he has with them. Amy in particular is seen as his equal and unlike Holland's film, she actually wants to initiate sex first, and as the film develops she fully participates in the vampire hunt at the end. Not just a damsel to be rescued, though Charley does save at the film's finale, she helps kill the now vampiric Ed. Charley's maturity in the eyes of others is further shown in his relationship with his mother. As Nina Auerbach points out in relation to *The Lost Boys* 'a single mother ... [is] the catastrophic agent of *The Lost Boys*, for this silly woman not only loses her sons: the only male authority she provides turns out to be the head vampire.'[23] The same is true of the original *Fright Night*, where Charley's self-absorbed mother thinks only of herself and treats her son like a five-year-old child. Here, in direct reference to that, when Charley asks his mother to trust him in what he says about their neighbour, she replies: 'Charley, stop! I'm your mom, not some ridiculous woman.' This is further shown later in the film when she stakes the vampire with a 'for sale' sign which she has in the boot of her car.[24] Consequently, what the new *Fright Night* shows is a very new teenager being plagued by a very old monster and not one of his own making but of the society that wishes to contain him.

Judith Halberstam makes an astute observation about the character of the monsters that a society, or community makes:

> The monster, in its otherworldly form, its supernatural shape, wears the traces of its own construction. Like the bolt through the neck of Frankenstein's monster in the modem horror film, the technology of monstrosity is written upon the body. And the artificiality of the monster denaturalizes in turn the humanness of his enemies.[25]

Jerry Dandridge then is a creation of the community that he inhabits and feeds off and, consequently, is shaped by their inherent monstrosity. The features of the vampire are then the

features of its creator. As Halberstam further states, 'The technology of *Dracula* gothicises certain bodies by making monstrosity an essential component of a race, a class, a gender, or some hybrid of all of these.'[26] Jerry's misogyny is one that would control woman as objects that are owned by men and are to be 'sucked dry' and discarded when no longer required. Jonathan Harker from Stoker's novel, similarly comments that the vampire's intent is to, 'satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless.'[27] Here too Dandridge 'turns' all those he bites to become like him so that they too will obey his strictures and spread them in ever widening circles. It is an ideology of infection and re-infection to reinforce the undead and unchanging nature of the vampire itself. Halberstam also comments that the nature of the monster has the potential to de-humanise those that attack it. But this is something that Charley is very aware of. In his vision of himself and what makes the kind of man he wants to be he is not responsible for those he loves, as the vampire wants him to be, but he is there for them. This is a fine distinction and worth explaining further. Just after his 'credo' speech, Dandridge says to Charley, 'everyone's got to look after his own business.' This is a challenge to the adolescent to fight the vampire on its own terms and to match the monstrosity of the monster. This is what the 1985 Charley tries to do and is reflected in Amy's plaintive cry to him after she is turned into a vampire: 'you were supposed to protect me.' Here, however, his responsibility is to be there for the ones he loves reconfiguring it from a possessive action into a supportive one. This is shown in his relations to his mother and girlfriend but also in his feelings for the father that left them. When the self-styled vampire expert Peter Vincent declines to help kill Dandridge—as he barely survived the last encounter with him—Charley says: 'Hey, I get it. My dad was like that. But I don't want to live till tomorrow if you're the kind of man I'm going to be.' Though fighting the vampire he will never become the monster that it and the society which made it wants.

4. Conclusion: The Monster Maketh the Man

> In all the darkest pages of the malign supernatural there is no more terrible tradition than that of the Vampire, a pariah even amongst demons. Foul are his ravages; gruesome and seemingly barbaric are the ancient and approved methods by which folk must rid themselves of this hideous pest.[28]

Fright Night, in all its versions, is a story that is as much about its main human protagonist as it is about its undead or monstrous 'star.' While the relationship between the two is, or becomes, inextricably linked to each other they too are the product of the times that they live in. Nina Auerbach's oft quoted assertion in *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, that every age produces the vampire it needs[29] is echoed in Matthew Beresford's comment, 'in essence, the vampire reflects an ever-changing being that bears relevance to the culture its exists in.'[30] *Fright Night* by extension reveals this to be equally as applicable to the idea of the teenager. Just as the vampire is expected to behave in certain ways because of the cultural expectation of the society that produces it, so too is the teenager. Charley in 1985 perfectly shows this as he struggles to become the 'man' that society demands of him and become the head of the broken family that he comes from. Charley's fight is then between his responsible self and his selfish self; the head of the family or the playboy 'lady-killer.' The vampire here may configure the dark side of American society but it is very much part of the psyche of the times. Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu observe this same point in their investigation into the possible meanings and sources of Stoker's Dracula when they say:

> We all know deep down that Dracula represents what Freud called the uncanny, that which should have remained hidden but does not. There is something both familiar and alien about Dracula the vampire which we try not to recognise, because such recognition is too frightening to face.[31]

Dandridge is then the representation or manifestation of the uncanny and repressed part of society. His misogyny and selfish behaviour only make apparent that which would normally remain hidden behind the good manners of American suburbia. Charley Brewster ultimately wins the battle but the fight has left him permanently scarred by the encounter. As Halberstam noted earlier, the same monstrous technology that created the vampire has also de-humanised its enemy and at the end of the film Charley my get to go 'all the way' with Amy but that is because she is truly his now. The vampire is not totally defeated only sublimated back into Charley's heart of darkness behind the respectable face of the suburbs.

