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'Fairy Tale Monsters / Monstrous Fairy Tales'

Contents

Short Stories and Poetry:

Book Reviews:

Film Reviews:

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Introduction

Cristina Santos

This special issue of the Monsters and the Monstrous Journal proposes to discuss the ideas of fairy tale monsters and monstrous fairy tales and explore how fairy tale monsters are defined, (re)created and (re)visioned. Contemporary popular culture has seen the fairy tale genre expand to include elements of paranormal romance by mixing with more traditional supernatural monsters (eg. vampires, werewolves, etc.), become re-energized with teenaged iterations of classic characters (Monster High, Ever After High), and perseverate as a space of both invention and intervention. Indeed, 2015 marks the 150th anniversary of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which has often been categorised as a fairy tale; Carroll himself specifically identified *Through the Looking-Glass* as 'a fairy-tale' in the poem he wrote as an epigraph for that book.

This collection of articles has taken on the task of examining, through the various art forms, the redefining and revisioning of fairy tale monsters such as Maleficent as well as new (re)interpretations of fairy tales through political, socio-cultural, (dis)abilities and sexual canons. Contributors have explored the question not only of the fairy tale 'monster' but also the idea of the 'monstrous' fairy tales as set out as the theme of this issue. Fairy tales can indeed be monstrous—traditional and revisited fairy tales carry stories of violence, cannibalism and rape but they can also be monstrous in its traditional depictions of androcentric, heteronormative didactics that contemporary revisions from authors such as Anne Rice, Alison Tyler and Eloisa James (to name a few) have sought to address.

The poetry, short stories and art collection included in this issue reflect contemporary interpretations of the fairy tales and fairy tale monsters. This issue also presents, as an overall collection, an approach to the metaliterary use of fairy tales and the pedagogical uses of fairy tale monsters.

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The Witch and the Goddess: *Hansel and Gretel* and the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*

Kevin McGuiness

Abstract

Within the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* which dates from the archaic period in ancient Greece, the goddess Demeter is faced with the wrenching loss of her daughter Persephone. Grief-stricken and forlorn, the goddess wanders to the small town of Eleusis disguised as an old crone where she is taken in by the king and queen and employed as a nurse for their young son Demophoön. In compensation to the couple, the goddess attempts to transform the young prince into an immortal. She performs an apotheosis by placing him on the fire of the hearth each evening to burn away his mortality. This tableau of an elderly woman placing a young male in a fire recurs in the medieval folktale *Hansel and Gretel* recorded by the Brothers Grimm, a story in which two young children are taken captive by a witch who threatens to consume them after placing them in her oven. Whereas Demeter is a revered and benevolent deity of extreme importance in ancient Greece, the witch in *Hansel and Gretel* is a predatory and malevolent figure. Does the witch in *Hansel and Gretel* therefore represent a perverted image of the ancient grain goddess? This villainous appropriation of Demeter's image serves as a manifestation of the cultural influence of the Christian Church that wished to abolish or demonize depictions of pagan deities within Western Europe during the Middle Ages. Adopting a comparative lens, I will uncover the links and commonalities shared by these two works which are separated by over two thousand years.

Key Words

Witch, goddess, fairytale, Demeter, Hansel, Gretel, Demophoön, oven, gingerbread house, step-mother.

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1. Introduction

In the ancient Greek poem the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess Demeter is faced with the wrenching loss of her daughter Persephone. Grief-stricken and disguised as an old crone, the goddess wanders to the small town of Eleusis in West Attica where she is taken in by King Keleus and Queen Metaneira to care for their young son Demophoön. In compensation, the goddess attempts to transform the young prince into an immortal, and performs an apotheosis by placing him on the fire of the hearth each evening to burn away his mortality. This tableau of an elderly woman placing a young male in a fire is repeated in the medieval folktale *Hansel and Gretel*, whereupon the witch attempts to engage in acts of cannibalism. Whereas Demeter is a revered and worshipped deity of extreme importance in ancient Greece, the witch in *Hansel and Gretel* is a predatory and malevolent figure.

Perhaps the most fascinating and disturbing aspect of these two narratives is how closely aligned the roles of deity and monster are, as the lines which divide the witch and the goddess

are razor thin. Both female figures exhibit superhuman qualities, capable of exacting both great tenderness and cruelty towards children. Ultimately the dividing factor is the goal of this cruelty - in the case of Demeter she wishes to bequeath immortality upon the child, whereas the witch simply wants to consume Hansel. Both female figures display intelligence and power; however the witch also exhibits a destructive and monstrous appetite. As Jack Zipes states in *Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales, Children, and the Culture Industry*, the witch 'is a predator, an ogress' who is destroyed 'in the name of goodness and God'.[1] Cannibalism therefore marks out the witch as 'a thoroughly repugnant human being',[2] a figure that 'perverts the basic comforts associated with the maternal and the home.'[3] The act of consuming human flesh within *Hansel and Gretel* places the witch beyond the borders of civilization, and marks her as a creature that has forfeited her humanity in the name of satisfying her monstrous appetites. She is categorically anti-creative, in that her actions results not only in the destruction of life, but also the perversion of the so-called 'natural cycle' whereupon children succeed their elders. The witch therefore comes to embody a monstrous inversion of the fertility goddess and a reversal of the creative process.

This villainous appropriation of Demeter's image may represent medieval perceptions of pagan deities within a Christianized world. Heide Göttner-Abendroth pointed out in *Die Göttin und ihr Heros* (*The Goddess and Your Heroes*) that the matriarchal world view and motifs of the original folk tales underwent successive stages of 'patriarchalization.' Göttner-Abendroth goes on to state that by the time the oral folk tales, originally stamped by matriarchal mythology, circulated in the Middle Ages, they had been transformed and the 'the goddess became the witch, evil fairy or stepmother'.[4] Utilizing the figure of Frau Holle (a pre-Christian deity similar to Demeter) to illustrate this point, Christa Kamenetsky explains that 'the mythical image of a kind and benevolent goddess of fertility had been transformed into an ugly and dreadful one'.[5] Both Göttner-Abendroth and Kamenetsky point towards the fact that the witch and the goddess share certain common qualities which may indicate an implicit relationship that has historical basis.

Within this article I will discuss the likelihood that these two stories share a common origin within the oral tradition. Likewise, I will examine the kinship that the witch shares with Demeter and the fact that she represents an adaptation and partial inversion of the grain goddess, functioning as a derivative of the Magna Mater. With the mass conversion to Christianity of large sectors of the European population during the late Roman and Byzantine period, it is likely that such literary demonization of pagan deities represents an attempt to eradicate and alienate them from popular consciousness.

Though these two works have profound sociological and historical implications, this article will be focusing primarily on their narratological aspects. Adopting an anthropological and psychoanalytic methodology, I will uncover the links and commonalities shared by these two works which are separated by over two thousand years. This implicit relationship between the literary figures of the goddess and the witch has been invoked by writers such as German feminist scholar Heide Göttner-Abendroth and Swiss psychologist Marie Louise von Franz. However the notion of a connection between the deified and monstrous female remains a relatively untouched topic within the English speaking comparative literature community. Utilizing the writings of such theorists as folklorist Jack Zipes, medieval scholar Graham Anderson and classics lecturer Nicholas James Richardson, I will reveal the fact that the witch in *Hansel and Gretel* represents an adapted and inverted image of the ancient grain goddess.

Distinguishing folk tales from mythology is a notoriously difficult task, and one which in recent years has frustrated cultural anthropologists and literary scholars alike. Both genres deal with supernatural characters and the magical attributes of nature, and often include the presence of a deity. However as Graham Anderson points out in *Fairytales in the Ancient World*, there is

a pervasive belief that mythological material subscribes to a superior level of human intellect when contrasted with the common folktale. As Anderson states 'There is a strong prejudice that myth operates at the level of the elevated, while folk – and fairytale at the level of the trivial'.[6] The validity of this claim is questionable, however I believe for the purposes of this article it would be productive to accept the fact that the distinguishing lines which delineate the folktale from its ancient counterpart are tenuous at best. Each form can easily slip into the other and any definitions which have been constructed around these two genres are more often gauged on the affective quality of the work, as opposed to any structural traits.

This article will reveal the symbolic and psychological implications of the imagery utilized in both works. These two texts include similar narrative features employed to evoke alternative effects upon the reader. This tendency to adapt works to suit particular social trends is articulated by American scholar Jack Zipes in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion.* As Zipes points out

> in each new stage of civilization…the symbols and configurations of the tales were endowed with new meaning, transformed, or eliminated in reaction to the needs and conflicts of the people within the social order.[7]

Octavio Paz echoes these sentiments when he states 'Art cannot be reduced to the land, the people and the moment that produce it; nevertheless, it is inseparable from them'.[8] Each of these respective works are therefore embedded within their own specific socio-cultural worlds, however there is a deep seated link which ties them together, namely a shared legacy.

The idea of a possible kinship between Demeter and the witch from *Hansel and Gretel* was first proposed by Joan Gould in her 2005 book *Spinning Straw into Gold: What Fairy Tales Really Reveal about the Transformation in a Woman's Life*. Though Gould is not an academic by trade, she has written extensively about the nature of fairy tales and their relevance to the stages of a woman's personal life. Gould astutely took note of the common imagery shared by both works when she questioned whether Demeter could have been

> transformed to a supernatural witch, living in a house made of bread, who tried to roast two children in the oven, for her benefit rather than theirs?[9]

Gould characterizes the witch from *Hansel and Gretel* as a harbinger of death, personifying a similar force that the grain goddess does during the winter months when she 'folds everything back inside her body with an impartial hand'.[10] Within the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess briefly embodies this role in physical terms, disguising herself as an old crone. The witch from *Hansel and Gretel* could therefore represent the permanent transition into this alternate being, the persona of the old crone fully emancipated from the grain goddess.

2. History of *Hansel and Gretel*

Before I venture too far into my analysis, I believe a brief outline of the development of *Hansel and Gretel* and the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* would be germane to this argument, and allow for a deeper understanding of how they function as derivatives of a common narrative foundation. Though the exact origin of *Hansel and Gretel* is uncertain, according to G. Ronald Murphy in *The Owl, the Raven, and the Dove: The Religious Meaning of the Grimms' Magic Fairy Tales*, the story is 'descended from the French tradition'.[11] Jack Zipes claims that the tale was told to the Brothers Grimm by Dortchen Wild (Wilhelm Grimm's future wife) at some point between 1808 and 1810.[12] As far as scholars have been able to determine, Wilhelm wrote from memory, listening to Dortchen recount the story before committing it to the page.[13] This

style of writing has caused certain scholars to question the degree of creative license exercised by Wilhelm in shaping the tale prior to publication.

Once the story had been written down, the Brothers Grimm went about moulding and refining the story to suit contemporary Christian sensibilities. It was recorded in the Ölenberg manuscript under the title 'Das Brüderchen und das Schwesterchen' ('The Little Brother and the Little Sister')[14] and was subsequently published in an altered state in the 1812 edition of the *Children and Household Tales*.[15] In the Ölenberg version of the story, there are numerous small though pivotal details that differ from the later more popular retelling. Specifically, the children are not named, and most importantly there are no references to God.[16] The religious overtones which pervade the Grimm's published version of the story are entirely absent from the earlier copy and highlight the possibility that the story has pre-Christian roots.

The exact date at which the tale of *Hansel and Gretel* came into existence is impossible to ascertain as it has existed in the oral tradition for numerous centuries and possibly millennia. However some hints to its ancient origins may be found in the fact that, as G. Ronald Murphy points out 'The cannibalistic witch of the forest is a figure about whom we have strictures from as long ago as…the reign of Charlemagne'.[17] It has also been speculated by Graham Anderson that motifs within the tale are present within the writings of Philostratus concerning the *Life of Apollonius* which date from the 3rd century C.E.[18] Therefore, it is entirely possible that the tale has ties to the ancient world, and may very well have existed in other iterations within previous millennia.

3. History of *Hymn to Demeter*

The history of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* is equally difficult to determine, as it has strong roots within the poetic tradition of ancient Greece. A story that existed initially in the oral tradition, it was recorded during the archaic period. As classics scholar Nicholas James Richardson states in his 1974 commentary on the hymn, it is generally accepted that it belongs to the seventh or sixth centuries B.C.E.[19] Though little is known of the poet who recorded the hymn, Richardson characterized this individual as someone either from Attica, or intimately acquainted with the city of Eleusis,[20] which figures prominently in the poem. Likely composed for recitation at public festivals, such as the Eleusinian Games,[21] the hymn was deeply intertwined with the celebrations in honour of the goddess Demeter and her cult located at Eleusis. Indeed, the Hymn has become so inextricably tied to Demeter's mystery cult and the activities that took place during this festival that it is difficult to tell where one begins and the other ends.

Within the myth, it is the abduction of Demeter's young daughter by the lord of the underworld which drives her into despair and sets her on a path to Eleusis where she serves as nurse to the young Demophoön. During her stay in the house of Keleus and Metaneira, Demeter attempts to make their child immortal through a process of anointing him with ambrosia, breathing on the child, and holding him in her bosom, as well as placing him in the fire of the hearth.[22] During one of these sessions, Metaneira disrupts the ritual by crying out for her child who she believes is being burned to death in the flames of the hearth. In frustration, Demeter tosses the child to the ground and abruptly leaves the palace after performing an epiphany.

However the Homeric version of this myth is not the only one in existence from the ancient world and in other variations of the tale, the child is in fact consumed within the flames. In the recordings of the tale attributed to the mythic poet Orpheus, Demeter 'burns and kills the child'.[23] Richardson points out that in some respects these alternate versions, referred to as Orphic, 'may represent earlier and more genuine traditions than those of the Homeric poet, who adapts to suit the requirements of traditional epic narrative'.[24] Likewise, this occurrence is also observed in the recording by Apollodorus in his *Library* from the first or second century C.E.[25]

It has been suggested by Ann Suter in her text *The Narcissus and the Pomegranate: An Archaeology of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter* that 'the whole Demophoön episode, has been incorporated into the agrarian version to make the *Hymn*',[26] and therefore may have represented a separate narrative which has subsequently been integrated into the Demeter and Persephone story. If this is true, then the narrative as it is encountered today may be vastly different from the one that existed within the oral tradition.

4. The Nurse and the Witch

Demeter's alternate persona of the elderly nurse Doso, which she temporarily adopts during her sojourn in Eleusis, closely resembles the physical characteristics typically associated with the figure of the witch. Once Demeter arrived at Eleusis, she is described by the hymn poet as disguised 'like a very old woman cut off from childbearing and the gifts of garland-loving Aphrodite'.[27] Demeter assumes the appearance of an elderly woman as a symbolic manifestation of her emotional desolation at the loss of her young daughter Persephone. The character of Doso appears to be a historically accurate representation of actual nurses within the ancient Greek world, as evidenced by statues discovered which date to the late Classical and early Hellenistic periods.[28] These renderings depict women with 'broad, heavy, wrinkled yet kind faces' as well as 'large, flabby, hunched bodies with thick arms and hands (redolent of hard work)'.[29] Such images closely resemble the physical traits traditionally ascribed to witches in the Middle Ages. Likewise, there is an extensive catalogue of historical scholarship connecting the figure of the midwife (and by extension the nurse) to the figure of the witch, a relationship which was solidified during the Middle Ages.

Traditionally witches are envisioned as female figures closely allied with the Devil or other demonic forces, and are often associated with acts of infanticide or other crimes against children. This predatory threat to children is central to the figure of the witch, as they are often envisioned as 'abductors and devourers' of youngsters.[30] As the Jesuit and demonologist Martin del Rio (1558-1608) points out, witches 'snatch children from the cradle and rend them in pieces…or they eat them, a food they find very pleasing'.[31] These qualities are all manifested in the witch within *Hansel and Gretel* who is characterized by Max Lüthi as not a person but rather a personification of evil.[32] G. Ronald Murphy echoes these sentiments in *The Owl, the Raven, and the Dove: The Religious Meaning of the Grimms' Magic Fairy Tales* when he claims that the witch is a conceptual figure personifying 'death itself'.[33] The witch is clearly representative of the destructive and ferocious aspects of nature and motherhood, with the sole function of destroying new life.

The character of the witch therefore embodies forces antithetical to Demeter and represents a perversion of her maternal nature. The witch fattens Hansel with the intention of eating him, manifesting a perverted vision of motherhood, one which rejects her children and instead of nourishing and feeding them instead wishes to destroy and consume them. This theme of cannibalism serves a dual function within the story, as it inverts the figure of the Magna Mater while simultaneously referencing practices believed to be associated with witches during the medieval period. As Lyndal Roper states in *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Europe*: 'The fairy tale mirrors the realities of witchcraft accusations…Eating babies was exactly what witches were believed to do'.[34] However I wish to argue that the act of cooking Hansel within the oven and consuming his flesh does not simply reference cannibalism, but also has a much deeper symbolic purpose, as it represents a reversal of the life-giving process of birth.

5. Dualism

One characteristic synonymous with both Demeter and the witch is that of dualism, as both figures adopt an alternate guise during the course of their stories. During her sojourn in Eleusis, Demeter appears as an elderly woman in the winter of her years. This external façade serves a symbolic purpose, simultaneously presenting the listener with a clear articulation of Demeter's internal dynamic and emotional turmoil while showcasing her transition from the state of motherhood to that of old crone. Though the figures of Doso and Demeter appear somewhat antithetical to one another, one fertile and vital, and the other withered and destitute, they are in fact facets of the same core being.

Similarly, the character of the witch within *Hansel and Gretel* exhibits a parallel manifestation of dualism, embodied in the figure of the children's stepmother. As Joyce Thomas points out in her 1989 text *Inside the Wolf's Belly*, the kinship shared by these two figures is showcased through the fact that 'both characters die [or vanish] at approximately the same time' in the narrative.[35] Upon the children's return from having conquered the murderous witch in the forest, the step-mother is conspicuously absent, and her disappearance is never explained. This fact seems to indicate that there is a symbolic link between the two, both of whom exhibit decidedly un-maternal qualities, and function as the combined agents of the children's potential destruction. As Murphy points out, it is the sin of rejecting and condemning her step-children which brings about the step-mother's symbolic transformation into the figure of the witch, an external manifestation of her inner corruption: 'The mother's…advocacy of the murder of her children is mortal sin...[and] the advocate of killing the children, the mother, is revealed in the forest world, the religious environment of the story, to be an ugly witch'.[36] It is through the destruction of the witch that the children are able to overcome the other monstrous maternal figure within their home, namely their stepmother.

The destructive and rejecting aspects of the stepmother fuse her with the figure of the witch and add a diabolical subtext to the fairytale by indicating the withdrawal of maternal love. In his text *Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales, Children, and the Culture Industry*, Jack Zipes articulates the ferocious nature of the stepmother:

> The stepmother could not care less if wild animals eat the children in the woods. She wants to get rid of them, to eradicate them from her life. The witch is a predator, an ogress, who wants to eat them. In the end, both evil women are killed in the text by Wilhelm in the name of goodness and God.[37]

It is therefore only through the children's destruction that the witch/step-mother will attain satisfaction within the story. Joyce Thomas describes the role of the witch/step-mother as 'a Draconian monster concealed within the guise of the maternal' who desires 'nothing less than the child's complete annihilation-via dismemberment and cannibalistic consumption'.[38] The fact that the witch functions as an alter-ego to the stepmother is indicated by the fact that 'upon their return home, the children discover the stepmother has died during their absence-almost as if she had been consumed in the same oven as the witch'.[39] The oven therefore functions as the instrument of the witch's destruction, but also as a symbol of her monstrous fertility.

6. The Gingerbread House, the Oven, the Hearth and Fire

The Gingerbread house where the witch resides is a later addition to the *Hansel and Gretel* fairy tale and functions as a perverted image of the body of the Magna Mater. The house did not appear in versions of the tale 'before the nineteenth century'[40] and ultimately serves as a trap, luring the starving children inside where they can be consumed by the witch. According to Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*,

the symbol of the house signifies 'oral greediness'[41] and 'represents the mother who in fact nurses the child from her own body'.[42] However the house is a false refuge, functioning to fill the stomachs of the children only to fatten them for later consumption and allow the witch to dine on their flesh. As Bettelheim goes on to point out, whereas the children 'eat only the symbolic representation of the mother, the gingerbread house; the witch wants to eat the children themselves'.[43] Through the gingerbread house, the witch is able to pervert the 'basic comforts associated with the maternal and the home'.[44] The oven therefore serves as an extension of this metaphor, and symbolizes the deathly womb of the witch.

Dispersing heat and cooking food, the oven was a central fixture within the domestic sphere during the Middle Ages. The oven therefore has often been associated with the maternal figure from tales of the medieval and ancient world. Within *Hansel and Gretel*, the oven comes to symbolize the surrogate womb of the witch and functions as a trap.[45] As Derek Brewer states in *Symbolic Stories: Traditional Narratives of Family Drama in English Literature*, the oven becomes 'a tomb if the growing individual is forced back into it'.[46] The process of cooking Hansel therefore functions as a means by which the birthing process is reversed and the witch's monstrous appetites can be satisfied. As Marina Warner points out in her text *No Go the Bogeyman*, 'the act of eating represents an inverted birthing: biological ownership through incorporation'.[47] Likewise, Valerie Estelle Frankel articulates this process in her text *From Girl to Goddess: The Heroine's Journey through Myth and Legend*: 'Infuriated, [the witch] wants to swallow [the children] back into her belly from which they came'.[48] The flames which emit from the oven are therefore the vehicle through which Hansel will be killed and the witch will attain sustenance.

The oven in *Hansel and Gretel* functions similarly to the hearth in the *Hymn to Demeter*, and both narratives feature a young male child who is threatened with the prospect of being killed within the flames of a womb-like enclosure. The ovens of medieval Europe bear certain structural similarities to the hearths of ancient Greece and both fixtures play a relatively similar role within the domestic realm. The hearths of Archaic Greece served to cook food, and were often affixed directly to the ground, serving to warm and light 'every part of the one-or-two-room houses'.[49] The fact that the hearth was associated with the womb is indicated within the Homeric version of the *Hymn to Demeter* itself, in which the author describes Demeter receiving Demophoön within her '*kolpos,*' a term which Richard Seaford argues may roughly translate as 'womb'.[50] Both the oven and the hearth therefore hold symbolic relevance to the body of the woman and her reproductive capabilities. The difference in terms of the implications of these fixtures exists in relation to their function within the narrative, as the oven has frightening properties, while the flames of the hearth possesses beneficial powers.

Whereas within the *Homeric Hymn* fire functions as a powerful agent of transformation and rebirth, in *Hansel and Gretel* it is simply an instrument of destruction. Just as fire converts grain into bread, so it transforms Demophoön into an immortal being. Fire within ancient myth therefore often holds magical attributes, purifying 'the things which are offered' and liberating 'them from the bonds of matter'.[51] As Helene P. Foley points out in her translation of the hymn, 'Fire can purge away mortality in myth' as one of its uses was 'to cremate the body, thus preparing for a transition for the world below'.[52] Conversely, the fire which threatens to kill Hansel has been stripped of its metaphysical attributes, it is no longer magical, but instead is solely used to kill and cook the child for consumption.

7. Conclusion

The contrast in the use of symbolic imagery within these two stories appears to be historically predicated, and may be tied to religious and sociological factors. The reworking of the character of the fertility goddess into the monstrous witch is undoubtedly a manifestation of

prevailing beliefs concerning pagan deities during the Middle Ages. The supernatural nature of the witch represents an inversion of the creative powers that are rooted in the ancient goddess. The witch's monstrous appetites and predatory behaviour are representative of the rejection of the reverential role allocated to the ancient goddess. The advent of Christendom had a profound impact on depictions of women, particularly in relation to their sexual nature. Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn* and the witch in *Hansel and Gretel* may very well represent the dual nature of the creative and destructive forces of the female deity. The journeys which Demophoön and Hansel undergo are similar in nature, though their eventual destinations are markedly different. As Roland Barthes points out in his text *Mythologies* 'the fundamental character of the mythical concept is to be appropriated',[53] and the ability of a tale to be reinvented, remoulded and retold is at the very heart of the oral tradition.

Notes

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[21] Ibid., 12.
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[23] Ibid., 80-1.

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[37] Zipes, *Happily Ever After*, 50.
[38] Joyce Thomas, *Inside the Wolf's Belly: Aspects of Fairy Tales* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 59.
[39] Ibid., 46.
[40] Roper, *Witch Craze*, 248.
[41] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Random House, 1976), 162.
[42] Gail de Vos and Anna E. Altmann, *New Tales for Old: Folktales as Literary Fictions for Young Adults* (Englewood: Libraries Unlimited, 1999), 121.
[43] Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 162.
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[47] Marina Warner, *No Go the Bogeyman: Scaring, Lulling, & Making Mock* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1998), 56.
[48] Valerie Estelle Frankel, *From Girl to Goddess: The Heroine's Journey through Myth and Legend* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2010), 271.
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Monster of Monsters: The Minotaur in the *Metamorphoses*

Tessa Little

Abstract
Monsters often represent the fears of the cultures that create them. The basis for these monsters come from a variety of sources, but particularly from creatures that members of a culture would have been exposed to. A majority of ancient Greek and Roman monsters are derived from wild animals, animals that exist on the fringes of society in the mysterious and dangerous wild. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a collection of myths and creatures from throughout the ancient Greco-Roman world and the one Monster that stands out is the Minotaur. The Minotaur represent an anomaly of the monster tradition because it is formed from man and bull, a domestic animal. This article explores the special case of the Minotaur and its domestic roots, arguing that because the monster inhabits the domestic sphere, he is more terrifying than all the other monsters in the *Metamorphoses*.

Key Words
Minotaur, myth, Ovid, Metamorphoses, Greece, Rome.

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Greek myth is replete with monstrous beings responsible for wide spread destruction and death, often as a result of punishment meted out by various deities. These monsters, while not reminiscent of monsters we may be familiar with, are certainly archetypes of later monstrous representations in their function within the myths they are present in. One of the most extensive collections of the monsters of ancient myths is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In this fantastical work, Ovid relates a large collection of Greek myths depicting a variety of transformations. The *Metamorphoses* depicts only 12 stereotypical monsters in all 12 books. Of these twelve monstrous beings, the most fearsome and unique is the Minotaur. This article will focus on the nature and function of the Minotaur in comparison to the other monsters of Greek myth represented specifically in the *Metamorphoses*;[1] particularly, I will discuss the basis of the Minotaur's monstrous characteristics inspired by ancient perceptions of the relationships between humans and animals.

1. Myth, Fairy Tales and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

Myth, from the Greek *mythus*, is defined generically as 'a tale'. Later generations have multiple terms to describe types of tales: fairy-tale, fable, folktale, saga, to name a few, but it has been accepted that the myths of ancient civilizations can be classified as early fairy-tales.[2] The inclusion of myths into the genre of fairy-tales or fables is primarily based on the purpose of the tales and their function in ancient society; primarily, the way myth allows humanity to explore its relationship with many entities as moral tales, warnings, reinforcements of social traditions and customs, and the major focus on humanity's relationship with nature is reinforced by the inclusion of monsters.[3] Fairly-tales, furthermore, are classified as happening in faraway

places and times, containing magical creatures, and describing events that could not possible happen.[4] Myth relates to these elements of fairy-tales; primarily with the appearance of magical creatures, the events of the myths taking place, generally, in less populated, or unpopulated places, and the lack of veracity in the tales. Myths are usually differentiated from fairy tales, because they often contain elements religious in nature; specifically, the appearance of a god or goddess as the primary antagonist. This does not necessarily form a religious basis for the myths, but simply provides a supernatural basis for the tales and the characters. For this reason, the appearance of deities should not detract from the fairy tale qualities of myths.

The *Metamorphoses* tells the story of the ancient Greco-Roman world from creation through the 'present' time, using the myths and characters renowned in ancient Greek and Roman culture. These myths, generally, occur in the faraway past and in faraway places; a majority of the characters are nymphs, naiads, fauns, satyrs, and other supernatural beings; the myths end with the transformation of the protagonist into an animal, a tree, a fountain, or another item, transformations that are impossible. Magic is also present in the *Metamorphoses*; this appears in the tale of Medea, centrally, but elements of magic are elsewhere.[5]

While possessing elements of myth and fairy tale, the *Metamorphoses* is distinctive among other works of ancient literature and traditional fairy-tales primarily because there is no central goal of the work, and subsequently no resolution at the end. Charles Segal argues that Ovid is attempting a *carmen perpetuam*; he is relating the past through the present by means of the myths.[6] Unlike other authors of his time, according to Segal, he is concerned only with entertainment. His tales lack structure; the characters lack a central goal that they are racing towards and as a result we are not invested in their story. Instead, we are entertained with the grotesque, shocking, and amazing.[7] Since the Romans were lacking in their own myths, Ovid borrows heavily from the Greek tradition; although, he makes little effort to hide the Greek origin, often keeping place names and character names the same, only the gods are referred to in their Roman names.[8]

While Ovid's characters are indeed lacking in a central goal, it would be a mistake to overlook the obvious moral purpose of the tales. He refrains from any long interpretation of the morals of these stories, but at the end of each transformation it is clear to the reader why the transformation occurred; the transformations follow a transgression of the character, a crime, and often are completed as an act of mercy.[9] The work in its entirety resembles a collection of what can be more accurately defined as allegories or fables, all intertwined into one long narrative, but each has an antagonist and a protagonist.[10] As with all works of this type, the antagonist is often supernatural in some way, but surprisingly few are monsters as we understand the term. The one monster that stands out is the Minotaur, primarily because of its unique nature, and because the story of the Minotaur is referred to elsewhere throughout the *Metamorphoses*, unlike other monsters, thus illustrating its nefarious influence.

The term monster originates from the Latin *monstrum* possessing a variety of meanings; most commonly a sign, portent, monster, atrocity, and warning. The noun is derived from the verb *monstrare* which generally means to demonstrate, teach, point out and instruct (*OLD*). The broad definition of these terms is manifested appropriately in the genre of myth and by the characters in them.[11] The aberrations that the term is used to define do not wholly appear as frightening creatures and the supernatural, and relatively benign beings are described as monsters in a variety of myths. It is, therefore, the nature of the entity described that lends the negative connotations to the term.

Many of the supernatural characters in the *Metamorphoses* are characterised as monsters, but only a handful are terrifying. Greek monsters are innately anomalous and cannot be classified, and transgress normal limits. Generally, they are hybrid creatures that unite disparate elements, commonly human and animal. Moreover, they commonly represent creatures whose

qualities have been enhanced in some way.[12] Seven of the 12 frightening, monstrous creatures in the *Metamorphoses* are based on wild animals. One is a Cyclops, thus based on humanity, and the domestic monsters, Cerberus and the Minotaur, are distinctly different from the other monsters; moreover, the Minotaur is distinguished further from these monsters by its distortion of the bull's domestic nature.

2. The Myth of the Minotaur

The myth of the Minotaur is present in Greek, and Roman, literature throughout its production; Greek moralist Plutarch relates the story of the Minotaur, Greek geographer Pausanias, and Greek tragedian Euripides, among others, describe the story of the Minotaur; Ovid includes the story with a sense of chronological development apparent in the myths such as Europa and Minos that set the basis for the Minotaur myth. These myths and characters are significant and appear throughout the *Metamorphoses*.[13] The oral tradition surrounding ancient myths allows for the appearance of the same characters throughout different pieces of literature, but the story of the Minotaur includes characters more widely effectual than characters and monsters in other myths.[14] The power of the Minotaur myth is related to the various crimes surrounding the myth, all of which are deep transgressions of social custom, tradition, and decency; these overwhelming transgressions allow for its unique popularity of ancient and modern authors. The myth of the Minotaur is included in Ovid, primarily because of its popularity and because the theme of transformation in relation to Minos is prevalent. Minos' history in the *Metamorphoses* is discussed later in this article.

King Minos of Crete assumed power and was in conflict with his brothers. He prayed for the support of Poseidon, who sent him a snow-white bull to sacrifice in honor of the deity. Minos, however, overwhelmed by the beauty of the bull, chose to keep the bull of Poseidon and sacrifice another in its place. As punishment, Poseidon placed desire in the heart of Pasiphae, Minos' wife, for the bull and she conspired to mate with it. Consequently, she became pregnant and upon the birth of the deformed offspring, Minos ordered Daedalus (the royal architect) to construct the labyrinth to hide away the monster and the proof of his wife's affair. Every year Athens was obliged to send youths as tributes to Crete, girls and boys, to enter the labyrinth and be devoured by the Minotaur. The monster is eventually defeated by Theseus, one of the chosen tributes.

The themes of the myth are impiety, adultery, and crimes against nature, all representative of rejection of social custom and tradition, and all deserving of punishment and all memorialized by the existence of the Minotaur. The myth has been interpreted in a variety of ways: Politically, the allegory presents Crete as corrupt and historically would heavily influence the Athenians to rise up against the dominion of Minos; Morally, the myth represents the extreme sexual transgression of Pasiphae by her infidelity to her husband and her unnatural lust for the bull; Impiety is also represented because the Minotaur is born because of a punishment meted out by Poseidon for Minos' breaking of the pact he made with the deity. All of these are serious infractions in the ancient Greek world and the myth of the Minotaur demonstrates the common practice of ancient authors to reinforce social custom in the form of fables.[15] I believe the myth, and the subsequent Minotaur, represents a contravention of the relationship and social pact between humans and animals; the Minotaur's domestic origin and occupation of the domestic sphere renders him more terrifying than any other monster because his presence corrupts civilization.

3. Greek and Roman Relationships with Animals

To better understand the terrifying character of the Minotaur as represented by its domestic origin, an explanation of ancient Greek and Roman perceptions and interactions with

domestic and wild animals is necessary. In ancient society, as today, there was a distinction between wild and domestic animals. The evolution of human society is directly linked to its relationships with animals; sympathy and empathy increased by the close relationships formed with the animals that worked in conjunction with humans, domestic animals. The connection is further illustrated by the affection shown to pets, most often dogs, and livestock, whose work in the fields was viewed as contributing to the welfare of society in the production of food.[16] The inclusion of these animals in society was granted because of the services these animals provided for human success and survival. The tasks they could perform and their personalities enabled humans to form reciprocal bonds with certain species. The relationship between Pasiphae and the Cretan bull perverts this reciprocal, working relationship because she oversteps the boundaries of these relations. This point will be discussed in subsequent sections of this article in detail.

The ancient perception of wild animals, however, was significantly different. Gruen argues that 'denigration of the other in antiquity seems essential to shape the inner portrait, the marginalization that defines the center, the reverse mirror that distorts the reflection of the opposite and enhances that of the hold'.[17] This idea of 'the other' is not limited to humans, but wild animals were seen as separate civilizations within human society; and this creation of the other served as a means to establish superiority.[18] The Romans demonstrate this principle better than the Greeks according to George Jennison, who states that when the Romans conquered a city they would often kill all of the domestic animals and then would capture and kill the wild animals.[19] The slaughter of the domestic animals was based on the fact that the animals were living within the society that was being conquered; wild animals were a foreign society that they conquered next to the domestic animals.[20] These captured wild beasts were used in spectacles as a reminder of the vastness of the government's domain and a demonstration of the mastery of the Romans over wild nature; civilized over uncivilized.[21] The wild represented everything that was a danger to Greek civilization.

4. Animal Monsters in the Metamorphoses

The ancient distinction between wild and domestic animals is strongly represented by the monsters in the *Metamorphoses*; specifically they are 'the Other'. The wild animal monsters generally appear in areas that are wild or outside of civilization in some way and maintain the absence of reason that distinguishes them from humans. They often only act on behalf of, or under the control of, a deity. In the story of Cadmus, he wanders in search of a land to colonize and awakens a great serpent. The serpent (Mars' own) is occupying an area unpopulated by humans and possesses enhanced characteristics of a normal serpent. The monster is much larger than a snake and its scales are much stronger than normal scales, allowing for its easy defense against the spears of Cadmus and his men. The venom of the serpent is also much more deadly, probably more so than normal venom (Ovid, *Met.*, 3.40).

Perseus does battle with a dragon that Atlas established to protect his orchards. The dragon, like the serpent, is large and features supernatural qualities not possessed by normal animals. The sea serpent that Perseus rescues Andromeda from is similar in nature; sent by a deity to exact punishment for an offense (Ovid, *Met.*, 4.967). In fact, a great majority of the monsters of the *Metamorphoses* are classified as serpent-like creatures. The exceptions are the Calydonian boar (Ovid, *Met.*, 8.376) and the wolf of Psamathe (Ovid, *Met.*, 11.493). In the case of the boar, it is sent to punish a community and possesses large tusks, breathes fire, and has an unusually strong hide, in addition to its massive size. The wolf is similarly described, but Ovid goes further to explain that the wolf is killing not from hunger, but from a desire for blood and an enjoyment in killing, a quality that is contrary to the nature of wild predators.

While inherently terrifying and exaggerated illustrations of wild animals, these monsters do retain their wild nature and, other than the enhanced qualities they possess, they are not necessarily aberrations. Wild animals often attack when disturbed in their habitat, and predators are known to infringe upon civilization in search of food.

The domestic animal representations in the *Metamorphoses*, similarly act according to their nature, but feature supernatural characteristics; the exception is the Minotaur. The first example of exceptional domestic animals is the Cretan bull, the father of the Minotaur. Following the decision of Minos to keep the bull, it is left unchecked and is described as terrorizing the Cretan countryside. This terror is manifested in its destruction of crops and the like, not necessarily a violent terror.[22] It is left to roam without the care and control of any human, an act contrary to the handling of livestock at the time, but not necessarily unusual or horrifying.

The fire breathing bulls (Ovid, *Met.*, 7.154) that Jason must subdue are used to plow land and are meant to be handled by a human, even if they are shod with bronze and possess horns tipped with iron. Even Cerberus, often considered a monster, is not altogether terrifying or dangerous to humanity. The three headed dog of Hades never leaves the underworld and is only encountered by humans or gods when they attempt to enter the underworld undetected or illegally. While a terrifying figure to be sure, Cerberus represents an exaggerated figure of a common dog; he is large in size, with three heads, and his venom is quite poisonous (Ovid, *Met*., 4.682-683), but he performs the basic duties expected of any guard dog. Cerberus occupies the entrance to Hades and keeps away any figure that should not enter and those that should not leave. In book four of the *Metamorphoses*, when Juno ventures to Hades, Cerberus is described as raising 'up his three heads baying all in unison' (Ovid., *Met*., 4.616-617), exactly the behavior expected of a guard dog.