In 2011 there has been a shift, not so in the vampire, but in the figure of Charley. The vampire is strangely the same; in fact, one could argue he is even more himself than before. Dandridge barely bothers to conceal his nature as a monster, grabbing victims off of the streets and openly using his supernatural powers in pursuit of Amy, Charley and his mother. Further, the vampire's appearing before Charley has 'seen' him shows him to be far more related to his surroundings than with any symbiotic bond with the teenager. As such he is a product of contemporary America, if not its daylight face then certainly its dark underbelly that produces the seamier side of exploitative places such as Las Vegas. Curiously, Charley too can be seen to be very much of his times. His transition from youth to maturity has been largely completed when the vampire appears with his status with his mother and girlfriend already established as equal and respectful. The monster he is fighting does not come from within him but from without and could be seen as a struggle with what society wants him to be. The female objectification which comes so easily to Dandridge is alien to Charley, and the vampire's speech about him needing to look after his women leaves the adolescent mystified rather than challenged.

The technologies that make and shape the monster are not the ones that shape the adolescent Brewster. Those technologies were the ones that shaped Charley's father and, consequently, allowed him to leave him and his mother; they are the very reasons why Charley refuses to be shaped by them and become the same as his dad. Charley's fight with the vampire is not to become a man or something better but to remain who he wants to be. In conclusion then, in the later version of *Fright Night* the vampire is not an adolescent 'rite of passage'' or an external manifestation of monstrous teenage sexual frustration, or even the product of self-imposed social alienation, but a means for Charley to become himself—not a generalised category but a specific identity. Jerry Dandridge, then, is an embodiment of the monstrous memory of the patriarchal past and the social expectation that feeds off the present to make immortal copies of itself into a never ending future—the past re-lived over and over again, and a past that Charley is fighting to escape. Killing the vampire does not allow Charley to rejoin a society that only lets him enter it by complying to its rules, as it did in 1985; rather it now, in the 21st century, means that he can negotiate with society on his own terms. Dandridge then is the Old vampire, from the Old World embodying all the sexism, exclusion and hierarchy that typifies the patriarchal monstrous past. By finally staking him at the end of the film Charley dispels the spectres of something very, very old and replaces it with something very, very new—himself.

Notes

[1] Paraphrased from Guillermo Del Toro and Chuck Hogan, *The Strain* (London: Harper, 2010), 164. Two of the main characters from their trilogy of vampire novels, Nora and Ephraim are speaking about the 'vampire' virus that threatens to infect the whole of New York; 'Nora said, 'This is something new,' [to which Ephraim replies] 'Or something very, very old'.
[2] S. P. Somtow, *Vampire Junction* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1984), 133.
[3] Alain Silver and James Ursini, *The Vampire Film: From Nosferatu to Interview with the Vampire* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), 166.
[4] Pat Gill, 'The Monstrous Years: Teens, Slasher Films, and the Family', in *Journal of Film and Video* 54.4 (2002): 19.
[5] Silver & Ursini, *The Vampire Film*, 167.
[6] Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 168.
[7] Adam Rex, *Fat Vampire: A Never Coming of Age Story* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 87.
[8] Stacey Abbott, *Celluloid Vampires: Life after Death in the Modern World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 180.
[9] Tom Holland, *Fright Night*, directed by Tom Holland, released 2 August 1985 (Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures), DVD.
[10] Abbott, *Celluloid Vampires*, 180.
[11] An obvious nod to the serpent in the Garden of Eden and his tempting of Eve but also interesting in its relevance to the later series of *Twilight* films where the vampire/apple correlation is again made.
[12] Sorcha Ní Fhlainn, '"It's Morning in America": The Rhetoric of Religion in the Music of The Lost Boys and the Deserved Death of the 1980s Vampire', in *The Role of the Monster: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*, ed. Niall Scott (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2009), 152.
[13] Anne Billson, *Let the Right One In: Devil's Advocates* (Leighton Buxxard: Autuer, 2011), 73.
[14] This is also seen in the remake *Vampire in Brooklyn* by Wes Craven from 1995, which stars Eddie Murphy.
[15] This again resurfaces in Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1993) and is summed up in its subtitle 'Love Never Dies.' Here the historical Vlad Tepes is reunited with his dead Queen Elisabeta.
[16] Stacey Abbott, 'Embracing the Metropolis: Urban Vampires in American Cinema of the 1980s and 90s', in *Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*, ed. Peter Day (New York: Rodopi, 2006), 129.
[17] Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1951), 99.
[18] Dobrev, of course, went on to star in the television series, *The Vampire Diaries* as the doppleganger human/vampire heroine Elena/Catherine.
[19] This is the exact word Dandridge uses to describe Amy in the 2011 *Fright Night*.
[20] This same idea of the vampire being the manifestation or projection of extreme emotions is also utilised in the cinematic adaptations of John Ajvide Lindqvist's *Let the Right One In* (2004). In both Tomas Alfredson's *Let the Right One In* (2008) and Matt Reeves' *Let Me In* (2010) the vampire only appears after the 12 year old boy is in a state of anguish or arousal.
[21] Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1976), 342.
[22] Franco Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms* (London, Verso, 1988), 93.
[23] Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, 168.

[24] This scene comes just after the former Jerry Dandridge makes an appearance in the film. Chris Sarendon plays the driver of a car who has just crashed into the car driven by Charley's mother that also contains him and Amy as they try to escape the vampire. This makes the third vampire film Chris Sarendon has played in. He also starred as Reverend Current, a pastor in league with a female vampire who runs a brothel in *Bordello of Blood* (1996) by Gilbert Adler.
[25] Judith Halberstam, 'Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', *Victorian Studies* 36.3 (1993): 349.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: Signet Classics, 1996), 56.
[28] Montague Summers, *The Vampire* (London: Studio Editions Ltd, 1995), ix.
[29] Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, 6.
[30] Matthew Beresford, *From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 201.
[31] Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), 181.

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Simon Bacon is an Independent Scholar living in Poznan, Poland. He is currently researching for ‘A Vampire in Neverland: The Immortal Child in Contemporary Film and Literature’.

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Book Reviews

Devil's Advocates: Let the Right One In

Anne Billson
Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2011
211 pages

Anne Billson's book, *Devil's Advocates: Let the Right One In***,** immediately benefits from not being about Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* Saga. The plethora of books that are continually being published, both scholarly and popular, have somewhat deflected attention away from many, far more interesting vampire narratives that are worthy of much wider appreciation and attention than they currently receive because of the *Twilight*-effect. One such narrative is the film *Let the Right One In* (2008) by Swedish director Tomas Alfredson. Critically acclaimed since its release, it has been slowly gaining more and more attention in academic circles, and, whilst it is making appearances as the subject of individual chapters in larger collections (a very well written chapter in Ken Gelder's forthcoming book on vampire cinema being a case in point), it has yet to have a complete volume devoted to it. This book changes that, if not completely, then it definitely serves as a starting point for an extended study of the film, the book which inspired it and the films that it has itself inspired subsequently.

Billson's *Let the Right One In* is part of a larger series, entitled 'Devil's Advocates' by Auteur which acts as a reader for individual classic horror films, having so far published one on *Witchfinder General* and due to release further volumes on *SAW* and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*.[1] As mentioned above, Billson's book is based on the highly acclaimed Swedish vampire film, *Låt den rätte komma in* (Let the Right One In), directed by Tomas Alfredson.[2] The ground swell behind the film, not least in academic quarters, has been growing in recent years making a book entirely devoted to it timely, if not overdue. Rightly, for the intent of the series and its size, it concentrates solely on Alfredson's film, with little mention of John Ajvide Lindqvist's book from 2004, on which the film is based, or Matt Reeves' re-interpretation of Alfredson's film in *Let Me In* from 2010. Reeves' film was in production at the time of the book's writing and including a detailed account of Lindqvist's novel would take both Alfredson's film and Billson's book beyond the remit of their, necessarily contained, works. The novel adds much more background to the character of the vampire; whilst also highlighting the inherent paedophilia involved in being both a 200 year old vampire trapped in the body of a 12 year old child but also the child's dependence on the kindness of adults to survive, unnoticed, in the contemporary world.[3] Also Lindqvist himself wrote the film script for *Let the Right One In,* so it can be argued that any disparities between the novel and the film have been given some form of official sanction, as hinted at in the director's commentary to the DVD version released by Momentum Pictures in 2009.

For those of you that have not seen the film, and I seriously recommend that you do, it tells the story of a 12-year-old boy, Oskar, living in a soulless, working-class suburb of Stockholm called Blackeberg.[4] Oskar's parents are separated; he lives with his mother, but is largely ignored by both of them making his a world without adults. Further to this, Oskar is mercilessly picked on at school by a gang of bullies. This causes Oskar to be a rather insular and 'odd' child, and he has a fascination for murder stories in newspapers and magazines which he cuts out and collects. Into this world of loneliness and despair, which is beautifully constructed by Alfredson in the film, enters a new neighbour—a 12 year old girl called Eli. It

transpires that Eli has been 12 for a very long time indeed, and is neither a girl nor human—Eli is, in fact, a vampire. The novel by Lindqvist describes at greater length the reasons for Eli's sexual ambiguity and the film only briefly hints at it. Alfredson builds a very touching love story between the two characters that is about friendship and belonging together, and showing that the real monsters are often not supernatural but human. Alfredson's direction is masterly, keeping the moments of horror and violence to a minimum, and so when they do happen, they are all the more shocking. Only one brief scene, of a horde of CGI cats attacking one of the characters who is turning into a vampire, mars an otherwise perfect film