Domestic animals, dwelling within the domestic sphere, have a role similar to slaves and women. They are meant to be used and controlled by humanity; they are inherently inferior and because they lack reason and the ability to speak, it is their nature to be controlled. This is distinct from wild animals who often are unable to be controlled by humans and because they do not inhabit the domestic sphere, they lack the ability to form reciprocal relationships with humans, a fact that generally prohibits humans to accept them as part of society. As a result, the bulls Jason deals with, the Cretan bull, and even Cerberus, while exaggerated, still preserve their domestic nature; the Minotaur does not. The Minotaur's consumption of human flesh and violent nature are disparate qualities of bulls and humans; so, while other domestic animals in the *Metamorphoses* retain elements of their domesticity, the Minotaur maintains nothing of its domesticity and this significantly separates it from the other monsters in the *Metamorphoses*.

5. The Minotaur: Function and Meaning in the Metamorphoses and Greco-Roman Society

The Minotaur represents a perversion of the domestic relationship between humanity and animals, but the Minotaur also illustrates a distortion of other human/animal creatures. The other hybrids in the *Metamorphoses*: Satyrs, centaurs, and fauns, while monstrous because they are aberrations, generally are not destructive or terrifying. Nessus is a centaur (half man-half horse) who is lustful of Deianira, the wife of Hercules, and attempts to steal her away from the hero (Ovid, *Met.*, 9.145) and a group of centaurs attending a wedding feast with the Lapiths drunk and incredibly lustful, attempt to seize the maidens at the feast (Ovid, *Met.*, 12.328); Centaurs are troublesome for certain, but they are not terrifying. Satyrs, half men-half goats, are attendants of Bacchus and are often rowdy because they partake in drinking and can be lusty, are not dangerous (Ovid, *Met.*, 1.266); Fauns, also half goat-half men, are similar to wood nymphs, attendants of Faunus (Ovid, *Met.*, 6.473); the most known faun is Pan, who lusts after

the hamadryad Syrinx (Ovid, *Met.*, 1.967), again hypersexual, but not dangerous. The only hybrid monster that is ferocious is the Minotaur; it is also the only hybrid of bull and man.

The bull is a common animal in the ancient world and appears commonly in large, important sacrifices.[23] On Crete and in ancient Minoan society, the bull is highly valued. The inhabitants of Knossos had a passion for the bull-ring, and excavations have produced pictures and statuettes that provide complete information about the sport. When a bull charged, a young athlete grabbed its horns and was tossed so as to make a back somersault over the bull's spine. Charles Seltmann sees this as the origin of the fable of the Minotaur. He argues, based on excavations, that the Athenian youths were trained to compete in this activity.[24] There is further archaeological evidence that Knossos was destroyed around the time Theseus is fabled to have defeated the Minotaur. It is possible that the king enacted a ceremony where he wore a bull's head mask; thus, suggesting the origins for the Minotaur.[25] Constantin Filippou argues that bulls in Cretan and even early Egyptian religious beliefs traditionally were transportation to 'the land of the blessed' and sees the interaction between bulls and youths as a ritual that enacts the ride to the underworld because, 'The ride is not an easy one and the deceased has to be 'skilled' in order to remain in control of the celestial animal. Only the virtuous believer will manage to 'harnesses or ride the bull'.[26]

The relationship between bulls and Cretans that is manifested in this practice and their culture, generally, is based in the mythical and supernatural. Minos', the king of Crete, mythological birth resulted from the rape of his mother Europa by Zeus in the guise of a bull (Ovid, *Met.*, 3.3).[27] Minos' beastly origins are mocked by Scylla, who is angered by his rebuff of her affections:

> Your father was not Jove, your mother, not misled by the counterfeit appearance of a bull! The origin of your story is false! In truth, it was a bull that sired you! (Ovid, *Met.*, 8.165-168).[28]

The connection between Minos and bovines is quite extensive. It is no wonder that, given his heritage and the significance of bulls to Cretan culture, that such a myth as that of the Minotaur would be easily confirmed in the minds of the ancient Greeks. The common presence of these animals and their ritual significance in Cretan society allowed for close bonds and empathy to be formed between the two species. The closeness of certain animals to humans is illustrated by ancient philosophical beliefs in the transmigration of souls; specifically, the beliefs of Pythagoras.

The philosophy of Pythagoras sought to understand the underlying principles behind what could be experienced by the senses. They believed in the transmigration of the soul and refrained from eating meat. The idea of reincarnation stems from the belief that when a person dies his or her soul would pass into another living creature. One's soul does not die when one dies; on the contrary, the soul remains the same, meaning the soul is merely reborn in another creature. Diodorus Siculus states:

> Pythagoras believed in the transmigration of souls and considered the eating of flesh as an abominable thing, saying that the souls of all living creatures pass after death into other living creatures (*Bibliotheca Historica*, 10.5).[29]

Consequently, it would have been considered possible that if one ate an animal one could potentially be eating a creature in which a formerly human soul resides through reincarnation. The transfer of the soul from animal to human proves the intimate relationship between humans and animals. On the death of the animal the formerly human soul would in turn transfer to

another creature, but while the soul resided in the animal, the animal was human. Pythagoras never argues that animals possess their own souls; the animal's lack of a soul allows for the transfer of a human soul because animals are essentially empty. That human souls are compatible with the bodies of animals confirms humanity's evolutionary and biological connection with animals; specifically domestic animals, whose inclusion in our society allows for such a transmigration to take place.

In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid provides an origin for Pythagoras' ideas concerning transmigration of the soul. In the *Metamorphoses*, Pythagoras explains the Golden Age as a utopian existence where humans prospered and lived without violence of any kind, especially violence towards animals. The Golden Age:

> Was so blessed in fruit of trees, and in the good herbs which the earth produced that it never would pollute the mouth with blood. The birds then safely moved their wings in air, the timid hares would wander in the fields with no fear, and their own credulity had not suspended fishes from the hook. All life was safe from treacherous wiles, fearing no injury, a peaceful world (Ovid, *Met.* 15. 96-103).[30]

Ovid's Pythagoras uses strong imagery to explain that in a distant time known as the Golden Age, men and animals lived in harmony together without death and suffering. This time of peace ended with what Pythagoras sees as *pollutio* (defilement) and *cruores* (bloodshed/gore). He describes the *nefas* (crime) of an individual who 'envied the ways of lions and gulped into his greedy paunch stuff from a carcass vile. He opened the foul paths of wickedness' (Ovid, *Met.* 15.111-113).[31] Pythagoras is particularly concerned with the consumption of animals that we interact with daily. He justifies the killing of predatory animals because they attempt the destruction of humanity and so are justly killed, but this does not justify killing other animals for consumption (Ovid, *Met.* 15.103-110).

Pythagoras' concentration on domesticated animals is significant because the idea that our souls can be transported into the bodies of animals is based on the idea that their interaction with us within civilization forms a closeness. We interact with these animals daily; often we share the same purpose and goal. The ox works side by side with the farmer in the field and the sheep provides the wool that keeps humanity warm in cold seasons. Ovid's Pythagoras implores the reader:

> O race of mortals! Do not eat such food! Give your attention to my serious words; and, when you next present the slaughtered flesh of oxen to your palates, know and feel that you gnaw your fellow tillers of the soil (Ovid, *Met.* 15. 140-142).[32]

The idea of transmigration between animals and humans allows for the possibility of hybrid creatures; the supposed existence of the Minotaur subverts this idea. As previously discussed, hybrid creatures are generally non-threatening. The only fierce hybrid is the Minotaur. The Minotaur is extremely threatening to humans. It subsides on a steady diet of youths that wander aimlessly through the labyrinth. The terrifying characteristics of the Minotaur are exactly those that deform the nature of the bull and human in it; Humans do not eat human flesh and bulls do not eat meat; the extreme perversion of Pasiphae forged the wholly unnatural nature of the monster. Its disposition results as a punishment for Pasiphae's crimes against nature and social order. Perhaps more frightening than the infringement of wild

characteristics on domestic creatures (human and bull), is the Minotaur's occupation of the domestic sphere.

In the myth, the Minotaur inhabits a labyrinth within the domestic sphere of Crete. Moreover, the Minotaur is never reported to eat Cretan youths, only foreigners (specifically Athenians). While perverting the sphere of domesticity generally, it perverts its own home; its own society. Through her actions, Pasiphae defiled a sacred animal (the bull), and corrupted the reciprocal relationship between humans and the animals that support them illustrated explicitly in the Minotaur and its inhabitation of her society.

The extreme function of the Minotaur as a warning against future indiscretions, is apparent in the resounding influence of the myth to later generations. In the fourteenth century, Phillip the IV of France commissioned a series of paintings for his hunting lodge. These depicted a variety of animal scenes and a large amount are scenes from the *Metamorphoses*; in particular, a sketch by Rubens exists known as "Daedalus and the Minotaur".[33] In the sketch, Daedalus wraps his left arm around the neck of the Minotaur, which has the body of bull and the head of a man. This is a distinct difference between the Minotaur of Ovid, which possesses the body of a man and the head of a bull. Fatima Diez Platas succinctly defines the changes made by Rubens, particularly describing the truth behind the terror of the Minotaur:

> This image shows that, theoretically, the Minotaur was for the Greeks a monster suffering from the worst possible combination that a hybrid of man and beast can embody, for he had the misfortune of inheriting from his father, the beautiful white bull coveted by Minos, the most important part of the body: the head, while his maternal inheritance barely brought him closer to the human condition. Unlike centaurs, who, thanks to their human head and torso were able to overcome, if desired, their uncouth animal brutality by exercising a capacity for human thought, Asterion or Asterio was condemned to subject a human body full of possibilities to a bull's understanding, which, in a way, incapacitated him for the level of humanity…).[34]

The Minotaur, by the perversion of traditional roles between animals and humans, is unable to control its base brutality because it lacks the reason of humanity. While reason had long been denied to animals, it is more important that a relatively benign creature, such as the bull, is distorted into a violent creature; thus, depicting the corruption of humanity's nature, and the nature of the bull. That this could be possible permits the Minotaur to be the most terrifying and enduring monster in the *Metamorphoses* and simultaneously, the most disturbing. Ovid was presumably aware of the influence of the Minotaur myth on Greco-Roman culture by virtue of its prominence in early and contemporary literature. It is no wonder, therefore, that he includes the myth in his catalogue of tales. As a result of its inclusion, the Minotaur stands out as uniquely terrifying among the other monsters because of its combination of human and domestic animal features; a combination that illustrates the manner in which Greeks and Romans perceived the animals around them.

Notes

[1] This article is not meant as a comprehensive discussion of all Greek monsters, but is only meant to interpret the Minotaur as special among all the monsters depicted in the *Metamorphoses* only. The number of monsters discussed is based on my own reading of the *Metamorphoses* and subsequent cataloguing of the monsters.

[2] Graham Anderson, *Fairy-Tale in the Ancient World* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2002), 1.

[3] Charles Segal, 'Ovid's Metamorphoses: Greek Myth in Augustan Rome', *Studies in Philology* 68.4 (1971): 371.
[4] Stith Thompsen, 'Fairy Tale', *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, Legend*, ed. Maria Leach and Jerome Fried (New York: Harper Collins Press, 1949), 365-379; Catherine Orenstein, *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked: Sex, Morality, and the Evolution of A Fairy Tale* (NY: Basic Books, 2003), 9.
[5] Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 7.1-73; 7.294-349.
[6] Segal, 'Ovid's Metamorphoses', 377.
[7] Ibid., 377-378.
[8] Ibid., 373-374.
[9] Often Ovid's transformations are aetiological, explaining the foundation of various shrines, trees, and animals.
[10] R. Blumenfield-Kosinski, 'The Scandal of Pasiphae: Narration and Interpretation in the "Ovid Moralise"', *Modern Philology* 93.3 (1996): 307-326. The author discusses the transmission of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into a fable by an anonymous French translator and discusses the ancient author as a fabulist.
[11] David Wardle, *Cicero on Divination* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), 102**;** Mary Beagon, 'Beyond Comparisons: M. Sergfius, *Fortunae Victor'*, *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honor of Miriam Griffin*, ed. Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 127; George Staley, *Seneca and the Idea of Tragedy* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 109, 113.
[12] Jenny Strauss Clay, 'The Generation of Monsters in Hesiod', *Classical Philology* 88.2 (1993): 105-106.
[13] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2.31.2; Plutarch, *Theseus*, 15-19; Euripides' *The Cretans*, 78-82.
[14] Anderson, *Fairy Tale*, describes the oral tradition of myth in relation to the genre of fairytales and fables.
[15] Blumenfield-Kosinski, 'The Scandal of Pasiphae', 306, 309-310. See also the early Greek lyric poets Archilochus, *fr*. 89, 103 and Semonides, *fr*. 7; each employ the beast fable to enforce tradition; similarly, Aesop's fables use animals to illustrate moral lessons. Also, Christopher G. Brown, 'Iambos', *A Companion to Greek Lyric Poets*, ed. Douglas E. Gerber (New York: Brill Press 1997), 12-42 discusses of the tradition of moralizing in early Greek poetry.
[16] W. H. S. Jones, 'Attitudes of the Greeks Towards Animals', *The Classical Review* 22.7 (1908): 209; for epithets see *Anth*. *Pal*. 7:189-216.
[17] E. S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 1.
[18] Ibid.
[19] George Jennison, *Animals for Show and Pleasure in Ancient Rome* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1937).
[20] Polybius, *Histories*, 36.4.
[21] Roger Dunkle, 'Overview of Roman Spectacle', *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, ed. Paul Christensen and Donald G. Kyle (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2014), 389. See also Martial *Spectacles* and Seneca, *On Benefits* 2.19.1.
[22] The destruction of the bull is not elaborated in Ovid; see Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 2.5.7.
[23] The bull is the first sacrificial animal, sacrificed at a feast that alienated humanity and gods. See Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*.

[24] Charles Seltmann, 'Theseus and the Minotaur of Knossos', *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 8.32 (1953): 99.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Constantin Filippou, *Cretan Script System of the Bronze Age* (NC: Astraea Publishing, 2014).
[27] Europa's Brother Cadmus founded Thebes and faced the serpent of Mars.
[28] Charles Martin, O*vid Metamorphoses* (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004). Scylla betrayed her family, father, and country and aided Minos in his victory against her country.
[29] Immanel Bekker, Ludwig Dindorf, Friedrich Vogel and Kurt Theodore Fischer, *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica* (Leipzig: NP, 1903-1906).
[30] Martin, *Ovid Metamorphoses*.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Fatima Diez Platas, 'A Companion for Daedalus: The Exceptional Iconography of Rubens' Minotaur' (PhD Diss., University of Santiago de Compostela), 11.
[34] Ibid.

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The Little Mermaid: Our Favourite Gothic Villain

Stephanie Stott

Abstract

Presenting an easy target to feminist critics, Ariel from Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (1989) is commonly condemned as the most misogynistic of the Princess pantheon. A cursory reading will suggest the usual objections: she alters her body, forsakes her family, and gives up her voice (and therefore her personality and means of consent) for a man she does not know, a man who has to save her in the end. However, I argue that the little mermaid is among the most feminist of the Disney Princesses for these actions and others, in which she exerts taboo forms of agency. Whereas earlier princesses fulfilled the role of silent victim (beautifully), Ariel presents the 'antithetical mirror image' to the angel in the house: a monster with her own desires - a possibility that Gilbert and Gubar recognized years ago, except that in *The Little Mermaid* Disney writers succeed in blending monstrousness with childlike seductiveness. Though cast in the position of damsel in distress, Ariel as a character exhibits all the trappings of a gothic villain - not in that she is evil, but rather active and assertive, as such villains are. In this way, she is the first Disney heroine to have her cake (use her sexual, intellectual, and entrepreneurial agencies) and eat it, too (attain her own happy ending). She flirts, objectifies, manipulates, obsesses, stalks, and gambles, and is ultimately rewarded for these un-princess-like methods. Seen in this light, the little mermaid serves as a precursor to the new trend of female-villain-redemption stories like *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, which depict a femme fatale with whom viewers can identify *and* who gets a happy ending. It is Ariel who first began to dismantle the previously opposing tropes of angelic heroine and monstrous villain, giving rise to new, stronger, more realistic leading ladies.

Key Words

The Little Mermaid, gothic, villain, misogynist, feminist, agency, angel, monster, femme fatale.

*****

The Disney Corporation is so wrapped up in contemporary American culture, it is difficult to determine which is the arbiter of its tastes and sympathies and which is merely the reflection. A recent spate of press releases testifies to this ubiquity:

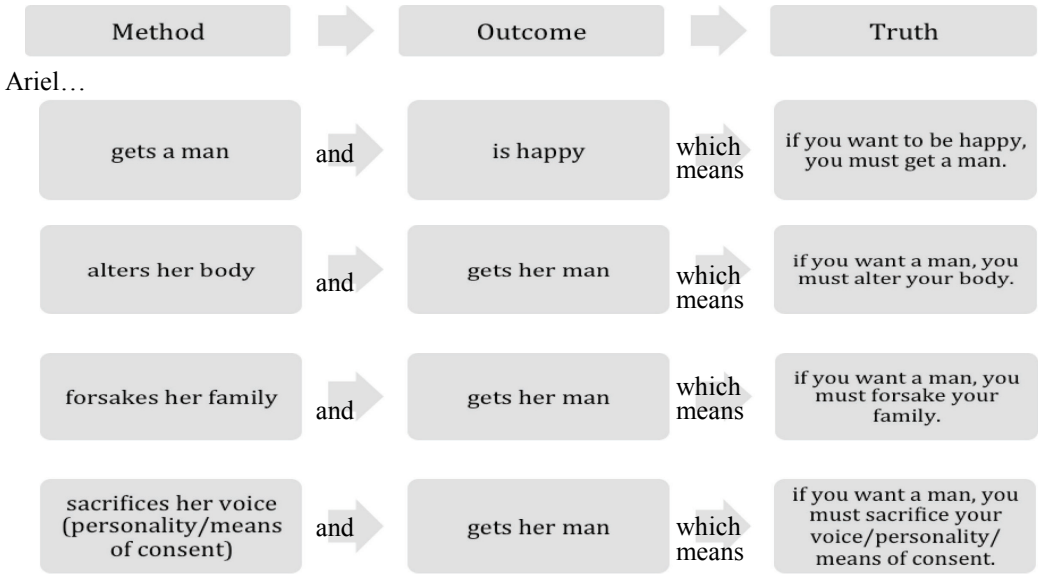
> Michelle Obama to Give Keynote Speech at Disney's 1st Veterans Institute Event
> Oct 28, 2013 – ABC News[1]
>
> First Lady Michelle Obama to Appear on Disney Channel's *Jessie*
> Apr 21 2014 – TV Guide[2]
>
> Obama Unveils $1B Boost for Preschools, Including $55 Million from Disney
> Dec 10, 2014 – ABC News[3]

One wonders whether it is the White House that understands the importance of Disney to its citizens, or Disney that understands the importance of the White House to its consumers. Either way, the brave Bald Eagle and the magical Mickey Mouse are not predator and prey, but two sides of the American coin: in any given decade, the country's preoccupations may be seen in Disney's depiction of evil, its portrayal of love, its representation of family, its rendering of female agency. For this reason, any recurring themes in Disney films - and any ruptures of these themes - are critical to understanding the psychology of the nation, long-term. It is in this effort to access the American psyche that I investigate Ariel's revolutionary status and nonconforming methods in Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (1989).

1. Feminist Criticism

During a recent phone conversation, my roommate from college remarked, 'isn't it funny how people disparage things that women and girls like?' *The Little Mermaid* has detractors in part because components of it are anti-woman, but also, I fear, for the polar opposite reason: because it is enjoyed *by women*. Recent Disney Princess films very cleverly circumvented this societal deprecation (and increased their consumer base) by - ostensibly, at least - targeting both boys and girls. Adjectival titles like *Tangled* and *Frozen* are not as obviously affiliated with princess culture as *Rapunzel* or *The Snow Queen*, 'allowing' otherwise sceptical brothers to accompany their mothers and sisters to the cinema. But it should be acknowledged that these more contemporary films are also more feminist (*more* feminist; not *entirely* feminist; not by any stretch of the imagination *post*-feminist).[4] They feature active, assertive female protagonists who choose their own adventures and are rewarded for their gumption. I argue, however, that these films' feminist roots may be traced directly back to Ariel and her unconventional methods.

Common critical arguments against Disney's mermaid typically fall under the purview of progressive Anglo-American feminism, which invests itself in 'utopian female representations and self-representations.'[5] Because this tradition is concerned with 'the way all gender, both male and female, is fabricated,' these scholars take especial issue with the depiction (read: construction) of females in our culture.[6] Such a school therefore looks at the outcomes of characters' actions as an indication of what the authors uphold and endorse as 'truth.' Most feminist criticisms of *The Little Mermaid* conform to this logic:

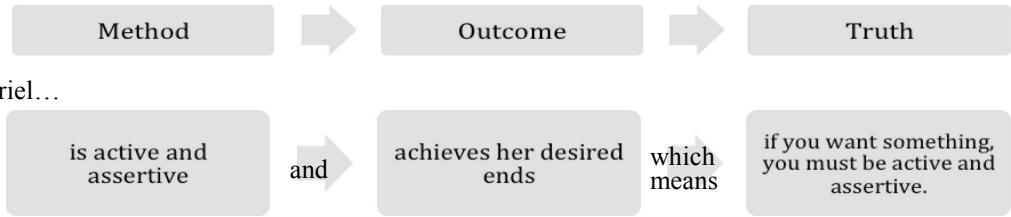


Though I take issue with the basis of the last criticism (that Ariel sacrifices her voice), I freely acknowledge that these are legitimate though (necessarily) simplistic criticisms of the film.

I say these criticisms are simplistic because they fail to take into account the motivations informing these methods and outcomes. One could easily argue that Ariel is happy at the end not (or not only) because she has gotten her man, but because she has achieved her initial dream of living on land. One might also point out that Ariel would not have changed her body for her man had Ursula not told her such a makeover was necessary. Regarding the abandonment of her family, one could point out that Ariel's family (in the form of Triton) abandoned her first. However, the fact remains that Ariel undertakes these actions and experiences these rewarding outcomes, thereby yielding these truths.

I say these criticisms are *necessarily* simplistic because, in omitting motivations, they reveal the importance of methods. For all that has traditionally distinguished heroines from villains is their ways/means: they in fact have the same desired ends. Snow White and the Evil Queen, Cinderella and Lady Trumaine, and Aurora and Maleficent want to be, essentially, queen. What distinguishes one group from the other is the method by which they attain (or, importantly, do not attain) this outcome. Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora do nothing and (therefore) get to be queen; the Evil Queen, Lady Trumaine, and Maleficent plot and scheme and (therefore) do *not* get to be/remain queen. The princesses go about achieving their happy endings through passive, selfless means while the wicked stepmothers employ active, selfish ones.

And herein lies one major reason Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* is the first feminist princess: her methods - in that they are meddling and manipulative - are indistinguishable from those of Disney villains. Yet, unlike these villains, Ariel's active and assertive means yield her desired ends. Using the logic-based analysis of Anglo-American feminism, then, Ariel's success generates new, feminist truths about women and society.



While specific actions are problematic for their misogynistic implications, the fact that Ariel undertakes action and achieves her goal heralds a more feminist Disney, by Anglo-American standards.[7]

It is the precepts of French feminism, however, that allow us to understand Ariel's more dubious behaviours as related to one another and to a larger feminist enterprise. I refer here to those theorists who situate essential femininity in '[w]hat lies outside male reason [which] is precisely everything such reason abhors - contradiction, nonidentity, fluidity, nonrationality, illogicality, mixing of genres, etc.'[8] It is the illogical nature of the mermaid's origins and the irrational, even maniacal nature of her actions that excuse her from the misogynistic roles of 'victim' or 'accomplice.'[9] In short, it is Ariel's status as a gothic figure that allows her to remain outside of and uncontrolled by the ultra-rational patriarchy. For Ariel's methods can only be fully understood with the aid of the irrational, illogical tropes of the gothic (incidentally, another genre deprecated for its appeal to women and girls). If the little mermaid is a villain (by which I do *not* mean to suggest that she is evil, but rather active and assertive, as such villains are), she is a gothic one.[10]

To put it another way, I propose to read forward from the beginning premise, rather than look at the film's conventional ending and read back from there. Using two key feminist strains, I propose to view Ariel as feminist first in the Anglo-American sense because of the active, assertive (i.e. villainous) means she employs to attain her (admittedly patriarchy-enforcing) ends and second in the French Post-Structuralist sense because of the gothic tradition in which she and her villainous methods are entrenched. I will begin with this second strain.

2. Paranormal

> In describing this siren, singing and smiling, coaxing and cajoling, the author, with modest pride, asks his readers all around, has he once forgotten the laws of politeness, and showed the monster's hideous tail above water? No! Those who like may peep down under waves that are pretty transparent, and see it writhing and twirling, diabolically hideous and slimy, flapping amongst bones, or curling around corpses; but above the water line, I ask, has not everything been proper, agreeable, and decorous…[11]

Even before we examine Ariel's villainous agencies, her affiliation with the gothic is immediately obvious in her status as a siren, a paranormal being. As a reaction against the Enlightenment, gothic literature rejoiced in the inexplicable, the unknowable, the supernatural; it is characterized by haunted settings, maniacal villains, and uncanny events. In other Disney Princess movies the hero and heroine must overcome these forces in order to reach their resolution, but in *The Little Mermaid*, our heroine is *part of that* gothic world. In *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), for example, the Beast and all the castle's inhabitants shed their gothic forms upon the movie's resolution. Even more striking, their castle is 'madeover' from distinctly Gothic (grey stone, gargoyles, black rooftops) to Rococo (sandstone, angels, red rooftops). This final alteration is unnecessary (they *could* live happily ever after in a Gothic castle) and seems to imply that all things gothic - the architecture as well as the curse - must be gotten rid of for a happy ever after. An analogous ending in *The Little Mermaid* would be tragic, involving the destruction of the mer-world and Ariel, as a prime representative of that world.

But why do I say the undersea world is gothic? After all, to Ariel (and to us viewers because we identify with her), it is 'all she's ever known.' I argue that the mer-world is a gothic space because of its status as feminine and mysterious in relation to the masculine and rational world on land. As Laura Sells points out, Disney renders the mer-world in '…sweeping seascapes which resemble Georgia O'Keeffe paintings, rich with the female imagery of sea shells and cave openings.'[12] Sells intensifies the undersea world's 'othered' status when she describes its relationship to the human world in terms of mainstream and marginalized systems:

> *The Little Mermaid* establishes the world on land and the world under the sea as two contrasting spaces, one factual and one fictive, one real and the other imaginary. In this dualistic and hierarchical construction, the human world can be aligned with the white male system and the water world situated outside that system.[13]

Though she is setting up an argument for viewing the undersea world as a colonized space, her observations about its feminine, mythic, alien status serve equally to make a case for its gothic nature.

But its colonized status is also important for my purposes, for it is often on usurped properties that gothic tales take place. Supernatural forces frequently inhabit stolen land (*The*

House of the Seven Gables, Ormond), appropriated castles (*Castle of Otranto*), Native American burial grounds, and slave plantations (*Absalom, Absalom*; *Strange True Stories of Louisiana*). Thus, Pat Murphy's observations that 'Sebastian, and many of the other sea creatures, have the facial features of people of colour;' 'the sea creatures spend their days singing and dancing to calypso music;' 'when they venture across the boundary into the "real world," they risk being reduced to human food;' and their culture is 'often invisible to the inhabitants of the white male system' suggest that the undersea world is ripe for interpretation as gothic.[14]

The opening scene of the film further illustrates the gothic status of Ariel's home. A giant ship emerges out of the mist into the maritime frame, displacing frolicking dolphins and seagulls, and with it comes a hearty sea chanty: 'I'll tell you a tale of the bottomless blue, and it's hey to the starboard, heave-ho. Look out, lad, a mermaid be waiting for you in mysterious fathoms below.'[15] It is human sailors who set up the story, characterizing the undersea world as 'mysterious' and warning a 'lad' (Prince Eric? A young sailor?) of dangerous mermaids. Undermining the credibility of the mer-world from a different angle, Grimsby (uptight fatherly advisor to the prince) tells Eric to 'pay no attention to this nautical nonsense.'[16] Both groups - the superstitious sailors and the learned landlubbers - challenge the viability of Ariel's world, one by declaring it in-credible, the other by announcing it un-credible. Hers is an inconceivable, mythical world.[17]

However, a topic no critic seems to want to broach: Ariel *is* dangerous to mortal men. She possesses a voice that bewitches its hearer. Upon his rescue from the shipwreck, Eric appears principally concerned with the voice of his saviour: 'A girl…rescued me. She was singing. She had the most beautiful voice.'[18] And in his next scene, again on the beach: '[Sigh], that voice. I can't get it out of my head. I've looked everywhere, Max. Where could she be?'[19] Yes she was attractive, yes she saved his life, but most importantly, she had a pretty voice. We know it is the voice that holds power over him because it instantly bewitches him a second time, despite the fact that it issues from Ursula-as-Vanessa. Of course, the way Disney animates this scene makes it appear that the voice bewitches Eric *because* it issues from Ursula-as-Vanessa: tendrils of yellow light snake their way out of the sea witch's nautilus and into Eric's eyes, as though it were the yellow light - not the siren's song - that bewitches him. However, Eric's affections already tended toward whomever possessed the voice: first Ariel when she sings him awake, then Vanessa as she sings along the shore. Yellow light or no yellow light, the fact remains that whoever gets Ariel's voice gets Ariel's man. Ariel's singing ability is not a talent; it is a supernatural power.

But Ariel's status as siren goes beyond her dangerously good voice; it also means she is half a fish, which automatically invites associations with other amphibious women. Indeed, strong similarities exist between the little mermaid (certainly Andersen's version) and Lamia in John Keats's poem of the same name. For instance, Lamia's happily ever after is thwarted when the groom's elderly tutor reveals her true identity as a snake-woman:

> 'Fool! Fool!' repeated he, while his eyes still
> Relented not, nor mov'd; 'from every ill
> Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,
> And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?'
> Then Lamia breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye,
> Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
> Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well
> As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
> Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,

> He look'd and look'd again a level - No!
> 'A Serpent!' echoed he; no sooner said,
> Than with a frightful scream she vanished[20]

Like Keats's snake-woman, Ariel (as well as Ursula) is revealed for what she is on the wedding day. Because the traditional gothic narrative requires that '…the villain, though he may try to hide it, is eventually shown to have the face of evil; his moral deformity eventually has an outward, physical display,'[21] both Lamia and Ariel here fulfil the role of gothic villain.

The figure of Lamia has greater significance still to the *The Little Mermaid*. Long predating her depiction in Keats's tragic poem, Lamia as a sea monster was a fixture of classical mythology. Though many versions abound, the most popular amalgamation of stories says that she was once a Libyan queen, daughter to Poseidon (and therefore sister to Triton), and one of Zeus's many flings. When Zeus's wife Hera discovered their tryst, she stole Lamia's children, triggering Lamia's transformation into a child-devouring demon, intent on exacting revenge on the offspring of others.[22] The idea of Ursula as sister to Triton and aunt to Ariel never made it beyond the drawing board for the film, but did find expression in the Broadway musical Disney created shortly afterward.[23] That Ursula was conceived of as Triton's sibling puts her in the same position as the mythical Lamia, and Ursula's penchant for taking revenge through other people's children mirrors the sea monster's practices. (Indeed, Ursula's excessive fondness for her eels only emphasizes her lack of real offspring.) In both Ariel's and Ursula's cases, then, the figure of Lamia seems to illuminate their gothic and villainous natures.

Beyond Lamia, however, it is significant that Ariel - and mermaids in general - is part fish *from the waist down*. Two of the female monsters in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* are likewise misshapen beneath the waist, a point that Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar observe

> […] foreshadow[s] Lear's 'But to girdle do the Gods inherit, Beneath is all the fiend's.' When, like all witches, she [Duessa] must do penance at the time of the new moon by bathing with herbs traditionally used by such other witches as Scylla, Circe, and Medea, her 'nether parts' are revealed as 'misshapen, monstrous.'[24]

As the site of female orgasms, childbirth, and other 'unladylike' bodily processes, a woman's nether regions are mysterious, dangerous, abject, and - I argue - gothic. For just as the gothic is sexual and feminine, so female sexuality is gothic.[25] Slapping on a fishtail in place of legs - and, significantly, what lies between those legs - is only replacing one abject female mystery with another, greater one. Mermaids are ultra-gothic because they are ultra-feminine/-mysterious/-dangerous/-abject.

Of course, the figure of Ursula takes this argument even further. As Elizabeth Bell observes, Ursula's 'octopus tentacles physically manifest the enveloping, consumptive sexuality of the deadly woman.'[26] If fish fins are an indictment of the dangerous vulva, octopus tentacles most definitely are. Both Ariel and Ursula, if only because of their paranormal bodies, possess characteristics of gothic villainy.

3. Doubling

> ...there are strange likenesses between us, Harry Potter. Even you must have noticed. Both half-bloods, orphans, raised by Muggles. Probably the only two Parselmouths to come to Hogwarts since the great Slytherin himself. We even *look* something alike...[27]

Too, Ariel could be said to resemble a villain if only because she doubles with villainous Ursula in many ways.[28] To begin with, the colour palette in which Ariel is animated does not match that of her friends, her father, or her lover - all of which might be expected - but that of the sea witch. The mermaid's breast shells are the same colour as Ursula's earrings; her hair brings out Ursula's lips; her fishtail matches Ursula's eye shadow. I draw attention to these details because Disney draws attention to them; whereas each of Ariel's sisters has a monotone ensemble (like a bridesmaid, backup singer, prop), Ariel's mismatched set of hues can only have been carefully selected. I argue that this visual doubling between mermaid and sea witch is not mere coincidence but implies kinship and succession, as visual similarities do in the real world. According to Bell, the physical similarities we see in wicked stepmothers may be read as portents of the princesses' future; these young ladies may someday be the active, assertive villains who are currently making their lives miserable.[29] After all, bullies are born from being bullied.

While I do not mean to suggest that Ariel will one day be a voluptuous sea witch herself, I do mean to suggest that active, assertive (i.e. villainous) tendencies are in her blood, are part of her birth right (and, as I will argue shortly, that she has already started cashing in on that birth right).

Another instance of doubling between the sea witch and the mermaid is their common tactic of changing appearance, and those appearances' similarities. Ariel 'only' gets legs, but Ursula gives herself a full-body makeover, complete with new identity as Vanessa. However, apart from a dye-job and a different parting in her hair, Vanessa could be Ariel. Of course, it is easy to say that the art department only had one template for 'pretty girl' or even that the visual doubling was Ursula's intention, but a more interesting explanation is that Vanessa's false exterior calls into question Ariel's. Disney shows us that Ariel is good by making her beautiful, but Vanessa has *the same exact kind of beauty*, and she is bad. We viewers find ourselves asking: is Ariel like Vanessa, or is Vanessa like Ariel?

Which is where the mirror device comes in. To reassure viewers that 'what you see is what you get,' Vanessa's true identity (Ursula) may be seen in the young woman's reflection. However, this mirror scene mirrors another, earlier on in the movie. When Ariel first meets Ursula, she sees her (Ursula) in a mirror. If mirrors reveal one's true identity, then on some level Ariel *is* Ursula. This argument has precedence: in discussing the (gothic) text *Jane Eyre*, Gilbert and Gubar construct a similar claim regarding Jane and Bertha as doubles:

> […] the adult Jane first clearly perceives her terrible double when Bertha puts on the wedding veil for the second Mrs. Rochester, and turns in the mirror. At that moment, Jane sees 'the reflection of the visage and features quite distinctly in the dark oblong glass,' sees them as if they were her own.[30]

That Jane first encounters Bertha in a mirror signals to the reader that these women have more in common than meets the eye. Given that Ariel's first encounter with Ursula suggests a similar bond, what we see in the later mirror scene is not actually reassuring, but reminds us of this bond - that Ariel is, on some level, actually like Vanessa.

4. Monstrous Agency

What makes Ariel truly villainous, however, is not how she looks, but how she acts. And *that* she acts. Earlier Disney Princesses fulfilled the feminine ideal of silent victim, what Coventry Patmore christened 'the Angel in the House.' Gilbert and Gubar describe how this is done: '…it is the surrender of her self - of her personal comfort, her personal desires, or both - that is the beautiful angel-woman's key act, while it is precisely this sacrifice which dooms her

to both death and heaven.'[31] Though Snow White, Aurora, and Cinderella could each be described as such a selfless martyr, Ariel in no way fits this description. The little mermaid tirelessly chases her dreams, from her very first scene. Indeed, Ariel appears to represent the opposite of the Angel in the House:

> a witch or monster, a magical creature of the lower world […] is a kind of antithetical mirror image of an angel. […] as a representative of otherness, she incarnates the damning otherness of the flesh rather than the inspiring otherness of the spirit, expressing what - to use Anne Finch's words - men consider her own 'presumptuous' desires rather than the angelic humility and 'dullness' for which she was designed.[32]

Ariel unashamedly indulges her desires, for which 'presumption' she is more monster/villain than angel. And she shares this penchant with other villains: 'the Queen [in the Grimm's' 'Little Snow White'], as we come to see more clearly in the course of the story, is a plotter, a plot-maker, a schemer, a witch, an artist, an impersonator, a woman of almost infinite creative energy, witty, wily, and self-absorbed as all artists traditionally are.'[33] Like other Disney villains, Ariel is a mover and shaker, not a moved and shaken.

5. Sexuality

If agency is inherently villainous for women, sexual agency most certainly is. It makes sense, then, that Disney has thus far only depicted 'the vain, active, and wicked woman of folktales [as] the *femme fatale*, the "deadly woman" of silent film and of Hollywood classic film.'[34] According to Colette, such a woman is 'characterized by décolleté, a "clinging black velvet dress," and weaponry. She catches the spectator in her gaze, "sinuously turns her serpent's neck…and - having first revealed enormously wide eyes, she slowly veils them with soft lids."'[35] Though sexy femme fatales abound in gothic literature (Ligeia, Carmilla, brides of Dracula, Geraldine, Isabella Thorpe, Catherine Linton I, Miss Jessel, etc.[36]), this figure long predates the genre, even its own fairly recent French term. For *The Little Mermaid*, animators modelled Ursula (officially, at least) on *Sunset Boulevard*'s femme fatale Norma Desmond, which goes some way in explaining how Ursula came to be the most sexually agentic of the Disney villains.[37]

That Ariel has plenty of sexual agency (by which I mean both gender competence and a libidinous prerogative) has not escaped notice. The most popular explanation for her unexpected expertise is that she got it from Ursula:

> In Ursula's drag scene,[38] Ariel learns that gender is performance; Ursula doesn't simply symbolize woman, she *performs* woman. Ursula uses a camp drag queen performance to teach Ariel to use makeup, to 'never underestimate the importance of body language,' to use the artifices and trappings of gendered behaviour.[39]

However, Ariel was 'performing woman' before she ever met Ursula. (And is this really surprising, when she has six older sisters?) The morning after Ariel saves Eric from the shipwreck, her sister Andrina announces that Ariel has been in the bathroom 'all morning.'[40] When Ariel emerges, she grooms herself in front of the mirror, and in the next scene, tucks a flower in her hair: stereotypical feminine mooning.