Anne Billson's book, which is informed by her own love and knowledge of films, takes a studious approach, and cleverly relates the narrative of the film, whilst comparing it to other films of the vampire genre. Consequently, she describes various key stages of the film in detail, not just in terms of the film's internal logic and continuing narrative but in its wider cinematic context as well. In chapters such as 'The Vampire's Arrival', 'Meeting the Vampire', 'Becoming a Vampire' and 'The Vampire's Lifestyle' Billson summarises important scenes in the film, whilst also showing the links they have to other vampire narratives. As an example, she mentions an early scene where we see Oskar, standing in his bedroom semi-naked, staring out into the snowy night, his head resting on the window pane, seemingly waiting for something to happen. Billson acutely observes, 'It's almost as if Oskar's gesture has summoned the vampire into existence from the depths of his own troubled soul, as though his wishful thinking has brought him an imaginary friend with superpowers who will eventually turn out to be his champion, saviour and companion.'[5] This almost willed arrival of the vampire is then linked to *Daughters of Darkness* (1971) directed by Harry Kümel. Based on a conflation of Sheridan Le Fanu's vampire story *Carmilla*, and the real-life historical figure of Erzabeth Bathory here too the vampire is waiting to be wanted.[6] Similarly, in the section on 'Becoming a Vampire' Billson discusses the differences and similarities between *Let the Right One In* and Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark* (1987), Tony Scott's *The Hunger* (1983), Anders Banke's *Frostbiten* (2006) and Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897). Her choice of a line from Scott's film to illustrate the duplicity of the vampire is particularly apt in relation to the character of Eli, when the vampire from *The Hunger*, Miriam Blaylock, says to her newest 'companion': 'And from this moment you will never grow old. Not a minute. You'll be young forever.'[7] Mirian knows that this is not true, although she wishes with all her heart that it was, intimating a similar hope in Eli's relationship with Oskar. The comparison with other films provides a good introduction to the wider canon and highlights meanings that are not readily apparent when taking the film as a stand-alone narrative.

There are also various chapters that discuss the many ways one can interpret the figure of the vampire: 'Vampire as Metaphor', 'Sex and the Vampire' and 'The Vampire as Serial Killer', with this last section being particularly interesting. As Billson herself astutely observes in relation to Eli, and in contrast to the *Twilight* era of vampires, 'We are forced to reflect that, far from being the powerful, sexually attractive and glamorous creatures of many latter-day vampire movies, the lives they lead are the lives of shunned outcasts—miserable, shabby and alone.'[8] Eli's distinctly unglamorous nature is linked directly to films such as George Romero's *Martin* (1977) and Bigelow's *Near Dark*, even to more contemporary films like David Slade's *30 Days of Night* (2007). The book also places the film in relation to various pieces of vampire lore (law) in sections on 'The Vampire's Nemesis', 'The Vampires Assistant' and 'Vampire Rules', identifying the main tropes from Stoker's seminal novel, such as Abraham Van Helsing and Renfield that form the basis of many films within the genre. Perceptively as always Billson then locates these stereotypes in vampire films as diverse as Roman Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Hunters* (1967) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* by Joss Whedon (1997-2003) and Tom Holland's *Fright Night* (1985) and *Cirque du Freak: The Vampires Assistant* (2009) by Paul

Weitz respectively. As a starting point about *Let the Right One In* and as a guide on the possible ways to look at or 'read' a genre film, I cannot recommend it enough. It is informative and concise and a great place to start any kind of research on Alfredson's film and vampire films in general.

There are, however, two minor additions that would have improved the comprehensiveness of the study. One is in Billson's comparison of *Let the Right One In* to the film *Frostbiten* (2006) by Anders Banke. The points she makes are excellent but it does give the impression that Banke's film is the only other Swedish vampire film to be made. Whilst Sweden does not have a long tradition of vampires in popular culture, there have been many vampire films made, and although the majority of them are largely pornographic in nature, there are some notable exceptions. Ingmar Bergman's *Hour of the Wolf* (1968) features vampire-like characters and, most pertinently, a vampire-child; and there is also *The Sleep of Death* (1981), a Swedish-Irish production directed by Calvin Floyd, which takes a more historical approach.[9] The other thing of note is that there is no mention of the Swedish director, Lukas Moodysson and his 1998 film, *Show Me Love* (Fucking Åmål), which features a very similar relationship to that shown in Alfredson's film (except here it is between two girls).[10]

Billson's book provides a brilliant starting point and whets the appetite for a much larger study of *Let the Right One In* and its various prequels and sequels.[11] I shall let Anne Billson herself end this review with the final lines from her book, no spoiler alert is necessary, which poetically sums up Alfredson's film and her explanation of the many splendid things that encompass the vampire genre as a whole: 'And that is one of the most miraculous achievements of the film—that is in itself yin and yang, light and dark, male and female, romantic and realist—an amalgam of opposites which come together in one perfect whole, like Oskar and Eli.'[12]

Notes

[1] *Witchfinder General* is written by Ian Cooper, and based on the 1968 film directed by Michael Reeves; *SAW* is written by Benjamin Poole, and based on the 2004 film directed by James Wan; and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* is written by James Rose and is about the 1974 film directed by Tobe Hooper.

[2] Alfredson has recently directed the equally acclaimed film *Tinker Taylor Soldier Spy* (2011) based on the John Le Carré's book, starring Gary Oldman.

[3] This is a theme that rarely enters the world of *Twilight* in any serious way, even though Edward Cullen is over a hundred years older than the teenager who he dates, Bella Swan.

[4] Soulless is quite apt here as Lindqvist purposely set the drama in such a place as it is a newly built suburb and has no churches in it at all. Lindqvist, in the special features part of the DVD by Momentum (2009) explains how this lack of history and religion means the inhabitants are totally unprepared for the vampire when it arrives.

[5] Billson, 31.

[6] A largely ignored film *Daughters of Darkness* underpins later vampire classics such as Tony Scott's *The Hunger* (1983) and Michael Almereyder's *Nadja* (1994).

[7] *The Hunger*, directed by Tony Scott, MGM, 1083, as quoted in Billson, 82.

[8] Billson, 57.

[9] There was another Swedish vampire film released the year after *Let the Right One In*, namely *Not Like Others* (2009) directed by Peter Pontikis. Though largely ignored as trying to cash in on the success of the earlier film its story about two real-life vampire sisters living in Stokholm is quite touching and achieves a realism that is akin to other real-life vampire stories, such as George Romero's *Martin* (1977) and *The Hamiltons* (2006) by The Butcher Brothers.

[10] Interestingly, Tomas Alfredson, Jon Ajvide Lindqvist, Lukas Moodyson and Matt Reeves were all born between 1965 and 1969, and conjure up a very similar view of their respective teenage years on film.
[11] Currently this includes John Ajvide Lindqvists sequel to the novel, as mentioned above, Matt Reeves film, *Let Me In* (2010), which is specifically an interpretation of Alfredson's film rather than Lindqvist's novel, and a prequel graphic novel to Reeves film called Let Me In: Crossroads (2011) by Marc Anderko and Patric Reynolds.
[12] Billson, 112.

Simon Bacon is an Independent Scholar whose current research centres on *The Vampire in Neverland: The Immortal Child in Contemporary Literature and Film*.

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The Urban Fantasy Anthology
Ed. Peter S. Beagle and Joe R. Lansdale
San Francisco: Tachyon, 2011
$15.95

In *The Urban Fantasy Anthology*, Peter S. Beagle and Joe R. Lansdale have created a much-needed collection of urban fantasy suitable for classroom instructors, academics and interested laypersons alike. As Beagle notes in his introduction, 'urban fantasy has become so vibrant, and has evolved so rapidly, that it has emerged as a distinct marketing category.' This book brings together a variety of important stories in the field from both grand masters of fiction and comparative newcomers, creating an important text for anyone interested in urban fantasy. Perhaps more importantly, however, the anthology creates a collection that leaves the impression of a genre (and series of sub-genres) still developing.

Beagle and Lansdale have chosen to divide the collection into three categories: Mythic Fiction, Paranormal Romance and Noir Fantasy. The sections are introduced by Charles de Lint, Paula Guran and Joe R. Lansdale, respectively. However, the section introductions illustrate the difficulties inherent in defining a genre, particularly one as new as urban fantasy. Indeed, beyond the basic element of the fantastic in a modern setting, the various section editors themselves show little consensus about what constitutes an 'urban fantasy' story. In the introduction, Beagle claims that 'I still think that urban fantasy's most important distinction is that it isn't *The Lord of the Rings*'. Each section editor's introduction provides his or her ideas about the concept of 'urban fantasy,' deepening and enriching the conversation surrounding the genre and its various sub-genres—a move that will, I suspect, more firmly entrench the various categories, despite everyone's apparent reluctance to do just that.

Charles de Lint entitles his section introduction 'A Personal Journey into Mythic Fiction'—and given the fact that de Lint's novel *The Jack of Kinrowan: A Novel of Urban Faerie* inspired the term 'urban fantasy' (much as his fiction participated in inspiring the genre itself), the development of the genre and de Lint's development as an author might well be synonymous. However, de Lint writes that he 'found the terms 'urban fantasy' and

'contemporary fantasy' unsatisfactory … partly because not all the works we were looking at were urban, or set in the present day'. His use of the term 'mythic fiction,' then, arises out of the fact that, as he notes, the difference between other urban fantasy books and what he calls mythic fiction is that 'the magical/mythic/folkloric elements of these books is colour and shade, rather than the substance of the story. The new urban fantasy story remains rooted in the genres from which it sprang. Its magic is more often matter-of-fact—bricks and mortar—rather than something that leaves the reader with a sense of wonder.' Mythic fiction, he implies, should create that wonder missing in other kinds of urban fantasy.

Included in the first section are two stories by de Lint himself, as well as one each by Emma Bull, Neil Gaiman, Jeffrey Ford and Peter Beagle. These are certainly not stories of the matter-of-fact or brick and mortar, but their forays into the mythic vary widely. Gaiman's otherwise apparently prosaic tale of a novelist-turned-screenwriter invokes the magic of the silver screen in the era of silent film as well as that of Victorian stage magicians, while Beagle's story of a medieval tapestry unicorn set free in the modern world by a sympathetic museum-goer reads more like the works included in the 'Paranormal Romance' section. All of the stories, however, deal with worlds of myth and legend, from a road-tripping Jesus and Satan in Ford's 'On the Road to New Egypt,' to an elf who plays music in a coffee shop in de Lint's 'Make a Joyful Noise,' to a Native American shape-shifting crow in Bull's 'The Bird that Whistles.'