But Ursula's number does highlight the disparity between Ariel's sexual agency and that of previous princesses. Rather than simply impress on Ariel that gender is performance,

Ursula's song actually illustrates the paradoxical message young girls in a patriarchal culture receive about their presentation: be demure, but also seductive.

> You'll have your looks, your pretty face.
> And don't underestimate the importance of body language, ha!
> The men up there don't like a lot of blabber
> They think a girl who gossips is a bore!
> Yes on land it's much preferred for ladies not to say a word
> And after all dear, what is idle prattle for?
> Come on, they're not all that impressed with conversation
> True gentlemen avoid it when they can
> But they dote and swoon and fawn
> On a lady who's withdrawn
> It's she who holds her tongue who gets the man.[41]

Ursula's song could either be read as encouraging Ariel to be a demure wallflower - one who speaks only when spoken to - *or* an assertive strumpet - one who trades a little less talk for a little more action. In support of the first reading are descriptions that would not be out of place in a nineteenth century sitting room: Ariel's appearance is 'pretty;' talk is 'gossip' and 'a bore;' and 'gentlemen' will 'dote and swoon and fawn/ On a lady who's withdrawn' because she 'holds her tongue.' In favour of the second reading are more brazen phrases that would fit better in a club setting: Ariel is endowed with 'looks' and 'body language,' talk is 'blabber' and 'prattle,' and she is out to 'get a man.' What sets Ariel apart from Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora is that she chooses the second 'reading,' that of seduction, over the more traditional reading of modesty (of course, part of her seduction involves pretending to be modest).

But more than understanding gender as performance, Ariel is distinctly sexually assertive in her interactions with Eric (and his effigy). She objectifies Eric (and in so doing, subject-ifies herself) after saving him from the shipwreck and again later when she sees his statue. After the rescue, she takes the liberty of stroking his unconscious face, saying wonderingly, 'He's so beautiful.'[42] It does not occur to her that he is also a person who can think and talk and that he has not given her permission to touch him in that way. (This may remind viewers of Ursula's equally presumptuous stroking of Triton's trident later on.) Just then, he is only a pretty face. Ariel becomes the sexual subject, the admirer, the doer; Eric becomes the sexual object, the admired, the done-to.

She objectifies him a second time when she applies the same logic to him that she applies to all the other objects in her cavern. She reasons that her artefacts' delightful appearances must indicate that they come from a delightful world, that appearance equals reality: 'I just don't see how a world that makes such wonderful things, could be bad.'[43] Similarly, she decides that the ludicrous statue of Eric (featuring him in the stereotypical knight-in-shining-role, striding upward, one metal-clad arm in front as if to shield him from onslaught, the other arm grasping a sword) 'looks just like him!'[44] whereas both Eric and his dog Max are rather nonplussed when they first see his statue. Ariel objectifies him by substituting the statue's outward appearance (a knight in shining armour) with Eric's inward reality. As Ariel puts her man in the role of object, she puts herself in the role of subject. And if part of the femme fatales' allure is their 'living and thinking only for themselves as sexual subjects, not sexual objects,'[45] then Ariel falls into this category, even before meeting Ursula.

When she enacts a romantic encounter with Eric's statue, however, she displays her gender understanding. Hands clasped, feigning surprise, she says to his effigy, 'Why Eric, run away with you?' Then, leaning her head on his shoulder, lowering her eyelids and dropping her

voice, she murmurs, 'This is all so, so sudden…'[46] Ariel does not just know the moves; she could write the book!

Of course, it is after the little mermaid has lost her voice and swapped her fins for legs that everyone remarks upon her sexual agency. Bell cites her sexy poses in 'sailcloth rage' to Scuttle's 'accompanying wolf whistle' as evidence of her feminine wiles.[47] No one misses, either, the grin she throws her fellow conspirators, upon stumbling and 'falling' into Eric's arms. Though moments before she had even us viewers fooled, the side-long smile lets us know her 'damsel in distress' is an act.

What are less often cited are the even cleverer stunts the mermaid pulls in her efforts to lure Eric in. Ariel allows him to 'catch' her watching him from the window, managing thus to communicate both her admiration and modesty as she shyly ducks back into her room. In letting him see her in the window, Ariel takes on the role of the good queen from 'Little Snow White,' the Angel in the House who begins that story 'framed by a window' (the next, bad queen will also be framed by glass, but hers will be a mirror).[48] In Andersen's version, the little mermaid actually is an Angel in the House: 'Many a night she stood by her open window and looked up through the dark blue water where the fish waved their fins and tails.'[49] Though Ariel is much more monster/villain according to Gilbert and Gubar's characterization, she frequently takes advantage of the angel/damsel cliché in her efforts to win her prince, a tactic not uncommon among gothic villains (for instance, Carmilla, Geraldine).

Ariel again feigns innocence to attract Eric, this time when the two are in a rowboat together. Ariel claims not to hear her fellow conspirators' pointed song encouraging Eric to appreciate her beauty and kiss her, when - if he can hear it - she certainly can. In doing so, she manipulates him into believing the words are his internal thoughts, and pretends an innocence she does not have. This pretending in order to get her man points to her understanding of and her willingness to use gender expectations.

Evidently the rowboat scene is the site of her greatest sexual agency for it is here, too, that she throws Eric her sultry look. As he leans in for the kiss, Ariel gives him a sly, come hither glance from beneath her lashes, a look reminiscent of Ursula-as-Vanessa's sly, self-satisfied smile when the sea witch's engagement to Eric is announced. The two sea women have more in common than we might at first think, certainly in terms of sexual prerogative and gender performance.

6. Mania

Unlike Snow White's need to clean, Aurora's knack for picking berries, or Cinderella's clothing line for mice, Ariel's pastimes are somewhat unsettling. Like gothic villain Egaeus in Poe's 'Berenice' or the duke in Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess,' Ariel is a fetishistic collector. She is a possessor of forbidden knowledge, like the controlling patriarch (the Beast) in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. Hers is not a preoccupation, but an obsession. She has created a shrine for her fascination like a religious fanatic, and her crowning piece - the ultimate site of her mania - is the statue of Eric, which she is thrilled to 'have.' Mingled with the awe that viewers experience upon first seeing this sixteen-year-old's cavern is a sense of trepidation at the unwavering commitment that such a collection must have required over the years.

Going hand-in-hand with this obsession with possession is the little mermaid's affinity for stalking. Though it is an unpleasant reading, Ariel's predatorily tendencies are difficult to deny. She watches Eric every chance she gets: on his ship, on the beach, beneath her window. It is one of the qualities in her that reminds us of aunt Ursula, who, of course, is watching Ariel watch Eric. It is the two sea women's unabashed gazes that remind us of their status as dangerous women. Indeed, Scuttle actually conflates for us the ideas of wicked women and watching. Upon spying Ursula in Vanessa's reflection, he hurries to tell Ariel and friends what

he has just discovered: 'I saw the watch - the witch! The witch was watching the mirror...!'[50] Not *looking* in the mirror; *watching*, because that is what *witches* do.

And Disney knows this. Before Ariel came along,

> The evil women of Disney films [were] the only female characters rendered in close-ups. Moreover, they [were] the only characters who address[ed] the camera directly, both advancing the narrative dieresis and confronting the spectator's gaze with their own. But Disney enlarge[d] the cinematic code for the face of the *femme fatale* with a special effect: the face and background fade to black and the eyes are painted as gold, glowing orbs, narrowing tightly on the intended victim/heroine.[51]

Though Ariel does not get a fade-to-black with glowing eyes like Ursula does, she *is* the first princess to gaze directly into the camera, the glowing going on around her. This new, direct-address gaze is evidence of a new, agentic, *watching* heroine. Ariel lusts after Eric just as Ursula hankers after Ariel (and just as we viewers have always yearned after all the Disney Princesses).

7. Devil-Dealing

In addition to her sexuality, bias, and mania, Ariel is an unusual princess in that she is a risk-taker. Unlike other Disney heroines who end up in their tricky situations out of bad luck (Snow White's father marries the wrong woman, Cinderella's father marries the wrong woman, Aurora's father tangles with the wrong woman, Belle's father tangles with the man who tangled with the wrong woman), Ariel *seeks out* this wrong woman.

And we know all along she will because, unlike other princesses (but very like other villains), she warns the viewer that she will do whatever it takes to get what she wants: 'Watch and you'll see, someday I'll be part of your world.'[52] Compare her definitive announcement with Belle's 'I want adventure in the great wide somewhere, I want it more than I can tell.'[53] There are many 'I want' statements but no 'I will's.' However, villains from the Wicked Witch of the West ('I'll get you, my pretty!'[54]) to Ursula ('Well, I'll give them something to celebrate soon enough.'[55]) to Gaston ('Just watch, I'm going to make Belle my wife.'[56]) have been making definitive action plans for decades.

Once there, in Ursula's cave, Ariel again exercises her agency and (questionable) decision-making ability. However inadvisable it might seem, Ariel signs the contract with the sea witch knowing full well the terms and conditions and, what's more, *that she need not go through with it*. We know she has considered her options because she reasons aloud, 'If I become human, I'll never be with my family or sisters again.'[57] Unlike other Disney heroines, she knowingly and intentionally deals with the devil.

And I want to emphasize that her contract with Ursula is a deal, a gamble; it is *not* a straight-up gift or 'sacrifice.' She is not definitely losing her voice; she is losing it *unless* she wins Eric. According to Sebastian, 'she [Ariel] won't say a word, and she won't say a word *until* you [Eric] kiss the girl'[58] (italics imposed). The little mermaid goes double or nothing on her own ingenuity, and this points to a fount of inner strength the likes of which we have not seen in previous princesses: Ariel *gambles* her voice on her own ability to achieve self-fulfilment, a move no angel/damsel would attempt, but which a gothic villain (à la Faust or Gray) would be more than capable of.[59]

8. Conclusion

Ultimately, I support criticizing *The Little Mermaid* for the right reasons - the domesticating of powerful obsession into a marriage plot, the worrisome efficacy of bodily alteration in securing a man, the apparent mutual exclusivity of romantic love and familial love - and not the wrong ones - Ariel's self-centeredness, her obvious sex-positivity, her wily manipulation of gender expectations, her single-minded obsession, her dangerous decisions, her bold self-confidence. These behaviours not only circumvent the patriarchal system because they involve villainous amounts of agency, but because they refute its safe, logical, linear trajectory for women (which, it must be said, is rarely actually 'safe' in Disney movies thanks to the villains). And it is especially for this reason that *The Little Mermaid* should not be criticized for its appeal to women and girls - not if we want resourceful, self-assured, independent young women.

That *The Little Mermaid* features this protagonist who not only gets away with exerting her supernatural agency, but gets rewarded for it, would seem to be excellent news for subsequent Disney Princesses. However, while Ariel may be said to have inspired greater agency in her younger peers, none are really femme fatales like she is. They are definitely active and assertive, but gone is the sexual agency. Disney has largely ceased production of Norma Desmonds in favour of Joan of Arcs - and that is okay, because it has simultaneously reinvented its existing Norma Desmonds to be protagonists in their own right. *Frozen* and *Maleficent* are obvious examples of this shift in perspective, each telling the story of an agentic femme fatale with whom the viewers can identify, *and* who gets a happy ending! The previously opposite tropes of angelic heroine and monstrous villain are gradually colliding to form a new, stronger, more realistic leading lady.

Notes

[1] ABC News. 'Michelle Obama to Give Keynote Speech at Disney's 1st Veterans Institute Event,' *ABC News*, ABC News Network, 28 November 2013, Web, viewed on 23 April 2015, http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2013/10/michelle-obama-to-give-keynote-speech-at-disneys-1st-veterans-institute-event/.

[2] Michael Schneider, 'First Lady Michelle Obama to Appear on Disney Channel's Jessie,' *TVGuide.com*, CBS Interactive, Inc., 21 April 2014, Web, viewed on 22 April 2015, http://www.tvguide.com/news/michelle-obama-disney-channel-jessie-1080694/.

[3] Devin Dwyer, 'Obama Unveils $1B Boost for Preschools, Including $55 Million From Disney,' *ABC News*, ABC News Network, 10 December 2014, Web, viewed on 22 April 2015, http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/obama-unveils-1b-boost-preschools-including-55-million/story?id=27470640.

[4] Rapunzel's hair power is arguably the result of patriarchal appropriation; whereas Gothel existed in a symbiotic relationship with the magic flower, Rapunzel's parents harvested it without thought for its continued existence or for the others it might have helped, too. And—though lauded as the first Disney Princess movie without a villain—Frozen does in fact have an 'evil' force to overcome: a female's power.

[5] Margot Norris, 'Not the Girl She Was at All: Women in "The Dead",' Joyce, James. *The Dead'* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1994), 191.

[6] Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2014), 768.

[7] Indeed, according to this view, Ariel may be seen as an assertive reinterpretation of the more pathetic mermaids of legend—Hans Christian Andersen's little mermaid but also Clemens Brentano's Lorelei—both of whom throw themselves to their deaths rather than live without

their lovers. Hans Christian Andersen, 'The Little Mermaid,' Trans. Jean Hersholt, *HC Andersen Centret* 8 November 2013, Web, viewed on 10 October 2014, http://www.Andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheLittleMermaid_e.html.
Clemens Brentano, 'Lore Lay,' *Music and Texts of Gary Bachlund*, Gary Bachlund, 1 January 1995, Web, viewed on 23 April 2015, http://www.bachlund.org/Lore_Lay.htm.
[8] Rivkin and Ryan, *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed, 767.
[9] Barbara Claire Freeman, '"Sublime Speculations": Edmund Burke, Lily Bart, and the Ethics of Risk,' *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), np.
[10] It is through this lens that all three mermaids—Disney's little mermaid, Andersen's little mermaid, and Brentano's Lorelei—would represent viable feminist heroines. Their essentially illogical nature and even self-destructive actions befuddle and subvert the patriarchal system, breaking free of the reiterative marriage plot, even if that freedom is only found in death.
[11] William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, (London: Harper Press, 2011) Kindle e-book, loc. 12812.
[12] Laura Sells, '"Where Do the Mermaids Stand?" Voice and Body in the Little Mermaid,' *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Bell, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995) 178.
[13] Ibid., 177.
[14] Ibid., 178.
[15] *The Little Mermaid* 2-Disc Platinum Edition, Dir. Ron Clements and John Musker, Perf. Jodi Benson and Christopher Daniel Barnes, Walt Disney Pictures, 2006, DVD.
[16] Ibid.
[17] And were this a more traditional gothic fairy tale (along the lines of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Sleeping Beauty*, or *Beauty and the Beast*), Ariel and her world *would* be the opponents requiring conquering, and Eric .the handsome orphaned princeling) would be the protagonist. This scene would mark his introduction to the possibility of sirens, and a brief glimpse during his birthday celebrations would serve as his first encounter with the dangerous maidens. Soon, he would come across a naked, speechless woman on the shore and begin to wonder at her dark secret.
[18] *The Little Mermaid*.
[19] Ibid.
[20] John Keats, 'Lamia,' *Gutenberg*. Project Gutenberg, Part 2 Lines 295-306, 23 October 2008, Web, viewed on 10 October 2014, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2490/2490-h/2490-h.htm.
[21] Bridget M. Marshall, 'The Face of Evil: Phrenology, Physiognomy, and the Gothic Villain,' *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*, 6.2 (2000), Jstor, viewed on 10 September 2014, 163, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41274102.
[22] Aaron J. Atsma, 'Lamia,' *Theoi* (New Zealand: Theoi Project, 2011), np.
[23] *The Little Mermaid*.
[24] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer in the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 30.
[25] This argument is not new and can be made for both gothic novels featuring male protagonists and those featuring female protagonists. Joseph Andriano, *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction* (Philadelphia, PA: Penn State Press, 2010), 6.
Cynthia Griffin Wolff, 'The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality' *Modern Language Studies*. 9.3 (1979): 104.

[26] Elizabeth Bell, 'Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies,' *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Bell (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 117.
[27] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Vancouver, B.C.: Raincoast Books, 1999), 233.
[28] Doubling is all over the gothic—Bertha Mason and Jane Eyre in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*, William Williamson and William Williamson in Edgar Allan Poe's short story of that name, Isabella and Matilda in Horace Walpole's novella *The Castle of Otranto*, Catherine Linton II and Catherine Linton I in Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*, Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*—though this literary device is hardly specific to the genre.
[29] Bell, 'Somatexts at the Disney Shop,' 121-122.
[30] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 362.
[31] Ibid., 25.
[32] Ibid., 28.
[33] Ibid., 39.
[34] Bell, 'Somatexts at the Disney Shop,' 115.
[35] Colette, qtd in 'Somatexts at the Disney Shop,' 115.
[36] I refer here to Ligeia from Edgar Allan Poe's short story of the same name, Carmilla from Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's novella of the same name, the brides of Dracula from Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, Geraldine from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem 'Christabel,' Isabella Thorpe from Jane Austen's novel *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine Linton I from Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*, Miss Jessel from Henry James' novel *The Turn of the Screw*.
[37] Unofficially, and 'according to the directing animator, Ruben Acquine, Ursula was modelled on the drag queen Divine.' Sells, 'Where do the Mermaids Stand?,' 182.
[38] 'During her song about body language, Ursula stages a camp drag show about being a woman in the white male system, beginning "backstage" with hair mousse and lipstick. She shimmies and wiggles in an exaggerated style while her eels swirl around her, forming a feather boa. This performance is a masquerade, a drag show starring Ursula as an ironic figure.' Sells, 'Where do the Mermaids Stand?,' 182.
[39] Sells, 'Where Do the Mermaids Stand?,' 183.
[40] *The Little Mermaid*.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Bell, 'Somatexts at the Disney Shop,' 116.
[46] *The Little Mermaid*.
[47] Bell, 'Somatexts at the Disney Shop,' 114.
[48] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 37.
[49] Andersen, 'The Little Mermaid.'
[50] *The Little Mermaid*.
[51] Bell, 'Somatexts at the Disney Shop,' 116.
[52] *The Little Mermaid*.
[53] *Beauty and the Beast*, Dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, Perf. Paige O'Hara and Jesse Corti, Walt Disney Pictures: 1991, DVD.
[54] *The Wizard of Oz*, Dir. Victor Fleming and George Cukor, Perf. Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, and Ray Bolger, Warner Bros Pictures: 1939, DVD.

[55] *The Little Mermaid*.
[56] *Beauty and the Beast*.
[57] *The Little Mermaid*.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Chachusa, '100 Disney Things #5: Common Criticisms of the Little Mermaid,' *LiveJournal.com,* 11 November 2012, Web, viewed on 10 October 2014, http://chachusa.livejournal.com/144418.html.

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The Evil Queen and the Frankenstein Monster: Recreating the Witch in *Once Upon a Time*

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Abstract

Traditional criticism of the Snow White myth has viewed the Evil Queen as the good mother's dark half, a projection of the child's psychosexual fears. But the TV series *Once Upon a Time* develops the character of the Evil Queen not as a shadowy phobia but as a heroine in her own right, complete with a tragic past, a vengeful axe to grind, and an agenda of world domination—or, at least, the domination of a small town in Maine known as Storybrooke. Creators Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz, of *Lost* fame, weave an intertextual tapestry that connects tales and myths from various sources, including Grimm, Disney, Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll, J.M. Barrie, Greek mythology, and Arthurian legend. Throughout the four seasons that have aired thus far, the action not only moves among various realms but also travels temporally backwards through time to reveal several rich interpretive back stories of these characters, developing known fairy tales as psychological bildungsromans. The creation story of Regina as monstrous Evil Queen intertwines with several other fairy tales, legends, and literary works—most notably, for the purposes of this essay, with the creation tale that lies at the heart of Mary Shelley's literary fable *Frankenstein.* One of the major parallels between Regina and Shelley's Creature is the embedding of their histories within the main text. In both cases, the histories develop sympathy for the monsters by illustrating the paths and motivations that led them there. Both stories contain elements of victimization, desertion, rejection, and oppression that result in the hardening of a gentle soul into a vengeful killer. Like Shelley's creature, Regina channels her loneliness and rage into violence. But unlike Shelley's Creature, *Once Upon a Time*'s Evil Queen is given the opportunity to pursue her own quest for redemption.

Key Words

Monsters, Evil Queen, *Frankenstein*, *Once Upon a Time*, Regina, fairy tales.

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The Evil Queen of the Snow White myth is, in many ways, the consummate fairy tale villainess: a composite of the tyrannical stepmother of Cinderella and the vengeful sorceress of Sleeping Beauty. Snow White's Evil Queen is both a stepmother and a witch, a dangerous combination, as any orphaned princess knows. Whether channeling the spirit of her magic mirror and using witchcraft to concoct a poisoned comb and apple, as in the Grimm tale, or consulting a grimoire to magically disguise herself as an old crone, as in the Disney film, the Queen commands not only the authority of her rank and relationship to Snow White but also the powers of the dark arts. Traditional criticism of the Snow White myth has viewed the Evil Queen as the good mother's dark half, a projection of the child's psychosexual fears.[1] But the TV series *Once Upon a Time* develops the character of the Evil Queen not as a shadowy phobia

but as a heroine in her own right, complete with a tragic past, a vengeful axe to grind, and an agenda of world domination—or, at least, the domination of a small town in Maine known as Storybrooke.

Once Upon a Time is primarily set in two main worlds: the Enchanted Forest, which is the traditional fairy tale setting, and present-day Storybrooke, the real world to which the characters have been transported, cursed with amnesia and no knowledge of their 'true' (that is, fairy tale) identities. As Season One opens, we learn that the Evil Queen, aptly named Regina, has thwarted the happy ending of Snow White and her Prince Charming by sending them and all of their friends and allies, some of whom traditionally populate separate fairy tales, to a world without magic, where Regina hopes to finally realize her own happy ending.[2] Throughout the four seasons that have aired thus far, the action not only moves between and among these (and various other) realms but also travels temporally backwards through time to reveal several rich interpretive back stories of these characters, developing known fairy tales as psychological bildungsromans. Creators Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz, of *Lost* fame, weave an intertextual tapestry that connects tales and myths from various sources, including Grimm, Disney, Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll, J.M. Barrie, Greek mythology, and Arthurian legend. The creation story of Regina as monstrous Evil Queen intertwines with several other fairy tales, legends, and literary works—most notably, for the purposes of this essay, with the creation tale that lies at the heart of Mary Shelley's literary fable *Frankenstein.*

In *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen posits that 'the monster is born [. . .] at [a] metaphoric crossroads, as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment—of a time, a feeling, and a place.'[3] The character of Regina is conceived at an intertextual crossroads—a fabulous fairy tale mash-up that embodies a postmodern *Zeitgeist*, in which good and evil are relative concepts and heroes and villains become interchangeable. While the Evil Queen of Grimm and Disney is essentially a static figure with no past and no future—no history and no opportunity for redemption—the characterization of *Once Upon a Time*'s Regina is enhanced through a richly intertextual history of her previous life in the Enchanted Forest. Developed over several seasons, this story includes the revelation that Regina's first true love, a stableboy named Daniel, was murdered by her mother Cora (the miller's daughter of the Rumplestiltskin tale). Following her heartbreak over Daniel's demise, the young Regina begins taking magic lessons from Rumplestiltskin in order to challenge her mother, his former tutee. But Rumplestiltskin has an agenda of his own: to corrupt Regina into becoming a sorceress formidable enough to cast the darkest of curses: the Dark Curse that constitutes the series' opening premise.

The resurrection of the murdered body of Daniel forms the core of the *Frankenstein* plot in both the past and the present. In the Enchanted Forest of the past, a character known as the 'Doctor' has arrived in the quest of a magical heart which he needs to complete his experiments in human resurrection.[4] This character is later revealed to be named Victor Frankenstein, who hails from a black-and-white world that is presumably eighteenth-century Europe, the setting of Mary Shelley's novel.[5] Based on Shelley's titular character in his obsession 'to pursue[. . .] nature to her hiding places' and penetrate the secrets of life and death, *Once Upon a Time*'s Victor attempts to reanimate his own dead brother rather than an amalgamation of anonymous body parts.[6] This deviation from Shelley's storyline provides a parallel to Regina's quest to resurrect a loved one.

Regina offers to provide a beating, live heart, procured from her mother's underground vault of stolen hearts, in exchange for the resurrection of Daniel. Much to her disappointment, the Doctor fails to revive Daniel, leaving a bereft Regina to return to Rumplestiltskin's tutelage with renewed intensity and fewer qualms about using magic to do evil. Meanwhile, in present-day Storybrooke, Victor is known as Dr. Whale, a reference to the director of the 1931

Frankenstein film, James Whale. In the present Whale succeeds in resurrecting Daniel, whose body Regina has magically preserved. Unfortunately, the risen Daniel retains little of his former humanity, attacking Dr. Whale, Regina's adopted son Henry, and Regina herself, before she is forced to destroy him a second time.[7]

The trope of the resurrected creature turning monstrous and murderous plays itself out again as Victor returns to his black-and-white world with the magical heart and successfully resurrects his brother Gerhardt. Like Daniel and Shelley's unnamed creature, Gerhardt struggles to regain and retain his humanity and control his monstrosity, but ultimately fails, murdering their father. Horrified by his own subhuman existence, Gerhardt begs Victor to end his miserable life, as Regina does for Daniel, but Victor refuses, locking his brother up and continuing his own obsessive quest to command and control Nature's power.[8]

While the overt storyline presents Dr. Whale as Victor Frankenstein and Gerhardt and Daniel as his monstrous creatures, the implicit subtext suggests several parallels between Regina and Victor, particularly for viewers familiar with Shelley's text. In her careful mummifying of Daniel's body through a preservation spell, the effectiveness of which is even remarked upon by the scientific Victor, who resists admitting that he needs magic, Regina mirrors Victor's obsession with pushing the boundaries of the possible. Like Regina, who trains under Rumplestiltskin, the young Victor Frankenstein dabbles in the dark arts, studying the occult works of the likes of Paracelsus, Albertus Magnus, and Cornelius Agrippa, before eventually learning to revere science over magic.[9] Most importantly, while Victor/Dr. Whale never renounces his obsession despite numerous failures, Regina learns the lessons of Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein: that to usurp divine creative power results in monstrosity. While Shelley's Victor is unable to vanquish his creature, Regina reluctantly puts an end to her own experiment, accepting responsibility to correct her mistake in a way that neither Victor does.

Critic George Levine notes that 'it is a commonplace of criticism of *Frankenstein* [. . .] that the hero and his antagonist are one [. . . .] [T]he monster and Frankenstein are doubles, two aspects of the same being.'[10] Dr. Whale points to this doubling when he ruefully remarks that the name of 'Frankenstein' has come to be synonymous with the monster rather than with the scientist who created him.[11] Given such doubling, it is not surprising that in addition to paralleling Victor, Regina also parallels his creature, in what is perhaps an even more striking resemblance. Rumplestiltskin makes this connection explicit as he bids Victor farewell: 'Thanks to your efforts, I've made my monster. Now I do hope you'll be able to make yours.'[12] It is later revealed that Rumple has initiated the entire deal with Victor in a successful attempt to render Regina despondent and therefore vulnerable to his manipulations. Immediately following the unsuccessful attempt to resurrect Daniel the first time, Regina rips the heart out of a rival protegé of Rumple's. Like Shelley's creature, Regina channels her loneliness and rage at the loss of her mate into violence. Thus are monsters made, not born.

One of the major parallels between Regina and Shelley's Creature is the embedding of their histories within the main text. Shelley's novel situates the Creature's story of his fall into monstrosity at its center, presented within Victor's tale as told to Captain Walton, but related in the Creature's own words. Kitsis and Horowitz develop Regina's history over several seasons, through flashbacks presented in arcs that complement and enhance the main storylines. In both cases, the histories develop sympathy for the monsters by illustrating the paths and motivations that led them there. Both stories contain elements of victimization, desertion, rejection, and oppression that result in the hardening of a gentle soul into a vengeful killer.

While the Frankenstein monster in Shelley's novel is a victim of parental neglect and desertion, as Victor runs in horror from the thing he created, Regina is a victim of obsessive parenting. Her mother Cora literally controls and physically restrains her through magic. Cora disapproves of Regina's masculine, active passions, such as horseriding, and seeks to morph her

daughter into the perfect wife for a king: passive, lovely, and obedient. Cora's own ambition for royal power thus warps her daughter's development.

Intertextuality also plays a role in analyzing the parallels between Regina's and the Creature's bildungsromans, as both texts borrow freely from the lessons of other related texts. Shelley's Creature finds a stash of books that greatly influence his intellectual and moral development: Goethe's *Sorrows of Werter*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. *Once Upon a Time*'s Evil Queen crosses textual lines and enters the mythical worlds of Robin Hood, Oz, Peter Pan, and Disney's *Frozen* (among others), learning valuable lessons about heroism through these intertextual forays. Unlike Shelley's Creature, who is last seen moving across a frozen Arctic wasteland, presumably to his death, *Once Upon a Time*'s Evil Queen is given the opportunity to enact these lessons in her own quest for redemption.

In Goethe's *Sorrows of Werter* Shelley's Creature recognizes his own noble sentiments: '[t]he gentle and domestic manners it described, combined with lofty sentiments and feelings, which had for their object something out of self, accorded well with my experience among my protectors, and with the wants which were for ever alive in my own bosom.' Goethe's work also teaches him the lessons of 'despondency and gloom,' as he weeps for young Werter's 'extinction [. . .] without precisely understanding it.'[13] Regina learns similar lessons in her interactions with Robin Hood, who, after Daniel's death, is revealed to be her destined soul mate. Unfortunately for Regina, their future happiness is thwarted by the return of Robin's wife and mother of his child, Maid Marian. When Marian's life is threatened by a freezing spell, Regina sacrifices the possibility of a life with Robin by sending him and his family away from Storybrooke.[14] While Regina's selfless act causes her great sorrow, it also represents the kind of personal sacrifice for the greater good that defines true heroism.

From Plutarch's *Lives* the Creature learns 'high thoughts; he elevated me above the wretched sphere of my own reflections, to admire and love the heroes of past ages.' This admiration for heroism stirs the Creature's own best impulses: 'I felt the greatest ardour for virtue rise within me, and abhorrence for vice.'[15] Regina's better nature similarly rises to the surface several times in her battles with her sister Zelena, the Wicked Witch of the West. In another nod to Shelleyan monstrosity, Zelena was abandoned by her mother Cora at birth and has literally turned green with envy over her jealousy of her sister Regina's life. Although Zelena warns that 'wicked always wins,' Regina twice defeats her sister but spares her life both times.[16] The first time, Regina taunts her sister by quoting their mother's advice: 'Never bring your heart to a witch fight.'[17] Although Cora loved Rumplestiltskin, she removed her own heart and married a King instead, because she believes that 'love is weakness.'[18] Regina has borrowed from her mother's bag of tricks and secreted her own heart with her lover Robin Hood for safekeeping. But Regina has in a sense also brought her heart to the battle in that her compassion spares Zelena's life. The second time, Regina employs light magic to battle an astonished Zelena, who believes her sister to be 'as dark as they come.' Announcing that she is 'changing,' Regina declares that she makes her 'own destiny' and that 'heroes don't kill,' once again refusing to vanquish her sister completely.[19] Although this decision will come back to haunt her as Zelena continues to threaten her happiness, Regina's development of compassion is an important step in her journey toward overcoming her monstrous destiny.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* provides some of the richest parallels for the development of both the Creature and the Evil Queen. The Creature envies Milton's Adam, 'a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator' and feels an affinity with the outcast Satan, who, like him, is consumed with self-loathing.[20] The Evil Queen of the Snow White myth also has some Satanic associations, as she wields a poisoned apple as one of the chief emblems of her fatal powers. But Regina ultimately overcomes her self-loathing as she learns to embrace all the disparate parts of herself.

By the third season of *Once Upon a Time*, Regina has allied herself with several of the heroes, including Snow White (known as Mary Margaret in Storybrooke) and her daughter Emma Swan, the Savior who has broken Regina's Dark Curse. The three women are trapped in Neverland by a villainous Peter Pan who has kidnapped Henry, Emma's biological and Regina's adopted son. Pan has tied them to a tree that feeds upon their regrets, and Snow and Emma each struggle with their own maternal failings. Regina is the only one who is able to break free, overcoming her regrets about her past evil deeds because they 'got me my son,' as she tells an astounded Pan.[21] Regina's assertion that the end justifies the means, while perhaps morally questionable, helps her to accept her own dark past.

One of the storylines driving the fourth season of *Once Upon a Time* is Disney's *Frozen*, another intertextual link which provides insight for Regina's development. Regina has been helping her former nemesis Emma Swan to control and more effectively wield her light magical powers, just as Rumplestiltskin had formerly fostered Regina's dark ones. Emma's struggle to define herself as a powerful woman without being perceived, or perceiving herself, as monstrous parallels Elsa's struggle in the Disney film. Like Elsa's parents, Emma's parents, Snow and Charming, fear Emma's powers. It is Regina who ultimately convinces them that wielding magical power does not necessarily make a woman a monster, or a witch.[22] In helping them to come to terms with Emma's power, Regina comes to terms with her own.

In addition to identifying with Milton's Satan, both Shelley's Creature and Regina bear some affinities with another character from *Paradise Lost*: Eve. In an essay entitled 'Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve,' critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar suggest that both Victor and his Creature actually most closely resemble Milton's Eve. Arguing that *Paradise Lost* presents 'hellish femaleness as a grotesque parody of heavenly maleness,' Gilbert and Gubar view Victor's obsessive transgressing as analogous to Eve's dangerous curiosity. More significantly, the Creature, nameless, friendless, powerless, 'doomed and filthy,' parallels the fallen Eve in his sin and self-loathing.[23]

Although the Evil Queen is the one who wields the poisoned apple, she also resembles Eve, as many traditional literary depictions of witches do, in her subordination to a Satanic master. Whether the machinations of Rumplestiltskin in *Once Upon a Time* or the commanding voice of the Magic Mirror in the traditional Snow White myths, the power of the Evil Queen is compromised by patriarchal figures that turn strong, decisive women into monsters. Even more recent feminist criticism concedes this point. In a 2009 chapter titled, 'Wicked Women: The Menace Lurking Behind Female Independence,' critics Margarita Carretero González and María Elena Rodríguez-Martín examine traditional fairy tale figures and more recent film characterizations of monstrous, powerful women, from Snow White's Evil Queen to *Mean Girls*' Regina George. As they argue, 'witches, spinsters, rich widows who decide not to remarry or unloving stepmothers in control of the power left by an absent father, independent women have traditionally been portrayed as a menace for the order established by patriarchal society.'[24] Encouragingly from a feminist perspective, the depiction of the Evil Queen in *Once Upon a Time* overturns or at least complicates several of these patriarchal tropes.

Rumplestiltskin plays many intertextual roles in *Once Upon a Time*. In Storybrooke he is Mr. Gold, the town pawnbroker who ransoms people's hopes and dreams. In the fairy tale world, he is also the Beast beloved by Belle and the Crocodile that terrorizes Captain Hook. While all of these roles are somewhat Satanic, it is his identity as the Dark One, a supremely evil and powerful being, which provides the most clearly devilish associations. Regina is variously his pupil, his ally, and his enemy. Although she is corrupted by his instruction and manipulation, she also learns from, bargains with, counter-manipulates, and resists him, battling him as an equal with both magic and cunning.

Once Upon a Time also overturns the power dynamic between the Evil Queen and her Magic Mirror. In their analysis of Grimm's *Snow White*, Gilbert and Gubar interpret the mirror as representing the voice and gaze of the absent King: 'His, surely, is the voice of the looking glass, the patriarchal voice of judgment that rules the Queen's—and every woman's—self-evaluation.'[25] According to this argument, 'female bonding is extraordinarily difficult in patriarchy: women almost inevitably turn against women because the voice of the looking glass sets them against each other.' As in the Grimm and Disney myths, the Evil Queen's primary motivation is her vendetta against Snow White, but in *Once Upon a Time* the issue is not feminine rivalry but a perceived betrayal. Initially Snow adores Regina, who rescues her from a runaway horse and eventually confides her love for Daniel, not Snow's father, to whom she is betrothed. Believing in Cora's unselfish love for her daughter and with a childlike naiveté, Snow betrays Regina's secret to Cora, resulting in Daniel's death. Thus begins Regina's lifelong hatred of her stepdaughter. But as Regina discovers her own heroism, she increasingly becomes Snow White's ally. Furthermore, the traditional function of the mirror as the Queen's master is replaced in *Once Upon a Time* with that of the Queen's servant. The denizen of the Queen's mirror is a genie, a former lover whom Regina manipulated into killing her husband, betrayed into taking the fall for it, and punished by imprisoning him in her mirror.[26] In the real world of Storybrooke he is Stanley Glass, editor of the Daily Mirror newspaper and smitten minion and mouthpiece of Mayor Regina. In this world also he covers for Regina, confessing to crimes that she committed.[27]

Another patriarchal trope overturned by *Once Upon a Time* is the interpretation of 'true love's kiss' as exclusively heterosexual and romantic. To their credit, Disney has been hard at work of late in dismantling this trope, as the films *Frozen* and *Maleficent* both attest. In *Frozen* true love's kiss occurs between the sisters Anna and Elsa, and Maleficent's kiss restores the princess after the prince's kiss fails to do so. Similarly, in *Once Upon a Time*, the first curse is broken by a kiss between Emma and her son Henry,[28] an innovation that is echoed and reinforced when a kiss between Regina and Henry breaks a subsequent curse.[29]

Whether struck by lightning and thrown off a precipice, as in the Disney film, or 'dancing herself to death in red-hot iron shoes'[30] as in Grimm, the Evil Queen traditionally meets a violent end, but Regina is determined to change that fate. In a metatextual innovation, Regina resolves to find the author of Henry's book of fairy tales, the supreme authority who seems to be controlling all of their fates, in order to finally achieve her happy ending. In her desire to rewrite her own ending, albeit through a ghost writer, Regina reveals her own artistic, creative desires. In their analysis of *Frankenstein*, Gilbert and Gubar suggest that the monstrous female Eve is an emblem not only for Victor and for his Creature but also for Mary Shelley herself, as a female author who questioned her own legitimacy and authority in a patriarchal world.[31] In their analysis of 'Snow White,' Gilbert and Gubar also interpret the Evil Queen as an emblem of the woman writer: 'For the Queen, as we come to see more clearly in the course of the story, is a plotter, a plot-maker, a schemer, a witch, an artist, an impersonator, a woman of almost infinite creative energy, witty, wily, and self-absorbed as all artists traditionally are.'[32]

When the author Isaac is discovered, he is suggested to be one of several authors, empowered temporarily by a magical quill. In fact, in a throwaway homage to Disney himself, August W. Booth (AKA Pinocchio) remarks that one of the authors was named Walt.[33] Isaac acknowledges that the odds have been stacked against Regina when he tells her, 'Of all the characters I've written for, you really do get screwed over the most.'[34] He agrees to write her a happy ending with Robin Hood. Regina also breaks the Satanic hold of Rumplestiltskin in this episode, refusing to team up with him, determined to find her happy ending on her own. She takes Isaac to Zelena, who is pregnant with Robin Hood's child, and threatens to have him write

her and her unborn baby out of existence, but relents when she realizes that her own happiness is not mutually exclusive of anyone else's: not Zelena's, not Emma's, not even Snow's.