Like the other section editors, Guran is uncomfortable with the term 'urban fantasy'—but unlike de Lint and Lansdale, she also takes exception to the term 'paranormal romance,' noting that many of the works categorized as paranormal romance are as likely to trace their origins to other genres. As she points out, Charlain Harris's initial Southern Vampire Mysteries novel (the basis for the HBO series *True Blood*) 'won an Anthony Award as Best Paperback *Mystery* of 2001'). For Guran, the central shared characteristic of fiction in this category is 'an intersection of 'the other'—the magical, the strange, the weird, the wondrous, the dark that illumines, the revelation of the hidden—with the mundane, the world we know'.

The anthology includes in this section stories by de Lint, Kelley Armstrong, Norman Partridge, Carrie Vaughn, Patricia Briggs, Bruce McAllister, Suzy McKee Charnas and Francesca Lia Block. In many ways, Guran is right—Block's story of a grieving-mother-turned-zombie-hunter-P.I. ('Farewell, My Zombie') and Vaughn's tale of a party-crashing zombie created by a controlling boyfriend ('Kitty's Zombie New Year') seem more mystery than romance. Similarly, Charnas' 'Boobs'—the story of an adolescent girl becoming a werewolf—ends more in horror than romance (though not entirely in either), as does Armstrong's 'A Haunted House of Her Own.' Indeed, of all of the excellent offerings in this section, only McAllister's 'Seeing Eye' seems to conclude with the potential for love that seems the hallmark of commercial fiction romance novels.

Although none of the authors of the introductions are entirely at ease with the term 'urban fantasy,' Lansdale is the most outspoken: 'It's not my purpose here to round up these stories and brand them. They can be tagged to some degree, but they are not confined by the tag'. Lansdale also notes that 'this section of stories owes less to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and more to noir and writers who tripped the dark fantastic with gleeful enthusiasm' such as Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, Ernest Hemingway, Richard Matheson, Ray Bradbury, Harlan Ellison, and Flannery O'Connor (among others).

The Noir Fantasy section includes two stories by Lansdale and one each by Thomas Disch, Susan Palwick, Holly Black, Tim Powers and Al Sarrantonio. Steven R. Boyett's short story 'Talking Back to the Moon,' also included in this section, is the only previously unpublished work in the collection. Only in this portion of the anthology do the selections seem to fully live up to their section name: these stories are dark. Disch's 'The White Man' is chilling

in its depiction of a young Malawi girl encouraged to hunt vampires in Minnesota, and in Palwick's 'Gestella,' the reader follows a domesticated werewolf wife as she spirals down to her inevitable horrific end. Black's 'The Coldest Girl in Coldtown' dispels any romantic notions about vampirism, while 'Talking Back to the Moon' offers a bleak post-apocalyptic world, even for werewolves and centaurs. 'The Bible Repairman' and 'Father Dear' both feature parents making dreadful sacrifices for their children.

The anthology has a few weaknesses, perhaps unsurprisingly for a collection attempting, in part, to both stabilize and expand conceptions about a relatively new genre. Guran's section introduction, for example, relies fairly heavily upon comments in Landsdale's section introduction, though Guran's precedes Lansdale's—but this is really only a problem for a reader reading the anthology in strict order, and I suspect that most casual readers will pick and choose among the stories available. More problematically, Beagle's introduction attributes 'cheerful werewolf heroines running radio call-in shows' to Laurel K. Hamilton's Anita Blake series—a mistake that perhaps indicates an only passing familiarity with the 'Paranormal Romance' version of urban fantasy, as the werewolf in question is actually from Carrie Vaughn's Kitty Norville series. Ultimately, though, *The Urban Fantasy Anthology* offers a much-needed collection of what Beagle calls 'raw, consciously commercial fiction, feeding an unquenchable hunger for walks on the wild side, blending and shaking up familiar themes until they are transformed into something new and meaningful'—an affordable collection that brings together some of the best stories to be found in urban fantasy, accompanied by an accessible critical framework. Despite its minor flaws, it's an absorbing collection—so much so that I read it in a single sitting—and the consistently well-chosen stories overcome the taxonomical tensions among the various section introductions.

Margo Collins received her PhD from University of North Texas. She now is an online instructor with DeVry University.

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Monsters in America: Our Historical Obsession with the Hideous and the Haunting
W. Scott Poole
Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011
295 pages
$29.95 hardback

In *Monster's in America*, W. Scott Poole presents a view of American history through the lens of its monsters. In doing so, he simultaneously models a new approach to the monstrous through the lens of American history. Throughout this text, Poole often assumes a 'fighting posture,' using the juxtaposition of monsters and history to point out weaknesses endemic to both American historiography and the scholarly study of horror and the monstrous. The result is a useful study that opens up new avenues of exploration for historians and scholars of the monstrous alike.

The seven chapters between the introduction and the epilogue are organized chronologically and analyse intersections of the monstrous with American history and culture

from the colonial era to the present. 'Monstrous Beginnings' considers monsters in the context of colonization and the European conquest of the North American landscape and its peoples. Poole discusses speculation over mastodons living in North America and legends of 'Deer woman' and other monsters that reflect the European encounter with Native Americans. He also discusses the horrors of slavery as they relate to a variety of monsters from the Snoligoster of Florida folklore to the monster of Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*. 'Goth Americana' discusses nineteenth-century literature in which the monster is frequently used to symbolize and make sense of such social institutions as whaling and slavery. This chapter also discusses the Civil War and the earliest portrayals of Southerners as the murderous 'other.' This became a standard trope of the slasher film genre, epitomized by *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. 'Weird science' examines fears over evolution, miscegenation, and eugenics reflected in such classic films as *King Kong* and *Freaks*. 'Alien Invasions' considers monstrous mythologies that emerged during the Cold War, particularly reports of alien abductions and cryptid animals such as Bigfoot. 'Deviant Bodies'—one of the most interesting chapters in the book—discusses America's simultaneous fear, obsession, and eroticization, of serial killers such as Ed Gein and Ted Bundy. This fascination is reflected in popular depictions of serial killers from *Psycho* to *Dexter*. 'Haunted Houses' reflects on anxieties over changing American domestic life as they relate to films such as *The Exorcist*, *The Brood*, and *Alien*. Finally, 'undead Americans' discusses our current obsession with zombies and vampires.

As a historian, Poole uses the monster to take aim at master narratives of American history, which he claims are inherently 'full of lies and untruths'. Monsters, he argues, reveal the underbelly of American history, the truths that Americans are often too horrified to look at. Monsters are, in a sense, a by-product of master narratives because they often serve to reflect or interpret the unpleasant realities that have been excluded from the traditional, often triumphalist, story of American history. Lurking behind the monsters are the experiences of Native Americans, slaves, the poor, and women.

This approach to American history through its monsters frequently steers analysis toward issues of politics and social justice. Poole sometimes resembles progressive historians such as Howard Zinn, equating the master narrative of American history with an endorsement of imperialism. Poole does not pull any punches in using monsters to expose historical injustices. For instance, in discussing America's obsession with serial killers in the 1980s, Poole speaks without apology of Ronald Reagan's 'war on poor single women'.

For scholars who study monsters, the most exciting aspect of Poole's analysis is that he refuses to limit his criteria of the monstrous. In fact, he refuses to present a definition of a 'monster.' Unfettered by categories, he examines not only the standard monsters of horror films, but also alleged sightings of sea serpents, cryptids, and aliens, along with serial killers and other documented horrors of history. In thinking so broadly about monsters, Poole critiques previous scholarship on monsters in the modern era, which has focused almost exclusively on film.

Two things are stake in Poole's call for us to look for monsters beyond the movie theatre: First, Poole argues that the study of horror must move beyond psychoanalysis and that the close focus on film has led to a kind of methodological individualism in which only the 'the self, especially the adolescent self, is the locus of understanding the horrific'. This narrow focus, he argues, has bracketed out the cultural and social structures that shape our understanding of the monstrous. This not only hurts our understanding of monsters, it renders the study of the monstrous irrelevant to broader conversations about culture. He writes, 'The tendency to view American monsters as primarily psychological archetypes ignores how closely they have reflected actual historical events and actual historical victims'. Horror, he argues, is indeed a 'return of the repressed,' as Freudians argue. But monsters often reflect that which has

been repressed by an entire culture rather than a single individual. Thus, monsters must be understood within a broader social and historical context. Here, Poole allies himself with sociologists such as Douglas E. Cowan, who advocates a similar approach to horror and culture in his book *Sacred Terror*.

Second, by looking at cryptids and serial killers alongside horror films, Poole challenges our assumption that monsters are 'fictional' beings. He writes, 'The line between 'story' and 'history' is highly permeable'. Monsters, he argues, are 'real' in that they both symbolize and help to configure worldviews. The way we see the world informs our monsters, but monsters also inform the way we see the world. This is a powerful argument for the continued study of the monstrous.

By Poole's own admission, there is much that had to be left out of this book. Key moments of American history are omitted as are key monsters. (I was particularly sad to see that Poole had no space to address the 'Mothman' sighted in West Virginia in 1967). However, what Poole does cover, he does with historical rigor making fascinating connections between monsters and the cultural context in which they emerged. In doing so, Poole models a new approach to the study of monsters that is rooted in historiography rather than psychoanalysis. *Monsters in America* is an important contribution to the study of the monstrous because it expands the methodological tool kit with which scholars can approach their subject.

Joe Laycock received a PhD from Boston University in Religion and Society. Currently he is adjunct professor at Piedmont Virginia Community College.

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Better off Dead: The Evolution of the Zombie as Post-Human
Ed. Deborah Christie and Sarah Juliet Lauro.
New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.
$26.00

To say that the zombie has become the new 'it' creature is more than an understatement: featured in comedies, dramas, cartoons as well as horror films, the zombie has never been so popular. But how did something so dead, evolve into something so culturally alive? In their collection *Better off Dead: The Evolution of the Zombie as Post-Human*, editors Deborah Christie and Sarah Juliet Lauro bring together a variety of contributors to help trace the zombie's evolution from Haitian legend to undead icon.