Isaac ultimately escapes from Regina and reunites with Rumple/Gold, who instructs him to begin writing an alternate reality, one that exchanges villains with heroes and vice versa. In another metatextual moment, Isaac signs his bestselling sequel to *Once Upon a Time, Heroes and Villains*, for scores of devoted fans. One of them even displays a 'Long Live Regina' button, attesting to the character's popularity in the real—that is, extra-textual—world. In the textual world of *Heroes and Villains*, Regina is an outlaw hero who seems to be once again doomed. She has exchanged roles with Snow White, who is hunting her down as the Evil Queen. In a crucial decision-making moment, Regina opts to save Henry over stopping Robin Hood's wedding, once again sacrificing her own happy ending for someone else's safety. Henry then succeeds in wresting the quill from Isaac, enabling him to write Regina an alternative ending at the last possible second: 'Thanks to the hero Regina's sacrifice, Isaac's villainous work was undone.'[35] This final sentence neatly unwrites Isaac's entire book, breaking the spell and returning all of the characters to their lives in Storybrooke.

As a mash-up of fairy tale, fable, and myth, *Once Upon a Time* is itself a monstrous creation, one that cobbles together the disparate parts of dead storytelling tropes, reanimates them, and gives them new life. Defying traditional generic and textual classification, the postmodern mash-up reenlivens defunct stereotypes and lets them loose beyond the pages of a storybook, into the real world, forcing us to confront and do battle with our own ingrained ideologies. Although the series has not concluded, at this moment Regina appears to have achieved her happy ending, although it turns out to be different from what she had anticipated. Rather than the hackneyed Disney trope of 'true'—that is, romantic, heterosexual—'love' with Robin Hood, the Evil Queen's happy ending presents her as a hero, one who saves the day through bravery and sacrifice (although she appears to have Robin, too, even if her wicked sister is carrying his child). While it remains to be seen what Kitsis and Horowitz have in store for Regina, one thing is certain: she will contine to defy traditional storytelling tropes that define powerful women as monstrosities.

Notes

[1] See Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1976), and Sheldon Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die: The Hidden Meaning of Fairy Tales* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).
[2] 'Pilot,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 23 Oct. 2011.
[3] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
[4] 'The Doctor,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 28 Oct 2012.
[5] 'In the Name of the Brother,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 20 Jan 2013.
[6] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein,* ed. J. Paul Hunter (New York: Norton, 1996), 32.
[7] 'The Doctor,' *Once Upon a Time*.
[8] 'In the Name of the Brother,' *Once Upon a Time*.
[9] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 22.
[10] George Levine, '*Frankenstein* and the Tradition of Realism,' *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, ed. J. Paul Hunter (New York: Norton, 1996), 209.
[11] 'In the Name of the Brother,' *Once Upon a Time*.
[12] 'The Doctor,' *Once Upon a Time*.
[13] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 86.
[14] 'Heroes and Villains,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC. 14 Dec 2014.

[15] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 87.
[16] 'New York City Serenade,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 9 Mar 2014.
[17] 'It's Not Easy Being Green,' *Once Upon a Time.* ABC, 6 Apr 2013.
[18] 'The Miller's Daughter,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 10 Mar 2013.
[19] 'Kansas,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 4 May 2014.
[20] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 87.
[21] 'Save Henry,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 1 Dec. 2013.
[22] 'Smash the Mirror,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC. 16 Nov 2014.
[23] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 'Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve,' *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, ed. J. Paul Hunter (New York: Norton, 1996), 225-240.
[24] Margarita Carrertero González and María Elena Rodríguez-Martín, 'Wicked Women: The Menace Lurking Behind Female Independence,' *The Wicked Heart: Studies in the Phenomena of Evil*, eds. Sorcha Ni Flainn and William Andrew Myers (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2009), 199-209.
[25] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 'Snow White and the Wicked Stepmother,' *The Classic Fairy Tales*, ed. Maria Tatar (New York: Norton, 1999), 291-97.
[26] 'Fruit of the Poisonous Tree,' *Once Upon a Time.* ABC. 29 Jan 2012.
[27] 'The Return,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 22 Apr 2012.
[28] 'A Land without Magic,' *Once Upon a Time.* ABC, 13 May 2012.
[29] 'A Curious Thing,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 27 Apr 2014.
[30] Gilbert and Gubar, 'Snow White and the Wicked Stepmother', 296.
[31] Gilbert and Gubar, 'Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve', 240.
[32] Gilbert and Gubar, 'Snow White and the Wicked Stepmother', 293.
[33] 'Best Laid Plans,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 29 Mar 2015.
[34] 'Mother,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 3 May 2015.
[35] 'Operation Mongoose,' *Once Upon a Time*. ABC, 10 May 2015.

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Image 1: *Red*. Film still. Dir. Kevin McGuiness. © 2010. Courtesy of Kevin McGuiness

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Covering Up: Red Riding Hood, Cannibalism, Sex and the Wolf

Adriana Spahr and Cristina Santos

Abstract

The Argentinean writer Luisa Valenzuela in her section on 'The Tales of Hades' (*Symmetries* 1993) revised six classical fairy tales by giving them an unquestionable feminist approach, amongst which was Little Red Riding Hood. Specifically, in the short story 'If this is Life, I'm Little Red Riding Hood', Valenzuela rewrites Little Red Riding Hood's symbolic journey through the forest to her grandmother's house as representative of her journey from childhood to adolescence and a maturity characterized by her embracing her own desires as embodied in her metamorphosis into the wolf. Eighteen years later, in 2011, *Once Upon a Time* an American fantasy-drama television series created by Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz , also revises classical fairy tales by not only emphasizing the role of women, but, most importantly, expanding on their interpretation. Surprisingly, the character Little Red Riding Hood accepts her wolf part in order to be independent and liberated from the patriarchal socio-cultural preconceptions of her environment. This article seeks to explore the role of Little Red Riding Hood in becoming a complete human being when the wolf part of her is accepted as an integral part of her personality—that is, to be fully human she must also accept the 'monster' within her.

Key Words:

Red Riding Hood, fairy tale rewritings, Luisa Valenzuela, 'If this is Life, I'm Red Riding Hood', *Once Upon a Time*, fairy tales, literature, television series.

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Many of the fairy tales we know today have a long history in oral traditions. Born of folklore, these tales' characteristics were gradually modified. *Red Riding Hood*, among others, lost its earthly humour and sexual intrigues, adapting to the requirements of society, or the social group that disseminated it.[1] In this sense, all the fairy tales and *Little Red Riding Hood* among them were rewritten over the centuries to satisfy social needs.[2] This rewriting continues up to the present and are both trans-culturally and interdisciplinarily represented. This article will be specifically focussed on the re-writings of *Little Red Riding Hood* at the end of the last century, through the Argentinian version of the story 'If this is Life, I'm Red Riding Hood' (1998) by Luisa Valenzuela (1938-) and the American television series *Once Upon a Time* (2011-). Points to be discussed will center around the feminist movements and the political need to defy the patriarchal structures imposed on women, especially in the scope of sexual politics arena. Yet, recent examples from popular culture seem to use the rewriting to construct a place of refuge from the uncertainty[3] produced by a globalizing world where the socio-economic and cultural barriers seem to dissipate, thereby making the previously-identifiable 'other' harder to define. In some cases, human nature chooses to take refuge in the known, the learned, the prefigured, configuring it to adjust to our needs to allow us to cope with our ever changing reality.

To being, one should note that there have many modifications of our tale that scholars agree in qualifying it, along with other fairy tales, as a hybrid genre since the first, or hyper-text, cannot be found. One of the oldest versions brings one to the medieval grotesque tradition

in which the scatological and cannibalism are present--Little Red Riding Hood eats excrement, eats her mother's head and drinks her blood. In another version the wolf dressed as the grandmother offers the girl the body and blood of her grandmother, she escapes by claiming she has to empty her stomach.[4] It seems that critics agree that the principle nexus of the story is found in the dangers a young girl must confront when crossing a bordering forest and seeing a wolf (be it two or four-legged). In this case, the girl was presented as smart, assertive and able to escape the wolf and even seduces the 'wolf.' In one version with the latter element, the heroine understands that her grandmother could not possibly have fur on her chest and hands, but decides to 'take care of a little business' before going to sleep.[5] In other versions, a boy vanquishes the wolf.

In the seventeenth century, Charles Perrault (1697), hearing the story from his child's nanny, adapts it to be read in front of the fire in middle-class French homes. The adaptation served to frighten, indoctrinate and mold girls. The story is simplified, the red hood is introduced, which in reality was the hat in vogue at the time.[6] Little Red Riding Hood is made beautiful to show the hazards of beauty and cannibalism is removed, as are the scatological elements and the detailed 'striptease' the girl performs in earlier versions. The subtle invitation to the girl is maintained, as well as the girl's disrobing before coming into bed. The hunter appears in the English version by Robert Samber (1729), though he does not save Biddy, the girl. Nevertheless, Samber dresses the wolf in a nightgown and gets rid of Perrault's moral. The Brothers Grimm (1812) continue with the moral of the tale, emphasizing the women's consequences of defying the mother's (and society's) orders role.[7] The girl remains beautiful but is educated as well, the grandmother is handy, crafting the red cape; the curative wine is replaced by cake in Little Red Riding Hood's basket. Finally, the acceptance of sexual pleasure in the act of getting undressed is eliminated as well and the transformation is complete: the girl becomes the object of masculine pleasure. The 'wolf' jumps from the bed dressed to eat her, the hunter saves her—and the tale enters the manuals of proper girlish behaviour: accept authority and renounce personal pleasure. Nevertheless, in the twentieth century, Little Red Riding Hood is gradually liberated: by the end of that century, Little Red Riding Hood, under the spell of consumerism, kills the wolf to sell his fur.[8]

The work of Luisa Valenzuela is associated with the search for female identity within a political context.[9] In this framework, we could say that 'If this is Life, I'm Red Riding Hood' appears at a time when the female voice has a greater space in which to express itself and where some women (not all, but those who have access to culture) can claim their sexuality not as a sin, but as an integral part of themselves. Through the twentieth century, and definitively in the 1980s, women writers[10] embark on the task of re-writing and reinterpreting myths, legends and fairy tales as an 'act of survival' understood as the need to modify all cultural material that projected an image of women as the passive beings dictated by phallocentrism. [11]

As Valenzuela does not reject children's stories, she does not alter the well-known story of Little Red Riding Hood, in which the girl is sent to her grandmother's house by her mother. Nevertheless, as the narrator of Emma Zunz by Jorge Luis Borges might say 'the circumstances' of the story are false.[12] In Valenzuela, the path represents the recognition of female sexuality that begins in the adolescence of 'la nena' (child) and ends with the acceptance of that sexuality (arrival at the grandmother's house):

> My mother told me to watch out for the wolf, and then she sent me into the wood [...] I take extra care because I'm approaching a part of the wood full of very tall, very erect trees. [...] In the distance, the wolf peers out from between the trees, and makes obscene gestures at me. At first, I don't quite understand and I wave to him. Yet I'm frightened, yet I keep walking [...] The

> wood, so rich in possibilities, seems inoffensive. It's a question of tasting them one by one.[13]

The woods is a Foucaldian 'counter-space',[14] away from the rules of patriarchal society, representing natural life, and thereby the uncontrollable, the mysterious, as is the discovery of one's sexuality. Little Red Riding Hood, as in the old folktale versions, is not afraid to confront life and in this case, to experience her sexual desire, generated and configured through her 'praxis.'[15] The erotic woods becomes a path of exploration and recognition of female sexuality, of sexual desire and pleasure, where the woman regains sovereignty over body. It is a journey to achieve a plenitude of the female erotic as defined by Audre Lorde as 'the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. … [Where] the erotic is the nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest knowledge'.[16] Opposite to Bella's experience in Stephenie Meyer's *New Moon* of the *Twilight* saga Valenzuela's Red Riding Hood does not require the participation of the male for the female protagonist to realize an understanding of her full and authentic sexual potential. Whereas Bella first 'discovers' the field with Edward in the first book of the saga, abandoned by Edward in the second book, she finds herself 'lost' in the forest and 'needs' Jacob's help to find the 'field' she first visited with Edward. . The forest is replaced by the field in Meyer's version yet represents the same 'counter-space' of the forest in traditional versions—it is a space constructed by and accessible with the assistance of the male gaze—either with physical presence and involvement of a male 'hero' (e.g. the hunt man, Jacob) or via androcentric codes of female behaviour indicated in the mother's instructions before the journey is undertaken. Valenzuela's Red Riding Hood avoids these externally imposed distortions of female sexuality by placing the epistemological construct of self back onto the protagonist. This same concept of a young woman's journey to sexual self-empowerment is also subject of Angela Carter's seminal short story 'Company of Wolves'[17] (1979) in which her version of Red Riding Hood also ventures into her sexual self-discovery without the need of a man to guide her.

On the other hand, the story made canonical by Perrault and Grimm —following the predicates of patriarchal society—restricts this female sexual development, making the young virginal woman the object of male sexual desire and the older sexually experienced woman as deviant and, in some cases, even monstrous. Within this framework, young female virginity acquires a doubly commodified value in the arena of sexual politics. According to Ferguson, 'virginity is a paradoxical condition, both perfect and monstrous, defined by both absence and presence.'[18] If critics attribute this characterization to studies of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, it remains a reality in various cultures, fashions and the new phenomenon of the 'virginity auction.' Though women here 'freely decide' to offer their virginity to their husband or the highest bidder, this 'choice' does not change the continuing valuation of virginity, be it social, economic or both, in the modern and globalized phallocentric market. In the latter part of the twentieth century, feminists considered this valuation of the body to be a detriment to the freedom of women. In this sense, there needed to be a recovery of power for themselves, the only way to de-mythify the monster, the prohibited desire symbolized by the wolf. Thus, the wolf in Valenzuela's story is not external to her self, but is her self: 'There's only one wolf. The other wolves we meet are merely its shadow'.[19]

Readers are able to observe this power shift within the story. At first the character, holding onto society's rules, takes her first steps into the woods, she defines the wolf as 'out there somewhere'.[20] Little by little however, she grows reconciled with the 'wolf within' who in typical Lacanian fashion,[21] she names 'Pirincho' in order to take control of him.[22] Accepting her total sexual experience, which naturally is not entirely positive, she recovers her name Little Red Riding Hood: 'Red Riding Hood, as we will call her from now on, has little chance of

growing bored and plenty of opportunity for growing disenchanted'.[23] And in this way, with full control of her body, she arrives at her grandmother's house transformed into a wolf: 'At my grandmother's door, I lick my wounds, I howl quietly, I compose and recompose myself.'[24] It becomes clear to the reader that Red Riding Hood has undertaken not only the physical journey through the liminal space of the woods but also embarked on a psycho-social transformation that mimics the passage of girlhood to womanhood. It is a process of maturation embodied in the young girl leaving her mother's house through the tangled and dangerous 'woods' towards her grandmother's house—an excursion to be read as Red Riding Hood's developing of gender and sexual identity bookmarked by her mother on one side of the 'woods' and her grandmother on the other side—where the wolf can also represent the battle between society and biology.[25]

Valenzuela does not stop there; her re-write makes it clear that the struggle for female emancipation is not individual. On the contrary, it is collective and must include all women. The story is thus completed by including the female voice on the one hand, and amalgamating them on the other.[26] The voice of the mother and child are emphasized, superimposed on one another, and cancelled, becoming one, joined in the same sexual experience:

> I might—I'm afraid—rather like the abysses. I do like them.
> No, dear.
> But you like them too, mama.
> Well, I both like them and fear them.[27]

In this way, it spans all women and all generations and converging in the person of the grandmother in the present:

> The grandmother is also going to be daring, the grandmother is alsoopening the door to the wolf at this very moment [...] Perhaps the grandmother likes him or has taken a shine to him already [...] I smooth my fur [...] She invites me to get into bed beside her [...] I notice that she is different but strangely familiar [...] And as I open my mouth to mention her mouth which is, in turn, opening, I finally recognise her.
> I recognise her, I recognise him, I recognise me.
> And the mouth swallows and at last we are one.
> All nice and warm.[28]

In this way, and not without irony, the Argentine writer is engaged with the social and political moment[29] in her re-writing of Little Red Riding Hood. By amalgamating Little Red Riding Hood-wolf-mother-grandmother she tries to return all women to their sexual power, considered 'monstrous' by society, and any woman who expressed or celebrated her sexuality to be monstrous.[30] For Valenzuela, sexual equality can only occur when women are allowed to enjoy and control their own bodies, and therefore their sexuality. Yet, it is a process of female sexual conscientization that recognizes the political and socio-cultural indoctrinations of female sexuality inherited from the mother (at the beginning of the journey) and the grandmother (at the end of her walk through the woods). It also incorporates the daughter's recognition that in order to practice her sexuality she must separate from her mother—but what does the passage to her grandmother's house imply? In Valenzuela's version, it implies that sexual desire in women is an integral part of her being and it does not disappear with the biological function of motherhood. However, if one were to consider the many modifications to this specific fairy tale in order to adapt to fixed androcentric social rules one can argue that Valenzuela empowers the female protagonists within a more egalitarian society: a matriarchal one. If one were to consider

that in the traditional fairy tale the grandmother was eaten by the wolf—this in turn symbolizes that the grandmother was no longer a sexual/ized being since she is consumed by the wolf and not the other way around. That is to say, unlike Red Riding Hood who cannibalizes the wolf and takes control of her sexuality, the mother who sends her off is symbolically saying goodbye to her sexual prime and the grandmother, at the end of the woods, already finds herself at the expiration of her sexual prime.

The fact that the wolf and Little Red Riding Hood are the same person and that she is no longer a little girl unites this short story and the television series *Once Upon a Time*, not to mention the film *Red Riding Hood* (2011) directed by Catharine Hartwicke. Nevertheless, the television series and Valenzuela's short story render different messages as the social and cultural circumstances are different. 'If this is Life' corresponds to a period of political optimism and of the hegemony of media in the so-called western world, which preached that with the disappearance of the soviet bloc one could expect the end of international conflict and as a result, greater well-being.[31] In 2001, however, the 'monster' returns and takes its place among us,[32] as the economic situation begins to deteriorate and social differences are acerbated. Uncertainty takes hold and inevitably in this situation, we seek refuge in known places, where we can magically calm our anxieties.[33] As with children, we return to a known zone that gives the 'security that we can keep going.'[34] Happily we find that our old reading companions are still rooted in our culture[35] in television programs such as *Once Upon a Time*,[36] where all the old fairy tales characters are found all grown up,[37] Little Red Riding Hood among them.

Once Upon A Time consists of two 'realities': the Enchanted Forest which is the magical intemporal world of fairy tales and the 'modern day' fictional town of Storybrooke in Maine, US to which the fairy tale characters have been transposed by the Evil Queen Regina and suffer from amnesia from her magical spell. Red Riding Hood from the Enchanted Forest is the known as the beautiful young and vivacious Ruby/Red with lips to match. Ruby works as a server in Granny's restaurant, dresses provocatively, at one point much like Valenzuela's Little Red Riding Hood. Her rebellion, however, is limited to a fondness for partying, and raising her Granny's ire when she is late for work.[38]

But Red's story is rather complex, in her past life in the Enchanted Forest Red lived in a town terrorized by a ferocious wolf that appeared on nights when the moon was full. The grandmother, cherished by the townspeople as the knowledgeable of the town on such matters—of savage animals—convinces the town that the best defense from the deadly beast is to hide locked up in one's homes during those full moon nights. In this version, Snow White and Red Riding Hood are friends and co-exist in each other's stories not just in Storybrooke but also their fairy tale lives in the Enchanted Forest. During one of the full moon nights Red runs away, without her red hood her grandmother was adamant she wear especially on these nights, to meet up with her lover who had been tied to a tree since he was the suspected wolf. Once Grannie discovers the missing Red, without her cape, she and Snow White track her down in the woods, transformed now as the wolf and attacking her lover. Ironically, the red cape in *Once Upon a Time* is used not just as an emblem of the young girl's sexuality but, in this case, it is the protective cover (for the Red and others) of her unleashed, uncontrolled and animalistic female sexuality that, unbeknownst to Red, resides in the wolf that sleeps within her and that the town's people so fear.

If one is to continue to consider the wolf as the sexual/unruly part of the human being that adults try to mold and shape to adjust to fit proscribed social norms,[39] the Grannie, in accordance with the traditional role of the grandmother in the original *Red Riding Hood,* is the voice of patriarchy, responsible for repressing the undesirable part of Little Red Riding Hood, that which, in the world of fairy tales, impedes the prototypical happy end for the modern and traditional Red Riding Hood. Red's metamorphosis, thereby, enforces the idea that deviation

from the accepted social norms is seen as threat, not only to the self but to the collective. Indeed, it places the sexually aggressive and empowered woman as 'deviant' and ultimately dangerous to the status quo.

The grandmother, unlike in the traditional tale and Valenzuela's, is the one who takes all the precautions to not only save but to control Red. She is literally the hunter -the traditional symbol of 'protection' and 'salvation'[40] of the social norms she is the only one who knows how to dominate the wolf—because she has been through it before and knows how to manage what Red is going through. On the one hand, she forces Red to wear her 'magic'[41] red cape that keeps Red's wolf side from surfacing. On the other hand, she uses a gun with silver bullets to make Red's human side re-emerge—returning her to her humanity, her controlled sexuality. At one point in the television series Red discovers that her mother is also a wolf and actually lives as the leader of her pack. Both Red and Snow White visit her cave and although the freedom of the 'wolf side' seems to be a dream come true it quickly transforms into a negative experience—an experience that leads Red to believe that an entirely uninhibited sexuality is innately dangerous. Ultimately, Grannie succeeds in separating Red from her mother so that the wolf 'life' does not overtake Red's life as it has for her Red's mother and so that Red may continue living as part of the community and not exiled to a cave existence.

In this sense, Red's life presents a clear dichotomy of a world where the other is situated externally in the binaries: 'good/bad' / 'monstrous/regulated.' Red spends her life ignorant that she is the wolf, *going* so far as to believe it is her boyfriend Peter, whom she ends up killing, as previously mentioned. To summarize:Snow White and Red discover one night that the prints of the wolf become human footsteps outside Red's bedroom window. They conclude that Peter, Red's boyfriend, must be the wolf. Red tells her boyfriend of her suspicions and he asks her to tie him to a tree to prevent him from killing any more peasants. Meanwhile Snow White puts on Red's cape to fool the grandmother while Red goes out that moonlit night. When Red's grandmother discovers the trick, she takes a gun and goes to search for Peter and Red only to find pieces of Peter and a wolf at his side. The grandmother pulls the trigger against the wolf and immediately after covers the wolf with the red cape and Red recovers her human form.

Such is the repression of this other side in Red that she has no memories of her 'monstrous' side nor of her actions while in wolf form. In the globalized world in which we live, as mentioned previously, the monster is not an external element but it is a thing that must be known from within that is many times denied. It is therefore imperative to integrate it in order to be truly a whole self:

> [Your grandmother] didn't want you to find out who you really are. She thinks that to be a wolf is something to be ashamed of. […] Humans want us to believe that we are monsters. The moment that you believe that you become one of them […] The only way that you ever control the wolf is by accepting it is part of you.[42]

With the help of her mother and her new 'pack,' Red learns to recognized the part of herself that she has thus far denied. She begins to enjoy the freedom of being a wolf, running without limits or impediments in the woods. While in direct contact with nature, she is free from social rules imposed by society's phallocentrism and prevailing misogynist ideologies concerning female sexuality. Nevertheless, the situation remains incomplete, as lacking as life with her grandmother. Valenzuela's version is also incomplete, since sexuality only represents a part of the self, it is not its totality. At this point, the acceptance of Red to one of the groups means converting the other into an enemy—she cannot have both her mother's and grandmother's approval nor can she be truly sexually liberated and part of her androcentric community.

When Snow White arrives at the cave, searching for Red, she is secretly followed by the king's guards who kill one of the wolves: the very wolf that had found Red and brought her to her mother. Red's mother blames Snow White for the death and orders her daughter to kill Snow. When Red refuses to do so, her mother exclaims:

> Where human goes death follows. The only way to stop them is killing them first […] When the moon rises we feast on the prisoner. [Snow White] will pay for our loss. […] Make your choice Red. You are one of us. Act like it. […] I am sorry my daughter, but that is what is means to be a wolf.[43]

Friendship prevails and Red, trying to defend Snow, kills her own mother. The romantic figure of the wolf disappears before the spectator. The disruptive instinct is clouded with the appearance of a murderous 'other' who cannot distinguish between someone who wants to hurt the group and Snow White who is only searching for her friend. One can conclude that it is not enough to control our internal monsters, it is also important to be alert to when they come out, they are not eruptions of the irrational. Thus a code of conduct is established which goes beyond the binary and closed mindedness of the group but rather invites a meditation of atrocities that, in a broader scope, groups and political leaders bring forward and individuals accept mindlessly after being bombarded by a hegemonic media.

Within the narrative, this is resolved when Red maintains that she will not relegate either of her sides, neither wolf nor human, since both are intrinsically part of her. She makes a purely moral and conscious choice, not for her mother or Snow, but for herself, to not be a killer,[44] thereby establishing a new relationship with her surroundings by choosing a moral good. The relationship between mother daughter bring out Red's feelings of maternal abandonment and shame of her wolf self that need to be dealt with so that she may truly belong to her 'civilized' community. The mother represents a demonized female sexuality that the grandmother seeks to prevent Red from acquiring in her relationship with her mother and her own innate 'wolf'. In the end, mother blame replaces Red's 'mother adoration' when she sees the extent of her mother's 'uncontrolled' freedom and the dangers of the monstrous woman and the need to tame her in order to 'protect' the collective—since there can be a fear of the collective being punished by one individual's infraction.[45] But, keeping true to the fairy tale genre, Red is no longer divided by appearances, but by goodness, thus guaranteeing the premises of the genre, where good always conquers evil.[46] To make this message possible and acceptable in our modern and globalizing world, society must be open to new changes and accept the differences that exist among us.

As a representation of modernity, Storybrooke recovers the memory of its past, and so does Ruby. When there is a death in town Ruby is unjustly accused of murder. Though she does not remember killing anyone, she loses confidence in herself and her ability to control her wolf side. In this case it is the ultimate representation of masculinity from both worlds--Prince Charming in one, sheriff from the other--who convince her of her good side: 'I know you, I know your real you, I know that you can control the wolf.'[47] As with the hunter in the traditional tale, the wolf disappears when Ruby/Red is physically covered with her magic red cape and symbolically with the patriarchal word, the calm returns to the town. Ruby/Red is accepted by the community and order and happiness is restored. In conclusion, 'If this is Life, I'm Red Riding Hood' and *Once Upon a Time* offer two re-writings of Little Red Riding Hood. Each represents two different moments in the struggle for equality and well-being. Valenzuela's work fits within the feminist writing that claims a space for women's equality. She uses the monstrous side erased from the story of Little Red Riding Hood, her sexuality, to normalize it, proposing that equality between the sexes is centered on the need for women to recover full

control of their own bodies. In contrast, in *Once Upon a Time*, we have an almost non-sexualized Red Riding Hood, concealing a monstrous part that she needs to manage and to control. The message is still encouraging from a feminist perspective since she represents the human duality where good and evil meet in the same body (both physical and social) and it is up to the individual to control it. Both re-writings are illuminating and continue to highlight the feminist considerations of the problematics of the objectification of the female body propagated by androcentric ideologies. The message of *Once Upon a Time*, of recognition and acceptance of difference seems revolutionary—we will see how things progress as the series is still ongoing, notwithstanding, the complexity of the female characters is praiseworthy. But patriarchal values are still present, as we observe in the character of Prince Charming/sheriff, or under the guise of female characters, as in the case of the grandmother. It is clear that there is still much to change in society, all the more in insecure and anxious times created by wars, unemployment and social inequality which we once thought about to be eliminated, as is palpable. It becomes obvious, even with the retellings discussed here, humanity continues to take refuge in the primitive world of fairies and myths[48] while searching and/or waiting for solutions to present social/ individual problems.

Notes

[1] Maria Tatar, *Off with Their Heads!* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 4. In this same tradition it is not surprising to find the nose and mouth emphasized in the tale in question.
[2] Jack Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (South Hadley, Mass: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1983), 16.
[3] Hubert J. Hermans, 'Self, Identity, and Globalization in Times of Uncertainty: A Dialogical Analysis', in *Review of General Psychological Association* 11.1 (Mar 2007): 31-61.
[4] Valentina Pisanty, *Como se lee un cuento popular* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1995), 119.
[5] Tatar, *Off with their Heads!*, 209-10.
[6] Pisanty, *Como se lee un cuento popular*, 156-72.
[7] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Act of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 9.
[8] This version appears in Roald Dahl, *Revolting Rhymes* (London: Random House, 1982), 47-53 a well-known parody in verse. For more modern adaptation of the Red Riding Hood see Sandra L. Beckett, *Red Riding Hood for all Ages* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2008).
[9] This prolific writer has incurred into many genres: short stories (1967-2008), novels (1966-2002) and essays (2001-2002). The search for feminine identity within a political and social context is found in *Symmetries*. 'Tales of Hades,' within the book, is a compendium of six tales, where we find our heroine along with Snow White, Blue Beard, Sleeping Beauty and the indispendable princes. José María Areta offers a political analysis of the stories in *La máscara del lenguaje en Cuentos de Hades de Luisa Valenzuela.* Viewed 23 May 2015, https://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero36/mascara.html.
[10] Another writer who rewrote fairy tales is Carmen Martin Gaite (1925-2000) *Little Red Riding Hood in Manhattan* (nc: np, 1990).
[11]Adrienne Rich, *Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), 35.
[12] Jorge Luis Borges story describes how Emma Zunz plans the murder of her father's business partner whom she considers responsible for her father's suicide. She elaborates a series of circumstances that justify his murder. The story ends: Actually, the story was incredible […] substantially was true. True was Emma Zunz' tone, true was her shame, true was her hate. True

also was the outrage she had suffered: only the circumstances were false, the time, and one or two proper names (Translation from Spanish to English was done by the authors).
[13] Luisa Valenzuela, 'If this is Life, I'm Red Riding Hood', *Symmetries* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1998), 104 and 108.
[14] Michel Foucault, 'Text/Context. Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics* 16:1 (1986): 22-27.
[15] Audre Lorde, 'Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as a Power', in *Take Back the Knight*, ed. Laura Lederer (New York: William Marrow, 1980), 295-300.
[16] Lorde, 'Uses of the Erotic', 278, 280.
[17] Adapted into film by acclaimed director Neil Jordan in 1984 *The Company of Wolves* starring Angela Lansbury.
[18] M. W. Ferguson, Foreword to *Menacing Virgins: Representing Virginity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, eds. Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Marina Leslie (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 7.
[19] Valenzuela, 'If this is Life, I'm Red Riding Hood', 108.
[20] Ibid., 109.
[21] Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink and Maire Jaanus, eds, *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (New York: State University of New York, 1995).
[22] Valenzuela, 'If this is Life, I'm Red Riding Hood', 111.
[23] Ibid., 106.
[24] José María Areta, *Especulo* 36 (2007): 3. Viewed 23 May 2015, https://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero36/mascara.html.
[25] See Nancy Friday, *My Mother/My Self: The Daughter's Search for Identity* (London: HarperCollins, 1994) for a discussion of mother/daughter relationships.
[26] Valenzuela claims that fairy tales are incomplete as they lack the female perspective. See Luisa Valenzuela, *La palabra en vilo: Narrativa de Luisa Valenzuela*, eds. Gwendolyn Díaz and María Inés Lagos (Santiago, Chile: Cuarto Propio, 1996), 11.
[27] Valenzuela, 'If this is Life, I'm Red Riding Hood', 105.
[28] Ibid., 106, 107, 115.
[29] Gwendolyn Díaz, 'Luisa Valenzuela on Writing, Power and Gender', *Golden Handcuff Review* 1.11 (2009): 7, Viewed on 17 May 2013, http://www.goldenhandcuffsreview.com/gh11content/12.
[30] Ibid., 5, 7.
[31] The communist 'monster' had fallen and the globalizing world would bring freedom, national barriers would disappear, Europe would consolidate in one big market in which its inhabitants would move freely looking for work.
[32] With 9/11 another type of monster is incorporated, one found among us, for which we need to be prepared. This has meant the investment of billions of dollars into a security devises that invades airports, as well as other places in North America and throughout the world.
[33] The story is therapeutic as it alludes to internal conflict that seems irresolvable. Bruno Bettelheim, *Psicoanálisis de los cuentos de hadas* (Barcelona: Biblioteca de bolsillo, 2011), 31.
[34] We are applying a concept of children to adults; however, adults tend to revert in moments of anxiety. Ibid., 16.
[35] Zipes demonstrates the perpetuation of fairy tales that is still prevalent in today's culture; he also points out that fairy tales are not universal but rather represent a historical moment. Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Act of Subversion*, 13.
[36] The Queen of the fairy tale is the evil stepmother of Snow White. But she was not always thus. When she first meets young Snow White she was a happy young woman, in love with a peasant whom she hoped to elope with. Snow White discovers the romance. Her future

stepmother asks her not to tell her mother and Snow White agrees. However in her need to help her future mother, she asks her mother that she let her daughter be happy. The powerful witch kills her daughter's lover. The pain of the loss makes her evil, in pursuit of the goal of gaining if not Snow White's death than her utter unhappiness and of the whole kingdom. For this purpose through a spell she sends all the characters to Storybrooke. In this contemporary world, Snow White is a teacher, Jiminy Cricket a psychologist, the hunter in Snow White the town's sheriff and the evil queen is the mayor. She is one of a few characters who retains a memory of her old identity and enjoys the unhappiness of the rest of the town. The series was created by Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz in 2011.

[37] One of the successes of this series is to incorporate viewers between the ages of 18 and 49. It adds to the interest of the series and of viewers. [Amanda Kondolojy, 'Sunday Final Rating "Survivor" "Once Upon a Time" "The Simpson" "Revenge" Adjusted-up', *Zap2it*, May 14, 2013, Viewed July 10, 2015.
http://tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/2013/05/14/sunday-final-rating-survivor-upon-a-time-the-simpson-revenge-adjusted-up/182603/.

[38] 'Welcome to Storybrooke', *Once Upon a Time*, March 2012, season 2, episode 17 of, Dir. David Barrett (American Broadcasting Companies, Television series, 2011-).

[39] Tatar, *Off with Their Heads!*, 38.

[40] The hunter is a strong and responsible person, symbolizing protection and salvation. Bruno Bettelheim, *Psicoanálisis de los cuentos de hadas* (Barcelona: Biblioteca de Bolsillo, 2011), 109.

[41] In this re-writing, Andrew Lang (1890*) Little Red Riding Hood (Blanchette)* manages to defeat the wolf thanks to the magical powers of the cape given to her by her grandmother. Blanchette's story doesn't differ from Little Red Riding Hood, except for the ending. Little Red Riding Hood undresses and sleeps with the wolf when she realizes it's not her grandmother in bed beside her, hiding her face in her hood. The wolf swallows part of her and burns himself. In the end, as in the traditional tales, Blanchette promises not to disobey her mother.

[42] 'Child of the moon', *Once Upon a Time*, Nov. 2012, season 2, episode 7, Dir. David Barrett (American Broadcasting Companies, Television series, 2011-).

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] See Phyllis Chessler's *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2009), for further discussion of the mother/daughter dynamic.

[46] 'Good defeats evil' is a phrase that Henry, grandson of Snow white and Prince Charming, keeps repeating.

[47] 'Child of the Moon', *Once Upon a Time*.

[48] Cristina Santos and Adriana Spahr, eds., *Defiant Deviance: The Irreality of Reality in the Cultural Imaginary* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 4.

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Image 1: *Death and the Iron Maiden*. Film still. Dir. Kevin McGuiness. © 2014.

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The Excrement-Encrusted Husband and His Homicidal Wives: The Abject Monster in Giovanni Francesco Straparola's 'Il Re Porco'

Victoria Tedeschi

Abstract

During sixteenth-century Italy, the monster was more than a literary phenomenon; it was a plausible being. Mothers and their maternal imagination were cited in medical documents as factors that incited a foetus' transformation from human to beast. Afflicted by this cultural change, Italian Folklorist Giovanni Francesco Straparola's animal bridegroom tale 'Il Re Porco' (1550) examines the core elements that encompass monstrosity. The tale concerns a queen that, (owing to the intervention a meddlesome fairy) gives birth to a prince who is half human, half porcine. His penchant for wallowing in filth and excrement encourages his first and second wife to murder the creature. Discovering their malicious intent, the prince kills them with his sharp hooves. Yet his marriage to the virtuous and patient Meldina effectively encourages the prince's permanent transformation from hybrid to human. Once the prince has attained a fixed identity, he is allowed to rule alongside his newfound wife. This article highlights the abject discourse running rampant throughout Straparola's tale. It explores how monsters can be identified via various socially-transgressive constructs. As a beast, the monster transgresses the boundary between human civility and bestial behaviour, overrides the divide between nature and culture and blurs the line between the clean and unclean body. While the beast is undoubtedly cast as a physiological and social monster, the title is also relevant for his two homicidal wives. Unwilling to witness abject experience, the wives attempt to kill their husband. Only the arrival of a woman unabashed by abject experience can help the monster obtain not only a permanent transformation but additionally the right to rule. At the tale's closure, Straparola's moral becomes clear: accepting abject experience provides psychological (also economical) reward whereas denying abject experience proves fatal to constructions of the self.

Key Words

Animal Bridegroom, fairy tale, Straparola, abject, Kristeva, Il Re Porco, monster.