The editors begin with the assertion, 'That the Zombie is ubiquitous in popular culture cannot be disputed,'[1] a reasonable assumption since most readers will spend much more time dead than they might alive here on Earth. But in addition to tracing the cultural evolution of the zombie, the collection pushes critical thinking into the area of the 'post-human.' On the one hand, we can see the zombie as post-human since the undead shuffling body we see before us was once an actual living, self-directed, human being. On the other hand, many recent works of zombie fiction feature creatures that don't just shuffle along in search of brains, but creatures that actually run, and at times sprint, like Olympic athletes. These new zombies even appear to think for themselves, retaining part of their humanity, or becoming something more than human.

Post-human is a play on words between the living and the dead; yet, the collection traces zombie fiction to explore the zombie as a species beyond human and at the same time forever tied to its humanity—from homo-sapien to homo-resurectus. Or, as the editors explain:

> We feel our collection acknowledges the possibility that the zombie is post-human, and also illustrates that we are living in the period of the post-zombie. Yet, for all this evolutionary progress, we acknowledge that any use of the word 'post' is, as Neil Badmington writes, 'forever tied up with what it is post-ing.'[2]

So, an examination of the undead is always already (to dust off a phrase) linked to the living. As dead individuals, zombies occupy an in-between space of not exactly living, not exactly dead, and not to mention, not exactly human. As the body decays, it becomes less recognizable, and less human, and decidedly more monstrous, or 'post-human.' And yet, it is this former state as human that makes the zombie such an effective (infective?) monster. How many times have we cringed as we see the living characters in zombie fiction, characters that cannot separate the monster from the person they once knew, become infected themselves? 'She's not your mother anymore,' Simon Peg's character in *Shaun of the Dead* is warned, 'she's a zombie!'[3] Sentimentality serves as catalyst for zombie plague. In a sense, humanity becomes the living human's greatest weakness. Zombie fiction serves to show that human beings are inherently vulnerable, biologically as well as culturally.

To trace zombie evolution, the collection is organized into three sections: 'And the Dead Shall Rise,' 'And the Dead Shall Walk,' and finally, 'And the Dead Shall Inherit the Earth.' The reader experiences the range of zombie lore, from the creature's early beginnings as undead Haitian slaves to its latest iteration as flash-mob performance artists. Throughout, we see the zombie as cultural metaphor: from an early analog for evils of slavery as well as the fears of a slave revolt, to George Romero's critique of consumer culture and its associated anxieties: slackers, Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, globalization. Finally, the collection examines the zombie as a form of protest, artistic expression, and harbinger of what the future may hold.

The contributors argue that the zombie has served as a repository for cultural fears for so long that there is no concrete stable idea of what constitutes 'the zombie,' reflecting the cultural fear that there is no stable concrete idea of what constitutes 'the human.' Zombies are liminal creatures, not alive, yet somehow animated, and it is this liminal, post-alive, state that creates the gaps into which so many can project. In the same way, it can be argued that humans are in their own way liminal creatures, existing as they do between cultures, between created realities, between competing histories as well as existing between competing technologies. So while the collection traces the cultural evolution of the zombie, it also investigates the mechanisms of this cultural evolutionary process. The early Haitian zombie highlighted cultural fears arising from race and colonialism, while the millennial zombie fleshes out the terror of modern terrorism without overtly invoking race.

The strength of the collection lies in its interdisciplinary approach. The contributors come to the project from a variety of backgrounds, including anthropology, philosophy, theater, media studies and performance art. This is a great asset, allowing the collection to move from moments of highbrow academic theory to the visceral delights of slash and splatter horror films. In addition, the editors have asked the contributors to look beyond his/her own contribution and examine how the individual work fits among the larger body of essays. To further integrate the individual essays, the three sections have mini-introductions that further unite and advance ongoing discussions between chapters.

If there is a weakness in the collection, it is that the contributors cannot escape the shadow of the 'godfather' of all zombies, George Romero; and at times, the reader may wonder if the book is a tribute to Romero—nearly every chapter and introduction references Romero in some capacity, to the extent that one almost expects a co ntribution from Romero himself to finish up the collection. Perhaps in a future edition of *Better Off Dead*, the editors might ask Romero for an afterward, or a forward, that would comment on the director's own views of zombie evolution. In the final assessment of this collection, the reader will see that although the contributors tip their hats to Romero, their true love is for the zombies whom the director helped shuffle along the evolutionary path.

Notes

[1] Deborah Christie and Sarah Juliet Lauro, 'Introduction', in *Better Off Dead: The Evolution of the Zombie as Post-Human*, Fordham University Press, New York, p. 1.
[2] Ibid., 2.
[3] Simon Peg, *Shuan of the* Dead, used as head not in Christie and Lauro, 'Afterword', in *Better Off Dead*, 231.

Ken Monteith is an Independent Scholar, currently residing in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.