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Sixteenth-century Italian literature popularised public interest in *la meravigliosa*: the wondrous. The Italian Reformation unsettled religious sensibilities, triggering an epistemological shift that ignited the accompanying humanist movement. Scientific advances and pioneering discoveries in fauna and flora disputed preconceived geographical and biological notions. The monstrous was embedded within this cultural milieu. Unable to confine to categorisation, the monstrous explored human limitation. Monsters were not restricted to literary discourse; they permeated the collective conscious. An increased interest in monstrous births emerged via the printing press which plastered difetto di materia (defects of nature) in pamphlets and broadsides. The pregnant female body was declared monstrous as maternal

imagination held the potential to distort the unborn foetus lying within. Reports were creative: a baby born with hypertrichosis (excessive bodily hair) was due to 'the mother having gazed at a portrait of Saint John in a bearskin hanging over her bed' whereas an infant with frog-like features resulted from the mother holding a frog during coitus in order to cure a presumed medical affliction.[1] Inevitably, monsters were showcased as the proverbial other and after some time, became the subject of intensive scientific investigation.

The Italian Renaissance gave currency to comical texts that featured deceptive adventurers and brazen women. Italian folklorist Giovanni Francesco Straparola's (c. 1480 - c. 1557) two-volume fairy tale collection *Le Piacevoli Notti* (1550-5) fit comfortably within this literary milieu. Recognized as the forefather of the literary fairy tale, Straparola was renowned for his bawdy plotlines and crude excretory humour. By featuring princesses that transgress gender binaries to mothers that give birth to enchanted serpents, Straparola's collection targeted a liberal audience with a relatively-high tolerance for obscenity. During the latter half of the century, *Le Piacevoli Notti* encountered criticism from ecclesiastical circles due to its anticlerical content – a factor that ultimately led to the collection's placement in the Index Librorum Prohibitorum (The Index of Prohibited Books) in 1624. Despite this setback, *Le Piacevoli Notti* was a commercial success and attained twenty reprints within fifty years of its initial publication.

Straparola's penchant for obscenity is evident in his animal bridegroom tale, 'Il Re Porco'. The tale concerns a queen that (owing to the intervention of a meddlesome fairy) gives birth to a porcine prince who possesses a fondness for filth and excrement. His first two wives are abhorred by the prince's recreational activities and consequently plot his demise. Discovering their malicious intent, the prince gores them both with his sharp hooves, killing them instantly. His third marriage is to the understanding and virtuous Meldina, who tolerates the prince's animalistic behaviour. She eventually affects her lover's transformation from pig to human by revealing to his parents that her husband sheds his natal pigskin at night. This prompts the king and queen to destroy the swinish skin during their son's slumber. The tale concludes with the king and queen's abdication and the crowning of their permanently-human son. In doing so, Straparola's pig prince provides what contemporaneous reports could not: a way to humanize (and reform) the monstrous.

This article employs Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection outlined in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982) to analyse the three monsters in Straparola's tale: the excrement-encrusted husband and his two homicidal wives. Kristeva's theory proves useful in evaluating the trio's defiance against societal norms as it provides a method to decipher the mechanisms of monstrosity: aversion, horror and disgust. Through it's potential to both frighten and delight the reader, fairy tale literature is both repelling and attractive as it compels the reader to confront that which is difficult to conceive. Certainly, Straparola's 'Il Re Porco' aligns with this paradoxical theorem, for Straparola's prince blurs an array of boundaries. He disrupts the parameters between animal and man, disturbs the line between the civilized and the uncivilized, infiltrates the border between the clean and the unclean body and ultimately, transgresses the nature and culture divide. Additionally, by incorporating characters that harbor homicidal drives, Straparola's tale suggests that the abject is that which is ominous, destructive, disturbing and is ultimately, that which threatens the identity of the self.

In her formative essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982), Julia Kristeva explains how abject experience is confronted via literary discourse. Defined as the ultimate corporeal transgression, abjection can be explained as that which refutes convention and inevitably 'disturbs identity, system [and] order'.[2] Abjection is regularly expressed via societal and individual taboos such as bodily waste, perversion, homicide and death: factors that equally affirm and threaten the existence of the subject. Despite its potential to disgust, the subject is

undeniably attracted to the abject due to its ability to straddle boundaries. In this way, the abject avoids categorisation for it is 'the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite'[3] and furthermore, 'the place where meaning collapses'.[4] By denying social convention, the abject inevitably redefines what it means to be human.

The self/other dualism draws an arbitrary line between the human and animal realm. Animals are culturally recognized as unfeeling stimulus-response mechanisms and are frequently othered. By becoming othered, animals are socially demoted from humanity's hierarchical pedestal. Animals are erroneously labelled as humanity's antithesis due to the presumption that culture 'elevates humans above other animals and the natural world'.[5] The prevailing supposition held by modern society is an 'us versus them' relationship: 'that *we* are radically different from *them;* that humans possess reason, language, and any number of other traits unknown to nonhuman animals'.[6] The fairy tale beast is born when human and non-human spheres collide.

The Stith-Thompson classification system categorizes 'Il Re Porco' as an animal bridegroom tale: a tale type that involves the marriage, love or union between a human and an enchanted animal. The tale may conclude with either the human's abandonment, the animal's death or otherwise, the animal's metamorphosis into a human. Animal bride and animal groom tales differ in that animal brides consider their bestial body as their essential being whereas the animal grooms regard humanity as their true form. This romantic union between human and beast regularly insinuates sexual relations between humans and animals. Zoologist James Serpell states that bestiality is the 'ultimate anti-anthropocentric act' as it threatens to 'make man a member of a brute creature' and acknowledges the fixed confluence between man and his bestial inheritance.[7] Philosopher Peter Singer agrees with this consensus, adding that bestiality's persistence as a socially-reprehensible act insinuates 'our desire to differentiate ourselves erotically and in every other way, from animals'.[8] King Galeotto considers to kill his infant son to protect his wife's reputation: 'Ed acciò che tal parto non ridondasse in vituperio della reina che buona e santa era, il re piú fiate ebbe animo di farlo uccidere e gettarlo nel mare' (And the king, mindful of how good and pious his queen was, often thought it best to kill him and throw him into the sea).[9] This thought was not uncommon during early modern Europe. To accuse an individual of undertaking bestial relations was 'to put them with their fellow beasts in the stable and farmyard'.[10] Infanticide was a popular practice: midwives were described in teratological treaties as 'smothering those births which they judged to lie outside the category of the human, and thus unfit for baptism'.[11] Indeed, while infanticide was widespread during the latter half of the sixteenth century, German physician Martin Weinrich reminded his readers 'num lecito occidere monstra' [it is forbidden to kill monsters] yet explained that this did not encompass children who were thought to be 'born from unions with brute beasts or devils or those who due to the invention of the maternal imagination were more animal than human'.[12] During an age that was unable to decipher the impossibility of hybrid birth, a sexual union between human and animal was judged as an undeniably diabolical relationship.

As half-human and half-pig, Straparola's protagonist is an oxymoronic figure, who encapsulates both human and animal tendencies. This is illustrated once the hybrid child is born:

> Ersilia … partorí un figliuolo, le cui membra non erano umane, ma porcine … Il bambino adunque, diligentemente nodrito, sovente veniva alla madre, e levatosi in piedi, le poneva il grognetto e le zampette in grembo. E la pietosa madre all'incontro lo accarezzava, ponendoli le mani sopra la pilosa schiena, ed abbracciavalo e basciavalo, non altrimenti che creatura umana si fusse. Ed

> il bambino avinchiavasi la coda, e con evidentissimi segni le materne carezze esserli molto grate le dimostrava.[13]
>
> [Ersilia … gave birth to a son whose extremities were not human, but porcine … Therefore, the child was nursed with care, and stood up, placed his little snout and his paws in her lap. And the pitiful mother would caress him, placing her hands over his hairy back, and embracing and kissing him as if he had been a human being. And the child wagged his tail and gave other signs to show that he was very grateful of his mother's caresses]

By defying taxonomic order, the pig prince is a corporeal transgression. He is branded as 'the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite'[14] and in doing so, threatens conceptions of humanity. The pig prince is undeniably deviant and destabilizes 'the carefully constructed system of classification erected in order to make sense of the surrounding world and humankind's position within it'.[15] He is the category between two contradictory principles: nature and culture. Indeed, Straparola avoids human descriptors when detailing his protagonist. For example, king Galeotto insists that his son will be raised '… non come bestia ma come animal razionale allevato e nodrito fusse'.[16] The pig prince will not be raised as a beast but nurtured as a 'rational animal', implying that 'only minimal efforts are made to tame his animal instincts'.[17] Straparola uses the word 'animal' when humanness is an unstable construct. Laurie Shannon explains that the term 'animal' interrogates what it means to be human. It is used to ascertain 'what we might well call 'the question of the human' rather than when humanity is asserted'.[18] King Galeotto categorically identifies his son as an animal – a term that humans have created to corral many species within a single entity. French Philosopher Jacques Derrida warns his audience to consider caution when adopting the descriptor 'animal' as the use of the term affirms a 'complicit, continued and organized involvement in a veritable war of the species'.[19] As a descriptor that designates that which is not human, adopting the term 'animal' demands superiority over the non-human realm. By refusing to class his son as a human, Galeotto's statement insinuates patriarchal authority and instils a separation between human and pig. Neither human nor beast, the prince is monstrous. He encapsulates the abject because he exists in a fixed state of transition and transformation. He is the 'in-between', the interval between man and creature.[20]

Yet Galeotto's promise to raise a 'rational animal' becomes problematic. Ironically, Straparola's prince opposes nobility and civility. Due to his porcine genetics, the prince possesses a fondness for filth:

> Il porcelletto, essendo alquanto cresciuto, cominciò umanamente parlare e andarsene per la cittá; e dove erano l'immondicie e le lordure, sí come fanno i porci, dentro se li cacciava. Dopo, cosí lordo e puzzolente, si ritornava a casa: e accostatosi al padre ed alla madre e fregandosi intorno alle vestimenta loro, tutte de letame gli le imbruttava; e perciò che egli gli era unico figliuolo, ogni cosa pazientemente sofferivano.[21]
>
> [The little pig, when he grew older, began to talk like a human being, and began to roam the city, and whenever he came across trash or filth he would always wallow in it, just like a pig. Later, he would return very gross and smelly: and he came to his father and mother and rubbed against their garments, dirtying them with manure, making them worse, but they patiently put up with it because he was their son]

The prince's anthropomorphism further heightens his transgressive nature. Despite his porcine genetics, the pig prince is able to 'parla umanamente' (speak as a human) and thus, occupies both human and non-human territory. Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) and philosophers René Descartes (1596-1650), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) all adhere to the same consensus: animals are without language, or, more accurately, animals are unable to offer more than a reactionary response to stimuli. Language and reasoning are considered traits that distinguish humans from their bestial brethren. As language is prescribed solely to humankind, anthropomorphism requires animals to lose their animality. The prince's human speech (yet porcine biology) merges nature and culture into a single entity, for 'a discursively-defined world is one from which nature is effectively excluded'.[22] The prince's anthropomorphic status holds abject allusions as by adopting language, the character challenges and redefines natural law.

Notwithstanding his ability to communicate, Straparola's protagonist opposes civilized society. The prince's penchant for wallowing in filth is not a habit typically reserved to royalty. While the monster is physical abnormal, monstrous conduct marks the beast as culturally abject. Associate professor Dana Oswald lists 'eating, grooming, and dressing, reactions to human approach, use of human language, and transgressing gender roles' as potential monstrous behaviour.[23] In literary discourse pigs encapsulate human vices; particularly slovenliness and avarice. As Benton Jay Kommins maintains, medieval Europe identified pigs with 'those aspects of human sin that demanded the most severe retribution … [and] became a hyperbolic sign of rudeness in bourgeois sensibility'.[24] Boars were cast as the anomalous, malodorous, overly-voracious non-human other: their act of wallowing in mud (to protect their sensitive skin from sunburn) embodies disgust. Their transgressive status is also physiological: the pig's grotesque, excreting, filthy body opposes civilized society. As such, the animal creates an abject experience for the sensitive bourgeoisie.

Meldina's excrement-encrusted spouse mirrors Kristeva's theory of maternal authority and its association with the clean and proper body. Kristeva states that rituals of defilement are closely related with the maternal, for mothers are usually held responsible for their child's sphincteral training. Kristeva states that the subject's first contact with authority is with its mother, who teaches the child about its body, 'the clean and the unclean, the proper and improper areas of the body'[25] However Kristeva's analysis focusses more on identity and wholeness of the self, rather than cleanliness. During the developmental stages of the child, the infant undergoes 'the primal mapping of the body' – a semiotic stage which involves distinguishing the infant's body from the body of the mother.[26] To achieve selfhood, the infant must regard the mother's body as abject. Yet this semiotic stage will reappear later in life, provoked by events that mimic this initial separation between mother and child. Furthermore, semiotic experience is ignited by events that threaten the subject's identity: 'It is thus not a lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order'.[27] When adults confront abjection, they recall this semiotic state – a state where the self is threatened by an external force:

> … abjection represents a revolt against that which gave us our own existence or state of being. At this point the child enters the symbolic realm, or law of the father. Thus, when we as adults confront the abject we simultaneously fear and identify with it. It provokes us into recalling a state of being prior to signification (or the law of the father) where we feel a sense of helplessness.[28]

By wallowing in filth, the pig prince objectifies the clean and proper body. His unclean body is rooted in the semiotic stage. Indeed, Straparola's protagonist cannot comprehend how

bodily excretions are socially-reprehensible:

> E fatta venire la sposa, vestita di onorevolissime vestimenta regali, al porco la presentò. Il quale, veggendola bella e graziosa, tutto gioliva: e cosí puzzolente e sporco la intorniava, facendole col grugno e con le zampe le maggior carezze che mai porco facesse. Ed ella, perciò che tutte le vestimenta le bruttava, indietro lo spingeva. Ma il porco dicevale: — Perché indietro mi spingi? non ti ho io fatto coteste vestimenta?[29]
>
> [And then the bride was called in, dressed in lavish clothes, and was presented to the pig. Seeing she was beautiful and graceful, he was filled with joy and, being so smelly and dirty, he jumped around her, caressing her with his snout and paws to show affection. But, realising her clothes were soiled, she pushed him back. The pig said to her 'Why do you push me away? Have I not given you these garments myself?']

The pig prince's disregard for social norms places his behaviour in the semiotic realm – a time when bodily wastes were not socially-unacceptable. The body exists in a fragile state as, rather than protecting the prince's body from excrement, the prince smothers himself in an excess of bodily wastes. Professor Barbara Creed comments that excretions such as blood, bile, excrement and pus are abject because '[t]he body ejects these substances, at the same time extricating itself from them and from the place where they fall, so that it might continue to live'.[30] Yet the prince's body does not extricate himself from these fluids. Rather than being embarrassed by his perpetual desire to wallow in filth, the pig prince revels in his own ordure, breaking social taboos along the way. As a confronting abject figure, Straparola's protagonist not only threatens the pristine body, yet also, constructions of selfhood and identity.

When Meldina reveals to her in-laws that her husband removes his porcine skin at night, the king and queen destroy the prince's natal pigskin. This allows the prince to remain permanently human. It is interesting to note, however, that the prince is not cognizant in this decision. Rather, those closest to him devise a plan to impact his metamorphosis. The monster must be redeemed or killed by the narrative's closure, for allowing the hybrid to live would reinstate humanity as a fluctuating concept rather than a fixed entity. Moreover, it is only when the prince has secured his humanity that his parents abdicate the throne and allow him to rule. Barbara Fass Leavy maintains that only once the beast is free from his nonhuman form can he enjoy and reinforce patriarchal society:

> Often he inherits a kingdom he can now rule unimpeded by the deficiencies implied by his animal form. True, he relinquishes his exclusive tie to nature, that is, freedom to satisfy basic drives unconstrained by society's requirements, but the stories say he has won more than he has lost.[31]

It is only by denying his bestial nature that the prince obtains the rational necessary to rule. By becoming wholly human, the monster performs the ultimate transformation in order to secure self/other dualisms. The prince's metamorphosis separates nature from culture, segregates civility from uncivil acts, isolates animality from humankind and partitions cleanliness from the unclean body. Suzanne Magnanini suggests that the monster must die for order and convention to prevail: the pig prince is 'transgressive, too sexual, perversely erotic, a lawbreaker; and so the monster and all that it embodies must be destroyed'.[32] By destroying the monster's offensive pigskin, definitions of humanity are restored and natural order is preserved.

While the monster exists as a biological disfigurement, the prince's beautiful brides are also associated with monstrous conduct. In fear of being defiled by their foul-smelling spouse, the wives devise a plot to murder the prince: 'E venuta l'ora di andare a riposare, disse la giovane: — Che voglio io fare di questa puzzolente bestia? Questa notte, com'egli sará in su 'l primo sonno, io l'ucciderò' (And when it was time to go to sleep, the girl said: - What need do I have of this smelly beast? Tonight, while he is sound asleep, I will kill him).[33] While they are never able to complete this homicidal deed, the brides are the ultimate lawbreakers. In retrospect, while the wives' homicidal urges are deemed diabolical, the prince's murder is insinuated as an act of self-preservation:

> Parve alla reina di andar a visitazione della nuora: e andatasene e trovatala dal porco uccisa, ne sentí grandissimo dolore. E ritornato il porco a casa, e agramente ripreso dalla reina, le rispose, lui avere fatto a lei quello che ella voleva far a lui: e sdegnato si partí.[34]
>
> [The queen went to visit her daughter-in-law: and to her grief found that the pig had killed her, which caused her great pain. And the pig returned home and replied to the queen's bitter reproaches, that he only did to her what she wanted to do with him: and so left angrily]

Abjection theory maintains that the wives' homicidal tendencies are more abject than the prince's murder. According to Kristeva, premeditated murder is the ultimate transgression as it heightens the corruptibility of the law:

> … any crime because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject, but premeditated crime, cunning murder, hypocritical revenge are even more so because they heighten the display of such fragility … [it is] a terror that dissembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it.[35]

While the prince enacts murder to defend himself, the wives perceive murder as a means to extricate themselves from abject experience. According to Professor Barbara Creed, such efforts are futile as the abject is inescapable: 'abjection is not something of which the subject can ever feel free - it is always there, beckoning the self to take up the place of abjection'.[36] Abject is that which threatens, yet affirms the subject. While it may break away from regulation and convention, the abject ultimately demonstrates the fragility of law and order.

As a genre foregrounded in conventions, fairy tale literature routinely features abject figures undergoing transitional experiences. Straparola's pig-human hybrid infringes convention and unsettles constructions of humanity. His unclean body, anthropomorphism and brute behaviour casts the character as abject. Yet while the prince exists as a biological monster, his reluctant brides are rendered abject due to their inclination to enact homicide against the creature. Their willingness to escape abject experience has fatal consequences. In fact, it is only when the virtuous Meldina accepts the prince's social (and physiological) transgressions that the prince is able to remain permanently human. This metamorphosis is a social promotion as once the prince has attained humanity, he possesses that which humanity upholds: civility, reason, and supreme authority. In this way, it is only by accepting abject experience can the subject reap psychological reward and achieve a greater understanding of the self.

Notes

[1] Valeria Finucci, *The Manly Masquerade: Masculinity, Paternity, and Castration in the Italian Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 55.
[2] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). 4.
[3] Ibid., 4.
[4] Ibid., 2.
[5] Samantha Hurn, *Humans and Other Animals: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Human-Animal Interactions* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 4.
[6] Ibid., 245.
[7] James Serpell, *In the Company of Animals: A Study of Human-Animal Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 158.
[8] Peter Singer, 'Heavy Petting,' *Nerve*, 2001, n.p.
[9] Giovanni Francesco Straparola, *Le Piacevoli Notti* (Bari: Tipografi-Editori-Librai, 1927), 77.
[10] Carl J. Griffin. 'Animal Maiming, Intimacy and the Politics of Shared Life: The Bestial and the Beastly in Eighteenth- and early Nineteenth-Century England,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37 (2011): 310, accessed 29 January 2014, doi: 0020-2754.
[11] Suzanne Magnanini, *Fairy-Tale Science: Monstrous Generation in the Tales of Straparola and Basile* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 107.
[12] Ibid., 107.
[13] Straparola, *Le Piacevoli*, 77.
[14] Kristeva, *Powers,* 4.
[15] Magnanini, *Fairy-Tale*, 107.
[16] Straparola, *Le Piacevoli*, 77.
[17] Lewis C. Seifert, 'Animal-Human Hybridity in d'Aulnoy's *Babiole* and *Prince Wild Boar,*' *High Anxiety: Masculinity in Crisis in Early Modern France*, ed. Kathleen P. Long (Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2002), 188.
[18] Laurie Shannon, 'The Sight Animals in Shakespeare; or, Before the Human,' *Theories and Methodologies* 124.2 (2009): 477, accessed 14 December 2013, http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/uploads/cms/documents/lshannon.pdf.
[19] Jacques Derrida, 'The Animal that Therefore I Am,' *Critical Inquiry* 28.2 (2002): 400, accessed 14 September 2013, http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0093-1896%28200224%2928%3A2%3C369%3AT ATTIA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9.
[20] Kristeva, *Powers,* 4.
[21] Straparola, *Le Piacevoli*, 77-78.
[22] David Kidner, 'Fabricating Nature: A Critique of the Social Construction of Nature,' *Environmental Ethics* 22 (2000): 348, accessed 2 October 2013, doi: 0163-4275.
[23] Dana Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D.S Brewer, 2010), 6.
[24] Benton Jay Kommins, 'Western Culture and the Ambiguous Legacies of the Pig,' *Comparative Literature and Culture* 3.4 (2001): 3, accessed 14 September, 2013. doi: 1481-4374.
[25] Kristeva, *Powers,* 12.
[26] Ibid., 72.
[27] Ibid., 4.

[28] Samantha Pentony, 'How Kristeva's Theory of Abjection Works in Relation to the Fairy Tale and Post-Colonial Novel: Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*, and Keri Hulme's *The Bone People,' Deep South* 2.3 (1996): n.p., accessed 14 September, 2013. http://www.otago.ac.nz/deepsouth/vol2no3/pentony.html.
[29] Straparola, *Le Piacevoli*, 79.
[30] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), 9
[31] Barbara Fass Leavy, *In Search of the Swan Maiden: A Narrative on Folklore and Gender* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 144.
[32] Magnanini, *Fairy-Tale*, 116.
[33] Straparola, *Le Piacevoli*, 79.
[34] Ibid., 79-80.
[35] Kristeva, *Powers*, 4.
[36] Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, 10.

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Hybridity Transformed: From 'Hans My Hedgehog' to the Genetically Engineered in Art

Mary Bricker

Abstract

Celebrating its bicentennial in 2015, 'Hans My Hedgehog' (Hans Mein Igel), a story from the Brothers Grimm, is a fairy tale about a hybrid person, Hans, who was born with normal human features below the waist but the features of a hedgehog above the waist. Hans leaves his biological family's home at a young age and escapes to the woods, where he teaches himself music, grows a herd of pigs, and helps those lost. His monstrousness is expressed in two ways in the story: first through his bodily features and second through his behaviour. In the story Hans assaults a princess as retribution for her father (the king) breaking an agreement with him. Traditional psychoanalytic readings of the tale explain his monstrousness as a result of a lack of parental control and as resolvable through the relinquishing of sexual fears. In the story, a second king is true to his word and he warmly welcomes Hans to his kingdom to marry his daughter. This fairy tale speaks to both the value of honesty and the power of familial love. A renewed interest in hybridity is found both in scientific and artistic communities. Today scientists experiment with animal cells to create new hybrid genetic forms for medical advancement. The potential good promised by the scientific community is beginning to shift the narrative regarding monsters, which we can see in recent museum exhibits throughout the country. For example, the exhibition *Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination* at the Frist Center in Nashville, Tennessee showcased mutation and evolution in a sympathetic way that allow the visitor to begin to relinquish the feelings of fear associated with monsters.

Key Words

Monster, genetic engineering, hybrid, hedgehog, Brothers Grimm, fairy tales, transformation.

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1. Introduction

Once only found in mythology and fairy tales as an embodiment of fear, hybrid life forms are now part of an international discussion regarding medical advancement. Scientists are experimenting with animals to make them carriers of human organs and blood. Though humanity may only now be able to scientifically create hybrid creatures, they have lived within our imaginations at least as long as the written word. Celebrating its bicentennial, the Brothers Grimm's 'Hans My Hedgehog' (Hans Mein Igel) was included in the second volume of the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*) in 1815.[1] Hans can be considered a monster based solely on his appearance, as he is born with the features of a hedgehog above the waist. On his upper body he has the outer quills of a hedgehog but is otherwise like a human. Nevertheless, Hans is raised as a beast and mistreated by his family because of his body. He is referred to as a creature ('wunderliches Tier') throughout the story, initially by his parents, whose bad behaviour socialises him, as well as by leaders in his community, including the pastor who instructs his parents how to raise their son.[2] The parents

follow his advice and prepare a bed of hay behind the stove, as they would for the family dog, where Hans remains for eight years. The joy that the parents expected the child to bring to their family when they wished a child falls flat, and the father has a second wish that the son would die. The parents do not take responsibility for their offspring nor do they try to help him. For Bruno Bettelheim, Hans is foremost beastly because of his strange mixture of human and animal elements: he is half hedgehog half human, which Bettelheim blames on the parents for having no control over their anger and impatience.[3] Their emotions are symbolised in the hybridity of the son who has a hedgehog head and quills.

2. Modern Museum Monsters

Andrew Lang's twelve-volume series *Fairy Books* helped to introduce the fairy tales to an English speaking audience starting in 1889. *The Green Fairy Book* published in 1892 contained Lang's version of 'Hans My Hedgehog', entitled 'Jack, My Hedgehog'. Though a different name, Lang's Jack is also a son of a farmer who experiences child abuse before moving away from his family to tend pigs and help those lost in the forest. In the preface Lang comments on future monsters:

> If there are frightful monsters in fairy tales, they do not frighten you now, because that kind of monster is no longer going about the world, whatever he may have done long, long ago. He has been turned into stone, and you may see his remains in museums.[4]

I would like to consider Lang's observation further by drawing on 'Hans My Hedgehog', in conjunction with artwork showcased at the 2012 art exhibition, *Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination* at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, Tennessee. The art exhibition contained pieces that represent societal mutation as well as evolution. Devoid of the written stories to accompany the monster display, the viewer is left to imagine the plot behind the art, making the morals of these fairy-tale snippets murky. The physical transformations take centre stage.

The curator Mark Scala suggests that the exhibition offered 'strange combinations of human and the animal. It's all an expression of the imagination, a way of conveying the complexity of humanity'.[5] Through their art, the artists in the exhibition mixed references to literature as well as to biogenetic science in their portrayal of the complex relationships between man and animal. Jack Zipes interprets these fairy tale fragments as evoking separation within wonder.[6] They might be considered alongside the strange child monsters often presented in the Grimms' fairy tales as hybrid animal-princes. The art does not offer a clear moral for children and adults alike, despite the inclusion of fairy tale archetypes such as references to fairy tale-like characters, objects, and landscapes. For Bettelheim fairy tales function as a natural resource to help work through fear: 'without fantasies to give us hope, we do not have the strength to meet the adversities of life'.[7] Though fairy tales are thought of as children's literature, countless authors use the genre as a medium for their modern-day concerns or draw on archetypal symbols to evoke a magical mood and add a layer of complexity. Just as artists are now returning to an older literary past to address current scientific discovery, so too did the Grimms traverse their contemporary time landscape during Romanticism in search of past cultural wisdom to make sense of community development within an era of uncertainty.

Now the fairy-tale narrative has been reshaped as visual art, mirroring a larger shift to a digital world empowered by images. Parallel to this shift, we also see a greater public display of empathy for the other or people different than the norm. Scala comments: 'While monster imagery has traditionally conveyed humanity's darkest aspects, today many artists reconfigure

the notion of monstrosity to express empathy and identification with the outsider'.[8] In the exhibition, hybrid parental creatures as well as genetically engineered children's playthings are displayed as harmless. According to the Bettelheim, the value of monsters lies in being scary, as the fantasy helps the child work through the monsters he feels within himself: without monsters the 'child remains helpless with his worst anxieties – much more so than if he had been told fairy tales which give these anxieties form and body and also show ways to overcome these monsters'.[9] But if we now empathise with monsters, then they no longer embody fear to be confronted in fantasy. Hence, my article speaks to the transformation of monsters in our advanced scientific age. Given our changing views on monsters and the monstrous in modern society, and building upon Bettelheim's reading, it could be true that fear of monsters can no longer affect the human psyche and physiological development. By contrast, the Grimms' fairy tale 'Hans My Hedgehog' shows the degree of prejudice against the other by way of the private and public mistreatment of the hedgehog-boy.

3. 'Hans My Hedgehog'

In 'Hans My Hedgehog' the reader learns that both the boy's body and lifestyle cause him to be seen as a misfit or outcast within normal society. For example, one of the kings he encounters in the forest thinks he can take advantage of Hans, assuming that because of his animal-like features, he lacks human intellect.[10] Hans also appears strange to both kings because of the bagpipe music that he plays and because they encounter him sitting in a tree, where he lives. In medieval thought one's residence was also a reason for marvel.[11] Hence, his life in the trees would have reinforced his monstrosity to the original audience.

The qualities that make him strange equally make him endearing. In addition to teaching himself to play the bagpipes, he also becomes a successful shepherd, growing a large herd of swine. These accomplishments demonstrate his human intellect as well as a level of cultivation. His relationship with animals shows the hybrid-boy's gentleness. He briefly returns home to slaughter the herd for his father and townsmen, emphasising his generosity and thoughtfulness. However, his success does not change his father's feelings toward him. In the woods he also encounters others, namely the kings, who are willing to accept his help but reluctant to return the goodwill.

Speaking generally about monsters, Scala states: 'With their horrible appearances and violent impulses, they [monsters] are conceived as punishers of behaviour that deviates from parental teachings, religious beliefs, or social norms'.[12] Scala's statement is also applicable to the Grimms' fairy tale. We see this with Hans's behaviour toward the first king. Perhaps the most important lesson Hans learns from his troubled childhood is the importance of keeping one's word. The tale further illuminates the strength of an individual facing adversity and contains a very modern moral concerning the value of honesty and fairness regardless of a person's outward appearance. Hans shows two lost kings on separate occasions their way out of the forest, and each promises to give Hans the first thing that greets him when returning home. In both cases, the king's daughter rushes out to greet her father. Later Hans visits both kings to gather his rewards. When the first king's daughter is forced to marry such a strange creature, Hans takes revenge by enacting monstrous fantasy that both demonstrates his sexual male prowess and performs power over the first king via his daughter's body. In Lang's version, as in the Grimms' tale, Jack/Hans inflicts physical aggression against the princess. This act of violence against the girl and implicitly against her father demonstrates a unique monstrous side of Hans that goes otherwise unknown:

> Hans My Hedgehog took off her beautiful clothes and stuck her with his quills until she was covered with blood. "This is what you get for being so

> deceitful!" he said. "Go back home. I don't want you." Then he sent her away, and she lived in disgrace for the rest of her life.[13]

Ashliman states that the Grimms intensified act of aggression against the princess between the first and the final seventh edition, as Hans initially 'undressed her' and in later editions 'he pulled off her clothes'.[14] This change emphasises the beastly side of Hans. No longer confined to a small corner of the kitchen, the unleashed monster marks fear and then shame in the royal family before moving on to the next kingdom. This situation demonstrates the dichotomy of his monstrous side and his earlier kindness shown to humans and animals alike.

4. 'Hans My Hedgehog' Variants

'Hans My Hedgehog' is considered a *Hog Bridegrooms* fairy tale type ATU 441 according to the Aarne-Thompson-Uther classification system for folk tales, which is determined by reoccurring motifs.[15] In each version a young woman is promised to a hybrid man-animal creature and the happy end includes a ridding of the animal skin or body. Sometimes the bodies are completely animal, but the characters act entirely human. Just as specific medical knowledge is needed to protect oneself from werewolves and vampires in legends, so too, I argue, is expertise needed to transform from a partial or full animal into a prince in fairy tales.[16] In these tales the bridegroom often appears as an animal that acts in a human way. For Bettelheim positive feelings ultimately correct the child's misdevelopment through his marriage to the second princess as she helps him to break the spell.[17] She is kind to Hans, because she realises the importance of her father's ability to live up to his word. As a cautionary tale, 'Hans My Hedgehog' warns about the trouble caused by adult negative behaviour, such as impatience as well as false promises, but suggests that the consequences are resolvable through parental acceptance of the child. Another solution lies within the daughter's power whose sexual anxieties are comforted by her animal husband and his promise to transform from a monster into a prince.[18] Whereas Bettelheim speaks of the girl's fear because of sex, I see that she is merely a representative of society's fear of the other.

In this tale, deviants from the norm appear within one's own family, as a survey of the *Hog Bridegrooms* tales demonstrates. In 'The Enchanted Brahman's Son' the oldest known version of animal-hybrid husbands published in the first book of the ancient Indian *Pañcatantra* from circa $_{AD}$ 300, the father seeks a wife for his son, the snake, and then helps the bride rid the son's snakeskin by throwing it in the fire after the wedding.[19] In Friedrich Krauss's 'Prinz Igel' (Prince Hedgehog) (1883), the hedgehog is the Kasier's son and a priest instructs the fiancée the way in which to transform the hedgehog into a prince with the help of holy water at the alter on their wedding day. In this sense the priest functions as a father figure, evoking his larger paternal role within the community. In Jeremiah Curtin's 'The Hedgehog, the Merchant, the King, and the Poor Man' (1903), a hedgehog transforms back into a prince through his wife's love for him, but is then separated from their children by the merchant's jealous wife, whose daughter previously refused to marry the prince when he was a hedgehog.

In other variants pigs replace the hedgehogs as bridegrooms but face similar family conflict.[20] Giovanni Francesco Straparola's 'King Pig' (1550) influenced Baroness d'Aulnoy's widely popular 'Le prince Marcassin', which is a tale of a royal family with a wild-boar boy who has a difficult time finding a wife. Ultimately, he marries and his wife's love helps to rid him of the boar skin and become human. In Johann Wilhelm Wolf's 'The Wild Pig' (Das wilde Schwein) (1845), an evil witch curses the royal family's son and the youngest sister enables him to transform back into a prince. Influenced by the Grimms, Josef Haltrich published 'Das Borstenkind' (The Bristle Child) (1856), in which the boy is turned into a wild boar through his mother's curse. Later his wife's devotion helps him to change back into a human. In the

Romanian tale, 'The Enchanted Pig', the father gives the keys to his daughters, who enter the mysterious and forbidden room to find a book that reveals their future spouses. The youngest is to marry a pig that is accepted by the family once he has regained human shape. In these examples the narrative is structured by the family.

5. Hybridity in Art and Science

Now in our postmodern world, Patricia Piccinini's art adds a new twist to classic narratives concerning hybridity. *Big Mother* (2005) is a sculpture of silicone, fiberglass, and human hair that depicts an ape-like mother breastfeeding a human child.[21] Piccinini's artistic creation could be seen as a role reversal of the familial situation that Hans faces in the fairy tale 'Hans My Hedgehog'. His mother neither nurses him nor treats him humanely. Conversely, Piccinini's *Big Mother's* baby looks cared for and healthy, which implies that genetically engineered parental figures would be effective alternatives to humans. Piccinini's art blurs the lines between the animal and human. In Piccinini's sculpture *The Long Awaited* (2008), the child rests his head on a grandparent-looking manatee creature with winged feet. This manatee resembles a harmless senior citizen cuddling with her grandchild. Another sculpture, *Still Life With Stem Cells* (2006), suggests that happiness will result from new scientific advancement, as it simulates the joy of a child who is surrounded by and plays with genetically modified pet-looking creatures. These actual life-size sculptures make the likelihood of these possibilities seem real.

The artist Suzanne Anker comments that Piccinini's *Big Mother* raises bioethical and philosophical questions concerning evolution: 'Piccinini's *Big Mother* prompts moral questions in terms of animal-human hybrids and the role these in-betweens play in a techno-scientific democratic society'.[22] Given the capabilities of genetic engineering we should consider the general question of what constitutes being human. Does one only need human blood or organs? Considering Piccinini's art, questions concerning mothers arise. Should a hybrid creature be treated as a human depending on its function within and service to a family? As a society we are ill equipped to answer the questions that arise from a lack of information about new life forms. According to Nancy Hightower we do not have a sufficient language to hold a discussion about the consequences of genetic engineering. Our language has not developed yet because of the newness of these scientific advancements. Piccinini's sculptures invite us to 'start reinventing language to hold the ambiguous, ambivalent tensions that are birthed through our technological innovations'.[23] In this sense, the visual art complements the written text where it falls silent.

At the same time, the promise of medical breakthroughs is replacing fear. DNAs are being spliced on animals to experiment with new hybrid-life forms, such as geeps (sheep-goat hybrids). Since 1980 scientists have also been implanting human genes into mice. A group of Israeli scientists has even been successful in creating a tiny human kidney in a mouse. Besides mice larger animals are also used in experimentations. According to Professor Lee Silver, a molecular biologist at Princeton University, experiments on cows involve replacing the genes in cows with human ones. Regenerative medicine can benefit from these scientific advancements, as cows could then be used as living storage vessel for human blood for medical transfusions. Silver states that the idea would be more likely acceptable if the animals are able to keep their outer physical appearance.[24]

Perhaps younger generations that fantasise about new scientific hybrid forms will help in the development of this new language needed to talk about these possibilities. Children visiting the American Museum of Natural History in New York play-built their own creatures, such as animals with seven and half heads and tales with fire.[25] Will these children's ideas become reality in successive years? Going back to Lang's observation of the way in which monsters have been mummified in museums (as Lang states in his preface of *The Green Fairy Book*), this

article shows that the monsters have not disappeared but instead we have changed our perception of them. The fear associated with Hans the Hedgehog has evolved into excitement.

In centuries past we were less likely to accept divergence from the typical, as evidenced by 'Hans My Hedgehog', in which Hans is treated as an outcast within his own home. Local religious authority in the story believe that Hans is poised between man and monster, as he is human enough for baptism and monster enough to necessitate restricted human physical contact. His mother fails to breastfeed the hybrid boy and the princess fears touching his spiny body on their wedding night. The fairy tale implies that there is also real reason for this fear, as confirmed by his violence against the first princess. She is disgraced for life due to the assault.[26]

In 'Hans My Hedgehog', the parents successfully avoid being associated with Hans. He rebels, leaves his parents to seek out a different more equitable world, and finds solace in the woods beyond civilisation. He punishes the first king for not living up to his word and, one could argue, also for failing to be accepting of those unlike himself. Hans marries the second princess, which allows his transformation. After Hans's quills are gone, the king's doctor heals his body with ointments. This shows that the happy end includes a healing from his past. Despite the ill treatment of Hans, he does not hold a grudge against either his family or society. His transformation allows him to make peace with his own father who earlier was glad to see him leave home. He also marries the princess a second time – this time as a human – thus underscoring the importance of his transformed body. The court accepts him into the family as man to continue a line of human rulers instead of hybrid ones.

Applying ointments as a medical treatment on hybrid beings is not going to reverse the creations of a genetically engineered evolution. Isolation of new breeds similar to those showcased in the imaginations of artists at the Frist Center would be the only way to stop the continuation of new species.[27] Artists Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz's *The Mail Boat* (2007) posit that scenario, as men in white uniforms greet mail carriers on their snow-covered iceberg colony where hybrid humans are portrayed in conversation on the island.[28] This alternative life-space was perhaps the intention of Hans when he left for the woods. The antiquated message of the fairy tale was that genetically mixed creatures are not a sign of advancement but rather indicate a domestic problem that has negative repercussions for the community. Though Scala suggests that the art's installation warns of society's ethical unpreparedness to handle the outcome of current genetic research, a new attitude is emerging, spurred on by the imagination of the young and the old who through their work and play acknowledge the dangers and the promises of the genetic evolution.[29]

Notes

[1] Beloved in literature, both Pliny and Aristotle wrote of hedgehogs, as did Shakespeare. Their portrayal of hedgehogs as nasty creatures may stem from the word's colloquial meaning as 'a term used for people who showed no regards for the feelings of others'. Though Beatrix Potter's twentieth-century hedgehog in *The Tales of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle* is endearing, hedgehogs are generally represented in a less than favourable light, as in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. For more information regarding hedgehogs' portrayal in literature, see Nigel Reeve, *Hedgehogs* (London: T & AD Poyser, 1994), 253.

[2] Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, 'Hans Mein Igel,' in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen Gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm*, ed. Heinz Rölleke (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2007), 460.

[3] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (NY: Vintage Books, 2010), 70.

[4] Andrew Lang, 'Preface: To the Friendly Reader,' in *The Green Fairy Book* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1906), viewed on 18 June 2015, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/33571/33571-h/33571-h.htm.
[5] Mark Scala, 'Frist Center: Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination,' narrated by Linda Wei, *Arts Break*, WNPT Nashville Public Television Arts Connection video, 3:14, 2 March 2012. Viewed on 19 June 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvhU1H9eJMs.
[6] Jack Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*: *The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2012), 137.
[7] Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 121.
[8] The Frist Center for the Visual Arts, 'Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination with Frist Center Curator Mark Scala,' *YouTube* video, 3:15, 16 March 2012, viewed on 18 June 2015, http://fristcenter.org/calendar-exhibitions/detail/fairy-tales-monsters-and-the-genetic-imagination.
[9] Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 120.
[10] Wilhelm Grimm and Jacob Grimm, 'Hans Mein Igel,' 461-462.
[11] J. B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Reader in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 26-36.
[12] The Frist Center for the Visual Arts, 'Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination with Frist Center Curator Mark Scala.'
[13] Jack Zipes, trans., *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm (NY: Bantam Books, 2002), 363. 'Da zog ihr Hans mein Igel die schönen Kleider aus, und stach sie mit seiner Igelhaut bis sie ganz blutig war, sagte 'das ist der Lohn für eure Falschheit, geh hin, ich will dich nicht', und jagte sie damit nach Haus, und war sie beschimpft ihr Lebtag'. Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, 'Hans Mein Igel,' 464.
[14] D. L. Ashliman, 'Hog Bridegrooms,' *Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts,* last modified 9 April 2015, viewed on 19 June 2015, http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hog.html.
[15] Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004), 263.
[16] Sarah L. Higley, 'Finding the Man under the Skin: Identity, Monstrosity, Expulsion and the Werewolf,' in *The Shadow Walker: Jacob Grimm's Mythology of the Monstrous*, ed. Tom Shippey (Tempe, Arizona: Brepols Publishers, 2005), 342.
[17] Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 70.
[18] Ibid., 284.
[19] Walter Scherf, 'Hans mein Igel,' in *Das Märchen Lexikon.* Zweiter Band: L-Z (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1995), 567.
[20] For a general overview and additional examples see Ibid., 566-568.
[21] Mark W. Scala, 'Checklist of the Exhibition,' in *Fairy Tales, Monsters and the Genetic Imagination*, ed. Mark W. Scala (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2012), 113.
[22] Suzanne Anker, 'The Extant Vamp (or the) Ire of It All: Fairy Tales and Genetic Engineering,' in *Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination*, ed. Mark W. Scala (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2012), 39.
[23] Nancy Hightower, 'Patricia Piccinini's Mythic Imagination,' *Weird Fiction Reviews,* viewed on 18 June 2015, http://weirdfictionreview.com/by/nancy-hightower/.
[24] Lee Silver, 'Mix and Match.' *Radiolab*. WNYC New York Public Radio, 7 April 2008, viewed on 18 June 2015, http://www.radiolab.org/story/91597-mix-and-match/.

[25] Laurel Kendall, 'Mix and Match.' *Radiolab*. WNYC New York Public Radio, 7 April 2008, viewed on 18 June 2015, http://www.radiolab.org/story/91597-mix-and-match/.
[26] Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 283.
[27] Lee Silver, 'Mix and Match.'
[28] Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz, *The Mail Boat* (2007), Plate 17 in *Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination*, ed. Mark W. Scala (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2012), 64.
[29] Mark Scala, 'Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination,' in *Fairy Tales, Monsters and the Genetic Imagination*, ed. Mark W. Scala (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2012), 11.

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A Contemporary Fairy Tale: Vampires, Sexual Trauma and *30 Days of Night* as 'Real' History

John Paul and Kristine Hart

Abstract

In this article, *30 Days of Night*—a film adapted from Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith's graphic novel about vampires taking over an Alaska town—is presented as a cinematic fairy tale as well as a metaphorical stand in for a little-known story of sexual abuse. Specifically, *30 Days* is presented as a mirror of the sexual exploitation, and the colonial and Christian invasion, of Native American people and indigenous worlds. In the same way that classic fairy tales serve as metaphorical warnings about potential real-world harm, so too does *30 Days of Night* mirror the threat, fear, and abuse of power inherent in the decades long violence committed against indigenous Alaskans. Just as the original Grimm tales explored dark and disturbing social realities and their not-always-so-happy endings, *30 Days of Night* provides a platform for exploring and confronting both symbolic and truthful tales of survival and, hopefully, healing.

Key Words

Fairy tales, vampires, Native Americans, sexual abuse, storytelling as healing.

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1. Introduction

Fairy tales can come true, the old song goes; it can happen to you. Unfortunately, however, most fairy tales are quite disturbing and the social realities on which the original fairy tales are based are dark indeed. This article explores one such horrific social reality (the pedophilic abuse of children) and uses a contemporary fairy tale to metaphorically connect and explore this dark truth. Specifically, *30 Days of Night*—a film adapted from Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith's graphic novel about vampires taking over an Alaska town—is presented as a cinematic fairy tale, as well as a metaphorical stand in, for a little-known story of the sexual abuse of Native Americans by priests in Alaska.

In *30 Days of Night* the town of Barrow, Alaska (a town so far north that during the winter the sun does not rise for 30 days) is overrun by vampires who take advantage of the prolonged darkness to openly kill the townspeople and feed at will. Similarly, pedophilic priests were relocated along Alaska's far west coast to rape and abuse an entire generation of children, free of oversight and intervention.[1] While both tales are, admittedly, dark and disturbing in their own right, linking the two together as an examination of the horrors that can happen when a powerful entity has unfettered access to a vulnerable, isolated population can serve multiple functions. As Zipes writes:

> I argue that our continual attraction to fairy tales, especially the classical Grimms' stories, is based more on something adults repress and are afraid to

> talk about, something the Grimms knew 200 years ago but also repressed. I mean child abuse, neglect and abandonment, and not only the kind experienced at the hands of strangers but also that meted out by parents and authority figures themselves. Perhaps the most therapeutic aspect of these stories is the reassurance that children can survive the horrors often imposed on them.[2]

Indeed, if you examine the body of the Grimms' tales you will find well over 100 stories about children who experience some form of mistreatment. Many begin with children being kidnapped, used as objects in a barter with the devil, or abandoned. The redeeming exploration of these tales, as Zipes further notes, is that they bring truth to light, and that in their telling we stop refusing that such trauma did not and does not exist, and work toward resiliency and healing.[3]

2. Grounding Assumptions

What is a fairy tale and does a movie about vampires truly fit this genre? While a full discussion of what does and does not constitute a fairy tale is beyond the scope of this article, there are several assumptions that guide and provide structure to the relevance of this topic. First, according to scholar Walter Rankin, there are stories that are fairytales even if the story does not formally label itself as such. Specifically, in his work, *Grimm Pictures, Fairy Tales in Horror and Suspense Films,* Rankin links and compares modern horror films (e.g., Aliens, Silence of the Lambs) to Grimm and states that modern horror stories fall under the subgenre 'fairy tale horror' and mirror the structure and the moral universe of the original Grimm fairy tales.[4]

Second, to this end, while vampire stories do not traditionally fit the conception of a fairy tale, they nonetheless, have the potential to be classified within the broader category of the genre. In fact, Rankin devotes several paragraphs making just this argument.

> In the Grimm Brothers' German dictionary…the vampire (der Vampyr) is defined simply as one of the dead who rises nightly from the grave to suck out the blood of the living…[5] By the time they had published their first edition of the fairy tales in 1812, the Brothers were no doubt quite familiar with some of these fascinating tales of the bloodthirsty undead. Although Grimm fairy tales do not directly reference vampires…a number of the tales include images that we have come to associate with these preying creatures of the night: Returning from the dead, falling under the spell of a mysterious stranger, and, of course,[6] … being a predatory creature [that] exploits the resources of others in a way that weakens or kills them.[7]

Now, having established that horror stories and vampires are worthy of being analysed as fairy tales, this section moves to the larger moralistic point, and next assumption of this article. It is known that the newer and more sanitized (non-fairy tale horror) retellings of the Grimm tales tend to excise the more violent endings, replacing them with the conclusions that, if children can survive one great trial, they will be rewarded with a lifetime free of adversity and be happy ever after. However, in the original Grimm tales (which have their soul in modern horror films), the lesson is that the monster often returns to torment and evil seems destined to live on. Thus, the third assumption of this article is that the happily ever in fairy tales is replaced with the strict moral lesson that 'self-protection and survival does not exist through passivity'.[8] In other words, while the hero or heroine can find joy and happiness in life, they

must also acknowledge and come to terms with the fact that life will be hard, that more trials await, and that one must be resilient and fight for his/her happiness. In this way, a fairy tale is really a story designed to tell children that, 'they must find radical ways to survive a world ruled by adults'[9] and a world ruled by cruelty.[10] Indeed, it is well known that most of our favorite fairy tales started out darker than the ones we generally came to know through Disney films:

> [The original fairy tales] are extremely dark and harrowing…many are somewhat erotic and deal with incest. Most of them are not what we call fairy tales; they tend to be…warning tales. The Grimms collected these tales to show what life was like…and they wanted to reveal what they considered the divine truths of the tales.[11]

As Bernheimer notes, these fairy tales are not 'escapist fantasies; they're stories of kids facing unimaginable terror'.[12] Finally, the fourth assumption is that while these tales are a warning of a grim reality they must also attempt to provide hope. For the most part, there is some sense of survival for the hero/ine in these tales. While not all endings are happy there is the hope that some children make it out of the dark forest. 'Remember Hansel and Gretel? They manage to shove that witch in the oven, and they emerge from the forest…alive'.[13]

3. History and Background

As noted in the introduction, this article considers the little known priest sex abuse scandal in rural Alaska and suggests that the cinematic fairy tale *30 Days of Night* provides uncanny similarities and the narrative imagery necessary to highlight, discuss and critique this horrific event. While it is unknown whether *30 Days of Night* was inspired by the stories of abuse that have emerged from rural Alaska, the metaphorical connection between the two stories create a form of 'cognitive narratology'—or, the use of fictional literary worlds to construct a cognitive 'empathetic experience and…ethical judgment' in real word minds of the audience.[14] Stated more simply, we use this particular fictional work to 'make visible' the hidden parallels in 'the huge storehouse of life stories that go by the name of literature [and in so doing we] shall realize that this is our mirror'.[15]

From the work of Remen, we know that 'stories, rather than facts, are what constitute worlds of meanings'.[16] Therefore, connecting the story of the priest abuse scandal in rural Alaska to a fairy tale that mirrors the horror in fantastical ways creates accessibility and knowledge in a way that short, fact based news accounts may not be able to replicate. Doing so may also have the effect of forcing greater accountability by the institutions that helped enable it and promoting greater healing by confronting the facts (in symbolism and in truth) and telling tales of survival.

3.1 The Real Vampires of St. Michael, Alaska

The village of St. Michael is home to some 360 native people in a remote section of Alaska, less than 150 miles below the Arctic Circle. For decades, Catholic priests and church workers sexually abused nearly an entire generation of Native children in the village of St. Michael, Alaska. The Catholic Church in St. Michael was built in the early decades of the 20th century as missionaries helped spread Catholicism across native Alaska. To help run the parish in St. Michael, the church sent Father George Endal—one of the state's pioneer priests. When Endal settled in St. Michael in 1968 he brought with him a volunteer named Joseph Lundowski. Together is it believed that Endal and Lundowski molested nearly 80 percent the town's children. Because there were no roads in or out, and because there was no dependable telephone service, Endal and Lundowski were free to do whatever they wished without oversight or

outside intervention.[17]

Further, their abuse of power was legitimized by the community's belief in the sanctity of the church. As Hopfinger notes, victims came from some of the poorest, most vulnerable areas in the United States. 'Their great-grandparents faced a wave of epidemics that killed off more than half the indigenous population of western Alaska. Convinced they had been failed by the shamans and old beliefs, many turned to the missionaries'.[18] And as Kenneth Rossa, one of the lead attorneys that represented victims and helped bring the abuse to light, states:

> This was 1970. It was absolutely unthinkable that the Catholic church could be involved in the sexual abuse of children. They had absolute power over the people and the culture. They had language power. They had political power. They had racial power. They had the power to send you to hell. There was nowhere for the kids to hide. There was no one they could talk to. The adults believed the abusers over their own children. It was a perfect storm for molestation.[19]

In the manner of a true horror story, the children abused in St. Michael suffered almost daily molestation until the summer of 1975 when a community member caught Joseph Lundowski in the act. Unfortunately, the police were not called and the church handled the matter internally. Lundowski was transported out of the town and left the state. However, Father Endal stayed. Through it all, he remained broadly revered by the adults in the community and for eight more years he would continue to molest the boys and girls of St. Michael.[20]

In terms of the history of abuse by church officials in Alaska, it has since been revealed that several dozen priests and church workers were identified as abusers— not just in St. Michael but in Alaska native villages across the state. More damning is evidence that suggests the Church knew these officials were predators when they sent them to rural Alaska.[21]

> Patrick Wall, a former Benedictine monk and Catholic priest who has served as a consultant to Roosa and other lawyers in the Alaska suits, said the Jesuits knew these missionaries were predators. These priests had abused elsewhere…and then were unleashed in the most uncontrolled environment.[22]

While the church should have been a sanctuary and place of spiritual healing instead of an institution of unspeakable abuse, in reality the first step toward healing came from a victim who sought to bring other victims out of the dark through the telling of their stories. Scroth writes:

> If the story has a heroine it is Elsie Boudreau, a victim determined to bring justice to the village. She hired a lawyer and confronted the bishop, Donald Kettler, who was installed in 2002. According to Boudreau, Kettler heard her story, but 'didn't get it.' So she and the lawyer assembled dozens of victims to pour out their tales to one another, and filed a class action suit against the church.[23]

As Hopfinger states:

> [This has since become] one of the darkest chapters of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church. More than 110 children in Eskimo villages claim they were molested between 1959 and 1986, raped or assaulted by 12 priests

> and three church volunteers. Families and victims believe that another 22 people were sexually abused by clergy members but have since killed themselves.[24]

As a result of the lawsuit, the Jesuit Oregon Province agreed to pay $50 million in damages, which is believed to be the largest settlement against a religious order.[25] Included in the 2009 court settlement was a requirement that Bishop Donald Ketter travel to all the affected villages, including St. Michael, to meet in person with the victims and personally apologize to each on behalf of the Catholic Church.[26]

3.2 30 Days of Night and the Vampire as Metaphor

30 Days of Night tells the story of predators who descend on a remote Alaskan town during a period of darkness—making it an apt metaphor for St. Michael. Located well north of the Arctic Circle, Barrow, Alaska[27] is an isolated outpost of humanity that falls into total darkness for two months in the winter (a period that has been reduced to 30 days in the movie). For a pack of vampires, this Alaskan town becomes a safe haven to 'feed,' because they don't have to worry about natural light (a metaphor for truth and discovery) turning them into dust. And for most of the story, the vampires do feed greedily and more or less unfettered. The primary resistance to the vampires comes in the form of the local Sheriff, Eben Oleson,[28] who works to hide town residents and eventually confronts the leader of the vampire pack directly, allowing survivors to escape the direct wrath of the remaining vampire brood. That said, in truth the vampires only true motivation to leave the town at the end is the fact that the month comes to an end and the sun emerges.[29]

In the beginning of the film, it is revealed that the vampires identified the residents of Barrow as targets based on the unrestricted access that both already existed and that they could create. Since the town was described as being in 80 miles of road-less wilderness where the sun would set for 30 days, this set the stage for this to be a predator friendly town. However, the vampires did not want any outside disruptions of their activities and took the extra step of seducing a human into destroying all methods of communication with the outside world as well as any potential methods of escape for their victims. As the seduced human said after being caught, 'so helpless against what is coming'.[30] To safeguard their secret, the vampires even took the extra step of attempting to burn down the town to destroy evidence of their presence, and prevent any survivors from telling the world what happened.[31]

The paedophilic priests and church workers in St. Michael did much the same thing by volunteering to go to an area that was not only remote, but where their position with the church would secure them unrestricted access to potential victims that could easily be preyed upon. Further, because of their priestly power, their victims would have few people that they could tell, or who would believe them or aid them. Here, these abusers sought out opportunistic events, looking for (and crafting) situations of unrestricted access to potential victims—and this is the main premise of the *30 Days of Night* tale. Poignantly, this behaviour is, as psychologist Bütz notes, vampire like as both the vampire and sex offender engage in invasive acts to seduce and to use power to gain gratification at another's expense. In fact, Bütz believes that the vampire as 'sex offender' may be the very foundation for the supernatural creature that is now several centuries old.[32]

Returning to the case of St Michael, it is important to note that the Catholic Church initially denied knowledge of abuse and attempted to bury internal records. It was not until attorneys, fighting on behalf of the victims, uncovered documents that suggested the institution's culpability in a cover-up.[33] Further, outside of the attempts of the vampires to silence the survivors, most of the townsfolk themselves felt the need to remain silent (as

suggested in the sequels), because 'we've learned to keep our mouths shut about it…because the authorities don't believe us'.[34] Again, in a symbolic link, consider the words from a few of the survivors of St. Michael:

> Alberta Steve: They [Endal and Lundowski] told us that if we told anybody, they wouldn't believe us because he worked for a church. He works for God. And he was right, nobody would believe us.[35]
>
> Benjamin Andrews: I told my dad what happened in the church. I told him that guy touched me in my mouth and in my bottom. I remember my dad grabbing his belt. And he hung me upside down and he beat me, told me never to blame priests like that.[36]
>
> Tom Cheemuk: I remember Mom asked me why there was blood on my underclothes…I was afraid to tell her what happened. I thought I might go to jail.[37]

With guidance from the research literature we know that survivors of sexual abuse are frequently met with cultures of silence that make it difficult for their experiences to be acknowledged.[38] Legal systems have often conspired to silence those who have been sexually abused from pressing charges against their assailant(s); and police and prosecutors have often been reluctant or unwilling to process allegations, except for those fitting into a fairly narrow set of parameters. And the *30 Days of Night* franchise does this in a metaphorical way (again, 'no one will believe us,' 'this is something we must handle on our own,' etc.).

The one person, who exists as an exception and breaks her silence, is the heroine of *30 Days of Night*, Stella Oleson. After surviving the vampiric attack at Barrow, Stella (the widowed wife of Sheriff Ben Oleson) writes a book[39] and holds various speaking engagements about the truth of the 'Barrow incident.' Ultimately, her activism gets the attention of fellow activists (anti-vampiric forces) who pledge to takedown the remaining vampire hierarchy. Again, in a link to the real life story of St. Michael, we find a brave heroine in Elsie Boudreau. As noted earlier in this article, Elsie is a survivor of the sexual abuse that occurred at St. Michael and was the one who brought a lawsuit (and public knowledge of the abuse) after her initial complaints to the church hierarchy fell on deaf ears.

So what lessons do we take from this? As Crisp writes, even when a culture of silence exists, the 'experience of wanting the silence broken is typical of survivors of sexual abuse irrespective of their gender, the age at which the abuse occurred, the method of abuse, the social context…and the point of history at which the abuse occurred'.[40] Here, it is worth noting again, that the goal of this article (beyond making the metaphoric link) is that storytelling and fairy tales may be used by survivors as a mode of finding and expressing one's own story of abuse and survival. As far as the use of the vampire as a metaphor for the recognition of abuse and survival, the paraphrased comments of sociologist Jeffrey Alexander are particularly relevant:

> There is no fairy tale-like happy ending per se to stories of systemic horror, [persons] realize that they are not alone and that they are in the grip of forces larger than themselves-and thus not to be blamed for failure to exert individual control over a structural evil…and in this knowledge, catharsis is possible.[41]

Indeed, the redeeming exploration of these tales is that they may be used to bring truth to light, and that in their telling society will stop refusing to believe that such trauma did and does exist, and work toward resiliency and healing. In this way, the telling of *30 Days of Night* may act as a process of symbolization for victims of sexual abuse.

3.3 The Vampire Attack on Native America and the Vampiric Transition

Another core premise of *30 Days of Night* is this: victims were chosen because it was the belief of the vampires 'that these things upon which we feed' are nothing more than cattle, or animals to be used up. Indeed, multiple scholars define and describe the vampire as a metaphor for the colonial invasion of indigenous worlds.[42] For example Clark writes that the vampire:

> works within a semiotic of the other-than-human to represent…colonialism as terrifying and virus-like – an invasive and evasive abnormality corrupted by every lust, natural and unnatural…. [Here, vampirism is a metaphor for white,] violent acts of penetration…[and] as metaphors for (dis)possession and cultural enfeeblement that are the hallmarks of the colonial enterprise.[43]

This symbolism of horror parallels the historical acts of Europeans and Euro-American conquest. According to Hedges and Sacco, 'rape and indiscriminate violence are the legacies of the white conquest. Soldiers on the western frontier, who passed captive squaws from tent to tent, joked that "Indian women rape easy"'.[44] As the sociologist and Catholic priest, Andrew Greeley writes, 'the problem [of abuse] is social structural or sociological. The abuser…is almost always someone for whom there is an 'asymmetric' relationship with the victim…[and it is] the preponderance of power'[45] (mirrored with the belief of superiority) that often enables abuse. To this end, Thomas, et al. write:

> Savage Indians have long fulfilled an honored place in American thought. The Puritans, for instance, came to the new land equipped with the concept that they were God's chosen and all who did not believe as they did were spawns of the Devil. They saw Indians as the perfect foil to justify their own beliefs…then came the belief that Indians would inevitably vanish before American 'civilization' [which] provided convenient cover for a harsher reality: [that] Indian vanishing was the direct result of cold-blooded American expansion.[46]

But what now of the role of Christianity and church officials acting as metaphoric vampires toward Native Americans? Christian boarding schools or Christian day schools on reservations virtually imprisoned native children in a social and cultural world meant to drain them of their Indianness and turn them Anglo (the vampiric transition). From forced assimilation where 'the sharp rules of immaculate living were instilled through blistered hands and knees on the floor with scouring toothbrushes; where mouths were scrubbed with lye and chlorine solutions for uttering Native words'.[47] The goal was to solve the 'Indian problem' and 'transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and…[develop] a civilized language and habit'.[48]

Indeed, the systematic assault on Native culture—from the shearing of children's hair, the banning of traditional clothing and customs, and the forcing of children to worship as Christians—were specific acculturation techniques designed to make native children more 'Anglo-American.' Native scholars have argued that this cultural destruction has not only left a 'soul wound' from which Native Americans broadly and generationally have not healed, but that it has also perpetuated the creation of monsters within (also known as the 'vampire

syndrome' where violent behavior is seen as an expression of victimization). In fact, H. Conner Thomas, a criminal defense attorney in Nome, indicated that he often wondered why the men of St. Michael Island seemed to have 'more than their fair share of significant problems with the law…[The abuse] may be an explanation'.[49]

The effects of the widespread cultural abuse continue to ricochet through Native communities today. Scholars argue that the experiences of such violence are directly correlated with post-traumatic reactions including social and psychological disruptions and breakdowns.[50] Today, sexual abuse and violence have reached epidemic proportions in Native communities, along with alcoholism and suicide. By the end of the 1990s, the sexual assault rate among Native Americans was three-and-a-half times higher than for any other ethnic group in the U.S., according to the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics.[51] Additionally, it has been found that in rural native villages the rate of sexual violence is 'as much as 12 times the national rate. And interviews with Native American women…across the nation's tribal reservations suggest an even grimmer reality: They say few, if any, female relatives or close friends have escaped sexual violence'.[52] Researchers are just beginning to establish the quantitative and qualitative links between these epidemic rates and the legacy of cultural genocide and as Lawson-Te Aho writes:

> Colonisation…is considered to be the most influential, insidious and far reaching process impacting…indigenous populations today…with each generation, the source of wounding becomes more difficult to see and name, creating the necessity for de-colonisation, a psychological tool to place colonisation impacts in a consciousness framework or context…[One source of de-colonisation methodology available to us is] the language-ing of trauma experiences…narration and storytelling can be a powerful catalyst for healing.[53]

4. Conclusion: Fairy Tales and Storytelling as Sources of Truth and Healing

This article explores a horrific social reality (the pedophilic abuse of children) and uses a contemporary cinematic fairy tale (the vampiric story, *30 Days of Night*) to metaphorically connect and explain this sinister truth. But this dark linkage has a goal beyond merely telling a grim tale; this article also has the optimistic goal of addressing fairy tales involving child abuse for its therapeutic aspects.

First, the redeeming aspect of these tales is that they may be used to bring truth to light, and that in their telling we stop refusing that such trauma did and does exist, and work toward resiliency and healing. In this way, the telling of *30 Days of Night* may act as a process of symbolization for victims of sexual abuse. In this manner, symbolization is a process of representing or linking an experience of trauma to/through a cultural form to help communicate what may be initially unmentionable.[54] By linking vampires to perpetrators of sexual assault, survivors may be more willing (more at ease by using shared cultural symbols) to start the process of communication and break the silence that often surrounds the trauma. As Stepakoff continues:

> Silence is one of the most psychologically and socially disruptive aspects of…trauma. To quote another ancient source, 'If you bring forth what is inside you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is inside you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.' The psychological harm caused by [trauma] is exacerbated by prohibitions against

> symbolic representation (i.e., 'I couldn't possibly reveal this,' 'Don't you dare talk about this)… [but] as victims find ways of representing or symbolizing their experiences…psychological and social repair become possible, even when the experiences are horrific and extreme.[55]

Second, as Jack Zipes reminds us, the telling of fairy tales that involve child abuse, neglect and abandonment, may be therapeutic because deep in these stories is the reassurance that children can survive the horrors imposed on them. Scholars in this field[56] argue that stories and fairytales can transform negative social-psychological states by providing people with narratives of resilience, courage, determination, and hope. Narratives of desperation and despair can be reframed as narratives of resilience and survival, and as Cruikshank notes, stories of suffering, might be reconstituted as narratives of vision, survival, and resilience.[57]

Third, in terms of the Indigenous experience and the traumas of colonization, Native scholars (and scholars of Native America) argue that story and storytelling can be one of the most persuasive methods to restore the disruptions of normal life and loss of integrity—as there is still an enduring value given to informal storytelling in indigenous societies.[58] Specifically, Cruikshank argues that persons of indigenous ancestry are enculturated to create, interpret, and value stories that make meaningful connections and provide order and continuity in a volatile world. Additionally, indigenous persons are often taught that a story can *say* multiple things and then that a story can *do* multiple things—such as to be used as a form of personal scaffolding to construct the story of one's survival.[59]

Finally, in conclusion, it should be reiterated that by making the symbolic link between *30 Days of Night* and the incident in St. Michael every reader/viewer is now a companion in the pain and healing of those survivors at St. Michael. And as was mentioned in the opening to this article, while not all endings are happy, it is true that some children make it out of the dark forest. Hansel and Gretel, despite being abused and tormented, nonetheless defeat the witch and emerge as survivors—and in the case of the victims of the vampiric attack, many do live to tell the tale, bring light to darkness, and inspire others to fight the good fight against cultures of silence and institutional harm.

Notes

[1] *Frontline,* 'The Silence,' dir. Tom Curran, reporter Mark Trahant. PBS, April 19, 2011, viewed on 31 May 2015. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/the-silence/.
[2] Jack Zipes, 'Children's Books; Child Abuse and Happy Endings,' *New York Times,* November 13, 1988, np., viewed on 14 June 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/13/books/children-s-books-child-abuse-and-happy-endings.html.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Walter Rankin, *Grimm Pictures: Fairy Tale Archetypes in Eight Horror and Suspense Films* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2007), 2733, Kindle edition.
[5] Ibid., 1197.
[6] Ibid., 1215.
[7] Ibid., 1295.
[8] Ibid., 106.
[9] Maria Tatar, trans. and ed., *The Grimm Reader: The Classic Tales of the Brothers Grimm* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010), xxix.
[10] Phillip Pullman, *Fairy Tales from the Brothers Grimm: A New English Version* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013); Jack Zipes, Introduction to *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the*

Brothers Grimm: The Complete First Edition, by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, trans. and ed. Jack Zipes, illus. Andrea Dezsö (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
[11] Jack Zipes, Interview with NPR staff, 'Today's Fairy Tales Started Out (Even More) Dark and Harrowing,' *NPR.org,* November 16, 2014, viewed on 24 June 2015, http://www.npr.org/2014/11/16/364089661/todays-fairy-tales-started-out-even-more-dark-and-harrowing.
[12] Kate Bernheimer, 'Surviving an Adult World in Fairy Tales, and Real Life,' *NPR.org*, July 18, 2014, viewed on 24 June 2015, http://www.npr.org/2014/11/16/364089661/todays-fairy-tales-started-out-even-more-dark-and-harrowing.
[13] Bernheimer, 'Surviving an Adult World,' np.
[14] Louise Nuttall, 'Attributing Minds to Vampires in Richard Matheson's *I am Legend*,' *Language and Literature* 24.1 (2015): 23.
[15] Arnold Weinstein, *Morning, Noon and Night:Finding the Meaning of Life's Stages Through Books,* (New York: Random House, 2011), 5.
[16] As cited in: Jennifer Reich and Cathy Michaels, 'Becoming Whole: The Role of Story for Healing,' *Journal of Holistic Nursing* 30.1 (2012): 17.
[17] *Frontline.*
[18] Tony Hopfinger, 'Sex Abuse in Alaska Church,' *Newsweek,* January 13, 2008, np., viewed on 24 June 2015, http://www.newsweek.com/sex-abuse-alaska-church-87473.
[19] *Frontline.*
[20] Ibid.
[21] Hopfinger, 'Sex Abuse in Alaska Church,' np.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Raymond Scroth, 'Frontline on Sexual Abuse in Alaska,' *America: The National Catholic Review,* April 18, 2011, np., viewed on 24 June 2015, http://americamagazine.org/content/all-things/frontline-sexual-abuse-alaska.
[24] Hopfinger, 'Sex Abuse in Alaska Church,' np.
[25] Ibid.
[26] *Frontline.*
[27] Geographically, Barrow, AK is situated approximately 557 miles north of St. Michael, AK. Both are located in remote areas and have no roads in or out.
[28] The character's name appeared as Olemaun in the original graphic novel, but was changed to Oleson for the movie version.
[29] *30 Days of Night,* dir. David Slade. Beverly Hills/Los Angeles: Ghost House Pictures/Columbia Pictures, 2007, DVD.
[30] *30 Days of Night.*
[31] Ibid.
[32] Michael R. Bütz, 'The Vampire as a Metaphor for Working with Childhood Abuse,' *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 63.3 (1993): 426-431.
[33] *Frontline.*
[34] Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith, *30 Days of Night: Return to Barrow, (*San Diego: IDW Publishing, 2004), 15, 93, Kindle edition.
[35] *Frontline.*
[36] Ibid.
[37] Hopfinger, 'Sex Abuse in Alaska Church,' np.
[38] See, for example: Jason Berry, *Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children,* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Shanee Stepakoff, 'The Healing Power of Symbolization,' *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 47.3 (2007): 400-

412; Beth R. Crisp, 'Silence and Silenced: Implications for the Spirituality of Survivors of Sexual Abuse,' *Feminist Theology* 18.3 (2010): 277-293; Keri Lawson-Te Aho, 'The Healing is in The Pain: Revisiting and Re-narrating Trauma Histories as a Starting Point for Healing,' *Psychology and Developing Societies* 24.2 (2014): 181-212.

[39] Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith, *30 Days of Night: Dark Days* (San Diego: IDW Publishing, 2004).

[40] Beth R. Crisp, 'Silence and Silenced: Implications for the Spirituality of Survivors of Sexual Abuse,' *Feminist Theology* 18.3 (2010): 278.

[41] Jeffrey Alexander, 'On the Social Construction of Moral Universals The 'Holocaust' from War Crime to Trauma Drama,' *European Journal of Social Theory* 5.1 (2002): 30.

[42] See, for example: Maureen Clark, 'Terror as White Female in Mudrooroo's Vampire Trilogy,' *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 41.2 (2006): 121–138; Neda Atanasoski, 'Dracula as Ethnic Conflict: The Technologies of 'Humanitarian Intervention' in the Balkans During the 1999 NATO Bombing of Serbia and Kosovo,' *Monsters and the Monstrous: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil,* ed. Niall Scott (Amsterdam - New York: Rodopi, 2007), 38: 61-79.

[43] Maureen Clark, 'Terror as White Female in Mudrooroo's Vampire Trilogy,' *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 41.2 (2006): 123.

[44] Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco, *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (New York: Nation Books, 2012), 8.

[45] Andrew M. Greeley, Foreword to *Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children,* by Jason Berry (Urbana, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), xix.

[46] David H. Thomas, et al., *The Native Americans: An Illustrated History* (North Dighton, MA: World Publications Group, 2001), 390.

[47] Andrea Smith, 'Soul Wound: The Legacy of Native American Schools,' *Amnesty International Magazine,* March 26, 2007, np., viewed on 24 June 2015, http://www.amnestyusa.org/node/87342.

[48] Ibid.

[49] William Lobdell, 'Missionary's Dark Legacy,' *Los Angeles Times,* November 19, 2005, viewed on 25 June 2015, http://www.latimes.com/local/la-na-alaska20051119-story.html#page=1.

[50] See, for example: Smith, 'Soul Wound,' np.; Jennifer Reich and Cathy Michaels, 'Becoming Whole: The Role of Story for Healing,' *Journal of Holistic Nursing* 30.1 (2012): 16-23; Keri Lawson-Te Aho, 'The Healing is in The Pain: Revisiting and Re-narrating Trauma Histories as a Starting Point for Healing,' *Psychology and Developing Societies* 24.2 (2014): 181-212.

[51] Smith, 'Soul Wound,' np.

[52] Timothy Williams, 'For Native American Women, Scourge of Rape, Rare Justice,' *The New York Times,* May 22, 2012, np., viewed on 24 June 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/23/us/native-americans-struggle-with-high-rate-of-rape.html?_r=0.

[53] Keri Lawson-Te Aho, 'The Healing is in The Pain: Revisiting and Re-narrating Trauma Histories as a Starting Point for Healing,' *Psychology and Developing Societies* 24.2 (2014): 183, 188.

[54] Shanee Stepakoff, 'The Healing Power of Symbolization,' *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 47.3 (2007): 400-412.

[55] Ibid., 411-412.

[56] See, for example: Yolanda Chávez Leyva, 'There is Great Good in Returning: A Testimonio from the Borderlands,' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 24.2/3 (2003):1-9.
[57] Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).
[58] See, for example: Ibid.; Lewis Mehl-Madrona, *Coyote Wisdom: The Power of Story In Healing* (Rochester, VT: Bear & Company, 2005); Reich and Michaels, 'Becoming Whole,' 16-23.
[59] Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories.*

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Short Stories and Poetry

The Siren's Tail

Rute Noiva

A story, child?
Which one to tell?
A princess wild,
A sleeping belle?

A siren's tale?
A siren's tail…
Under the moon, a ship sets sail.

And where it ends?
The sea decides
The capes it bends,
The grasping tides.

Upon the sky,
A milky eye
Watches ship and crew go by.

Beyond the beach,
Above the waves,
Within the reach
Of Ocean's slaves,

Men sail the sea,
Men sail to see
The lands anew where Man is free.

For Ocean calls,
A splashing voice
That rises, falls.
'My crew, rejoice!

For water deep,
If waters keep
Such fabled horrors, tonight they sleep!

For we, the bold,
Fear not the touch
Of tales of old
And monsters such

That lurk inside,
That hide inside
This endless sea, this salty tide.

No monster, serpent,
No maiden bright,
No wayward current
In the empty night

Could ever scare,
Ever ensnare
Or keep us all from getting there!'

The Captain swears.
The crew, it cheers.
(What fate is theirs,
Poor boys? Such tears

They left ashore,
Are cried ashore
For those who left forever more.)

When, from the crowd,
A voice made rough
By oceans ploughed,
More than enough

To teach him fear
(Such wizened fear)
Of what he knows swims hidden here.

And this he speaks:
'What do you know?
You, child who seeks
A land to sow,

In which to rest
Where farmers rest
When the grave calls them to her breast?

Will you be brave
In deed and speech
If from the wave
The powers reach

And grab us all?
Forsake us all?
When sirens sing and sirens call,

Which of you, boys,
Which of you, men,
Will die as toys
Of Devil's clan,

Sinking deep
In silent sleep,
Caught and dead in sirens' keep?'

'Foolish fellow!'
'Guileless pest!'
The sailors bellow,
The sailors jest.

'Believing lore
And tales of yore,
Of fools like you who came before!'

The sailors mock,
Too young to heed,
A clueless flock
By dream and greed

Told to fare
To siren's lair
And shed, poor wolves, the fleece they wear.

The man, he sighs,
Looks at the sails,
Each time he tries,
Each time he fails.

He takes the helm
When billows whelm
And makes his peace with Ocean's realm.

'Forgive me, Gale,
And spare me, Water.
These sheep who sail
I bring to slaughter.

They die in vain
And die in pain
To teach the others, who'll remain,

To leave the seed
In stories told
To those who lead
Their sailors bold,

Of Nature's plea:
'Respect the sea
And all that lives and dies in me.''

Stories, lass,
They're lessons hidden.
From lips they pass
To ears bidden.

A siren's tail…
A siren's tale.
Under the moon, a ship sets sail.

A wooden shell,
A tiny wonder,
It fights the swell
For land and plunder,

For men who plan,
Who think they can
Steal the shores where day began.

But worry not.
Soon they'll be gone.
In oceans fraught
With Devil's spawn,

On moonlit nights
The northern lights
Shine off the tails of water sprites.

From rocky shores
The sirens call.
Their song now pours
And sailors fall.

Under their spell,
The men, they fell
Into the endless, sodden Hell.

The ship, it sways
In Ocean's keep.
Awake, it plays
Where others sleep.

And at the wheel
The man of steel
Sails wherever sailors will.

Beyond the shore,
Under the sea,
What lived before
Now turns to thee

And singing calls
To salty halls,
Free from life and stony walls:

‘We monsters, ghosts,
We swimming fey
Who stalk the coasts
In search of prey,

From beds of blue,
Now call to you,
Who brave the seas and plough them through,

To ask in awe
If beasts we be
For scale and claw?
For being free?

For monstrous will?
What monster will,
Like Man destroy and rape and kill

What cannot fight,
What will not run?
We ask tonight
To all and none,

When kingdoms crash,
Burn down to ash,
Or islands sink without a splash,

Can you survive?
What world recalls
Those who can’t strive
Beyond safe walls?

Your time will end
As all things tend
To live the truth that doesn’t bend.

But legend, see,
It never dies.
Where currents flee,

A helmsman lies.

And the siren's tale?
A siren's tail
Whips and lives if a ship sets sail!'

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►▼◄

A Fairy Land

Amitabh Vikram

Early morning a miracle happened
Near to the door
A tree in the garden sparkled
Into thousand splendid suns
Like a fairy tale
Dark clouds formed
The parents' room went up in smoke
Many things disappeared in this magic
The children were in awe
Or perhaps they were numb
They saw shiny fruits dripped from a distant tree
They waited for a fairy to come
But a carrion crow flew in a faraway land

►▼◄

Mattie Hornbecker's Other Bag

Brandy L. Schillace

1. Mattie Hornbecker Did Not Like Tourists

Even when she was one.

They destroyed the local color somehow, what with their ball caps and sun-glasses, fanny-packs and sunscreen. The ferry was full of them: generic humans. Why, they could be from *anywhere.*

At least, thought Mattie, *she* was from somewhere normal. Normal, Illinois, to be exact. And as a sensible woman, she brought a little Normal everywhere she went.

'We'll be docking soon, please don't forget your personal items.'

Mattie pulled the knitting bag a little closer. They would be returning by ferry, too, but heaven knew how many other day-trippers to the island might be on and off again by then. Couldn't be too careful.

When the ferry rocked and rolled to a halt, a little knot of people collected around a sign for 'Cave Tour.' Mattie blinked and adjusted her cap, which had gone rather askew on her fluffy white head. The young couple beside her clutched their flimsy clothes in the breeze. Couldn't be bothered to check the weather, she supposed; it was *always* cool by the seaside, but of course you couldn't tell young people anything.

'A bit late, aren't they?' Said a large man wearing a shirt much too small. A sweat stain was forming on the back--shaped rather like a duck. 'We don't have all day.'

But of course they *did* have all day, Mattie corrected silently. That was the point of a day trip. He was old enough to know better, but perhaps he was showing off for his children, a purple-faced boy very likely to out-girth his father and a slouching girl suffering from ennui. She tugged at a lock of limp, blond hair.

'I don't know why we have to go to a cave anyhow. It's just a hole in the ground.'

'It's not in the ground at all, actually!' The bright voice belonged to a slender woman with a rucksack. 'It's right in the side of the granite--and it's considered one of the most unusual cave formations in North America. In fact, very little is known about how granite caves form, but--'

'It's about time,' the Big Man interrupted, waving at the bus. The slender woman hovered for a moment, as though she meant to press on. Mattie nodded to her kindly; it was the right thing to do. After all, it was quite clear she was unmarried and, given her age and interests, would probably stay that way. Mattie adjusted her horn-rims.

'Go on, dear.'

'Oh--Oh, yes,' the woman smiled (desperately, Mattie thought). 'It's just that--well, it's rare. And this one is almost perfectly round. It's famous among cavers, sort of a legend.'

'Cool,' said the young hipster to his girlfriend. She didn't say anything. She was busy trying to climb into his shirt for warmth.

'Hello, there--is this everyone?' The first of two tour guides, male, very tall and impossibly lean. Couldn't be healthy. *Drugs*, Mattie thought. His second-in-command was female--probably. She, too, was rather too lean for common decency, and her haircut was just dreadful. (And that was excepting the very obvious nose ring).

'Ahem,' Big Man cleared his throat. 'You're late. Do you know what time it is?'

'My name is John. This is Lisa,' John avoided the big man and spoke instead to the woman-and-rucksack. 'Sorry for the delay; we had bus trouble.'

'Great,' moaned the daughter. 'We'll end up stuck here.'

'All fixed now,' Lisa said with a lisp. Mattie noted the cause with extreme distaste. She had a *tongue ring*. Of course she did.

'All aboard.'

The seven tourists climbed into the bus, a testament to diesel and paper-tree air freshener. Mattie sat in the back bench seat; she didn't mind. It gave one a better perspective, and usually meant she needn't share. But the slender woman and her desperation had followed.

'So--you like caves?' she asked, shoving her rucksack under the seat. Mattie was forced to put the knitting away, but she suppressed even the hint of a sigh. That would not be proper.

'I think they are lovely,' she said. Because that *was* proper. 'I always try to see things of reputation when traveling.'

'Sure--yes, me too! I'm Sue Sandwich, and I know what you're thinking, but it's really a common name. Somewhere.'

'In Kent, dear. In England. The Earl of Sandwich,' Mattie smiled, and thought how very wrong the young woman was. She couldn't possibly know what Mattie was thinking. If she did, she might have moved her rucksack so she could get on with knitting the stocking-cap for Mr. Burlsworth's second wife. (Complained of cold, she did, all the time.)

'Really? I never could remember the place. Where are you from?'

'Normal. Illinois.'

'Any caves there?'

Mattie wondered if there was a psychological connection between spelunking and longing for matrimony. She didn't say so. She didn't need to. Sue Sandwich could carry a conversation all by herself.

'This cave has two names. Did you know?' Sue unrolled a tattered bit of paper. 'It's called Granite Cave on the brochures. See here? And here? But that isn't what they call it around here--'

'Duh,' said the Hipster. 'Everybody knows that story.'

'What do you call it, then?' Sue chirped, and the girlfriend emerged from the folds of designer punk.

'It's haunted. They call it *Satan's Bedroom,*' she said, but she'd gone a little wrong. The bus mic crackled to life.

'Not *Bedroom*,' the tour guide corrected. 'It's called *Satan's Foyer*.'

Mattie had been busily tucking knitting needles into her oversized, lavender knitting bag, but now she looked up.

'As in front room?'

John smiled, a flash of teeth from the top of his bean-pole body.

'Something like that. Hell's lobby.'

Mattie blinked at him through her spectacles. Her first thought was that it was well passed tea time, and she saw no refreshments forthcoming on this tour.

But her second thought was that hell's lobby was not a pleasant sounding place--and would be very unlikely to have a concierge service.

2. The Road to Granite Save was Not, It Seemed, Meant for Buses

And Big Man's son, it seemed, wasn't made for them either. He had been violet complected when they arrived, but he'd gone a little green. Chartreuse even, Mattie thought, which wasn't even a good color for second-hand dishware.

'Hey driver!' Big Man hadn't bothered to learn the name. 'Can't you see you're making him sick?'

Tour-guide Lisa could see very well, of course; they all could--and hear it too, as the boy was making a gurgling noise. But Mattie felt very sure that the driver was not singly responsible

for his condition. Careful counting of the candy wrappers in his pocket, plus the empty big-gulp soda cup he'd dropped on the floor, ought, in fairness to bear some of the blame.

'We can't stop now. We're on an incline.'

'Man, you *have* to,' The hipsters begged. After all, the incline meant any vomitous utterances from the front would be rolling back their way.

'No, I don't.'

The gurgling boy added a dry *hetch-hetch* to his symphony of disgust, but the bus rattled on.

'Not really much of a tour guide, is he?' Sue Sandwich whispered to Mattie. 'They're supposed to tell us about where we're going.'

As if in answer, Lisa turned in her direction.

'We are going up hill. Then we will go down hill.'

'Duh,' Big Man's daughter sighed, but Mattie waved her comment away.

'Yes. And what excellent hearing you must have--Lisa, was it?' Mattie smiled and set her knitting bag on the floor with a clunk. 'Will the cave be at the bottom of the hill, then?'

'No. It's at the Granite cliffside. You'll see'

Mattie had no doubt that she would. Sue, however, seemed unconvinced.

'Well, but, how do we *get* to the cliffside?'

Lisa's pale, thin lips creased into an equally pale, thin smile.

'A little walk, that's all.'

Mattie had some experience with little walks. When an elderly woman from the knitter's guild said something was 'a little walk,' it usually was. About eight steps to the nearest shaded bench, eleven steps if she was feeling frisky. When a too-tall, too-thin near-teenager said something was a 'little walk,' it was not likely to be little--and not likely to be walking. Just as well she brought sensible shoes.

When the bus spilled them out (and when the purple-chartreuse boy had spilled his lunch), it became quite clear how right Mattie's guess had been. A small sign, hard to see in overgrown pine boughs, announced the 'trail head.'

'Oh, a hike!' Sue Sandwich exclaimed with (unshared) delight.

'You didn't *say* we were hiking.'

Hipster's girlfriend had perfected the effete cadence between threat and a whine. Hipster himself had apparently developed a corresponding tone-deafness.

'Aw, it ain't far--been there loads of times.'

Mattie regarded him with suspicion. If it were true, then he was doubly an idiot for coming unprepared for the weather.

'Better be worth it,' Big Man huffed. 'We spent good money.'

'Wasted it, you mean,' his daughter muttered, now pulling the locks cross-wise.

The guides took no notice, but led the way through the pines and up the crushed gravel track. Well-tended, well-packed. It ought to be, as the brochure insisted the tour ran every day from noon to two. Of course, it was rather well passed two already. In fact, it was a quarter to four. Mattie clucked under her breath--they would be hard pressed to make it back before dark. She would miss her quiz show. A travesty, that. The wind was a bit chilly, and she clutched her brown purse a bit closer--

'Oh dear.'

'What's the matter?' Sue asked. 'Is the walk too much?'

'Mmm? No, not at all,' Mattie's fingers twitched fussily. 'I seem to have left my other bag on the bus.'

'Not to worry! I have everything *and* a kitchen sink in this rucksack,' she patted the bulging bag lovingly. 'What do you need?'

Mattie gave a little dry cough, the closest thing she dared to an indication of annoyance. After all, it wasn't about need. It was about her bag.

'I like to keep it with me, you know. It has all my little things in it.'

'Your knitting, huh? I know exactly what you mean.'

Mattie very much doubted this.

The wind continued to pick up, and above them, the sky had begun to darken considerably.

'Hey, man, I think it's gonna storm--maybe we should just go back to the bus?'

'We can't go back now!' Sue cried. 'We must be almost there, surely!'

'We *are* there,' said Lisa. From behind them. She nodded at her partner, who pulled aside the last pine bough and bowed as though he were a stage manager thanking an audience.

'Welcome to Satan's Foyer.'

'I told you it was a hole,' Big Man's daughter harumphed.

And really, it very much appeared to be one. Mattie sniffed. The trail ended in a flat wall of granite, which stood out pink against the white rock under their feet. The pines which had hailed them on either side dropped away and there was a flat space clear of any foliage. If they had looked behind them, they would have seen--just beyond the tree-tops--a wide sweep of bay and the tidy shoreline. But of course, they had come to look at the cave, and so they did: a perfectly circular aperture that seemed bored right into the cliff-side, a deep dark hole flanked by pink stone under a rolling sky.

Sue Sandwich dug out a worn looking camera.

'Just--Wow.'

Hipster shook his head.

'Looks haunted to me.'

'Who cares? I'm f-f-freezing,' sang the girlfriend, with Big Man's brood providing a chorus of 'Can we leave now?'

'We paid for it. We're going in.'

'Of course,' the guides agreed in sync. 'After you.'

Big Man swaggered forward in the over-done way of a man who hadn't the first clue what he was doing. Mattie twitched her nose at him; the walk had not improved the sweat-stain, either. From behind, the duck-shaped mark had morphed into a full-grown goose. It would surely be a flock by the time they got back.

'Do you have a light?' he asked, hovering at the edge.

'I do!' Sue exclaimed, producing not one but three. 'Here! And here--who else wants one?'

'I'm not going in there,' the girlfriend exclaimed, deciding it was high time threat took over for whine. But above them, a sudden streak of light announced a change of plans, followed by a peal of thunder. Rain, it seemed, was excellent incentive. Sue watched the troupe disappear into the dimness.

'Coming, Mattie?'

'I really need my *other* bag.'

Lisa stretched her long neck, which triple-cracked.

'It's not like you're knitting in the cave--come on.'

'My bag.'

'The storm,' Sue reminded her. 'You can't go back down the path in the rain!'

And, almost on cue, the drops began to fall. Mattie sighed and followed Sue Sandwich into the dim interior of Satan's Foyer...with Lisa right behind.

3. The Cave Was Impressive in Its Way, Mattie Thought

It was dry, at least. The strangely rounded opening was lined with the pink-hued granite, a sort of crystalline frame for the storm passing over the mountain. But black as the sky might be, it was positively blazing in comparison to the surrounding, suffocating dark.

'It's so awful down there,' Hipster's girlfriend chirped. 'It's like a well.'

'Some people think it *was* a well.' Sue Sandwich played her flashlight on the tattered brochure. 'It drops off sharply somewhere around here.'

'Of course it does. That's what you've come to see, isn't it?' John didn't have a flashlight, but seemed to move about very well in the dark without one.

'This is Hell's lobby, remember?' Lisa added, somewhere to Sue's left. 'The rest of the cave is *Hell.'*

'There are children here, you know!' Big Man growled, though Mattie thought he sounded a trifle more concerned than either of his offspring.

'This way, please. The tour has only started.'

'Ahem,' coughed Mattie. The tour guides were flanking them, pushing them on, but she had made up her mind. 'I'm not going without my bag.'

'What?' John turned around in annoyed surprise. *'What* bag?'

'Her blasted knitting,' Lisa muttered, and it didn't require night vision to know she has rolled her eyes as she said it.

'But it's pouring!'

'Not to worry, not to worry,' Mattie tutted. She ducked her white head under Lisa's arm and toddled off toward the entrance. 'I always travel with an umbrella–terribly unpredictable weather on the islands.'

Sue and the others stared after her retreating form, a little square body in frumpy clothes, unfolding her umbrella like a bat's wing. In a moment, she had disappeared into the sheets of rain that belted down the gravel track. Sue felt her heart skip.

'Should we let her go on her own like that? A little old lady could get hurt!'

'Leave her. That makes three a piece, Thelia.'

Big Man started.

'Who–or what–is Thelia?'

'My last name,' Lisa scowled at her partner. 'That's fine, *John.* I'll lead the girls–you take the others.'

The little band descended, walking slowly down smooth granite. Hipster had been separated with difficulty from his girlfriend, who was forced to walk between Sue and Big Man's increasingly reluctant daughter.

'This is a dumb tour. We can barely see anything.'

'You want to see something?' John asked. Then he tilted Big Man's light abruptly upward. The six remaining tourists gasped in unison; the ceiling was a flapping, moving mass of huddled bodies. Hipster's girlfriend shrunk into her carefully arranged infinity scarf.

'*What. Are. Those?*'

Big Man's daughter shrugged.

'Bats. Big deal.'

'Bats! What are they doing up there?' her father gasped, as if allowing bat in the cave was a huge failing of the tour company.

'Waiting,' the tour guides replied in unison.

'For what?'

'For Sunset.' Lisa's voice was almost a hiss of delight. 'They go out and feed at dusk. It's almost time, too.'

All three flashlight beams wandered irresistibly upward. In the pools of light, the bats showed increasing activity. Their ears were pricked up, and they'd begun to make tiny, eerie, chirping sounds–like a swarm of insects.

'Um, what happens to us when they fly out?' Hipster asked. 'I mean–should we–'

'DUCK!' barked Big Man's son and–in a rare display of momentum–he did just that as a million flying rodents went swooping down on them.

'AAAiiiieeeeeeee!' Girlfriend climbed over-top of Sue, who toppled over under the weight of her pack. Flashlights went rolling, and the train-roar of wings thundered on for a full five minutes. Sue covered her head and her ears, waiting, but in their wake even the silence was deafening.

'Are they gone?' She scrambled into a sitting position—but could not get her bearings. 'I can't see anything!'

'Me neither!'

'What's happened to the lights?'

The cave had gone completely, utterly dark. It assaulted the senses like a velvet-covered hammer, leaving only pulsing ripples before their eyes–the trace surges of rapidly beating hearts.

'John? Lisa?' Sue asked groping along the floor.

'Did they leave us?' Hipster whispered. But the dark whispered back, a strange throb of disembodied voiced.

'We will never leave you.'

'Where are you?' Big Man gulped.

'*Here.'*

'And here.'

'*And here*.'

'Is this some kind of joke??'

'Not at all,' giggled a voice like Lisa's. 'It's much more a *game*.'

From the distant corners, they could hear a heavy flapping, like a bat but far bigger.

'Something's got me!' Hipster yelped, and in that moment, Sue finally locked her fingers about the canister of her Coleman. She flipped it around, shining it in the direction of his whimpering–

'It's only me.'

John's fingers had closed tight around Hipster's throat and he lifted him from the floor.

'What do you want? Money? You want our money?'

'Don't be silly,' Lisa hissed, appearing at Sue's elbow.

'L-L-Lisa?'

'*Lisa* was the tour guide I had for lunch.'

There was silence. Then there was lot of shouting, and some whimpering, and a variety of other rather juvenile behavior…

Or at least, Mattie thought so. She was standing just at the entrance of the cave, thinking how unfortunate it was that young people always lost their heads in a crisis. What *were* they teaching at school these days?

'Have I missed the tour?'

All eyes, especially those of the would-be-captors, turned toward the sound of an umbrella being carefully shaken out. Sue still clutched the flashlight, but her hand was shaking too much to use it. The not-Lisa grasped her wrist and held it firm, pointing the beam at Mattie Hornbecker, her hat askew and her hair mussed from wind and rain–but looking not much the worse for wear.

'You haven't missed it at all,' she hissed, her tongue ring *and* her teeth making it hard to speak plainly.

'Really, dear, that kind of lisp is most unseemly.'

Sue struggled with words of warning: *They're dangerous*!

'Yes,' Mattie agreed, giving the too-thin woman an appraising glance. 'And badly dressed, with unsightly haircuts, dismal attitudes and a speech impediment…'

'Excuse me?'

'And in sore need of a good bath,' Mattie continued.

That had done it. The creature–for she was looking less human by the moment–launched herself forward. There was a swoosh, followed by a splash… and then, the unmistakable sound of sizzling.

Thelia made a gasping, gulping sound and held her hands to her liquefying face.

'Holy Water,' Mattie explained, holding the dripping vial. 'And vinegar.'

The doused creature didn't respond, but instead sunk to its knees and began writhing awfully. *Tut, tut*, Mattie muttered, and then went about the sordid business of plunging a bamboo knitting needle into Thelia's black heart.

This, it seemed, had gotten not-John's attention. But he wasn't going to waste his time. In a twisted writhing of bent limbs, he'd transformed. Not into a bat; that was the mistaken reporting of myth and not very kind to actually bats. There was something far more insect-like about the leather-winged monstrosity, and his many-eyed face split in a seam of teeth as he darted for the exit. Mattie clucked and pulled a handful of powder from her bag. She blew upon it, sending a cloud into the path of the retreating creature, who fell to the floor in a fit of coughing. Knitting needle two was produced, and Mattie served him as she had Thelia. Except that he burst into flames immediately afterward.

Silence reigned for a full two minutes. And then, as was his wont, Big Man asked the important questions.

'What? What? *What*?'

'Vampires.' Mattie brushed flecks of charred bat remains from her woolen skirt.

'But–you–needles–powder?' Sue managed.

'Bamboo. Good for complex knitting patterns, too.' Mattie said, tucking the Holy Water into her purse. 'The other trick I owe to Miss Roberta Shelton. She makes pulverized garlic powder by special order. From her own garden, you know. Mixed with vinegar, it's quite good on spinach.'

Sue opened and shut her mouth silently, and in the vacuum, Big Man's daughter picked up the thread.

'But how did you *know?'*

From the sound of it, she wasn't bored anymore.

'The young lady called this cave Satan's Bedroom, as I recall.' She nodded to Hipster's girlfriend, who had the poor sense to go catatonic.

'But *they* called it Satan's Foyer, and *that w*as the name of a vampire coven destroyed here in the 70s. I imagine they were hoping to rebuild it, starting with the young females.'

'What about us?' Big Man asked, but Mattie was too well bred to suggest that he, at least, would have been a main course. His daughter had fewer reservations; she pushed past him, her blue eyes round saucers of appreciation.

'Who are *you*, though?'

'Mattie Hornbecker, first class, of the Knitters Guild of Vampire Hunters, Normal, Illinois,' Mattie handed her a folded card. On the front was a ball of yarn, on the back was the number of its recruiting office. 'Re-establishing normal, since 1854.'

'You're amazing.'

'Sometimes,' Mattie agreed with appropriate humility. 'It is much easier when I bring the bag; I hate to be unprepared.'

'You're still amazing,' the girl repeated, and Mattie thought perhaps there was some hope for the youth of tomorrow after all.

It was time to go home; the storm was letting up even as the sun set behind the ridge. Mattie had long ago missed her quiz show, of course, but there was still time for *At the Auction* and the hotel kitchen wouldn't close for another hour or so. She stepped over the smoking bat-shaped ash, and around the oily slick that had once been Thelia. It was a waste of two good knitting needles, she thought. But a good cup of tea would do wonders–and perhaps a nice bit of beef.

It was a good day's work, after all.

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The Story Ends Here

Amitabh Vikram

Her sensuous body must've tempted everyone for sure,
That's why they had desired their wives less than a whore.

'Her beautiful body made her a hooker,' they said,
'Lest, she'd been someone's wife; we hadn't paid.'

They liked to consume her instead for pleasure;
And wanted to taste her for their good measure.

They wanted to forget their pain and wound;
They desired fun, and for play became hound.

Her love made their troubles feel much less.
Their problems of lives were well harnessed.

Their countless woes and innumerable strife,
Made her their toy and they hit their stride.

She resisted a lot, but all went in vain.
All became sheriffs and nobody wrote complaint.

They softened her rage with little love and money;
Little pushing and patting made her everyone's honey.

►▼◄

The Lost World

Amitabh Vikram

What happened to the world; clouds shed no rain?
No tongue speaks a word; and every hope is faint.
Decency is degraded; every equation has changed.
Humility has become vanity; and all colors fade.
Sincerity is now boring; frivolity is so cool.
If you are honest then you're the biggest fool.
People are lost; new machines are found.
No one listens even how loud is your sound.
Criminals replace heroes; a lewd remark is wit
On each virtuous lip sensuality always sits.
Weapons rein the city, and life is frost.
Humility is a pity; and humanity is lost.

Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi is university faculty and assistant professor of linguistics at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, India; and author of two books on lesser known Indian languages: *A Grammar of Hadoti* and *A Grammar of Bhadarwahi.* His Hindi poetry collection titled *Chinaar kaa Sukhaa Patta* (means. Dried Leaves of Chinar) is a notable contribution to contemporary Hindi poetry. He has published around 100 poems in different anthologies, journals, and magazines worldwide. Until recently, his poem 'Mother' has included as a prologue to *Motherhood and War: International Perspectives (Eds.)*, Palgrave Macmillan Press. 2014.

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Book Reviews

Death's Summer Coat: What the History of Death and Dying Can Tell Us about Life and Living

Brandy Schillace
London: Elliot and Thompson Limited, 2015
266 pages

We are all aware of the well-known adage that there are two things in life that one cannot avoid, death and taxes. However, that does not stop us trying to avoid both. This book then is about the former and contemporary Western cultures avoidance or non-acceptance of it. The volume engages with this issue via the authors encounters with death both on a personal and a professional level, being an historian of medicine as well as experiencing the recent loss of beloved grandparents. Where some books might be prone to too many personal digressions this one skillfully plots a course between subjective experience and historical and anthropological research so that examples from other times and cultures are made more vital and relevant through their connection to actual contemporary experience. The book is divided into sections that take us through the various processes of death from dying and death to burial and funerals, and of course mourning and memorials. It opens with what one might call, the invention of the burial or funeral ('Dead and Knowing it'), then examples of burial practices from non-Western cultures ('Eat Your Dead'), it moves on to changing perceptions of death and mourning, from the Black Death upwards, in Europe and America, culminating with the Victorian obsession with momento-mori ('Through a Glass Darkly,' and 'Dying Victorian' respectively). It then moves to the ways in which our perception of the 'body' of death, the corpse, has developed, largely through its increasing medicalization (Death at the Anatomy Theatre) and how the humanity has gone out of death (Death and the Doctor) and concluding on how 'natural deaths' can bring life back into death (Death Comes to Dinner). Underpinning the text is the dichotomy between death as an event or process, whether the medical can also be spiritual and if the evolution of death has stopped in the 21st century or are we at a staging post before moving on to something else?

Considering these in more detail the main text is preceded by an introduction, which begins to give form to the authors reasoning for embarking on the volume which is the sense that contemporary Western culture finds death as something of an embarrassment and a failure of the capitalist teleology. As Schillace observes in regard to the cultural silence around mortality:

We die. We know this, in principle, and yet in the Western world we don't live with the idea of death. We refrain from thinking about it, we avoid reflecting upon it, and death is something most of us simply don't talk about.

This is an important point for the book, and it is one mentioned frequently, that death has died for 21st century Western culture and that the consequence is that we no longer know how to live, at least in terms of compassion and social bonding. This is something of a repeated and well known mantra in regard to Modernism and capitalism and even Post- Modernism but that does not make it any the less true.

The first chapter then begins to chart both the 'invention' of funerals in Western culture, between 30,000 and 170,000 years ago, their evolution and comparison with those from other

cultures. Primarily this is to establish the importance of ritual and rites of passage as central to any sense of identity and social belonging and the difficulties of negotiating these in relation to the modern world. In fact deviations bring their own problems which can not only avoid death but attempt to defer it forever, 'The loss (or at least the abridgment) of our grief culture explains something else too: the increasingly popular focus of stalling death entirely and living in a medically extended eternity.' In contrast to a perceived loss of ritual in the 21st century the next chapter opens with the subheading 'Death and the Departed across the globe' and proceeds to list various unusual examples of the ways in which other cultures have dealt with the demise of their loved ones. And so we are told respectively of 'sky burials,' as practiced by Tibetan Buddhists which consists of them 'dissecting the dead into small pieces and giving the remains to the birds,' the Ilongot, from the Southern Sierra Madre, who practice 'grief rage' where 'after a death the men in the village felt compelled – irresistibly driven - to headhunt, the Wari, residents of the Brazilian rain forests, who 'disposed of dead bodies primarily through mortuary cannibalism' though 'only relatives (but not immediate relations…) eat the body.' From here we move to preserving the dead and mummification where we learn of the Toraja of Sulawesi, Indonesia who hang coffins from cliff sides or inter 'remains inside of growing trees,' or the Merina of Madagascar who rewrap the dead in new shrouds followed by 'dancing them in the streets,' and ending with the Mexican Day of the Dead where one eats with the deceased. All of these are brought together as examples of how various societies 'help' their ancestors move on to whatever the next plane of existence might be and subsequently ensure they don't come back to disturb the living. Chapter three returns to Europe and America to show how historical practices and rituals have changed and been increasingly rationalized up until the Victorian period. Beginning with the Black Death, beginning in 13th-14th centuries, this section discusses the ways that death has moved out of the lives of the living. With bodies piling up to almost 600 a day in certain areas churches, at the height of the plague epidemic, could no longer cope with the amount of dead. With corpses lining the streets and thrown into mass graves the old rituals could no longer take place and 'coffin paths' came into being so the deceased could be transported well away from the sight of the healthy. The Reformation further removed the spiritual from this final journey and with the Enlightenment death came under the auspices of science rather than God. By the 18th century burial was not so much about the how good the recently deceased had been but how much wealth and power their family had. As Schillace observes,' something new arose: a commodity culture of death. What the eighteenth century citizen *spent* upon the funeral became significant.'

The next chapter focuses on the oddity that was the Victorian period, an age with one foot in the past and one in the future and where science and magic existed alongside each other (spiritualism was considered a pseudo-science at this time). It was also a time of the burgeoning middle classes who no longer wanted to be buried alongside the poor but wanted to show their money even in death and so new necropolis' were constructed outside church ground at various sites including Kensal Green, Highgate, Norwood and Glasgow. But the funeral as a singular event was not enough and so an industry in momento mori and death objects arose, fetishized objects that represented both wealth and the recently deceased. From heirlooms to lockets of hair and to jewelry containing something belonging to the dearly beloved, grief become a commodity in its own right. As part of this particular codes of dress were proscribed during mourning:

In the first year of mourning a widow wore black crepe…in her second….black but might be trimmed with white collars or cuffs. 'ordinary mourning' was next…still black, but now the fabric could be shiny – and then 'half mourning', when gray or purple was permitted.

Alongside this there was also a huge demand for memorial photography, images of the dead displayed as though they were still alive. Most striking of these are the images of babies

laying in their best clothes as though sleeping or laying in their mothers arms. All these objects carried a weight beyond their physical substance, able to 'collect trauma around them like memory sponges.' However this fascination was not to last and as the author speculates:

The Victorian grief culture may have fallen victim to the speeding up of life and the stripping away of the last vestiges of magic…Sigmund Freud's theories would replace the science of the mind that made room for object-memory, and by the end of the nineteenth century, much of the relic culture of death had gone.

Chapter 5 returns to the body itself and examines the rise of anatomical study and the dissection of corpses. The UK passed the Anatomy Act in 1832 to increase the amount of cadavers available for dissection. This was still largely considered a radical thing to do but it signaled an official acceptance of the increasing medicalization of death. The 'father' of anatomy, Andreas Vesalius revolutionized the practice in the 1530's and, as an aside, marked out one of the more curious by products of the process, the importance of the identities of those deemed acceptable for the knife: societal outcasts. Vesalius chose criminals whilst the Anatomy Act allowed for the use of unclaimed paupers bodies. Similarly in America, at the same time, it was 'Potters Field and the cities so called Negroes Burial Ground.' Whilst it clearly marked its subjects out as being outsiders it also produced another group of undesirables, the infamous 'Resurrection men,' such as Burke and Hare who procured cadavers fresh from the grave. Although dissection can be seen as the triumph of reason over superstition it also signals a debate which continues today in that it represents 'a contest of sorts between the medical professional and the public over the sanctity of death.' The author sees this as a step towards the dehumanization's of the body (patient) under the medical gaze and points out that, at least in the 21st century, 'nothing 'new' is discovered in anatomy; rather it is a 'new' experience for students.' This process can be seen to be increased by the use of synthetic corpses which reproduce life-like skin, muscle and tendons but also the development of SynDavers that will also breath and bleed like real humans. The resultant distancing of the doctor from living, messy humans is a theme which is picked up and continued in the rest of the chapter which focuses on the relationship between doctors, patients and death. This largely takes the form of a consideration of end of life or palliative care and what might be considered a 'good' death, and this again is a theme that permeates the book. Contemporary medicine is seen to be motivated by saving life at all costs rather than ensuring the quality of life, as the author comments, 'when all else fails, medicine aims to deliver the body from the pain of death, if not from death itself, and finally even to take away the pain of grief through psychiatric medicine.' And this too points to the purpose of the study, for death is experienced by all those involved in it, not just the family but those that have loved and cared for them; it is the process of death which includes care, end of life and mourning. The notion of a 'good' death and the fulfillment of a natural process is further hindered by the intrusion of the law in defining when someone is actually dead, or when medicine has failed. In the 1950's it was no longer deemed that the lack of a heartbeat signaled death, but also the cessation of breathing, reflexes and electroencephalograph activity. By 1968 this was refined to the lack of function in organ, brain or other with no hope of it returning that meant death. In 2007 this become 'total brain failure' but even this is now being contested with patients families utilizing legal channels to have such decision recanted so that their loved ones can remain in stasis on life support machines indefinitely. It would seem that the notion of a 'good' or humane death has been lost in the quest for sustaining life at all costs. This objectification of the patient sees death as a failure and loses sight of the basic human truths that when all else fails we need 'compassion…warmth and the ability to feel' with those that are suffering.

This chapter ends and the final one begins with the hope/plea of whether we are able 'make new rituals, forge new paths, try new things.' Death comes to Dinner is then a final call

for contemporary society to refamiliarize itself with death and to embrace it closely rather than push it away. This, the author tells us, can be achieved in various ways with the first one being the funeral itself and that rather than relying on others to do this, often extremely expensively and impersonally, we should take control of it ourselves. The best way to do this is through 'green' or 'natural burials,' details for which can be found in the *Natural Death Handbook* which moves the service back into the home and proposes more personal and competitively priced options. We should also give ourselves time to grieve and adopt whatever methods seem appropriate, whether it's through personal rituals, momento mori or unusual memorials. Then we should do more to invite death into our lives before the event, so as to prevent it being an unwelcome stranger but rather an expected friend. This, we are told, can be done through attending events and meetings such as the Death Salon, Dinners with Death and also Death Cafés and provide spaces of discussion and companionship, so that we may better acquaint ourselves, not just with the living but death as well. This pointed further made by Schillace with the final sentence of the chapter where she states, 'we cannot wait until death happens to talk about death. It's a bit like waiting until winter to gather in the grain.'

A brief 'Epilogue' completes the volume and gives something of a summery to the authors thoughts on the subject, that death, like life is about storytelling and that we cope better with both by giving them some form of meaningful narrative, not as belonging to someone else but as something in which we are constantly and intimately engaged, as she observes, 'in our approach to death, as in our approach to life, I believe in better stories – and plenty of revision.'

It is fascinating book, especially if one is new to the topic, and has a nice amount of books mentioned in the text which one can use for further research and investigation. The personal touches keep the subject matter grounded in the everyday experience of our own lives and provides much material for our own, inevitable ongoing encounters with death and mourning.

Simon Bacon is an independent researcher specializing in vampires, zombies and all forms of the undead in popular culture. He is currently working on an edited collection, *Little Horrors: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Anomalous Children and the Construction of Monstrosity*, due out in 2016.

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Gothic Evolutions: Poetry, Tales, Context, Theory

Edited by Corinna Wagner
Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2014
xxiii + 564 pages

Books, web sites, television shows, cinema and music all confirm that even in these early years of the twenty-first century, Western culture remains fascinated with the 'dark side' of human nature. Indeed, in this technological era in which one may track others' movements with GPS, be 'connected' and Skype face-to-face with people from Canada to New Zealand, and send or obtain information almost instantaneously on the internet, many people still harbour an attraction to the 'unknowable,' the enigmatic, the incomprehensible; this sense of an 'unknowable' is often associated with a vague feeling of something 'unspeakable,' and, more often than not, malevolence. Moreover, one can turn on the television, buy a DVD, open a book (or, probably, now, a Kindle) and encounter stories about ghosts, ghost 'hunters,' paranormal

activity, vampires, zombies, and witches, all inheritors of a subversive, creative movement that began to brew in the eighteenth-century. Indeed, one of the best (and most intriguing) features of the gothic genre is its malleability; the gothic is easily adaptable in form and content, as well as time and place. This malleability renders 'gothic' (in)famously difficult to pin down, as editor Corinna Wagner reminds readers in her incisive introduction; but this elusiveness, of course, renders the gothic all the more attractive.

Wagner's and Broadview Press' edition is a wonderful showcase of the various guises and meanings that the gothic assumes. As the title indicates, *Gothic Evolutions: Poetry, Tales, Context, Theory* charts the transformations of gothic literature in Western culture, from the mid-eighteenth century—starting with the Graveyard School of poetry's Thomas Grey (1716-71) and his 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' (1751) to the fin-de-siècle poetry of Charlotte Mew (1869-1928), who is represented by 'In Nunhead Cemetery' (1916) and 'Madeleine in the Church' (also 1916). Moreover, Wagner's anthology assembles some of the best-known, 'foundational' tales of the genre—such as E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'The Sandman' (1816) to Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Pit and the Pendulum' (1845)—while (perhaps) introducing the reader to some relatively obscure but equally delightful and chilling pieces, like Charles Lever's 'Post-Mortem Recollections of a Medical Lecturer,' (1836), which accounts an oppressive experience of being buried alive. In addition to an erudite introduction that details gothic's recurring obsessions—doppelgängers, sanity, consciousness, desire, transgression, sexuality, death—Wagner also furnishes readers with 'A Chronology of Major Social, Political, Literary, and Cultural Events' from 1742-1918, including the many revolutions (industrial, technological, political) and social turbulence from which the gothic emerged. The editor provides detailed head-notes to the authors and their work, and the poetry and stories appear in the anthology in the order in which they were originally published. Indeed, Wagner pays much attention to chronology, adhering to the aim of showcasing 'evolutions' of the genre. However, the anthology contains an alternate table of contents that arranges the works according to theme, such as 'Gender,' 'Medicine, Science, and the Body,' and 'Uses of the Past/ Medievalism.' Of course, readers can also take a 'free-range' approach to reading, as I did, moving in and out of the tales and poems as one desires.

Most of the work, however, dates from the nineteenth-century, and is particularly grounded in British Romanticism, a period in which the gothic flourished. The 'big six poets' all make an appearance: William Wordsworth's eerie poem 'The Thorn' (1798); Samuel Taylor Coleridge's hypnotic nightmares are represented by 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1800 version); John Keats' worry about female sexuality manifests in poems like 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' (1819); Percy Bysshe Shelley's Elizabethan 'throw-back' play *The Cenci* (1819) is printed in full; and, of course, Byron ('mad, bad, and dangerous to know'), who became synonymous with darkness and transgression, whose 'The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale' (1813) is also included. Victorian masters of the eerie are also well-represented, including Sheridan Le Fanu's 'Green Tea' (1872), Emily Dickinson's masterful meditations about death (and the life of the mind), in poems dating from 1862-7, and Henry James' 'The Way It Came' (1896). While many of the authors in the anthology are British or American, the anthology extends its borders (like the gothic) and incorporates literature from non-English speaking parts of the world. France's 'enfants terribles' appear, with a tale by the Marquis de Sade and several of Baudelaire's more audacious poems from *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857). British Romanticism was greatly influenced by German fiction and philosophy, as evidenced by E. T. A. Hoffmann's story (already mentioned). Also featured are Russia's Ivan Turgenev and his story 'The Dream' (1876) as well as two poems, and Japan's Izumi Kyōka, whose 'The Surgery Room' (1895) conceals a vital secret linked to a patient's refusal of anaesthetic.

Indeed, the anthology emphasizes gothic's obsession with sexuality and transgression, particularly female sexuality and transgression. Almost every poem betrays this fixation, from Coleridge's 'Christabel' (1816), to Keats' 'Lamia' (1820), Christina Rossetti's 'The Goblin Market' (1862), and Charles Baudelaire's 'The Vampire' (1861) and 'The Metamorphoses of the Vampire' (1866; this last poem could not be published in France until 1949). Evidently the idea of women sucking the life from people was a commonplace terror. The anthology also reveals another gothic obsession, one with medicine. Part of this fascination may relate to the emphasis upon the body in gothic literature; however, the fascination is tempered by an equally powerful repulsion about the doctor and his work. In addition to the many stories that feature doctors, several are written by doctors—for example, Silas Weir Mitchell's 'The Case of George Dedlow' (1866) (Weir Mitchell himself and his controversial 'rest-cure' is later trounced by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' [1892], also included in this anthology).

Broadview Press editions—in addition to its mandate to re-publish non-canonical, or 'forgotten' literary texts—provides readers with a wealth of secondary material, to situate the texts (or genre, in this case) in the eras in which they were created. As Wagner points out in her introduction, the gothic genre provided not only entertainment and explorations of the 'unknown'; it also masked trenchant critiques of social, political, and economic issues, from the maltreatment of women to the subjugation of others by colonialism. Wagner provides excerpts from key critical and theoretical texts that inform, analyze, and contribute to the aesthetics of the gothic; the selections of background sources comprise four appendices. The first, entitled 'Political Context and the History of Ideas,' ranges from Hobbes' Leviathan (1651) and its detailing of the body politic and social contract theory, to Jeremy Bentham's plan for prison reform: the panopticon (1791). The selections in this appendix emphasize the ways in which power is constructed, exercised, and maintained, with the pieces making a case for state power (Bentham) or exposing it (Marx and Engels' excerpt from *The Communist Manifesto* [1848]). 'Aesthetic Theory and the Gothic,' includes two seminal writings that helped fashion gothic aesthetic: Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757)* and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790). The third appendix,

'Science, Medicine, and the Gothic,' contains texts that attempt to elucidate the human psyche, particularly its 'perverseness.' The final appendix, 'Critical Theory and the Gothic,' includes excerpts from seminal works, like Sigmund Freud's 'The Uncanny' (1919), in which he identifies a key component of the gothic, the *Unheimlich*, or the uncanny, in his interpretation of Hoffmann's 'The Sandman.' Also found in this appendix are texts by Michel Foucault, whose theories about the functions and constructions of power, discipline, surveillance, and sexuality yield many interpretations for the gothic. Included here are excerpts from his essay 'Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias' (1967), in which he argues for the significance of liminal spaces, and a sample from *Discipline and Punish* (1975), in which he historicizes the apparatus of power and its treatment of bodies in Western culture, from medieval and early modern displays of power and subjection of citizens (e.g. public hangings) and to the eighteenth-century turn to the panopticon and surveillance.

The anthology is interspersed with reproductions of paintings that reinforce the haunting, atmospheric nature of the gothic, particularly Giovanni Battista Piranesi's 'The Drawbridge,' (1761), which appears quite modern and machine-like with its repetition of (apparently) broken bridges and platforms (this image is also the text's cover). As with any collections, choices are made, and fans of the genre might quarrel with this or that. For example, I would have enjoyed more pages from Burke or Kant's philosophies, or more of Freud's 'The Uncanny,' all of which are so inescapable when writing or thinking about anything gothic; and I could have done without all of Shelley's *The Cenci*, for a few more tales—Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*,

for example, or Oscar Wilde's wickedly funny 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' (although, perhaps these are more readily available to the public). While the anthology is a scholarly one, it also celebrates the gothic, and will engross anyone who loves to succumb to unsettling tales.

Janice Zehentbauer recently graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. Her doctoral thesis examines the figure of the *migraineur* in British and European fiction and life-writing of the late-nineteenth century, as well as neurological treatises and journal articles regarding migraine and its 'allied disorders.' She is the co-author (with Cristina Santos) of the article 'Lady of Perpetual Virginity: Jessica's Presence in *True Blood*,' a part of a collection of essays entitled *Virgin Envy*, to be published in 2016 by the University of Regina Press.

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The Origins of Monsters: Image and Cognition in the First Age of Mechanical Reproduction

David Wengrow
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014
xvi + 162 pages

David Wengrow's *The Origins of Monsters: Image and Cognition in the First Age of Mechanical Reproduction* is based on a series of lectures – part of the Rostovtzeff Lectures series – given at New York University in 2011. As a lecture series turned into a fairly short book, it's more thought-provoking than exhaustive, an example of one way to look at the origins of monstrous images in prehistory and early history.

Wengrow focuses his attention on art from the Bronze Age (3,000—1,200 BCE), particularly but not exclusively the developing urban civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean world. Artifacts from this period, including bronze vessels, carvings and seals, show an increasing range of 'composite' animals – monsters such as griffons that combine the features of more than one type of animal, or of animals and humans. Wengrow explores the connections between changing technology, changing cognition and the development of the monstrous image.

Central to Wengrow's discussion is the idea of the 'epidemiology of culture,' a concept usually applied to the spread of language. In essence, Wengrow is asking what it is about the depictions of composite monsters that make them so popular and persistent, and why they spring up when they do.

Wengrow begins by covering the history of these images, beginning with the Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods – although people who aren't specialists in these periods often associate them with 'shamanism' and human-animal hybrids, he contends that in fact these types of images are relatively rare in this part of prehistory. From there, he looks at composite creatures on artifacts from early dynastic Egypt, the Near East, Greece and China. Wengrow argues that these images often go together with developing urban culture, arguing that 'none of the regions I have mentioned adopted the core features of urban civilization without also establishing a visual repertoire of fantastic, composite creatures.'

These creatures served several roles – for example, as guardian divinities or demons, or as indicators of exotic outsideness and therefore prestige. Their function was explicitly tied to

their paradoxical nature as images that both engaged the mind's capacity to recognize living creatures and confounded it with their impossibility.

What is it, then, about these images that ties them to the spread of the urban civilizations of the Bronze Age? Wengrow suggests that composite images rely on a universal human sense of 'intuitive biology' that allows viewers to assign composite creatures the properties of the creatures they borrow parts from even though they have never actually encountered them. In contrast to this intuitive understanding of the composite animal as an animal, there is also a historically-contingent element at work: specifically, that the act of dividing the images of animals into discrete parts and then recombining them was particularly well-suited to the kind of perception needed to understand the world within developing proto-state systems.

For Wengrow, then, the development of the composite animal image is an instance of the historical – rather than evolutionary – development of human cognition; these creatures are now part of the way humans see the world, but it took a specific set of historical circumstances to develop the ability to think about them.

Wengrow stops short of arguing that humans in the earliest phases of urban civilization were 'thinking with monsters,' but the thought is there, unverifiable – as is the nature of most speculation about early human cognition -- but interesting.

The Origin of Monsters is a provocative look at the origin and meaning of one of the most ubiquitous types of monstrous image in archaeology, as well as a fascinating overview of the evidence for readers from outside the field.

James Holloway studied received his PhD in archaeology from Cambridge University. He teaches history and works as a freelance writer. Interests include medieval burial practice and the representation of archaeology in the media, especially horror, fantasy and science fiction.

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Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Third edition
Robert Louis Stevenson
Edited by Martin A. Danahay
Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2015
i + 230 pages

My first encounter with Robert Louis Stevenson's short novel, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, was as a young child tuning in to the Saturday-morning cartoons in the 1970s, watching Bugs Bunny run away from the suddenly, startlingly green Mr Hyde (1955's 'Hyde and Hair'). From this and other sources of popular culture, people who have never read the novel itself are likely familiar with the tale of the doctor whose ambitious scientific experiments transform him into a menacing, creaturely 'other.' From the moment of its publication in January 1886, Stevenson's mysterious and anxious tale of doubles, violence, and identity seized the public and seeped into the cultural imaginary.

The story itself is constructed as a mystery, interweaving the framing devices of detective fiction and the gothic genre, as Stevenson draws out the suspense regarding the 'strange' identity of Mr. Hyde. (Included in this edition's Appendix F is a parody from *Punch*, which appeared quickly on the heels of the novel in February 1886, which delights in the

elusive narrative: 'Don't you recognize me?' [asked the little old creature in the baggy clothes]. 'Mr. R. L. Stevenson says I mustn't,' was the weary response; 'for, if I did, I should spoil the last chapter' [140]). Through the perspective of Mr. Utterson, the reader learns of a disturbing story about Mr. Hyde, a short account told to him by a colleague (the characters are mostly males, here; a maid makes a brief appearance when witnessing a murder). This introduction to the ghastly actions of Mr. Hyde stimulates Utterson to conduct investigations of his own regarding Mr. Hyde, which leads to more stories-within-the-story: witness-reports, murder case histories, letters and wills that contribute to unravelling the mystery, while at the same time sustaining suspense.

Even though the tale of Jekyll and Hyde remains very well-known, Danahay's third edition of *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* reminds us that the novel was very much a creation of its time. Late-nineteenth century Britain was an era of great strife: class structures and social roles were being challenged by women, industrial labourers, and people subjugated by the British empire. New technologies, like the telegraph and the railway, facilitated travel and communication but also forced people into rapid lives, while urban centres like London became simultaneously sprawling and overcrowded. Neurology was emerging as its own (vexed) field of study, yielding influential findings about the brain and nervous system by physicians such as John Hughlings-Jackson, David Ferrier (whose vivisection experiments were generally decried), and William Richard Gowers. While the general public, intellectuals, and artists were attracted by the findings of neurology, others were anxious that this new science, which increasingly 'located' human abilities like speech in the brain, would undermine notions of individuality, identity, and free will. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* repeatedly manifests these and other anxieties beset by the age, and the appendices of this third edition give contemporary readers a sense of the milieu in which Stevenson created and published his novel.

One of the most delightful distinguishing features of the Broadview Press is the additional source material that accompanies the primary text. Danahay offers scholars and general readers alike a wide range of secondary readings to situate Stevenson's *Strange Case*. For example, in an appendix entitled 'Victorian Psychology'—another emerging medical discipline of the nineteenth-century—Danahay introduces readers to excerpts from physicians and scientists' work, including Henry Maudsley's 'The Double Brain,' (1889), F. H. Myers' 'Multiplex Personality,' (1886) and Richard Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1903). These attempted to account for a person's personality, as well as how 'disorders' of the two hemispheres of the brain produced strong emotions, like melancholia, and conditions, like 'mania,' while the short excerpt from Krafft-Ebing explores notorious cases of violence 'lust murders.' Two other appendices overlap with this fascination with and anxiety about the psyche: items related to the 1888 Jack-the-Ripper murders, and theories about 'degeneration.' Newspaper accounts and poetry from *Punch* render Stevenson's story all the more prescient in relation to the murders in Whitechapel, as they convey the urgency, immediacy, and very real horror of the crimes. The other related appendix, 'Degeneration and Crime,' includes selections from Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotion in Man and Animals* (1872), Gina Lombroso Ferrero's summaries of her father's work (Cesare Lombroso) regarding phrenology and the identification of the physical traits of criminals (1911), and Max Nordeau's *Degeneration* (1892). Also included, in a section about London in the 1880s, is an extract William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), which purports to expose the harsh conditions of the working class, but instead reveals unease regarding class difference and reinscribes colonial tenets and racism by comparing the poor to those 'lost' in 'Darkest Africa.' The final appendix, 'The Victorian Gentleman: Body and Clothing,' also highlights issues of class differences and class 'profiling,' with some articles by Stevenson himself, and others, that

reflect upon the ways in which one may identify (and interrogate) a 'proper' gentleman; a category, as noted by Danahay, that is blurred throughout the novel and strongly contested in late-Victorian Britain.

Other appendices lend greater understanding to the creation of the novel itself and its immediate, immense popularity. Stevenson's article 'A Chapter on Dreams (1888) attests to the author's continuing interest in sleeping, waking, and conscience, and also offers some insight into his thoughts about story-telling. A selection of Stevenson's letters lend a glimpse of the man himself, while the short story 'Markheim' (1884) and a small section of the play *Deacon Brodie* (1879) feature the author's obsession with doubling. A stage version of Stevenson's work was quickly produced in America in 1887, produced by Richard Mansfield (1854-1907) and introduced in Boston and New York in 1887. Danahay includes some transcription a prompt book, (one of Mansfield's, now held in the Smithsonian), which reveals how the novel was adapted for the stage; a major addition includes a central female character.

This third edition by Danahay and the Broadview Press only attests to the enduring fascination with Stevenson's work. Danahay himself notes the some of the alterations made for this edition; a key change includes striking the article 'The' from the title (note that now it is called *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*). According to the editor, Stevenson originally published the work without the definite article, and referred to his story as his 'strange case;' perhaps the absence of a definite article is less limiting and hints to the plurality of the text. While today we may be uncannily familiar with the tale, this captivating edition heightens all the more the (intoxicating?) hold Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde have on our imagination.

Janice Zehentbauer recently graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. Her doctoral thesis examines the figure of the *migraineur* in British and European fiction and life-writing of the late-nineteenth century, as well as neurological treatises and journal articles regarding migraine and its 'allied disorders.' She is the co-author (with Cristina Santos) of the article 'Lady of Perpetual Virginity: Jessica's Presence in *True Blood*,' a part of a collection of essays entitled *Virgin Envy*, to be published in 2016 by the University of Regina Press.

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Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimms

Edited by Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhill
Detroit, IL: Wayne State University Press, 2012
358 pages

The introduction to this collection of essays (an introduction aptly and playfully entitled 'Once Upon a Queer Time'), poses a challenge to the academic community: where, in in the realm of Grimm-related folklore studies, are all the queer analyses and interpretations? The lack certainly has little to do with a want of fertile material. As Turner and Greenhill point out, the Grimm Brothers were heavily involved in a project of 'excising heterosex' in order to render their tales more suitable for young audiences. Their method of cleansing the tales of any and all erotic content (for an assumed heterosexual audience, of course) has the ironically 'perverse' effect of shifting the focus in these collected folktales away from positive representations of heterosexuality and towards alternative relationships that exist as self-sustaining rejections of the stereotypical middle-class, (re)productive, heterosexual trajectory. Turner and Greenhill

attempt with this anthology of essays to compensate for this lack, while suggesting that more scholars should be mining this rich field, querying its queer possibilities – at one point in their introduction, they offer Red Riding Hood as a potential subject, a kind of Sleeping Beauty-like text just waiting to have its queer potential awakened and interrogated by a perceptive reader. In these tales, there are wise women and their young female charges, girls choosing familial loyalty over husbandly love, gendered transformations from girl to animal to man – all depicted as alternate schemes of maturation and survival that exist healthily outside of the standard patriarchal definition of what it is to be a heteronormative being.

The volume is divided into four parts – 'Faux Femininities,' 'Revising Rewritings,' 'Queering the Tales,' and 'Beyond the Grimms.' In addition to these topical dividers, there is a thorough appendix that lists all the appearances of Trans and Drag tropes within traditional folktales (the source for the tale types is Hans-Jörg Uther's system of classification). This appendix is delightfully thorough – though, considering the larger breadth of queer tropes that are explored in the collection, one might have preferred an even larger catalogue of themes! The number of listed tales that are never touched upon in this volume, however, is yet another indication of the vast potential of this field and another encouragement for future scholars to take up the critical gauntlet.

'Faux Femininities' deals with the gendered role of the 'female' and 'feminine' in fairy tale tropes and plots. Cristina Bacchilega and Kevin Goldstein's articles are particularly fascinating contributions: Bacchilega's article on 'Clever Greta' and 'Clever Else' analyzes two different tales that focus on female tricksters, interrogating the ways in which both tricksters resist (and are either rewarded or punished by) the society that insists on their adherence to the stereotype of the good, silent, and, above all, obedient woman. While affective criticism and personal anecdotes are integral to Bacchilega's analysis (she discusses at length, for instance, her own practice of telling these tales to her daughter and her daughter's various responses to these heroines), Kevin Goldstein approaches 'The Goose Girl at the Spring' from a more historical angle. The tale deals with an old wise woman who protects a lost princess and guides her to the prince that she will eventually marry, thus engineering the conclusion of a heteronormative marriage plot arc. Goldstein argues, however, that before the princess is 'saved' by marriage, the two-person household of girl and wise woman is portrayed as wholly self-sufficient, both economically and emotionally – so self-sufficient, in fact, that the marriage plot itself is rendered as a kind of violent disruption. Goldstein discusses the historical role of the midwife/healer figure in early modern society, arguing that midwives were not understood by their neighbors as monstrous witches but rather as benevolent healers, underscoring the ambiguous role of this older woman who occupies a space that is neither heteronormative nor completely opposed to its constraints, but seems to both create and exist in a liberated, timeless space: one that the princess enjoys until heteronormative time resumes its course, bringing about the tale's conventional conclusion.

In 'Revising Rewritings,' the focus turns to adaptations and retellings of the original Grimm plots that have either underscored or sought to conceal the queer implications of the source material. Kimberly J. Lau's article on Angela Carter's vampiric Sleeping Beauty tale, 'The Lady of the House of Love,' is of particular interest with its insightful analysis of how Carter at once explores and critiques the male, voyeuristic obsession with dead, pliant women, an obsession at the very heart of the erotic telos of the original Sleeping Beauty tale. While Lau's final conclusion that Carter 'pierces the fairy-tale love that facilitates the patriarchal investment in a pornographic culture' is perhaps a bit dated in its reductive and strictly hetero-masculine understanding of the pornographic gaze, her exploration of the vampire trope as a method of equating female sexuality with monstrosity is thorough and would be of interest not only to the scholar of folklore and gender theory, but to the Gothic scholar and genre theorist as

well. Andrew J. Friedenthal in his article on the Snow White tale makes a compelling case for why the most popular retellings of the legend so often choose to neglect Snow's sister 'Rose Red,' arguing that adaptors preferred Snow White's purity and 'innocence' over Rose Red's blatant (and possibly even lesbian) sexual energy.

In 'Queering the Tales,' the articles focus exclusively on anti-normative relationships and interactions. Catherine Tosenberger's article analyzes the Bluebeard-esque tale 'Fitcher's Bird,' the story of a girl who outwits her murderous husband. Tosenberger argues that 'Fitcher's Bird' praises the resourcefulness of its heroine by inverting the common tropes presented in Bluebeard (the foolish wife of Bluebeard is replaced with a self-preserving heroine and the rescuing brothers are completely omitted as the heroine saves herself through her own ingenuity), creating a queered space of female disguise and intrepidity and subtly transforming a plot that so often functions as a critical, moralizing tale into a complement of female wit. Kay Turner's 'Playing with Fire: Transgression as Truth in Grimms' 'Frau Trude'' is another stand-out, both academically and artistically. She reads this obscure tale of a young woman's relationship to an older witch as a mythic way of understanding the harrowing and exhilarating experience of 'coming-out,' and her reading is not only thorough but at times even poetically inspired: one of those rare pieces of scholarship that contains as much poetic truth in it as the tale that it analyzes.

As a kind of coda, the collection is capped by a section called 'Beyond the Grimms': two short analyses that deal with the queering of gender dynamics in folk tales outside of the Grimm canon. Margaret A. Mills does smart and insightful work with a popular Afghan folktale ('The Boxwoman') orally-related by the 20th-century storyteller Safdár Tawakkolí, unraveling why it is that a male storyteller and his wholly-male audience would delight in a tale that features a trickster woman who exploits foolish and tyrannical men (hint: the constraints of hetero-normativity can be a pain to men as well and it's a pleasure even in a largely patriarchal society to imagine taking a backseat and allowing your wife to hold the reins once in a while).

One of the great strengths of this collection is how easily its sense of playfulness mingles with its more intellectual intentions. There is a punning lyricism and anecdotally-driven wisdom that is apparent not only in Turner and Greenhill's masterful introduction, but in the articles themselves – Bacchilega's discussion of her own experiences as a teller of tales and Turner's poetic discussion of the experience of 'coming out' in her analysis of 'Frau Trude' stand out as particularly potent and effective examples of this. The childlike sketches by Bettina Hutschek interspersed throughout the volume enhance this personal mood while they illustrate the fairy-tale plots that are discussed. True to this juxtaposition of 'play' and scholarship, the essays in this collection are informed as much by the more emotive, reader-oriented aspects of affect theory as they are by new formalism's rigorous emphasis on tracing tropes and their resonances.

In this light, Elliot Gordon Mercer's article – ''The Grave Mound': A Queer Adaptation' – makes a perfect, poignant close to this collection, with its melding of analysis and artistry. After briefly discussing the Grimms' moralizing tale 'The Grave Mound,' a tale that emphasizes the importance of charity in a strictly religious context, Mercer rewrites the tale according to the values of a utopian LGBTQ community that seeks to care for its own in the face of sustained political, economic, and social obstacles. Mercer's blend of scholarship and tale-telling resounds with the mission statement and mood of the anthology as a whole and his own fable (self-aware and yet unironic in relation to its own mythos-making intent) makes for a politically and intellectually active and adventurous conclusion to an anthology that is itself bracing in an academic and poetic sense.

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Uvod u teoriju čudovišta: od Humbabe do Kalibana [*Introduction to Monster Theory: From Humbaba to Caliban*]

Miranda Levanat-Peričić
Zagreb: AGM, 2014
311 pages

Miranda Levanat-Peričić's *Uvod u teoriju čudovišta: od Humbabe do Kalibana* (Introduction to monster theory: from Humbaba to Caliban) has the distinction of being the first Croatian study entirely dedicated to the study of monsters and the monstrous. Based on the author's doctoral thesis, this insightful, informed and informative study provides an outline of European views on monstrousness, as evidenced by literary, historical and philosophical writings. Close and comparative readings of select examples form the basis of Levanat-Peričić's morphology of monsters which encompasses the following elements: monstrous space, monstrous diet, monstrous language, monstrous body and monstrous origin.

A lecturer at the University of Zadar (Department of Croatian and Slavic studies), Levanat-Peričić presents readers with a volume which is impressive in both its depth and breadth: not only does it bring together a wide range of generically, culturally and linguistically diverse texts, but also skillfully combines a variety of methodologies and theoretical approaches, from literary and cultural studies to linguistics and history. The seven chapters that comprise this illuminating study follow both a thematic and chronological trajectory. Numerous illustrations, photographs (none of which are, unfortunately, in colour) and tables complement the text. The tables, mostly used to compare different views on a particular subject or definitions of a key term, are a particularly helpful addition.

As an introduction to the study, chapter one presents the theoretical and methodological framework and discusses key concepts: monsters, monstrousness and ethnocentrism (in this case synonymous with Eurocentrism). Seeing that the rhetoric of monsters is created through oppositions (e.g. human/monster, familiar/unfamiliar, centre/margin) and usually fuelled by fear, the author interprets monstrousness as an effective strategy of othering and estrangement. Taking her cue from Jeffrey Jerome Cohen who argues that monsters, being embodiments of fears, desires and anxieties of a particular society at a particular point in time and space, assume the body of the culture that shapes them, she further suggests that monstrousness presents a form of discursive cultural practice which has its own body, form and morphology. Thus, to study the morphology of monsters is 'to study elements of a given culture and elements of a given discourse' (13–14, my translation).

Chapter two focuses on Mesopotamian literature, more specifically its (heroic) epics such as *Enuma Elish* (cca. 17th/12th c. BC) and *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (cca. 2100 BC). The introductory part of the chapter is dedicated to providing the proper context for the discussion by addressing historical, (inter)textual, stylistic and linguistic issues. Comparative textual analyses of Sumerian and Akkadian epics reveal the conflict between a (godlike) hero and a

monster to be their central topic, with Gilgamesh and Humbaba as a prototypical example. Traditionally situated at the very margins of the known world – specifically, the mountains, the attributes of which are often reflected in their appearance and demeanour – monsters in Mesopotamian literature function as embodiments of fear of the unknown.

Chapter three analyses select texts from the *Old Testament* (Psalms, The Book of Job) and the monsters they feature, the most prominent among them being Leviathan, Behemoth and Rahab. Since many of these monsters are created via demonization of deities featured in polytheistic belief systems, much attention is dedicated to the interactions between Israelite and Canaan culture, and the relationship between Jehovah and Baal.

The beginning of chapter four addresses the relationship between monstrousness and space. Using the writings of Herodotus and Pliny the Elder as her case studies, Levanat-Peričić demonstrates how tribes living on or beyond the margins of the so-called civilized world are given monstrous attributes by virtue of their distance from the centre. The discussion then shifts to St. Augustine who contemplates the issue of monstrousness from a theological point of view. Since God is infallible, the existence of monsters cannot be the result of an error. But if God created them, what is the purpose of their existence? St. Augustine and other medieval writers interested in the subject such as Isidore of Seville and Sebastian Brandt, answer this question by interpreting monsters as signs, warnings from God, and messages about the future. The second part of the chapter provides an outline of views on demons from antiquity (Hesiod, Plutarch, Apuleius, etc.) to the Middle Ages (St. Augustine). The final part of the chapter examines the discourse of disgust and horror of the supposedly dangerous and monstrous female body. Like any monster, the woman is defined in relation to the norm – in this case, man – and found 'faulty' and 'incomplete' in comparison. As such, she is labelled as dangerous and in need of constant supervision.

The topic of chapter five is the medieval epic *Beowulf* (8th–11th c.) and its monsters, Grendel and his mother. The monstrousness of Grendel is discussed in relation to his habitat (the swamp which is contrasted to the human – male, patriarchal, heroic – Heorot Hall), lineage and name (amidst a patrilineal world, the monster lacks the name of the father), and eating habits (he devours bloody flesh). Modelled after the prototype of the devil's mother, Grendel's mother is contrasted with the Virgin-Mary-like queen mother of Heorot Hall.

Chapter six encompasses postcolonial interpretations of three plays by William Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice* (1596–98), *Othello* (1603) and *The Tempest* (1610–11). Characters from the plays – Shylock, Othello and Caliban, respectively – are presented as embodiments of monstrousness and figures of otherness, due to their appearance, habitat, ethnicity, language, etc. Discussions of each of the plays is framed by an introduction which explores the historical, literary and social context in which the play was created and an epilogue of sorts dedicated to the history of the play on stage, more specifically stage embodiments of the characters under discussion. As expected, analyses of *The Tempest* and the 'moon calf' Caliban take up the majority of the chapter.

Chapter seven concludes the study by summarizing the findings and presenting an overview of the morphology of monsters.

As the first study dedicated to the theory, classification and interpretation of monsters to emerge within the Croatian academic context, *Uvod u teoriju čudovišta* was met with considerable (well-deserved!) critical acclaim. Indeed, the well-supported arguments combined with the author's thorough knowledge of the subject leave little to no room for criticism. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for some of the book's more 'technical' aspects: the page numbers in the list of contents do not match the actual page numbers in the book, and there is no index. Finally, despite being well-researched and rich in detail, the book is inevitably limited in scope and remains Eurocentric in its choice of examples. Perhaps this limitation will

serve as an additional stimulus for future research into this burgeoning field of academic study, research that will inevitably build on the theoretical and methodological foundations laid down by Levanat-Peričić.

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Film Reviews

Cinderella

Dir. Kenneth Branagh
Perf. Lily James, Cate Blanchett and Richard Madden.
Allison Shearmur Productions, 2015

Disney is synonymous with the fairy tale film and the success of recent titles such as *Brave*, *Frozen* and *Maleficent* have proven that films focusing on female relationships can be commercially successful. The subversive potential of the fairy tale has often passed Disney by as the studio stuck to the tried and tested formula of the princess tale. Until recently the only female relationships in Disney fairy tale films were power struggles between the wicked (M)other figure and her innocent victim and where Disney led, many other studios followed.

This one dimensional depiction of evil women became untenable in the late twentieth century, and Disney eventually caught up with the radically re-told fairy tale of second wave feminism. Their latest offering in the shape of a live action re-make of the 1959 animation *Cinderella* discards the mechanisms of its action counterparts that saw Snow White in armour and Gretel with an automatic crossbow. This new Cinderella could easily have fallen into the 'strong female protagonist' role as a way to invigorate the tale for a new audience, especially after the success of *Maleficent* which appears to follow this method. However, with Kenneth Branagh – he of the longest *Hamlet* in the history of *Hamlet*s – at the helm it was unlikely that Cinderella would be transformed into the kick-ass heroine that other re-tellings have chosen to portray. The closest to ass-kicking this Cinderella gets is running away from an exploding pumpkin. Given the strict corsetry employed in all of Lily James' costumes, it is perhaps for the best that she had little in the way of action. Said corsetry does render her performance somewhat breathy, particularly the lines delivered while in 'the' dress, as this is clearly the most restrictive. Given the controversy that the suspected measurement of James' waist created in the media in advance of the film's release, the fact that it also hampers the actor's ability to deliver her lines should have taken higher priority over the debatable aesthetic effect.

Rather than hindering the narrative, the focus on developing the existing characterisation generates some of the best scenes as the film spends it's time elaborating on the characters and

settings that we already know rather than re-forming the narrative entirely. Branagh takes the potential of this narrative set up in the opening of the Disney animation and expands it.

Helena Bonham Carter's Fairy Godmother also takes on the role of narrator and delivers a line taken directly from the opening storybook sequence of *Cinderella* (1959): the family fortunes were squandered upon the vain and selfish stepsisters, while Cinderella was abused, humiliated, and finally forced to become a servant in her own home. And yet, through it all, Cinderella remained ever gentle and kind.

Although the live action film is no longer than the original animation, short by today's standards at 105 minutes, the story is significantly more developed. Much of this development is achieved by Bonham Carter's voice-over narration. While the animation gives us no glimpse of the ill-fated first wife and Cinderella's mother, this adaptation concedes some actual characterisation to both of Cinderella's parents. Not enough to give them their own names and individual identities outside of their connection to the protagonist; however it is heartening to see evidence within this adaptation that Cinderella's relationship with her parents is for the most part healthy. It goes some way to explaining how she manages to withstand the abuse of her step-family later in the narrative.

Indeed, the various relationships between parent and child are the focus of Branagh's film even more so than the fledgling romance between Ella/Cinderella and Kit/Charming.

This stepmother, not content to wait for Ella's father to die, evicts the protagonist to the attic while the merchant is away on business. During this sequence the narrative establishes Ella's kindness and good nature, showing her willingness to sacrifice for others by giving her step-sisters her bedroom and helping the kitchen staff. This is an aspect that is reinstated from the Grimm version of the tale that was removed from the 1959 animation. In the Grimms' version of the tale, the marriage is specifically referred to as 'monstrous', and Cate Blanchet embodies the role of Lady Tremaine. She brings an elegance and poise to the cruel stepmother that the animation failed to capture. Unlike other versions of the tale, there is little attempt to rehabilitate the monstrous stepmother. There is, however, a poignant moment in the film when an alternate reading is implied during the post-ball confrontation. Lady Tremaine confronts Cinderella after finding the remaining glass slipper. The use of the conventional once upon a time frame in this scene displays the self-awareness that is now a requirement for fairy tale adaptations.

Branagh's film is opulent. The colours are vibrant and the setting is just the right blend of fantastical and realistic to evoke the traditional ahistoric fairy tale setting. This vibrancy is just this side of cartoonish, and contrasts distinctly with the surprisingly serious themes of parental loss and familial abuse. Nevertheless, much of the subversive potential of the fairy tale retelling is side-lined in favour of a more direct interpretation of the source material. While this is perhaps unsurprising given both the director and the studio, one can't help but feel that this represents a missed opportunity with a greater depth of characterisation and narrative freshness sacrificed to the directness of the adaptation. Any adaptation must negotiate between recognition and innovation, and resisting the current fashion for the fractured and twisted fairy tale could offer a new perspective. However, with Disney's commercial hold on the fairy tale just as strong as it was in the aftermath of the success of *Cinderella* (1959), that is not what the live action adaptation offers. This is the same sanitised and sentimental fairy tale, with a more vibrant and colourful backdrop.

Branagh's *Cinderella* is a spectacle, and its depiction of parent/child relationships is refreshingly well rounded. However, if you are looking for a Cinderella tale with more bite may I recommend *Ever After*?

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Maleficent

Dir. Robert Stromberg
Perf. Angelina Jolie, Elle Fanning, Sharlto Copley.
Walt Disney Films, 2014

With lush sets and beautiful costumes, *Maleficent* (2014) represents the directorial debut of celebrated visual effects artist Robert Stromberg. Incorporating elements of Disney's celebrated animated film *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *Maleficent* is a mash-up of traditional fairytale conventions told through a feminist lens. The film adopts a subversive tone in its treatment of the folktale *Briar Rose*, depicting Maleficent (Angelina Jolie) as both the protagonist *and* antagonist simultaneously. Headed by Angelina Jolie (who also co-produced the picture), the film features a cast of A-list actors including Elle Fanning, Sharlto Copley, and Imelda Staunton. Jolie turns in a compelling performance, and the rest of the cast provides a strong foundation for the plot to unfold.

Stylistically, the film resembles those of Guillermo del Toro and Terry Gilliam, such as *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) and *The Adventure of Baron Munchausen* (1988). The film also makes marvellous use of computer-generated visuals, fusing practical and digital special effects seamlessly. Incorporating imagery from both pagan and Christian iconography, the film is visually rich, offering a luscious experience for the eyes. The world that Maleficent and the other fairy creature inhabit is particularly beautiful, a locus amoenus comparable to Eden that offers a harsh contrast to the dark world that the humans inhabit.

The storyline revolves around the love affair between the young boy Stefan and Maleficent, a powerful fairy who resides in the forests that surround the castle. After a brief encounter in which Stefan attempts to steal jewels from the forest, the two children bond over the fact that they are both orphans left to fend for themselves as the result of their parent's deaths. The affection between Maleficent and Stefan lasts for many years, but eventually goes awry when it is declared that whoever delivers the head of the powerful fairy to King Henry (Kenneth Cranham) shall be declared his successor. Though Stefan does not decapitate Maleficent, he does something much worse, cutting off her graceful wings and rendering her earthbound; a fallen angel. The removal of Maleficent's wings is tantamount to rape and the shift in her character following this mutilation is manifested brilliantly both in Jolie's costume and makeup.

Adopting the role of villain, Maleficent is compelled to curse the only child of Stefan, the princess Aurora (Elle Fanning). In an act borrowed directly from the original fairytale *Briar Rose*, Maleficent declares that on Aurora's sixteenth birthday she will prick her finger on the needle of a spinning wheel, causing her to fall into an eternal sleep from which only true love can awaken her. Hoping to save his daughter, Stefan sends young Aurora away with three

bumbling fairies to be raised in the woods ignorant of her parentage and the curse that haunts her. These three fairies (played by Lesley Manville, Imelda Staunton and Juno Temple) function as the comic relief in the story and provide light-hearted humour while raising baby Aurora. As they are utterly incompetent as caretakers, the role of ensuring the wellbeing of the child ironically falls at the feet of Maleficent who watches the trio from a distance.

Stalking the group to keep an eye on her prey, Maleficent gradually develops a strong kinship with Aurora which, in a surprising twist, blossoms into a maternal bond, neutralizing her former anger. As Aurora grows up and becomes a young woman, she begins to resemble Maleficent prior to Stefan's betrayal and the relationship between the two women grows so strong that Maleficent attempts unsuccessfully to undo the curse that she had invoked earlier in the film. The narrative toys with audience expectations by including the figure of Prince Philip (Brenton Thwaites), an attractive young man who encounters Aurora and is smitten with her, but ultimately plays a peripheral role in the third act of the film.

The story reaches its climactic denouement when Aurora learns the truth about her heritage and seeks out King Stefan (Sharlto Copley). Once inside the castle, Aurora is drawn by unseen forces into the servant's quarters where she discovers a pile of scorched spinning wheels whereupon the curse is fulfilled. Trapped in a comatose state, it is not the kiss of the handsome Prince Philip that awakens Aurora, but that of her godmother Maleficent. True love in this film is not envisioned as that promised within fairy tales or romance novels, but instead is the platonic love shared by two loving and loyal friends. The film concludes with the death of Stefan and the release of Aurora from the bonds of the castle to live freely within the world of the forest with Maleficent.

The film successfully depicts the destructive and conciliatory aspects of love, as it is the instrument through which Maleficent is both wounded and healed. All moral authority in *Maleficent* is firmly rooted in the female characters, as they are the ones who are able to move beyond the madness and cruelty of combat to reach diplomacy and resolution. Likewise, it is revealed at the conclusion of the film that the entire narrative has been recounted by Aurora at a more mature age, indicating the birth of a pseudo-matriarchal society.

Jolie's character is envisioned as both a hero and villain within the narrative, and functions as the agent of the meeting of Prince Philip and Aurora, as well as the one who rescues Aurora from the curse she herself placed upon her. The elaborate back story the writers included concerning Maleficent's transformation into a villain makes her a much more sympathetic and accessible character than in previous filmic depictions. However it also renders her benign, never actually adopting a threatening posture. Her benevolence is never forgotten in the storyline, as indicated by the fact that she is averse to iron, the metal of weaponry, which burns her flesh like fire. Ultimately Maleficent is a noble and altruistic spirit temporarily twisted by the callous actions of a cruel lover. From fallen goddess to warrior angel, Maleficent is both a tragic and heroic figure who ultimately prevails in the end.

There is a clear delineation in the film between the world of the forest creatures and that of the humans. The latter is depicted as monstrous and destructive, a fact which is communicated brilliantly through lighting and costume. Stefan comes to epitomize the stupidity and futility of the human race in his quest for power. As the film progresses he slowly descends into a state of paranoia and madness, abusing his servants and carrying on conversations with the disembodied wings he 'stole' from Maleficent. The film clearly seems to indicate that violence has the effect of destroying the destroyer, and showcases the failure and impotency of traditional manifestations of patriarchal authority.

Although the film is intriguing, it is far from flawless, and at certain points the story drags, with melodramatic pauses and dialogue that sounds riddled with clichés. Likewise, the ideology that the film espouses works better on paper than in celluloid, as neither Maleficent

nor Stefan function well as villainous figures. Both fail at striking fear into the heart of the audience, as the former is too sympathetic and the latter too pitiful. The film is tailored for a younger audience, one which will be spellbound by the awe-inspiring visual effects and will overlook any minor flaws in the story. Overall it is a compelling film which boasts strong performances and terrific visuals while proposing provocative and subversive ideas concerning traditional fairytale conventions.

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Image 3: Maleficent. © 2015. Image courtesy of Charles E. Butler